

Initial Reaction to the Death of George Floyd:  
Churches in Rust Belt Cities and Surrounding Areas  
in Ohio and Western Pennsylvania

by

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## Abstract

The murder of George Floyd was a pivotal moment in this country's continual fight on racism. As a result, the Black Lives Matter movement initiated a campaign to defund the police. This research project will look at a purposive sample of 10 churches that were selected in Rust Belt cities of Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Transcripts were pulled from YouTube for the sermons from May 31, 2020, through June 21, 2020, for the 10 churches. This project used grounded theory when analyzing the texts in NVivo and the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count softwares to see if the churches selected took a position in any way regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. Results showed that 3 of the 10 churches had sermons that were sympathetic to the Black Lives Matter Movement. The majority of the churches had neutral sermons; however, all churches were similar in usage of keywords (specified below), authenticity, and tone. Future research is necessary to assist law enforcement with community relations and the potential connection between sermon topics and societal issues.

**Keywords:** George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, racism, police, law enforcement, defunding the police, police brutality, black, white privilege, diversity, ethnicity, cultural representation, retrenchment, apartheid, bigotry, discrimination, violence, anarchists, protests, riots.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

The origins of racism can be traced back thousands of years. This research project's objective is to discuss the response to a specific occurrence that ensued more recently: the events that transpired on May 25, 2020, with the death of George Floyd. This was a pivotal moment in our nation's continual struggle on racism. George Floyd, a Black man, was arrested in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on the pretense that he passed a counterfeit \$20 bill. During his arrest, Derek Chauvin, a White police officer, knelt on his neck holding him down for over 9 minutes (Levenson, 2021). Floyd was yelling that he could not breathe but was not released and held, until ultimately, he died (Jones, 2022).

The death of George Floyd started a chain reaction across the United States and throughout the world. Protests, riots, and looting ensued. The forefront of these protests was the Black Lives Matter movement and their call for defunding the police and repercussions for police brutality. As stated in an ABC news article, "in demonstrations that drew millions in cities across the country and abroad, protestors called for police reform while mourning the death of yet another unarmed Black person at the hands of police in the United States" (Delisio, 2021). There have been several instances of police brutality in the past that have caused protests to erupt. However, the unfortunate and horrifically unjust death of George Floyd was truly a pivotal moment in our country's history that sparked numerous calls for an end to police brutality and the adequate punishment of the involved law enforcement officers.

Many people took to social media to vent their outrage and promote their stand on this heinous act; however, this research project evaluated another platform that was

utilized – churches. Churches are a safe place to worship whatever you may believe, and many use their beliefs as an outlet to pray for equality and an end to injustices across the world. It is also a place where one religious authority, i.e., a minister, priest, pastor, can evangelize their congregations with their message. While some congregants may not listen intently, other individuals listen closely, absorbing every word that is being spoken. This is because churches stand apart from other social institutions on matters related to worship and theology, “inspire an ontological belief in God’s created order with a salvific vision of hope” (Miles-Tribble, 2020, p. 63). In conducting this study, the researcher selected churches in Rust Belt cities and surrounding areas in Ohio and western Pennsylvania that were chosen from a master list of megachurches in the Frames of Misinformation and Extremism project (Rogers, 2020) to see how these religious leaders conveyed their personal beliefs to their communities. Key words extracted from transcripts of sermons that were placed on YouTube for public viewing were analyzed.

The murder of George Floyd, a Black man, at the hands of a White police officer outraged the nation. His death was another example of the continual racism in the United States. Citizens took to rioting and protests to exclaim their dissatisfaction with the systems that are in place and to call for defunding the police and police reformation; others, looked to God and worship to make sense of the tragedy and to seek guidance in these difficult times.



## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review and Theory**

#### **Origins of Racism in the United States**

While most people think the origin of racism to be slavery, it can be traced back as early as the 13th and 14th centuries with the association of Jews with evil forces such as the devil and witchcraft (Frederickson, 2003). During the Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) and Reformation (16<sup>th</sup> century) periods, people began to enslave Africans. This led to the slave trade and the bringing of enslaved people to the Americas. The original justification for the American slavery of Africans often came from the Bible and the story of Noah and Ham (Haynes, 2007), though other claims were possible. In this story, as related in Genesis 9:20-27, Noah had become drunk, as he had just planted a vineyard and drank of its wine. He laid down in his tent naked where his son, Ham, saw him. When Noah woke up, he knew that Ham had saw him and was angry and cursed Ham's youngest son, Canaan. He said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Genesis 9:25 KJV; Emerson & Smith, 2000). Canaan, it is claimed, was the progenitor of Africans; hence, Noah's curse was not solely on Canaan but on all Canaan's descendants.

A justification that strayed from religion is Virginia's claim that Africans are to remain enslaved "because they had heathen ancestry" (Fredrickson, 2003.). During this time, Thomas Jefferson also believed there were differences between Black and White people that scientists could discover (Jefferson as stated in DiAngelo, 2018). It is evident that at this point in time there was a shift in the thought process behind slavery where it became completely about race. As stated before, there were instances of racism centuries

before this, but it is around the time of the slave trade (16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) where most people locate the commencement of modern racism.

In the early 1700s, with the increased population of slaves, some Christians began to think they should convert the slaves. A New England Congregational minister, Cotton Mather, said, “How canst thou Love thy Negro, and be willing to see him ly under the Rage of Sin, and the Wrath of God?” (quoted in Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 23). This ideology did not bode well with slave owners as they felt the slaves would think that, if they were free of sin, then they were free as well. However, Evangelicalism took hold with the Great Awakening (1730s – 1740s). In the early 1800s, divisions about slavery appeared in religious institutions. The North was against slavery, where the South was not. After the Civil War, Blacks were starting to integrate themselves into society with the Whites. They were holding high positions and it threatened the Whites. The attitudes from the evangelical Christians that came about from this caused Blacks to venture out and start their own churches (Emerson & Smith, 2000).

Advocacy for racial justice has been a long-standing battle in the United States, where Blacks have waged a powerful battle for justice and equality, while enduring violence as well as oppression (Alfred, 2021). Over time, the Black community faced many dead ends as in the case of *State v. Mann* in 1829, heard by the Supreme Court of North Carolina. John Mann had hired a slave from another owner and, when that slave ran off from him, he shot her in response. He was initially charged with assault and convicted; however, the Supreme Court of North Carolina reversed the decision. In the opinion, Justice Thomas Ruffin indicated, “The power of the master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect” (*State v. Mann* [1829]; Greene, 2021

p.40). In this ruling, justice was not served as a man committed a heinous act, yet his conviction was overturned because the Supreme Court ruled it was his right to ensure submission of his slaves. Then, in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842), a slave by the name of Margaret Morgan escaped from Maryland to Pennsylvania. Prigg was sent to retrieve her and bring her back to Maryland. He was charged with kidnapping and violating the 1826 law passed by Pennsylvania's legislature that did not allow this. However, the Supreme Court reversed the decision thereby foregoing the 1826 legislation (Baker, 2014).

