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On the Reciprocal Nature of Active Publics in Divisive Social Issues:

Opinion Climate and the Road to Stalled Social Conversations

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Opinion Climate and the Road to Stalled Social Conversations

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE

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BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Jeong-Nam Kim, Chair

Dr. Sherri Irvin

Dr. Angela Zhang

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Abstract

This thesis investigated active publics' communicative course of action by evaluating variables such as individual ethical orientation and perceived opinion climate, providing insight on the justification of the communicative behavior. The Situational Theory of Problem Solving (STOPS) and the Communicative Action for Problem Solving model (CAPS) inquire about the *most* probable communicative action taken by the different ethical orientations – deontological and teleological. The study accounted for two types of public opinion perception bias –Hostile Media Perception and Projection Bias.

Besides public opinion, the study analyzed how different active publics communicate and interact and how ethical orientation comes into play. The results show that views expressed by or projected on the media influence more communicative action, while the opinion projected unto peers in one's circle tends to influence cross-interaction avoidance. The results suggest that, while there is a safer environment for information forwarding, under the same conditions, when communicative action increases, so does cross-interaction avoidance. Therefore, social conversations become more of a "give and give" dynamic instead of a dialogical "give and take" of information.

Ethical orientation shows significant influence on communicative action. The difference between deontologists' and teleologists' pathways to communicative action is a phenomenon practitioners need to observe when analyzing immediate or delayed actions of their target public.

Keywords: situational theory, ethical orientation, deontology, communicative behavior, publics, Black Lives Matter, cross-interaction avoidance

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Introduction

Digital platforms have become essential for 21st-century social movements (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016). The use of social networks and digital means augments the reality of social movements and counter-movements, as it provides a means for all voices to be heard (Gilboa, 2009); this enhancement of communication offers an opportunity to expand communications research in understanding if and how it changes behavioral dynamics of publics. Valentini and Edwards (2019) note that the margins of public relations broadened due to the greater visibility of the field. The scope grew beyond "its organizational origin" to incorporating a "much richer range of starting points for multi-faceted analyses of public relations" (p.195). The growth in the scope and scale of media also enables researchers to analyze the social universe (Kleineberg & Boguñá, 2014). Online social networks are reshaping the landscape of social interaction worldwide (Kleineberg & Boguñá, 2014). Researchers have focused on studying the semantics used by the movements (Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, & Dodds, 2018) and the scaling of social movements through social media (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016). This study seeks to contribute to investigating the effects and influence of digital media, combining theories and concepts to create a new analysis of public communicative behavior.

The differences between the opinion stances (Black Lives Matter vs. Blue Lives Matter/All Lives Matter) are the focus of analysis because the public opinion environment surrounding this issue presents itself to be very polarized (Rose, 2020). Communicative action about this issue is presumed to be of an internal debate nature for many individuals, as those who publicly supported either side of the discussion suffered some consequences (Way, 2020; Canales, 2020; Pietsch, 2020), thus involving many factors studied in public opinion and public

behavior theories (e.g., the spiral of silence premises and the situational theory of problem solving).

The study investigates the course of action of active publics by evaluating variables such as individual ethical orientation and their perceived opinion climate, which provide insight into the justification of the communicative behavior to analyze what possible variables affected the situation and thus could predict communicative action pathways. It does so by focusing on the narrative around the issues of race and police brutality in the U.S., which are incorporated in the Black Lives Matter Movement dynamics (Campbell, 2021; Emmanuel, 2021), and it investigates the communicative behavior online through the lenses of the communication theories. The STOPS theory and the CAPS model of public behavior inquire about the most probable communicative action taken by the different ethical orientations – deontological and teleological. The Situational Theory of Problem Solving (STOPS) and the Communicative Action for Problem Solving model (CAPS) are interconnected in that both set paradigms and levels of communicative action and public segmentation – they inquire about the reasons for behavior or the absence of such (Shim, Chung, & Kim, 2017). The spiral of silence is a classic theory in the field of communications. The way it sets the stage for understanding opinion perception (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) and its general assumptions of how some aspects of communicative behavior make it a key addition to this study.

