

protest or in institutionalized politics. We include categorical variables for active affiliation with liberal, moderate, and conservative Protestant denominations using the standard General Social Survey categorization of Protestant denominations (T. Smith, 1990). We also include categorical variables for nominal Protestants, practicing Catholics, nominal Catholics, and non-Christian (Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.) religious faiths.<sup>6</sup> We define practicing Catholics as those either attending church two to three times per month or more, or who say that their religious faith is “extremely” important in their lives. “Nominal” Catholics and Protestants are defined as those who attend church less than two to three times per month and who do not say their faith is “extremely” important in their lives. These variables are interpreted in relation to those who report no religious affiliation.

## THE FINDINGS

Multinomial logistic regression yields beta coefficients that refer to three separate contrasts: (1) institutional participation relative to no action, (2) protest relative to no action, and (3) protest relative to institutional participation. For the purpose of presentation, we exponentiate the coefficients, converting them to odds ratios. The results are presented in Table II.

Our findings indicate that those with higher levels of income, not surprisingly, are more likely than those with a household income of less than \$20,000 to have donated time or money to a political organization relative to engaging in no political action. Controlling for the other variables that are included in the analysis, those with an income of \$80,000 or more are approximately 1.5 times more likely to engage in institutionalized political action than to engage in no action. Individuals in the other income categories are not significantly more likely than the low-income group to have engaged in institutionalized politics compared to no action.

As shown in second column, income is not a statistically significant predictor of protest relative to no action. This finding, or more appropriately this “nonfinding,” demonstrates that currently in the United States social protest is a political strategy that cuts across class boundaries. Interestingly, those who refused to report their household income are less likely to have engaged in protest relative to institutional political participation, although this relationship falls just short of being significant at the .05 level. We can only speculate on the meaning of this. Perhaps those who engage in protest

<sup>6</sup>The low number of respondents from these non-Christian religious traditions prevents us from analyzing them as separate groups, as they deserve.

**Table II.** Institutional Political Participation and Protest: Multinomial Logistic Regression Estimates

Variable	Institutional/ no action Exp ( $\beta$ )	Protest/ no action Exp ( $\beta$ )	Protest/ Institutional Exp ( $\beta$ )
Income			
Refused	1.201	.653	.544 <sup>a</sup>
\$20,000–\$49,999	1.074	.858	.799
\$50,000–79,999	1.161	1.169	1.006
\$80,000 and above	1.547 <sup>b</sup>	.898	.580 <sup>a</sup>
Education			
12 to 15 years	.667 <sup>c</sup>	.773	1.159
16 years	.582 <sup>c</sup>	.559 <sup>b</sup>	.961
>16 years	.628 <sup>c</sup>	.996	1.584 <sup>a</sup>
Educated on issues			
A lot	1.755 <sup>c</sup>	5.043 <sup>c</sup>	2.873 <sup>c</sup>
Some	1.325 <sup>b</sup>	3.012 <sup>c</sup>	2.274 <sup>b</sup>
Financial situation			
About the same	1.126	.834	.741
Worse	1.077	.905	.840
Ascriptive identities			
Age	.988 <sup>c</sup>	.969 <sup>c</sup>	.981 <sup>c</sup>
Female	.818 <sup>b</sup>	.563 <sup>c</sup>	.688 <sup>b</sup>
Black	1.840 <sup>c</sup>	2.697 <sup>c</sup>	1.466 <sup>a</sup>
Hispanic	1.369	2.067 <sup>a</sup>	1.510
Other ethnic	1.156	1.692	1.463
Organizational activity			
Donated to the poor	2.057 <sup>c</sup>	2.099 <sup>c</sup>	1.020
Community volunteer (religious)	1.434 <sup>c</sup>	1.936 <sup>c</sup>	1.351
Community volunteer (nonreligious)	1.367 <sup>c</sup>	1.927 <sup>c</sup>	1.410 <sup>b</sup>
Votes Democrat	1.245 <sup>a</sup>	1.278	1.027
Votes Republican	1.416 <sup>c</sup>	1.174	.827
Attend church more than weekly	.936	1.470 <sup>a</sup>	1.570 <sup>b</sup>
Attend church weekly	.938	.752	.802
Religious affiliation			
Conservative Protestant	2.720 <sup>c</sup>	.936	.344 <sup>b</sup>
Moderate Protestant	2.617 <sup>c</sup>	1.284	.589
Liberal Protestant	2.116 <sup>c</sup>	.561	.265 <sup>c</sup>
Nominal Protestant	2.452 <sup>c</sup>	.978	.399 <sup>a</sup>
Catholic	3.383 <sup>c</sup>	1.381	.408 <sup>a</sup>
Nonnominal Catholic	2.532 <sup>b</sup>	1.340	.529
Non-Christian religion	1.142	.558	.490
Constant	.250 <sup>c</sup>	.166 <sup>c</sup>	.664
Log-likelihood	–2224.11		
(df)	60		
n	2561		

<sup>a</sup> $p < .10$ .<sup>b</sup> $p < .05$ .<sup>c</sup> $p < .01$ .

are more sympathetic to the goals of social scientific research. Those in the highest income category are less likely than those under \$20,000 to engage in protest relative to institutional politics, but this relationship also falls short of statistical significance ( $p < .1$ ).

While higher income makes it more likely that individuals will participate in institutionalized politics rather than engaging in no action, higher education seems to have the opposite effect. After controlling for income and for the other variables, those in each of the education categories are less than .7 times as likely than the lowest education group to have engaged in institutionalized politics relative to no action. Each of these relationships is significant at the .01 level. Column 2 shows that those with sixteen years of education are significantly less likely to have engaged in protest relative to no action. Those with a postgraduate education, on the other hand, are more likely than those with a high school education or less to have engaged in protest relative to institutional politics, although this finding falls just short of being significant at the .05 level.