In 1846, a slave by the name of Dred Scott instituted legal proceedings for his freedom (*Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 1857; Horton & Horton, 2001). He indicated that he, along with his wife, were enslaved while living in a free territory. What should have been an open and shut case, as there was precedence, took a turn in a different direction. After 11 years, on March 6, 1857, the case was decided by the Supreme Court, which ultimately ruled that slaves were not citizens and therefore could not expect the federal government or the courts to protect them.

While slavery may have been abolished in 1865, the racism against Black Americans continued with the establishment of Jim Crow laws (Alexander, 2012; Frederickson, 2003; Hannah-Jones, 2021; Horton & Horton, 2001). In the South, there was complete segregation of Black and White Americans. Black Americans were unable to vote, preventing them from having any say in the future of their country, and Black and White Americans were not allowed to marry each other.

In 1896, the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), established the 'separate but equal' doctrine (History.com Editors, 2009; Horton & Horton, 2001). In this case, Homer Plessy was an African American who sat in a train car for White people.

When he refused to move, he was arrested. Plessy argued to the Supreme Court that his constitutional rights were violated. Segregation continued in the U.S. until eliminated through a series of Supreme Court rulings and federal legislation, most notably *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) and the Civil Rights Act (1964).

During the 1950, efforts to minimize racism escalated. *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) was five separate cases that were consolidated by the Supreme Court dealing with segregation in schools (*History-Brown v. Board of Education Re-enactment*, 2013.; Stallion, 2013). The premise was that by having separate schools, Black people would feel inferior to White people and be denied educational opportunities that they could obtain in a segregated school. It was also argued that this was a violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the “equal protection clause” in that the separate schools would have inequalities which could affect the motivation to learn by Blacks. It took the Supreme Court two terms and the replacement of Chief Justice Fred Vinson to overturn the previous decisions and rule that it is inherently unequal to have separate schools.

Protests against public bus systems in the South accentuated other aspects of Jim Crow. The Mass Bus Boycott of Baton Rouge in 1953 was led by Reverend T.J. Jemison, who was the pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church (Birnbaum et al., 2000). At this time, the Jim Crow laws were still in effect regarding segregation of buses. Black people were segregated to the back of the bus and not allowed to sit in the White section, even if there were empty seats. In response to this, Reverend Jemison staged a mass boycott and for, “ten days not a Negro rode the bus” (Jemison as stated in Birnbaum et al., 2000).

Ultimately, a compromise was reached as to reserved and first come-first-serve seating (Birnbaum et al, 2000).

In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for not giving up her seat on the bus to a White person. Buses were still segregated, and she was in the first row of the “Colored” section. When a White man was standing, with no seats available to him, the bus driver asked Rosa to move. Rosa, who was against segregation, refused his request. This led to the Montgomery bus boycott which was headed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a pivotal moment for the Civil Rights Movement.

These events triggered extraordinary reactions from segments of White America. In 1955, a devastating shock to the Black community, was the murder of Emmett Till (Griffin, 2022; Horton & Horton, 2001). Emmett, who was only 14 years old, was visiting relatives in Mississippi. He was found murdered and mutilated at the hands of White men for supposedly speaking disrespectfully to a White woman. The husband of the White woman, Carolyn Bryant, and his half-brother were charged but were found not guilty. Emmett’s mother refused to have a closed casket for the funeral so that everyone could see what was done to her son. His picture and story were run both nationally and internationally. According to a civil rights worker at the time, this case distressed both White and Black Americans, “with the white community because...it had become nationally publicized, with us blacks because it said that even a child was not safe from racism, bigotry, and death” (quoted in Horton and Horton, 2001, p. 279). As a side note, the family of Emmett Till recently found an arrest warrant that was issued for Carolyn Bryant Donham, but was never served. They are asking that it be served upon her now and that justice be served. Carolyn is in her 80s (Griffin, 2022).

These struggles for Black freedom culminated with two pieces of legislation in the 1960s. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In this act, discrimination was prohibited (*Civil Rights Act, 1964*). It allowed for the integration of schools and public places. It also allowed for equality in the workplace. Shortly thereafter, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed by Congress. Section 2 of this Act declares it unlawful to deny a person the right to vote based on their race (Newkirk, 2021).

### **The Criminal Justice and Contemporary Racism**

In many ways, the current conflict between minorities and the criminal justice system started with the “War on Drugs” (History.com Editors, 2017; Hannah-Jones, 2021). In 1971, President Richard M. Nixon imposed harsher penalties for drug use. Some say that he had an ulterior motive in doing this - it was his way of disrupting the Black community. Then in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan reinforced these policies which led to an increase in incarcerations for Black people.

Alexander (2012) brings up the topic of incarceration rates and how the largest population happens to be Black males. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2020, the number of Black prisoners was 938 per 100,000 which was a decrease of 37% from 2010. However, this was still higher than their White counterparts (Carson, 2021; see Appendix A). She then hypothesizes that this may be attributed to the fact that Black males are stereotyped as criminals, thus they are targeted by police, leading to higher incarceration rates. Ultimately, she goes on to explain how the incarceration of Black men leads to similar results as the Jim Crow laws did as people

who were previously incarcerated face several injustices once released from prison as they struggle to find housing and employment (Alexander, 2012).

### **Origins of Black Lives Matter**

The Black Lives Matter movement emerged in 2013 due to the death of Trayvon Martin (Alfred, 2021). Trayvon Martin was a Black teenager who was walking through a gated community when he was shot and killed by George Zimmerman. Zimmerman was acting as the coordinator for the neighborhood watch program at the time. His statement to account for the shooting was that he was afraid for his life. Zimmerman was subsequently acquitted. Disagreement with this decision led to nationwide protests.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement gained more momentum in 2014 in response to the deaths of Eric Garner by a police chokehold in New York City as he gasped “I can’t breathe” and the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, in August (Morris, 2021). Building on the popular sentiment, the Black Lives Matter organization was started by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, and Opal Tometi. Their mission “is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes” (blacklivesmatter.com, n.d.).