This research has two outstanding focuses – it analyses communicative action and cross-interaction avoidance. Most studies of communication theories' application involve organizations or are investigated following a public-organization crisis model, tending to answer questions such as how to best manage an organization strategically amid a crisis/issue/problem. This study is focused on a socially controversial topic, how the publics holding different

opinions and dispositions would act towards the subject, and how they would interact with each other. Even though there is no direct line of organization-public analysis in this study, these observations are still crucial for organizations in the public, private, cultural, social, and governmental spheres. They can understand and plan for strategic positioning around issues that might not be caused by them directly but still call for action on their part. Understanding the amount and nature of communication behavior in theory and practice is essential. It allows communication professionals to comprehend and plan for who is likely to use or ignore any information provided (Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010).

Literature Review

This study is informed by many areas of literature. First, it describes all aspects of media perception needed for this analysis, and the second part focuses on the element of public segmentation and the pathways of communicative behavior. The review brings together communication theories, how they are situated in the digital sphere, what they imply about the behavior of publics, along with concepts they cover, all of which are crucial for this analysis. For better organization, this review is divided into the following sections: public segmentation, media perception, communicative behavior, ethics, and understanding of the social issue.

On Public Segmentation and Communicative Behavior

Publics – definition, and use in public relations

Before going through specifics on the situational theory, more should be described on the concept of publics in this research. The definition, or the debate to define publics dates decades ago, with Walter Lippman and John Dewey around the 1920s; both authors agree that multiple types of publics/groups "become active in situations where their self-interests (are) at stake" (Grunig & Kim, 2017, p. 01). Lippman and Dewey disagreed about the nature of said publics (expectators vs. actors). Expectators are passive takers of information. These are malleable consumers who can be influenced by the information put out by organizations (Grunig & Kim, 2017). This notion relates to the early stages of public relations (press agentry and public information). The denomination of the publics as *actors* assumes that they are active contributors to the information transmission process, relating to the two-way communications models in public relations. It also correlates to the notion of the publics as *problem solvers*, which is the basis of the situational theory of problem solving – which defines members of a public as those who use communication as an instrument to cope with their problematic life situations (Kim,

Grunig, & Ni, 2010). It is important to segment publics as they are motivated to communicate for themselves, communicate with similar individuals to form organized groups, and communicate with organizations to shape behavior or make demands (Grunig & Kim, 2017). Organizations must segment these groups to plan and strategize effectively.

Situational Theory of Problem Solving - theory of public segmentation

Public segmentation has been a critical concept in the field of strategic and crisis communication (Kim, Ni, & Sha, 2008; Kim, Ni, Kim, & Kim, 2012) as the stages of strategic management of public relations are defined by the publics (Kim, Ni, & Sha, 2008, p. 752). Segmenting publics is a necessary key step because it allows for a better and categorized understanding of communicative action. In strategic communication management, communicators need to "map out" the segments of the population (Kim & Ni, 2010) for better understanding and guidance on how to strategically communicate with prioritized publics (Kim, Ni, & Sha, 2008). The segmentation of publics in communication research has been approached in many different ways. For example, publics have been segmented in terms of interests and stake – internal and external publics (Koehler & Raithel, 2018), in terms of their different level of involvement – active, passive, and nonpublic (Kim & Krishna, 2014). In the social sphere, every strategic decision needs to account for the public's behavior to create practical solutions for the crisis and not the other way around. Hence, organizations must scan the environment, understand it, and identify the public who would influence the decisions and will be influenced by the decisions taken by the organization. The STOPS theory helps segment publics using situational variables.

The Situational Theory of Problem Solving (STOPS) extends from the situational theory of the public (Grunig, 1997). The STOPS theory contradicts the spiral of silence theory. STOPS

states that communicative behavior is situational rather than merely based on social pressure. The situational variables are problem recognition, level of involvement, and constraints recognition (Kim & Grunig, 2011). The STOPS theory also conceptualizes how the public is segmented in their likelihood of speaking out. These categories range from latent publics to active (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Active publics perceive a connection or high level of involvement with the problem at hand, recognize the problem, and do not feel constrained in contributing to the problem's solution. Aware publics are those who recognize the problem but have high constraints recognition. Latent publics have low problem recognition and high constraint recognition. Nonpublics do not have a relationship with the situation. For this analysis, the focus lies on the active publics. As Grunig and Kim (2017) describe, "members of an active public not only seek out information but also review, synthesize, and modify information and diligently propagate selected and digested information to others" (p.15). Active communicators tend to approach and avoid information by taking part in selection bias (Grunig & Kim, 2017). Hence this analysis focuses on active publics and counter publics.

