Black National Anthem

"What is the "black national anthem" & is it actually a thing in the black community? I've have never heard of it until the NFL made this announcement." **Salvio, Twitter**

What is public perception of NFL's decision to play "Lift Every Voice and Sing" before the National Anthem?

Overview

On July 2nd, 2020, the National Football League (NFL) announced plans to play "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (a.k.a. the Black National Anthem) before every Week 1 NFL game. The timing of the announcement—before the July 4th weekend generated highly-animated, thought-provoking discussions that questioned the NFL's decision to play this song before the Star-Spangled Banner (a.k.a. U.S. National Anthem). Topic modeling and sentiment analysis was applied to U.S. online discussions to measure public opinion and gain deeper insights into the NFL's current controversy.

Key Findings

- The NFL's decision is seen as a purely symbolic gesture that is pandering to individuals and organizations during a turbulent time in the U.S.
    - Further polarized the relationship between the NFL and its fan base
    - Perceived as marketing ploy—not deploying its vast resources to address issues and solve problems
- African Americans do not believe the NFL's decision is helpful or constructive
    - Consider the NFL as tone deaf—don't understand problems and underlying issues that exist within African American communities

Recommendations

- The NFL should focus on its mission to "Unite people and inspire communities in the joy of the game by delivering the world's most exciting sports and entertainment experience" and mobilize its vast resources to address socio-economic disparities—make positive changes in people's lives.

Data Analytics

ENODO's analysts examined 52,645 Tweets, 47,856 Facebook posts, 36,980 news sites, 21,065 RSS feeds, 18,564 blogs, 14,324 Instagram posts, and 11,509 YouTube comments to produce this Ask ENODO.

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"The "black national anthem", played before the national anthem during week 1 of the NFL is promoting segregation. This is wrong."

Robert Pfeiffer, Twitter

Sentiment Analysis

Measured the positive, negative, and neutral sentiment polarities of discussions regarding the NFL announcement

- **Overall:** Negative sentiment (71%) is dominated by discussions about concerns the NFL is promoting divisiveness among racial groups
- **Black Population:** Negative sentiment (42%) was primarily linked to NFL's actions that fail to address underlying social issues that affect African American communities
- **White Population:** Negative sentiment (82%) heightened previous sentiment (e.g. kneeling during National Anthem)—fuels growing support to boycott the NFL


Overall: Positive 10%, Negative 71%, Neutral 19%

White Population: Positive 5%, Negative 82%, Neutral 13%

Black Population: Positive 31%, Negative 42%, Neutral 27%

Legend: Positive, Negative, Neutral
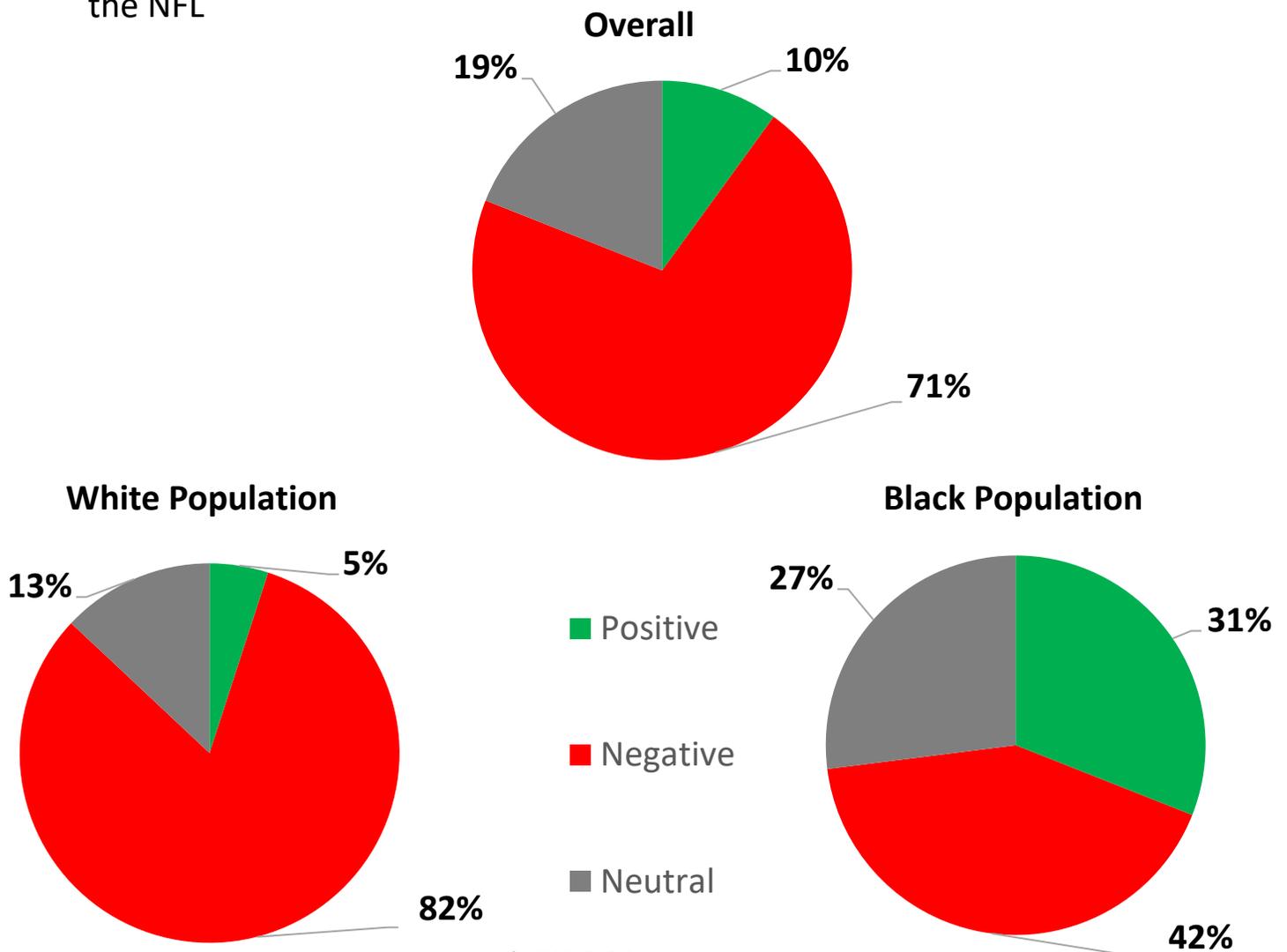
"So the NFL is just adding fuel to the racial divide??! I mean we are one country right? Or did I miss that day in History class when I was told we are two or three different nations" David, Twitter