However, the Black Lives Matter movement gained worldwide notoriety in their protests, which culminated from the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, where there were widespread calls for police reform and even defunding of law-enforcement agencies. These protests erupted across the country and garnered national and worldwide attention for a call to end police brutality.

## **The Defunding of the Police**

The death of George Floyd led to political protests across the United States in the summer of 2020 (Lum, Koper, and Wu, 2021). From the protests, the slogan “Defund the Police” emerged. These protests and calls to defund the police led to the rise in power of Black Lives Matter. “Like Black Lives Matter, Defund the Police is a political hashtag that means different things to different people” (Bratton & Knobler, 2021, p. 455).

Taken at the simplest of definitions, the idea to defund the police has been met with resistance from both Republicans and Democrats. Defunding the police really breaks down into four categories (Eaglin, 2021). First, there are abolitionists, who believe the police are meant to “monitor and watch over Black people” (Smith as quoted in Eaglin, 2021). The abolitionists believe that defunding the police is the first step to abolishing them (Eaglin, 2021).

The next category is police recalibration. The idea of recalibration is to take funds that are meant for police and spend the money in other areas in the community. For example, funds from the police department would be spent on expanding mental health services. Their long-term goal is not to eliminate police, but rather change their role in society.

Police oversight is a third category that wishes to shift funding from the police and only provide it when they meet certain metrics. By manipulating these metrics, funding for police departments would be reduced if adherence to new systemic policing policies are not pursued.



The final category is Fiscal Constraints. The idea in this category is the reduction of government spending, not necessarily just police funding. Changes to policing are a welcome benefit in this category, but not the primary goal.

The demand to defund the police has been met with resistance, not only by law enforcement, but by communities with high crime and poverty rates. A Gallup's Center on Black Voices poll found that 61% of Black respondents wanted the same level of police protection and 20% wanted more protection (Lum, Koper, and Wu, 2021). Local governments from across the country responded to the defund movement, cutting their police budgets deeply, but by the end of 2021, many of these same police departments saw their funding restored, or even increased as a reaction to a rise in crime. In Dallas, the homicide rate was up 25% (Goodman, 2021).

Further outcries in protests are for police reform. Some police departments have based changes on President Barack Obama's reform principles outlined in the 2015 Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. That model includes "diversification, demilitarization, implicit bias and de-escalation training, community policing, and accountability policies, such as body-worn cameras and use of force restrictions" (Arora et al, 2019, quoted in Cobbina-Dungy, et al., 2022, p. 152). Some have also called for the actual disbanding of police departments. In the wake of the George Floyd protests, a police station in the Third Precinct of Minnesota was abandoned and several officers walked off the job (Press, 2020).

### **Churches and Racial Conflict**

It is hard to ignore the role of religion in these conflicts. In 19<sup>th</sup>-century America, White Americans in both South and North frequently justified the subjugation of Blacks

using the myth of Noah's curse (Haynes, 2007). As Protestant churches spread through the South, southern churches adamantly resisted demands of abolitionists (Loveland, 1980). Major northern denominations such as the Methodists and Presbyterians accommodated this dissent in their efforts to build nationwide institutions even though such actions resulted in costly schisms resulting in separate institutions for Whites favoring abolitionism and free Blacks (Cross, 1950; George, 1973, Gravely, 1984; Marsden, 1970).

Black churches, by contrast, were places where Black people could go to discuss politics and seek an education. As Hannah-Jones (2021, p. 339) says, the Black church was “forged out of slavery, it was also a place of protection and practicality.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke out for equality while also using theology in his speeches (King, 1981; Washington, 1986). For him “a just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God” (King as quoted in Dixon, 2021, p. 25). He promoted peaceful protests and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his efforts. “The connection between religious faith and the social movement is a remarkable moment in American religious history, attesting to the power of religion to call for and realize change” (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 45-46).

Hence, historically, Black churches have been a target to many acts of violence and racism. One such act was in 2014, when a pastor of Flood Christian Church in Missouri raised a cry about police brutality in the killing of Michael Brown. Michael Brown was a teenager who was shot and killed by a White police officer, Darren Wilson. The church was burned after Michael's father was baptized in it, as a clear act of racism in response to the pleas for change in law enforcement (Hannah-Jones, 2021).

The resulting state of affairs leaves American churches dramatically divided by race. Even today, congregants in White and Black churches differ substantially in their views of structural social problems even when theology is held constant (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Black Christians are prone to see structural issues influencing individual social problems, while Whites are more likely to hold to doctrines of individual responsibility that downplay structural issues. Furthermore, themes of White supremacy and the superiority of White-dominated cultures permeate the far-right and are linked to the current spread of Christian nationalism and conspiracism (Barkun, 1997; Rogers, 2021).

With regard to the death of George Floyd, the negative response of some White Christian groups to the Black Lives Matter movement is especially noteworthy (Clark, 2022). In a study that was done of 10 churches/organizations in Southern California, Nevada, and Arizona, there was an even division of the results. Five of the 10 churches shared extremist views with their followers while the other five were sympathetic. They were all supportive of police officers; however, not all were sympathetic to the Black Lives Matter movement.

### **Summary**

Religion is a constant in the division between Black and White and has been in the forefront of the racial divide. The church has been a safe haven for many Blacks where they could go to learn and talk politics. This led to acts of violence against their persons and their churches. Even today, the conflict and division continue. The chapters to follow examine this issue as it impacted church responses in Ohio and western Pennsylvania to the George Floyd death.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This research project used an inductive approach to look at 10 churches from Rust Belt cities in Ohio and western Pennsylvania to explore how church leaders may or may not have attempted to influence their congregations on the concepts of Black Lives Matter, defunding the police, and the idea of police reform in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. This qualitative study compared and examined the positions between three groups of churches – Black, White, and Multicultural – and how each pastor conveyed their perspectives to their congregations for the period of May 31, 2020, through June 21, 2020. The social issues that were brought to light by this critical incident will be analyzed at the completion of this project to see how the different denominations and ethnicities conveyed those to their congregations.

The churches were chosen from a list of megachurches selected for monitoring in the Frames of Misinformation and Extremism (FOME) project (Rogers, 2020). The transcripts from the services held between May 31, 2020, and June 21, 2020, were taken from YouTube and evaluated using grounded theory. “Grounded theory sets out to discover or construct theory from data, systematically obtained and analyzed using comparative analysis” (Chun et al., 2019, p. 1).