The STOPS theory closely looks at "why and how one begins problem-solving efforts, and what communicative characteristics the problem solver will show during the problem-solving process" (Kim & Krishna, 2014, p. 92). The three variables that dictate the level of publics in this theory can be used together with the different communicative behaviors described in the CAPS model. The CAPS model is proposed to complement the STOPS theory to better represent the range of communicative behaviors that members of the public display (Kim & Krishna, 2014, p. 82). The aspects of the CAPS model become the dependent variable of the STOPS theory (Kim et al., 2010; Grunig & Kim, 2017).

Communicative Action for Problem Solving – communicative behaviors

In this study, communicative behavior is one of the critical concepts. Communicative behavior is a broad concept. Speaking, signaling, or transferring information can be categorized as communicative behavior. This research uses the communicative action for problem solving model (CAPS) to keep it specific and measurable. The CAPS model delineates three domains – information acquisition, selection, and transmission (Kim, Miller, & Chon, 2016), and from these domains, it denominates six behaviors – information seeking, attending, forefending, permitting, forwarding, sharing (Kim, Miller, & Chon, 2016). The three domains describe levels of passive and active involvement directly correlated to the segmentation of the denomination of publics from the STOPS theory. These different levels of communicative action make the CAPS model a more "holistic model of information behaviors when people encounter a problematic situation" (Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010). The CAPS model describes that active communication behavior spans more than active information consumption. Situation-specific behavior also includes the active selection and information transmission (Kim & Ni, 2010). This delineation in the CAPS model allows for a detailed examination of how variables (i.e., individual ethical orientation) influence communicative behavior at all these levels. These levels of communicative behavior are evaluated against other independent variables in this study.

It is essential to describe the three dimensions of behavior in the CAPS models since they can also be divided into more active and passive communicative behaviors. The model postulates that the more one commits to solving the problem, the more behaviors of acquiring information, the more selective dealing with said information, and the more transmissive of information one becomes (Kim & Krishna, 2014; Kim & Ni, 2010; Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010).

Information acquisition: This refers to the behavior of *information-foraging* (Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010, p. 130). Acquiring information happens actively and proactively (information seeking); or passively and reactively (information attending), when an individual gets information only from available and promptly accessible sources (Kim et al., 2010).

Information selection: There are many studies and concepts of information selection (selective exposure, selective bias, and many more). The CAPS model delineates two types of information selection behavior: information permitting, a passive act of selection, and information forefending, the active act of fending off certain information by being *systematic, specific,* and seeking *relevance* of the information (Kim, Grunig, & Kim, 2010, p. 136). While engaged in problem solving, individuals tend to create discriminatory rules to guide their judgments on which information will or will not be included (Kim, Grunig, & Kim, 2010). This filtering is essential to remember when discussing cross-public interaction, which is key to this general analysis.

Information transmission. Transmission is divided into two levels of activeness concerning how individuals transmit information. Information sharing is the passive, reactive level when an individual would only share information after being prompted (Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010). On the other hand, information forwarding describes individuals who would share information without being prompted first. An information *forwarder* proactively propagates their problem recognition and preferred way of problem solving (Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010, p. 139).

These communicative behaviors are essential because they categorize behavior into levels and stages. A criticism of the situational approach of segmentation and scanning publics for a specific issue is its dynamic nature; publics change, and so does their behavior over time. Situational approaches have greater utility (Kim, Ni, & Sha, 2008, p. 757) in an environment

with a fast flow of information and provide more chances to account for various variables and analyze communicative behavior at different levels. This study, for example, examines a very situational and dynamic, and some may call it a chronic issue. The situational scale allows for getting more substance into the observations.

Dialogue in Conflict Resolution. Before introducing the concept of cross-public interaction, it is crucial to describe the role of dialogue in conflict resolution. The dynamics of public-counter public communication can be analyzed through the lens of conflict resolution through dialogue as an attempt to explain why these conversations stagnate. Understanding dialogue in conflict resolution also adds to the explanation of communication as an action for problem solving. Dialogue is characterized as "communicative give and take**"** (Kent & Taylor, 1998 as cited in Paquette, Sommerfeldt, & Kent, 2015, p. 31). Social media allows everyone to participate in social conversations by posting their opinions, sharing, liking, and supporting similar opinions. How does this enhanced production and sharing of information become dialogue to resolve social issues? Eytan Gilboa (2009) states that this aspect of the media can help and hinder the dialogue for conflict resolution. In communications research, the concept of hot-issue public, a momentaneous public rising from increased media attention but dying down due to burnout, can be an example of how enhanced communications channels hinder the dialogue for conflict resolution. The phenomenon of hot-issue publics was investigated by Aldoory and Grunig (2012). They define a hot issue as "a problem that involves nearly everyone in the population and has received extensive media coverage" (p.93). The concepts of hot-issue publics and a hot issue are interdependent, as hot-issue publics arise only when a specific, and most times, chronicled problem starts to receive media coverage. Still, it disappears as soon as the issue also disappears from the media spotlight. Aldoory and Grunig