These results suggest that while income provides incentive to engage in institutionalized politics in order to protect financial interests, higher education breeds some skepticism of the political process. It is important to keep in mind that the institutionalized politics component of our dependent variable is not a measure of voter turnout, but is instead a measure of whether the respondent has donated time or money to a political organization. It seems that those with the highest levels of education prefer to invest their time in social protest activity rather than exclusively donating time or money to institutionalized political organizations.

We also find that those who indicated that they have spent time educating themselves on political issues are much more likely to have engaged in both institutionalized politics and protest, relative to no action. In the first column of Table II we see that those who reported that they had spent a lot of time educating themselves on issues are about 1.75 times as likely than those who have not spent time educating themselves to have engaged in institutionalized politics relative to no action. Respondents who reported having spent some time educating themselves on the issues are approximately 1.3 times more likely to have engaged in institutionalized politics compared to no action.

The most striking contrast appears when comparing the propensity to protest relative to no political action. Individuals reporting that they spent a lot of time educating themselves on the issues are more than five times as likely than those who have not educated themselves on issues to have engaged in protest. Those who spent some time educating themselves are three times as likely to have engaged in protest relative to no action. The results in column three show that individuals who educated themselves on

issues are also considerably more likely than those who have not to have engaged in protest rather than institutionalized politics.

It should be kept in mind that with our cross-sectional design we are unable to tell whether education on issues leads people to protest or whether engaging in protest leads them to educate themselves on the issues. Undoubtedly, both of these are true.<sup>7</sup> In either case, our findings show that education on the issues is an important factor that differentiates protesters from the general population, including those who engage actively in institutionalized politics.

Stagnant or worsening financial circumstances are not significant predictors for any of the three contrasts. Age, on the other hand is significant for all three comparisons. Age reduces the odds of participating in institutional politics relative to no action, it reduces the odds of engaging in protest relative to no action, and age also reduces the odds of engaging in protest relative to institutional politics. Gender operates in a similar fashion. Holding all else constant, women are less likely than men to engage in protest relative to no action and relative to institutional participation. Women are also less likely to engage in institutionalized politics relative to no action.

African Americans in our sample are more likely than Whites to have engaged in institutional politics relative to no action. Blacks are also more likely to have engaged in protest relative to no action. In fact, controlling for the other variables in the analysis, they are about 2.7 times as likely to have engaged in protest. Column three shows that African Americans are also 1.47 times more likely than Whites to have engaged in protest relative to institutional politics ( $p < .1$ ). Hispanics and those in the "other" ethnic group category are also more likely than Whites to have protested relative to no action and relative to institutional politics, but these findings are not statistically significant at the .05 level.

As for the organizational variables, our data show that those who donated money to the poor or needy are significantly more likely to have engaged in both institutional politics and protest, relative to no action. Aiding the poor, however, does not make it more or less likely that an individual will engage in protest relative to institutional politics. The same can be said for participation in religious-affiliated community organizations. Net of the effects of the other variables, participation in religious-affiliated community organizations increases the odds of participation in both institu-

<sup>7</sup>We omitted these variables in a separate analysis to assess the stability of the other coefficients. Our findings are relatively stable, with a few exceptions. When the self-education variables are not included, Democratic voting becomes significant for the institutionalized to no action contrast, the 16 years of education variable is not significant for the protest to no action contrast, and the postgraduate education and nominal Protestant variables are statistically significant.

tionalized politics and protest, relative to no action, but does not make a significant difference in the protest to institutional politics contrast.

Participation in community organizations that are not affiliated with religious organizations also increases the odds that individuals will have engaged in institutional politics and in protest, relative to no action. As shown in column three, those who participated in nonreligious community organizations are also 1.4 times more likely than nonparticipants to have engaged in protest relative to institutional politics, holding all the other variables constant. Republican voters are significantly more likely than those who did not claim an attachment to one of the two parties to have engaged in institutionalized politics relative to no action. Neither Democratic nor Republican voting is significant at the .05 level for any of the other contrasts. In a separate analysis (not shown), we also found no significant differences between Democrats and Republicans on any of the three contrasts.

Findings related to church attendance are particularly interesting. Those who report that they attend religious services once a week are not significantly different from those who attend church less frequently on any of the three contrasts. More frequent church attendance (more than once a week), however, significantly increases the likelihood of protest relative to institutionalized political action. This finding is consistent with the observations of scholars who have noted the important role that religious congregations can play in facilitating social movement activism (Zald and McCarthy, 1987; Smith, 1996a, 1996b; McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984).

Finally, we address the religious affiliation variables. In comparison to those who indicated that they were not religious, all but one of the religious affiliation categories are significantly more likely to have participated in institutionalized politics relative to no action. Non-Christian religion is not significant. Holding the other variables constant, those falling into any of the other religious affiliation categories are at least two times more likely than the nonreligious to have engaged in institutional politics rather than no action.

Religious affiliation does not make a significant difference in terms of the likelihood that an individual will protest relative to no action. But as is shown in column 3, both conservative Protestants and liberal Protestants are significantly less likely than nonreligious respondents to have engaged in protest relative to institutional politics. These results do not indicate that any of the religious affiliations promote political apathy or submissiveness in any sense. They do indicate, however, that for most religious groups, especially for liberal and conservative Protestants, political interests are primarily channeled into institutionalized political institutions. As previously noted, however, those who attend religious services the most often, which