Qualitative data analysis, which is the “collecting and analyzing” of a ‘systematically selected set of documents’ such as ‘text or visual images’ to discover ‘meaning, themes and cultural and social significant,’” will be used to analyze the transcripts from the sermons that were extracted (Kraska and Neuman, 2008, p. 437 as stated in Nolasco, et al., 2010). This will be done by using key words pertaining to

racism, Black Lives Matter, and defunding the police. Two methodologies will be used to understand the responses – a key-word analysis using NVivo and an analysis of sentiment and tone using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software. Selected churches had to be both on the FOME megachurch list and have at least one available YouTube transcript during the study period. The list of these churches can be found in Table 1.

### **Software**

NVivo is a state-of-the-art software used widely in the qualitative analysis of text. The key-word analysis used words related to (1) racial issues, (2) policing, and (3) violence. The racial-issues key words were George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, racism, black, white privilege, diversity, ethnicity, cultural representation, retrenchment, apartheid, bigotry, discrimination. The policing key words were police, law enforcement, defunding the police, police brutality. The violence words were violence, anarchists, protests, riots. All the words as a group were queried with NVivo set to stemmed words and a broad context (roughly one paragraph). In addition, an exploratory cluster analysis was done on the three codes.

Differences in sentiment and tone were looked at using LIWC-22. This software, which originated in the effort of James Pennebaker and colleagues to understand the social and psychological meaning of words, enables the computerized analysis of word usage and has two features – a processing component (“the program itself”) and a dictionary with words classified by category (Tausczik and Pennebaker, 2010). The end result is a percentage of how many times a certain word in a category is used. These percentages can then give you a glimpse into the speaker’s thought processes to perceive

how they intended their message. For the purposes of this research project, the percentages were averaged for each church and group.

In the LIWC program, a set of categories were chosen from those available to depict the emotions that were conveyed in each sermon. The abbreviations stemmed from the following categories below. These categories have “built-in dictionaries created to capture people’s social and psychological states” (LIWC, 2022). Example ideas or words accompany the categories.:

- Summary Variables (Table 2)
  - Authentic – perceived honesty, genuineness
  - Emotional Tone – Degree of positive (negative) tone
- Linguistic Dimensions (Table 3)
  - Pronouns
    - I – 1<sup>st</sup> person singular (I, me, my, myself)
    - We – 1<sup>st</sup> person plural (we, our, us, lets)
    - You – 2<sup>nd</sup> person (you, your, u, yourself)
    - She/He – 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (he/she, her/his)
    - They – 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (they, their, them, themselves)
- Prepositions and Affects -Linguistic Dimensions & Psychological Processes (Table 4)
  - Negate – (Negations) not, no, never, nothing
  - Affect – good, well, new, love
  - Tone Positive – good, well, new love
  - Tone Negative – bad, wrong, too much, hate

- Emotions - Psychological Processes (Table 5)
  - Emotion – good, love, happy, hope
  - Emotion Positive – (positive emotion) good, love, happy, hope
  - Emotion Negative – (negative emotion) bad, hate, hurt, tired
  - Emotion Anxiety – (negative emotion) worry, fear, afraid, nervous
  - Emotion Anger – (negative emotion) hate, mad, angry, frustration
  - Emotion Sad – (negative emotion) sad, disappoint, cry
- Social Processes (Table 6)
  - Social – you, we, he, she
  - Social Behavior – said, love, say, care
  - Pro Social – care, help, thank, please
  - Conflict – (interpersonal conflict) fight, kill, killed, attack
  - Moral – (Moralization) wrong, honor, deserve, judge
  - Communicate – said, say, tell, thank
- Social - Perception (Table 7)
  - Perception – in, out, up, there
  - Attention – look, look for, watch, check
  - Motion – go, come, went, came
  - Space – in, out, up, there
  - Visual – see, look, eye, saw
  - Auditory – sound, heard, hear, music
  - Feeling – feel, hard, cool, felt
- Social - Perception (Table 7)

- Perception – in, out, up, there
- Attention – loo, look for, watch, check
- Motion – go, come, went, came
- Space – in, out, up, there
- Visual – see, look, eye, saw
- Auditory – sound, heard, hear, music
- Feeling – feel, hard, cool, felt
- Conversational (Table 8)
  - Conversation – yeah, oh, yes, okay
  - Assent – yeah, yes, okay, ok
  - Nonfluencies – oh, um, uh, I, i
- Culture (Table 9)
  - Politics – united states, govern, congress, senate
  - Ethnicity – American, French, Chinese, Indian
  - Lifestyle – work, home, school, working
  - Religion – God, hell, Christmas, church
- Mental Motives (Table 10)
  - Mental (mental health) – mental health, depressed, suicide, trauma
  - Reward – (motives) opportunity, win, gain, benefit
  - Risk (motives) secure, protect, pain, risk
  - Curiosity (motives) – science, look for, research, wonder
  - Allure – have, like, out, know.



## **Research Ethics**

This research was approved by the Youngstown State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) through a modification to protocol 2022-191, Frames of Misinformation and Extremism. The protocol covers all FOME use of social media, including YouTube, and is classified as exempt. The modification permitted this student to participate in the project.

The FOME project generally, and this thesis particularly, follows guidelines consistent with generally accepted practices, Citi Training, and the European Union for the use of social media (Hagen et al., 2019; Hu, 2019; Martinez, 2019). These guidelines support the use of social media in research but limit the ways in which the material is cited and distributed to keep the content producer from undue attention and protect the copyright owner. Pastors are regarded as public figures and the FOME IRB protocol specifically allows reference to them. However, the point here is not to draw attention to any specific church. The list of churches used in the study is provided in Table 1 to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the research, but individual churches or speakers are not referenced by name, and the church numbers used in the results tables do not correspond with the order of churches in Table 1.

## **Sample / Population**

For the purposes of this research project, 10 churches were chosen based on their location in Rust Belt cities or surrounding areas in Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Nine of the 10 came from a master list of megachurches in the FOME project (Rogers, 2020), which was derived from a larger list of megachurches identified by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research (2020). By definition, megachurches have an attendance of at least

2,000 people. The tenth church was selected to make sure at least one church representing the New Apostolic Reformation, whose adherents have played a key role in the promotion of violence and spread of conspiracism in this historical moment (Rogers, 2021).