also describe why social conversations stagnate due to frustration and media burnout due to no solution being given to the problem. This study assumes that these conversations stagnate because the communication around the issue becomes more of a give-and-give dynamic rather than a give-and-take to form resolutions. Hence the conceptualization of cross-interaction avoidance.

Cross-interaction Avoidance

Active communicators also filter information in a way that follows ingroup vs. outgroup dynamics. Bennet and Iyengar (2008) also note that most media users would *very rarely* get themselves in the pathway of attitude-discrepant information, assuming that this behavior is not limited to media selection but social circles. The rift among different opinion groups increases. This research is based on the fact that acts of communication are being used for problem-solving. Therefore, we assume that cross-interaction between groups is vital to that effect. Otherwise, social conversations stagnate due to the burnout of involvement (Aldoory & Grunig, 2012).

Diving into the social theory of intergroup conflict is needed to situate the concept proposed in this study (cross-interaction avoidance). Communication varies as a function of the type of relationships in which individuals are involved (Gudykunst, Yoon, & Nishida, 1987). To help describe interactions, this research looks into Henri Tajfel and John Turner's social identity theory. In their discussions, these authors describe two extremes in human interaction dynamics – the *interpersonal* and the *intergroup (*Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The interpersonal extreme is the interaction between two or more individuals that is "fully determined" by their interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics, which is not affected by their social group dynamics. The other extreme is this vice-versa, specifically how two or more individuals or groups interact without affecting their interindividual personal relationships (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Social interaction works on these two extremes normally; in a way these two extremes are not always

mutually exclusive. Intergroups dynamics might be easier to divide for example the separation of political ideologies, of opposite cultures, interpersonal dynamics however, might be influenced by the group an individual belongs to, there might be cases where a republican might interact well with a democrat or people with different mindsets might still interact, but would avoid the conflicting subject . This analysis is directly focused on intergroup dynamics, as we are observing differences between two opinion groups. Recalling one of this research's main observations in analysis, the question of why social conversations stagnate can be given to the concepts of ingroup *versus* outgroup interaction or lack thereof.

Ingroup and outgroup interaction is a topic that has been investigated in different frameworks in communications, cultural variations, social cognition, and others (Gudykunst et al., 1987; Joyce & Harwood, 2014). This analysis predicts that an individual of a specific 'active' group will interact with their ingroups while filtering out the opposite. This translates directly to avoid taking part in sensible conversations with members of counterpublics. Polarization is a concept that has often been used to describe the opinion climate in the United States (Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, & Westwood, 2019). A reason behind this might be that the publics are focused on putting out argumentative information about their opinion stance more than they are on participating in dialogue – therefore, not having sustainable grounds for creating practical solutions or understanding the different causes for arguments. This increased cross-interaction avoidance contributes to how issues die over time, becoming chronic.

Following on the concept of hot issues, the process of social discussion may start as one that resembles dialogue, but it ends as two opposite parts talking and not listening much. The cycle continues to the same phenomenon described in Aldoory and Grunig (2012) in how the publics start to lose interest in the issue as time goes by and no (practical) solution is in sight.

After the peak of protests and media coverage in the summer of 2020, after the death of George Floyd, the commitment and allyship for the Black Lives Matter movement increased, but as the flame died down, so did the commitment of the people to support the cause (Williams, 2021). As this author further explains, this might be due to many factors going from fatigue and frustration to a growing backlash. The cross-public interaction this research proposes to analyze conceptualizes elements of exploratory conversations, understanding of the other side, and efforts to reach a consensus.

From what is described here about public, and communicative behavior, the following hypothesis is drawn for analysis:

- H1: Active publics about the BLM issue, irrespective of issue stance or status, will show more communicative action than passive groups when accounting for either hostile media perceptions or projection bias conditions.