Topic Modeling

Revealed three (3) trending topics from U.S. online discussions related to the NFL's announcement:

- **Symbolic Gesture:** 47% expressed concern that the NFL's decision was a symbolic gesture and added no value to address African American issues
- **Boycott NFL:** 26% of discussions (e.g. 52,765) reference plans to boycott watching games (e.g. Hashtag #BoycottNFL)
- **Black Communities:** 19% discussed the growing need to address issues within Black communities (e.g. crime, poverty, and COVID-19)
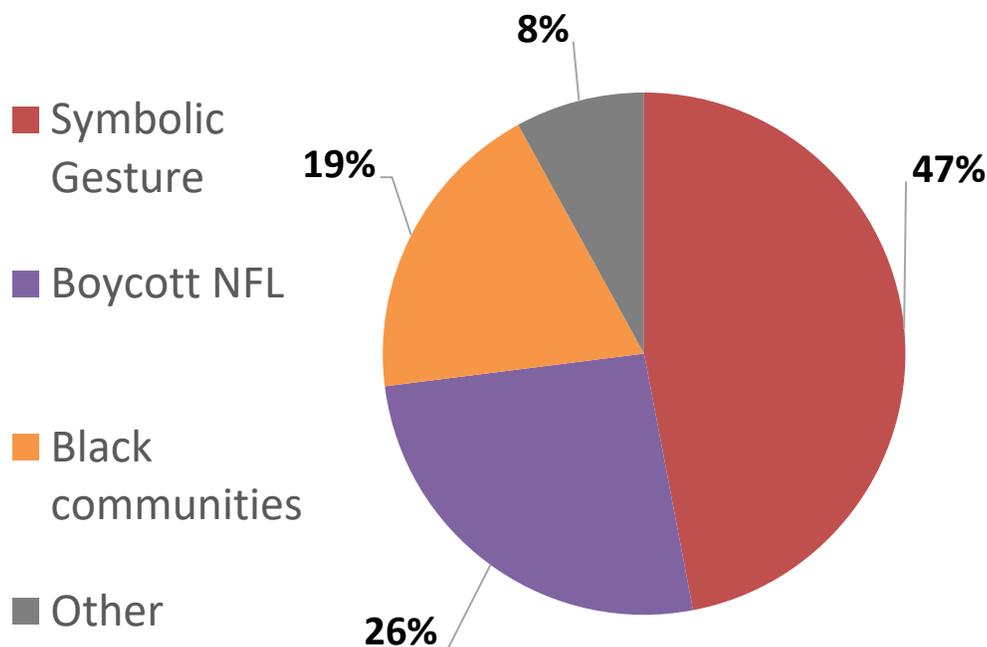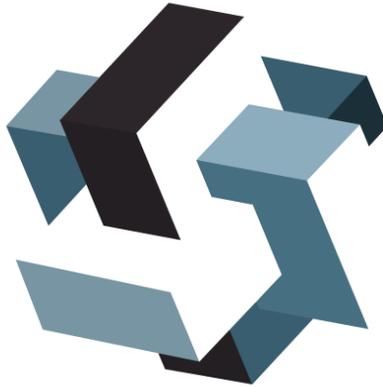
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