The churches were chosen as a purposive sampling of churches in the Ohio and Pennsylvania areas. A “purposive sample is the one whose characteristics are defined for a purpose that is relevant to the study” (Andrade, 2021, p. 87). One advantage to using the purposive sample was that the churches were chosen based on their proximity to the area selected for study. Of the 10 churches, 5 were Baptist, 4 were non-denominational, and 1 was Other. For the sake of analysis, churches were classified as Black, White, or Multicultural based on the researcher’s viewing of church videos.

### **Summary**

In summary, this research project looked at 10 churches that were chosen, based on location, from a list of megachurches in the Frames of Misinformation and Extremism project (Rogers, 2020). The churches were then categorized by denomination and then by ethnicity. Transcripts were taken from YouTube and analyzed based on keywords using NVivo and LIWC. The following chapter will show the results from this analysis and how these programs were used.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

#### **General Findings**

The results of the key-word analysis found that 7 of the 10 churches did not openly admit to supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. Three churches (1 non-denominational and 2 Baptist) alluded to supporting the movement. Nonetheless, in the NVivo cluster analysis there was little difference between sermons, which was surprising. It was expected that the presence of the words “George Floyd” and Black Lives Matter” would at the very least create one or two clusters of sermons devoted to recent events, but that did not happen, even when such sermons were present. However, in setting up the cluster, one anomalous church was found, and those results are discussed below. The result tables from the LIWC analysis (Tables 2-10) did not reveal large differences between church groups (Black, White, Multicultural).

#### **Findings for Individual Churches**

Church #1 was sympathetic to the Black Lives Matter movement. The pastor spoke about the nation being divided and all the rioting. Racism was a topic that was addressed, and they are against it. The church has members of their congregation that are police officers, so it was mentioned that you should not judge all based on the actions of one, as their members are decent people. There were several mentions that no matter the race of a person, they need to be respected. Other topics of the sermons were White supremacy, systemic racism, and riots. There was a strong push for nonviolence. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor had a 51.35%

authentic tone, the tone was more in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular context (4.24%), and they had a positive emotion (0.80%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

Church #2 does not condone riots; they feel it is an evil philosophy. They want peace for all those who are affected by this tragedy. They are also in support of the police. There was no obvious relation to the Black Lives Matter movement. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 23.99% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural context (2.61%), and they had a positive emotion (0.39%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

Church #3 supported prayer requests from members of the congregation. Some prayers were for those in authority. The pastor made it known that the church should seek justice; however, they would not endorse the protests. There was a call for police reform and training but there was no direct correlation to supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 18.75% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural context (3.53%), and they had a positive emotion (1.27%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

At Church #4, racism is mentioned and the pastor is reminiscent of their youth and seeing some of the acts of segregation. However, the pastor insisted, we need to move past this. They speak of riots and how they equate to lawlessness. It is time for a change and an answer needs to be found. One cannot find any relation to the Black Lives Matter movement. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 32.03% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person context (3.47%), and they had a positive emotion (0.66%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

The pastor of Church #5 is heavily preaching about racism as a current public health crisis – to be Black in America is dangerous. They also indicated that another virus, which can only be cured by Jesus, is White supremacy. They go on to preach that Black churches are the last chance. They do not say whether or not they are for or against the protests, but they are mentioned. They further talk about a picture that was taken of the President at the time and the hypocrisy of said picture. They also refer to the book *White Fragility*. They go on to mention the reformation of the police department and the need for change regarding policing. From the dialogue, one would gather that they were sympathetic to the Black Lives Matter movement. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 21.32% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person context (3.88%), and they had a positive emotion (0.70%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

At Church #6, the sermons came back with several matches to the keywords. However, the keywords were used in a different context that was not pertaining to the Black Lives Matter movement. There was a reference to protesting; however, it just alluded to protesting in our culture. There was also talk of being influenced by the culture we live in and tolerating the sin of our society. In these sermons, there was no mention of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, or defunding the police. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 26.98% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural context (3.33%), and they had a positive emotion (1.34%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

The pastor in Church #7 was angry and referenced fighting against hatred. His dialogue consisted of various puns relating to breathing and shooting. The main message was to stop the injustices that are facing the Black man. They referenced Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr., a lot and read from a letter that Dr. King had posted from a jail cell (*Letter from Birmingham Jail*). They spoke of riots and that they are the voice of the unheard. They also speak of bias and mentions voting for Donald Trump in the same sentence. They go on to mention that the Governor had made a statement apologizing to the Black community for the wrongs against them and will try to make corrections but that the President could not do the same. They speak out against the looting as it is tearing the businesses down. He voiced his thoughts about how to respond to the congregation regarding the events that happened as well as his messages on YouTube and the news. He went as far as comparing himself to Jesus and saying what he would say. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 45.42% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person context (4.82%), and they had a positive emotion (1.02%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

This church stood out in the effort to create an exploratory cluster analysis of the sermons. With the most angry of the sermons on the Sunday after the Floyd death, race key words appeared 63.49% of the time in the broad-context frequency analysis, and a second sermon from this church scored 36.81%. In comparison, the next highest sermon across all churches was 8.44% on this indicator and most scored below 4%. The police key words showed up with a frequency of 25.69% in the most angry sermon with two other sermons of Church #7 scoring 4.59% and 2.45% respectively. Only one other sermon in the entire sample had a percentage above 1% at 1.01%. Violence key words were present 11.87% of the time in the most angry sermon and 4.98% in a second—all other sermons in the sample scored below 2%.

In Church #8, there was no mention if their views were in line with those of Black Lives Matter, though they did mention George Floyd. The message purveyed was that of many emotions. They alluded to our nation feeling healthier than it really is. Their fixation was on racism and the need for it to be cleaned up. The pastor compared not being able to breathe like George Floyd to listening to God's word. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 45.05% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular context (3.11%), and they had a positive emotion (0.50%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

Church #9 had several matches to the key words in some form. However, once again, there was no direct identification with the Black Lives Matter movement. The pastor alluded to events in society and that one can see what is going on by reading a newspaper or watching television. The pastor also discussed how there is very little truthfulness in leadership and that these are difficult times. They spoke to the congregation of not liking the rioting or the murder of minorities, but under pressure, those who have God in their lives are stronger. The message to the people was that it does not matter what you do in your vocation, just that you serve Jesus Christ. When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 33.55% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular context (2.98%), and they had an equal positive/negative emotion (0.46%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

The pastor at Church #10 spoke of their anger at the blatant disregard for Black men. They spoke of White hate and how this incident was a tipping point. They give their approval to the protests and rallies that are being held. They also talk of police reform and supporting businesses of African Americans. The tone of these sermons

would allude to the church being sympathetic to the Black Lives Matter movement.