On media perception

The Spiral of Silence

This study is centered on public opinion and the extent to which it influences communicative behavior. Even though this study only borrows the premises from the spiral of silence theory, it applies two more modern concepts to measure opinion perception. The two concepts (hostile media perception and projection bias) account for more modern aspects than the original spiral of silence premises. Nonetheless, these premises are still crucial to situate this study in the digital era. Noelle-Neuman (1974) states, “public opinion is a matter of speaking and of silence” (p.44), and it “claims to be authoritative” (p. 44). The spiral of silence theory refers to the individual’s willingness to expose himself as having an opinion that is different from what he considers to be the leading strain of opinion. Individuals often need to decide whether they want to express their judgment and choose what side of the social groups they want

to be on, and this decision can sometimes be a forced one; Noelle-Neumann (1974) states that "to the individual, not isolating himself is more important than his own judgment" (p. 43). Noelle-Neumann started studying the spiral of silence with five hypotheses at hand: (1) individuals assess the distribution and trend of the opinion; (2) the willingness to speak out varies according to this assessment; (3) from this, the individual soon realizes that the assessment of the distribution and the actual distribution of opinions are divergent; (4) if an assessment in the present is said to be positive or negative, the likelihood is that it continues to be in the future, though the intensity of the opinion may vary; (5) the extent to which an individual is willing to expose himself depends on the expectation of the future mainstream position. Moreover, she cites two factors that influence the willingness to speak out – (1) an individual's fear of isolation and (2) shaken self-confidence by the fact that an individual's own views are not confirmed by the majority or by the future forecast of the opinion. These factors create what Lang and Lang (2012) describe as a "self-reinforcing spiral of silence" (p. 370).

The Non-silence in the Digital Era. Computer or smartphone-mediated communication environments provide some user affordances that might strengthen their willingness to speak out, weakening the spiral of silence. Suler (2005) described some of these affordances in what he calls *the online disinhibition effect*. This non-pathological psychological stage can be benign or toxic. Suler explains that many factors contribute to it, including the fact that the online medium offers dissociative anonymity, invisibility, asynchrony, solipsistic introjection, dissociative imagination, attenuated status and authority, and individual differences factors that loosen some of the "repressive barriers" (Suler, 2005, p. 184). Over the years, researchers have applied the concepts of the spiral of silence and analyzed its assumptions. Chen Yang (2016) offers an overview of the spiral of silence in cyberspace research. Hsuan-Ting Chen (2018) analyses the

spiral of silence on social media and concludes that the effects of the spiral perpetuate only when there are high levels of disagreement and high probability of public exposure in the individual's network. Chen (2018) explains that the factor of *anonymity* is one of the variables they look for when considering expressing dissent to the mainstream opinion, and computer-mediated communication can sometimes offer that affordance. This way, the menace of being ostracized from their inner group is reduced. At times, social media provides a space for this, as Gearhart and Zhang (2015) evaluate the spiral of silence on social networking sites (SNS). Their study asserted that most aspects of the spiral of silence theory held up in SNSs, but a few required modifications.

Anonymity is an SNS characteristic that allows individuals to express their opinions even when incongruent with the majority. However, social media threatens to boost solidarity among a homogeneous group (Gearhart & Zhang, 2011, p. 211), meaning less cross-public interaction increases opinion polarization. Online and offline environments do not differ much in forming in-groups and selective exposure. Silence is still influenced by the "fear of others' reactions" (Gearhart & Zhang, 2011, p. 211). A digital environment provides a *curtain of protection* that may allow for a few things this thesis is investigating. Karpf (2012), as cited in Rim, Lee, and Yoo (2020), describes that the ability to communicate about an issue at low cost and with fewer geographic barriers enables the public to publicize their goals and establish a supportive network quickly. SNSs also allow people to engage in social conversations and advocate for the stance they support. In SNSs, individuals are likely to post an incongruent opinion but not respond to disagreeable posts (p. 211), which poses the question of whether social media aids the dialogue for the resolution of social issues.

Other studies have analyzed the theory's veracity in digital communication dynamics (Hakobyan, 2020; Chaudhry & Gruzd, 2020; Olson & LaPoe, 2018). These studies, however, suggest mixed results. Although the digital arena enhances information and opinion-sharing opportunities and provides a *safer* space for open and horizontal communication, the privatization of the arena shapes new rules and different forms of communication (Hakobyan, 2020, p. 19). These studies also suggest that communicative behavior depends on the social context to a greater extent than on the characteristics of the computer-mediated platform (Chaudhry & Gruzd, 2020; Sohn, 2019; Kayany, 1998), which supports the situational theory of problem-solving.

Anna Schulz and Patrick Roessler (2012) describe public opinion perception as subjective and describe two patterns of information selection by internet users. The *subjective-consonant pattern* of information filtering states that individuals turn attention "only to information supporting their own position" while actively avoiding dissonant content (Schulz & Roessler, 2012, p. 352). The *subjective-pluralistic pattern* assumes that individuals select consonant and dissonant information (Schulz & Roessler, 2012). The spiral of silence theory was based on an original context – digital media allowing for user content diffusion was not a variable. The internet and computer-mediated channels offer options that make the signals communicated by the individual's social environment stronger, more pluralistic, and more visible (Schulz & Roessler, 2012). It is crucial to attend to how individuals navigate the "information jungle" (Schulz & Roessler, 2012, p. 350) and how they make decisions according to that. Examining communicative behavior dependent on public opinion perception, in this case, is not complete without analyzing how individuals perceive their surrounding opinions.

Individuals observe two sources of public opinion climate – the mass media and the social environment (Schulz & Roessler, 2012, p. 346). These two aspects are being considered in this analysis by evaluating hostile media perception (what is the individual's perception of the media's opinion?) and projection bias (what is the individual's perception of the opinion of the people in their circle?). These cognitive behaviors can affect how people communicate within and across their public segment (Christen & Gunther, 2003). Hostile media perception and projection bias are variables of how individuals perceive media and public opinion and therefore act on it – key aspects of this study.

Hostile Media Perception and Projection Bias

Selection bias is an aspect that has been amply discussed in media studies. Individuals select input from the media and their social circle in a subjective way, creating inflation of their own perception. Individuals usually follow patterns of selecting consistent information based on their interests, favors, and needs (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008). The hostile media perception (HMP) concept has been used in literature of many different topics: political participation (Feldman, Hart, Leiserowitz, Maibach, & Roser-Renouf, 2017), partisanship (Kim, 2019), climate change (Hart, Feldman, & Leiserowitz, 2015). It states that individuals are likely to see *objective* and *balanced* news content but instead they interpret is as hostile toward their own opinion (Kim, 2019, Schulz & Roessler, 2012, p. 355). The hypotheses for HMP are as follows:

- H2.a: Those who perceive the media as having a similar opinion about the BLM issue as their own, irrespective of issue stance, will show more communicative action about the issue than those who perceive a counter opinion from the media.

- H2.b: Those who perceive the media as having a similar opinion about the BLM issue to their own, irrespective of issue stance, will show less cross-interaction avoidance than those who perceive a counter opinion from the media.

Projection bias is the "tendency to see one's own opinions as relatively common while viewing alternative opinions as less common" (Ross, Green, & House, 1977, as cited in Christen & Gunther, 2003, p. 415). This concept is closely related to the looking glass effect or the false consensus bias. Projection bias is the idea that if an individual is asked to estimate the opinion of others on an issue, the individual will rely on their own opinion, projecting it as the opinion of others. And this translates to the following hypothesis:

- H3.a: Those who project the same opinion about the BLM issue, irrespective of issue stance, will show more communicative action than those who project a counter opinion.
- H3.b: Those who project the same opinion about the BLM issue, irrespective of issue stance, irrespective of issue stance, will show less cross-interaction avoidance than those who project a counter opinion.

The perception aspect of both the hostile media perception and projection bias could translate to what Noelle-Neumann assumes of the spiral of silence concerning the perception of a dissonant opinion climate (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

On the Matter of Ethics

Deontology vs. Teleology – How Ethics Matter in Communicative Behavior

Ethics is now to be considered, adding to the understanding of decision-making for communicative action. The aspect of ethics has been analyzed in many domains – research, business, communications, and many others. Ethical attributes refer to attitudes and behaviors in

various contexts (Davis, 1994; Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2005). This paper's approach to ethics is closely connected to the use of ethics in the business sphere, as managerial models of ethical business operate under the belief that *conduct of business can and ought to support the social good* (Bartlett & Preston, 2000). This assumption is close to what this research is investigating – how two different ideas of what is *good* might influence an individual's communicative behavior amid polarized controversial social issues.