When running the transcripts through LIWC using the key words, the pastor came across with a 14.87% authentic tone, the tone was more in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural context (2.31%), and they had a positive emotion (0.90%) followed closely by a negative emotion (0.87%). See Tables 2, 3, 5.

### **Findings by Racial Group**

After looking that the results of NVivo and LIWC independently, the churches were then divided into groups: Black, White, Multicultural. The largest differences came with authenticity and tone (Table 2). In the authentic category, where the pastor would be perceived as honest, the White and Multicultural churches averaged very closely at 34.51% and 34.56%; however, the Black churches were at 26.62%. The verbiage that was used in their sermons came across less genuine than those of their counterparts. When relating to tone, the Black and Multicultural were very similar at 40.75% and 40.15%, whereas the White was at 35.23%.

Nonetheless, it is hard to draw definitive conclusions from the LIWC results. The sample size is small, so the addition of one or two churches could dramatically change the conclusion. Moreover, there was large internal variability within each group that was masked by the group averages. In other words, the largest differences among the churches did not translate into systematically large differences across groups.

### **Limitations**

The following limitations were noted in this research. First, the study was done of a relatively small sample size. Further research is needed with a larger sample size to conclude if the data is significant to the issues at hand. Second, data was taken from a



relatively short time frame. To be more specific with the percentages, transcripts should be analyzed over different periods of time, not just when there is a historic moment.

Third, data was not taken into consideration prior to or after the dates of May 31, 2020, through June 20, 2020. Finally, the area demographics should also be included to show the population that is being addressed.

### **Summary**

The results of the findings netted the conclusions that pastors from 3 of the 10 churches delivered sermons that were sympathetic to the Black Lives Matter movement. The churches, when looked at independently, had a range of authenticity from 14.87% to 51.35%. Tone ranged from 26.90% to 61.01%. However, the most extreme differences could not be identified with particular race groupings of churches.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion**

Today, it can be said that we live in a racialized society, “a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life-opportunities, and social relationships” (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 7). The research began with the Frames of Misinformation and Extremism project (Rogers, 2020) with the intent to compare churches in Rust Belt cities of Ohio and western Pennsylvania to see how these churches may or may not have presented the Black Lives Matter movement and the issue of defunding the police to their congregations.

Between the three groups of churches that were chosen, Black, White, Multicultural, there was no blatant difference with the exception of an anomalous church. While churches varied in the extent to which they supported Black Lives Matter in the wake of George Floyd’s death, the cluster analysis yielded no major results with the exception of one anomalous church. In other words, pro-Black Lives Matter churches and those churches that were non-committal were surprisingly similar in the choice of key words, authenticity, and tone.

While the lack of results is often regarded as unimportant, this may not be the case here. In a similar research project also related to the FOME project, a sample of churches from California, Arizona, and Nevada was purposively chosen because of their embrace of Christian nationalism (Clark, 2022). These results not only revealed sharp contrasts between churches but indicated that five of the 10 churches/organizations were openly opposed to Black Lives Matter during the Floyd protests and contained ideas that could be associated with the extreme right. Such extremes were not present in this study

of Ohio and western Pennsylvania. The results for the two studies differ in nature due to their locations and types of churches/organization analyzed. The differing results are worth noting as perception can drastically change based upon region.

The study that was done was considered small in nature. Further research should be done expanding the area and the number of churches involved. However, this study of these churches is warranted in helping law enforcement in their efforts to close the gap in their community relations. Police officers need to “work collaboratively with their communities to build bridges and make meaningful change” (Smith as cited in Nelson, 2021). It is instrumental for change to have a community that trusts law enforcement officers with the sole duty of protecting the members of the community and keeping them safe. If there is no trust, there will be no relationship between the community and law enforcement; thus, no change will ever occur.

### **Contributions**

This research project is beneficial to the criminal justice field relating to police community relations because “the numerous recent shootings of unarmed Black men, women, and children by police serve as a vivid reminder of the continued strained relationship between communities of Color and the criminal justice system” (Boehme et al., 2022, p. 124). The murder of George Floyd by a White police officer served as a pivotal moment in this Country’s struggle with systemic racism and police brutality.

The events that took place following the murder of George Floyd had people venting their frustrations in a number of ways. Outlets that were used were social media and other social platforms. Churches were another avenue that people were able to raise their voice in a safe environment. This research project allows further insight into the

way community members air their grievances to each other. It allows for insight into the people who are directly affected and how they deal with it.

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**Table 1**  
**Churches**

The ten churches that have been randomly selected in the Rust Belt Cities and surrounding areas in Ohio and western Pennsylvania:

Canton Baptist Temple:

Denomination: Baptist  
Founded: 1937  
Location: Canton, Ohio.  
Pastor: Rev. Mike Frazier  
<https://www.cantonbaptist.org/>

Cleveland Baptist Church.

Denomination: Southern Baptist  
Founded: 1958  
Location: Cleveland, OH  
Pastor: Peter Folger  
<https://clevelandbaptist.org/>

Cornerstone Church:

Denomination: Nondenominational  
Founded: 1986  
Location: Toledo, Ohio.  
Pastors: Phil and Meredith Ryburn  
<https://cornerstone.church/>

Faith Family Church.

Denomination: Nondenominational  
Founded: 1988  
Location: Canton, OH  
Pastor: Mike and Barb Cameneti  
<https://www.faithfamilyoh.com/>

First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland.

Denomination: Baptist  
Founded: 1833  
Location: Cleveland, Ohio  
Pastor: Kregg Burris  
<https://www.firstbaptistcleveland.org/>

Mt. Ararat Baptist Church.

Denomination: Baptist

Founded: 1906

Location: Pittsburgh, PA

Pastor: Reverend Dr. William H. Curtis

<https://www.mt-ararat.org/>

Oasis Church:

Denomination: Nondenominational/Charismatic

Founded: 1979

Location: Middletown, OH

Pastor: Dr. Tim Sheets

<https://www.oasiswired.org/>

Olivet Institutional Baptist Church.

Denomination: Baptist

Founded: 1931

Location: Cleveland, OH

Pastor: Dr. Jawanza Karriem Colvin

<http://oibc.org/>

The Word Church.

Denomination: Nondenominational

Founded: 2000

Location: Cleveland, OH

Pastor: Dr. R.A. Vernon

<https://wordcity.org/>

World Harvest Church.

Denomination: Pentecostal

Founded: 1977

Location: Columbus, Ohio.

Pastor: Rod Parsley

<https://whc.life/>

**Table 2***Summary Variables*

<b>Church #</b>	<b>Authentic</b> <i>(Perceived Honesty, Genuineness)</i>	<b>Tone</b> <i>(Emotional Tone, Degree or Positive/Negative)</i>
<b>1</b>	51.35%	32.66%
<b>2</b>	23.99%	35.71%
<b>3</b>	18.75%	61.01%
<b>4</b>	32.03%	41.36%
<b>5</b>	21.32%	43.13%
<b>6</b>	26.98%	55.48%
<b>7</b>	45.42%	51.58%
<b>8</b>	45.05%	27.14%
<b>9</b>	33.55%	26.69%
<b>10</b>	14.87%	26.75%
<b>Black</b>	26.62%	40.75%
<b>White</b>	34.51%	35.23%
<b>Multicultural</b>	34.56%	40.15%

**Table 3***Linguistic Dimensions*

<b>Church #</b>	<b>Pronouns</b>				
	<b>I</b> <i>(1st Person Singular)</i>	<b>We</b> <i>(1st Person Plural)</i>	<b>You</b> <i>(2nd Person)</i>	<b>She/He</b> <i>(3rd Person Singular)</i>	<b>They</b> <i>(3rd Person Plural)</i>
<b>1</b>	4.24%	2.95%	3.36%	0.94%	1.01%
<b>2</b>	2.04%	2.61%	2.16%	1.80%	0.86%
<b>3</b>	1.86%	3.53%	2.80%	1.30%	0.87%
<b>4</b>	2.74%	2.11%	3.47%	0.97%	0.65%
<b>5</b>	2.02%	3.04%	3.88%	0.80%	0.86%
<b>6</b>	2.17%	3.33%	3.01%	1.55%	0.75%
<b>7</b>	4.80%	2.70%	4.82%	1.40%	1%
<b>8</b>	3.11%	2.68%	3.01%	1.37%	1.17%
<b>9</b>	2.98%	2.41%	2.24%	2.34%	1.20%
<b>10</b>	1.77%	1.13%	2.31%	1.88%	0.73%
<b>Black</b>	2.78%	2.36%	2.36%	1.30%	0.86%
<b>White</b>	2.93%	2.82%	2.63%	1.72%	0.99%
<b>Multicultural</b>	2.66%	2.75%	3.04%	1.27%	0.98%

**Table 4***Prepositions & Affects (Linguistic Dimensions and Psychological Processes)*

Church #	Prepositions & Affects			
	Negate <i>(Negations)</i>	Affect <i>(Good, Well, New, Love)</i>	Tone Positive <i>(Positive)</i>	Tone Negative <i>(Negative)</i>
1	1.97%	3.19%	1.99%	1.10%
2	1.56%	3.14%	2.02%	0.95%
3	0.89%	4.80%	3.66%	1.05%
4	1.61%	3.92%	2.64%	1.20%
5	1.57%	3.86%	2.67%	1.14%
6	1.42%	4.03%	3.13%	0.86%
7	2.21%	4.10%	3.03%	1.00%
8	1.43%	2.42%	1.42%	0.95%
9	1.73%	3.06%	1.73%	1.24%
10	0.90%	4.11%	2.20%	1.80%
Black	1.56%	4.00%	2.64%	1.30%
White	1.70%	3.28%	2.10%	1.07%
Multicultural	1.30%	3.43%	2.34%	1.03%

**Table 5***Emotions (Psychological Processes)*

Church #	Emotions					
	Emotion <i>(Good, Love, Happy, Hope)</i>	Emotion Positive <i>(Positive)</i>	Emotion Negative <i>(Negative)</i>	Emotion Anxiety <i>(Anxiety)</i>	Emotion Anger <i>(Anger)</i>	Emotion Sad <i>(Sadness)</i>
1	1.35%	0.80%	0.47%	0.04%	0.19%	0.12%
2	0.72%	0.39%	0.27%	0.09%	0.05%	0.07%
3	1.74%	1.27%	0.37%	0.08%	0.11%	0.05%
4	1.06%	0.66%	0.35%	0.05%	0.11%	0.08%
5	1.17%	0.70%	0.42%	0.11%	0.06%	0.08%
6	1.61%	1.34%	0.22%	0.06%	0.07%	0.04%
7	1.39%	1.02%	0.30%	0.05%	0.10%	0.04%
8	0.83%	0.50%	0.27%	0.02%	0.05%	0.07%
9	0.99%	0.46%	0.46%	0.08%	0.09%	0.11%
10	1.90%	0.90%	0.87%	0.08%	0.21%	0.19%
Black	1.45%	0.86%	0.52%	0.09%	0.11%	0.10%
White	1.11%	0.67%	0.38%	0.07%	0.10%	0.09%
Multicultural	1.15%	0.76%	0.32%	0.04%	0.08%	0.07%

**Table 6***Social Processes*

Church #	Social					
	Social <i>(Social Processes)</i>	Social Behavior <i>(Social Behavior)</i>	Pro Social <i>(Pro Social Behavior)</i>	Conflict <i>(Interpersonal Conflict)</i>	Moral <i>(Moralization)</i>	Communicate <i>(Communication)</i>
1	16.03%	4.77%	0.42%	0.13%	0.29%	2.90%
2	13.31%	4.16%	0.27%	0.19%	0.32%	2.63%
3	16.56%	4.77%	0.87%	0.16%	0.48%	2.06%
4	13.60%	4.03%	0.44%	0.16%	0.51%	2.07%
5	15.95%	4.31%	0.66%	0.23%	0.33%	2.17%
6	14.90%	4.35%	0.53%	0.08%	0.52%	2.41%
7	20.78%	6.10%	0.88%	0.22%	0.40%	3.35%
8	14.92%	3.93%	0.24%	0.18%	0.21%	2.55%
9	14.52%	3.97%	0.28%	0.22%	0.32%	2.46%
10	11.05%	3.23%	0.31%	0.31%	0.35%	1.47%
<b>Black</b>	<b>15.93</b>	4.52%	0.62%	0.25%	0.36%	2.31%
<b>White</b>	<b>14.66</b>	4.28%	0.36%	0.17%	0.34%	2.60%
<b>Multicultural</b>	<b>15.15</b>	4.20%	0.47%	0.17%	0.35%	2.31%