In business literature, ethics has been studied in different optics. Questions surveyed in the area range from how ethics influence purchasing behavior, brand perception, corporate social responsibility, business hypocrisy, and more (Whalen, Pitts & Wong, 1991; Shim & Kim, 2017). Analyzing ethical orientation in communicative behavior can help understand how the current generations make decisions. In a complex market such as today's social and business sphere, ethics also feature an essential part in attitude formation and can be considered a precursor to public communication with and behaviors toward firms (Shim & Kim, 2017). The same can be assumed of public behavior around social issues.

In order to have an effective focus and as a starting point, only two types of ethics will be used for this study: teleology and deontology. The individual ethical orientation concept refers to whether an individual decides on his actions as purpose-led (teleology) or duty-led (deontology). Individual ethical orientation influences whether individuals communicate. It suggests possible pathways to reach an end (communication for problem solving); in this case, communicative behavior in relation to Black Lives Matter and police brutality. The characteristics of individual ethical orientation are not always at the top of our minds when we are communicating, but they influence the ideals of individuals and how they act upon those.

Ethics has also been evaluated extensively in its relationship to strategic communications and business management (see Robin, Reindenbach & Forrest, 1996), which sets its relevance and applicability in understanding public communicative behavior. This year, at the 25th International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC), most papers presented had an aspect of the study of ethics, mainly how the public interprets organizations' ethics. The study of ethics in public relations is usually applied to study the implications of corporate social responsibility and corporate activism. This increased interest in researching ethics also contributes to the importance of this study with the added variable of the ethical orientation of publics.

Deontology. Deontology derives from the Greek words *deon = duty* and *logos = science,* meaning the study or science of duty. This type of ethics includes normative theories regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted concerning the individual's duty and what one ought to do (Alexander & Moore, 2020). In polarizing social conversations, we often notice a great deal of emotion and counterarguments; usually, what is more important for an individual (their duty or the consequence of their actions) prevails in dictating what action they take (Fritzsche & Oz, 2007). Individuals with deontological ethical orientation are guided by their duty; the ends do not weigh as much. When faced with a decision, they consult what they ought to do. This approach "ascertains the content of duty without considering the consequences of a particular way of acting" (Macdonald & Beck-Dudley, 1994).

Teleology. From the combination of the Greek *telos=end* and *logos=science,* teleology "emphasizes the outcomes over the process" ("Ethical Orientations: Teleology"). Sometimes called *consequentialism,* teleology defines the moral character of actions in terms of good or bad consequences ("Ethical Orientations: Teleology"). Individuals with a teleological ethical

orientation believe that unethical behavior is the one that produces further problematic situations. A BLM supporter with a consequentialist or teleological ethical orientation would support the movement because it would benefit society.

Teleologists and deontologists are not always the opposite; they differ in reaching a specific realization, plan, and timing and justification for action. Regarding human rights, deontologists can state that as we are all humans, it is our *duty* to treat all humans with the same respect, therefore aligning with the ideals of the Black Lives Matter movement, and they might support the protests. With regards to holistic social well-being, teleologists can state that the consequences that will come from having equality are good for society and might produce *more* good. Still, these might not support the protests taking place as these would cause disruptions (consequence). There are pro-BLM deontologists and teleologists, and the same for the counter-BLM issue stance.

Teleologists might not act toward defending their opinion because they might not consider their action as an (*immediate*) bringer of change. The issue is that ethical stance is personal, and as such, it depends on personal values, level of knowledge, experience, the magnitude of the problem, proximity, social environment, and immediacy (Black, Gardner, Pierce, & Steers, 2019). Because the definitions of duty and consequences are situational and individual, there might be outliers in terms of the results of this study. Nevertheless, we expect to see patterns between deontologists' and teleologists' ethical orientations. However, the road to making conclusive arguments about the influence of ethics requires more studies to attest to validity and consistency.

This research argues that individual ethical orientation should be another layer of reasons to consider when analyzing motivation to stand up and communicate. It hypothesizes that ethical

orientation guides action and may be a stronger predictor than public opinion perception (spiral of silence) and situational variables (STOPS). Since deontologists are guided by their duty, which might be of faster realization, and teleologists are guided by consequences/results and these requires more analysis, and a slower realization, the following hypotheses are then drawn:

- H4.a: Those who have a deontological ethical orientation, irrespective of issue stance, will show more communicative action than those with a teleological ethical orientation.
- H4.b: Those who have a deontological ethical orientation, irrespective of issue stance, will show less cross-interaction avoidance than those with a teleological ethical orientation.