**Table 7***Social (Perception)*

Church #	Social						
	Perception	Attention	Motion	Space	Visual	Auditory	Feeling
1	8.60%	0.52%	1.49%	5.66%	0.94%	0.51%	0.35%
2	9.10%	0.20%	1.74%	5.85%	0.94%	0.80%	0.26%
3	9.29%	0.38%	1.10%	5.36%	1.49%	1.24%	0.34%
4	9.03%	0.26%	1.48%	5.70%	0.65%	1.41%	0.21%
5	8.33%	0.49%	1.14%	4.90%	1.11%	1.17%	0.14%
6	9.07%	0.42%	1.33%	6.44%	0.70%	0.75%	0.08%
7	9.06%	0.84%	1.70%	5.74%	1.26%	0.31%	0.29%
8	9.92%	0.30%	1.90%	6.88%	0.85%	0.47%	0.31%
9	8.88%	0.70%	1.29%	6.59%	0.69%	0.42%	0.09%
10	8.78%	0.25%	1.29%	5.22%	0.88%	0.88%	0.67%
<b>Black</b>	8.68%	0.52%	1.35%	5.25%	1.09%	0.83%	0.34%
<b>White</b>	8.90%	0.48%	1.50%	6.15%	0.82%	0.59%	0.19%
<b>Multicultural</b>	9.55%	0.32%	1.58%	6.19%	1.00%	0.89%	0.30%



**Table 8***Conversational*

Church #	Conversational		
	Conversation	Assent	Nonfluencies
1	0.74%	0.11%	0.12%
2	0.34%	0.06%	0.06%
3	0.24%	0.08%	0.07%
4	0.61%	0.18%	0.10%
5	0.68%	0.09%	0.28%
6	0.45%	0.14%	0.14%
7	0.35%	0.21%	0.02%
8	0.76%	0.22%	0.08%
9	0.43%	0.08%	0.14%
10	0.12%	0%	0.01%
Black	0.41%	0.10%	0.12%
White	0.49%	0.09%	0.11%
Multicultural	0.57%	0.17%	0.08%

**Table 9***Culture*

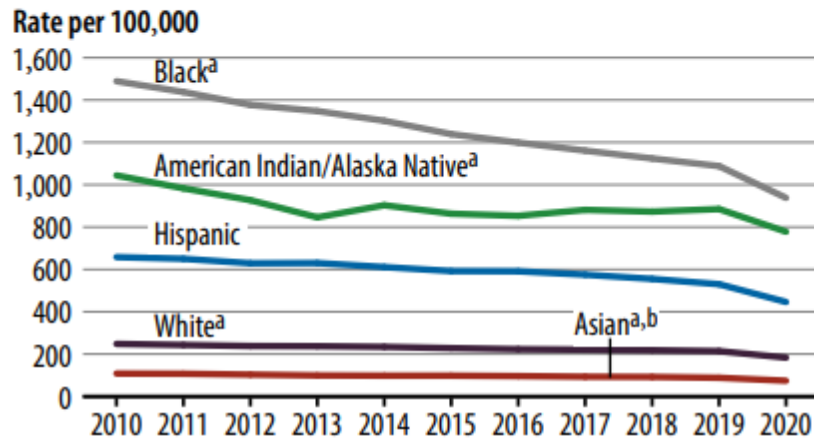
Church #	Culture			
	Politics	Ethnicity	Lifestyle	Religion
1	0.17%	0.26%	4.01%	3.16%
2	0.60%	0.09%	4.81%	3.54%
3	0.12%	0.15%	4.91%	2.32%
4	0.16%	0.19%	5.90%	3.63%
5	0.32%	0.29%	5.50%	3.25%
6	0.05%	0.26%	6.10%	4.20%
7	0.58%	0.39%	4.23%	2.83%
8	0.16%	0.16%	3.14%	2.21%
9	0.14%	0.10%	4.50%	3.31%
10	0.20%	0.14%	3.01%	1.85%
Black	0.36%	0.28%	4.37%	2.70%
White	0.25%	0.16%	4.72%	3.48%
Multicultural	0.15%	0.16%	4.22%	2.53%

**Table 10***Mental Motives*

Church #	Mental/Motives				
	Mental	Reward	Risk	Curiosity	Allure
1	0%	0.05%	0.12%	0.12%	8.53%
2	0%	0.11%	0.11%	0.09%	5.53%
3	0.01%	0.13%	0.15%	0.13%	6.26%
4	0.02%	0.06%	0.17%	0.08%	7.98%
5	0.02%	0.08%	0.17%	0.16%	6.10%
6	0%	0.20%	0.30%	0.07%	7.04%
7	0.02%	0.06%	0.17%	0.08%	7.98%
8	0%	0.02%	0.17%	0.13%	6.98%
9	0%	0.13%	0.20%	0.26%	5.93%
10	0.03%	0.07%	0.56%	0.23%	4.85%
Black	0.02%	0.07%	0.29%	0.16%	6.29
White	0.00%	0.11%	0.18%	0.15%	6.66
Multicultural	0.01%	0.07%	0.15%	0.14%	6.76

## Appendix A

### Imprisonment rates of U.S. residents, based on sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities, per 100,000 U.S. residents, by race or ethnicity, 2010–2020



Note: Jurisdiction refers to the legal authority of state or federal correctional officials over a prisoner, regardless of where the prisoner is held. Imprisonment rate is the number of sentenced prisoners under state or federal jurisdiction per 100,000 U.S. residents in a given category. Rates are for December 31 of each year and are based on prisoners with a sentence of more than 1 year. Resident population estimates are from the U.S. Census Bureau for January 1 of the following year. As of December 31, 2001, sentenced felons from the District of Columbia were the responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. See table 5 for rates.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks). See *Methodology*.

<sup>b</sup>Includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Federal Justice Statistics Program, 2020 (preliminary), National Corrections Reporting Program, 2019, National Prisoner Statistics, 2010–2020, Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2004, and Survey of Prison Inmates, 2016; and U.S. Census Bureau, postcensal resident population estimates for January 1 of the following calendar year.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice (Carson, 2021).



Apr 28, 2022 10:18:01 AM EDT

Richard Rogers  
Cr Just & Cons Sciences 141212

Re: Modification - 2022-191 Frames of Misinformation and Extremism

Dear Dr. Richard Rogers:

Youngstown State University Human Subjects Review Board has rendered the decision below for Frames of Misinformation and Extremism.

Decision: Approved

Findings: The researchers request to add an additional person to the previously approved project. This will not change the level of risk. Approved.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,  
Youngstown State University Human Subjects Review Board