On Understanding the Social Issue

Black Lives Matter – A Polarized Issue

The Black Lives Matter Movement is one of the social movements that gained momentum through social media (Altman, 2015). The BLM movement is a "hot topic of debate" in public and academic spheres (Tillery, 2019). The movement took as its cause dismantling the "residue of systemic racism" in the United States that "devalued the lives of African Americans" (Clayton, 2018, p. 449). In the movement's website "About" section, the mission is described as

> To eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives." (*About - Black Lives Matter*)

The movement was founded in 2013 in response to the murder of Trayvon Martin and the subsequent trial. The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation. Inc is a global organization in the U.S., U.K., and Canada (*About - Black Lives Matter*). Still, its boundaries go

beyond these three countries, and it is greatly aided by digital media, as it started as a Twitter hashtag (Rickford, 2015). The whole movement is a "confederation of local groups" (Altman, 2015) who advocate against discrimination against the black race in the United States and worldwide. Police brutality against black people is one of the leading social problems the movement deals with (Clayton, 2018).

Black Lives Matter vs. Counter movements. The movement once again became a spotlight conversation topic due to the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Gillian Bolsover (2020) describes the happenings in 2020 (the COVID pandemic and the events related to systemic racism) as issues associated with "opposite forms of individual political response" (p. 1). Many joined the conversation using the movement's hashtags as a social movement and aided by social media. At the same time, those who opposed the movement appropriated and deployed the movement phraseology for their own arguments (Ince, Rojas, & Davis, 2017). For example, #BLM and #BlackLivesMatter became #AllLivesMatter and #BlueLivesMatter. The debate around the movement is not mere phraseology but a demonstration of a struggle for power in controlling the discourse about this systemic issue of race and racism across the nation (Carney, 2016).

The polarizing narrative of Black Lives Matter vs. Blue Lives Matter arose and became the source of heated debate online (for further references and views about the All-Lives Matter and Black Lives Matter arguments consult Stollznow, 2021; Lopez, 2016; Victor, 2016). Before proceeding with our analysis, it is crucial to gather how opinion about the issue generally is around the United States. According to the Pew Research Center, the majority of the country's population supports the Black Lives Matter movement (Parker, Horowitz & Anderson, 2020).

This thesis includes two multifactorial analyses that bring together the concepts of opinion perception (spiral of silence), public communicative behavior (STOPS and CAPS), and ethics. These concepts are reflected in the set of hypotheses to analyze the variables of media perception (hostile media perception and projection bias), cross-public interaction (high and low), and individual ethical orientation (teleology and deontology).

RQ1: How does ethics influence communicative behavior amid a polarizing issue?

RQ2: Do the publics participate in conversations with their counter-publics?

RQ3: Why do social conversations stagnate?

RQ4: What is the preferred arena for these discussions? Online vs in-person

With the literature it can be summarized that the variables of issue motivation (active publics) deontologist ethical orientation and hostile media perception to be arouser of communicative action because these aspects are not directly connected to interpersonal aspects - the media being more digital, and deontologist and motivated public are driven by their problem recognition and their sense of duty. On the other hand, projection bias is considered a suppressor of communicative action, being a variable that accounts for interpersonal connection, depending on how the opinion is projected, this has more likeability of being a suppressor of communicative action. Hence, the interaction hypotheses include**:**

- H5.a: There will be an interaction effect, on communicative action, between issue motivation and hostile media perception. The more active and perceiving the media as favorable, the more communicative actions about the issue (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Hostile Media Perception).
- H5.b: There will be an interaction effect, on communicative action, between issue motivation and projection bias. The more active and projecting a similar opinion, the

greater communicative action about the issue (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Projection Bias).

- H5.c: There will be an interaction effects, on cross-interaction avoidance, between issue motivation and hostile media perception. The more active and perceiving the media as favorable, the less cross-interaction avoidance about the issue (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Hostile Media Perception).
- H5.d There will be an interaction effects, on cross-interaction avoidance, between issue motivation and projection bias. The more active and projecting a similar opinion, the less cross-interaction avoidance about the issue (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Projection Bias).
- H6.a: There will be an interaction effect, on communicative action, between ethical orientation and hostile media perception. The more the deontological ethical orientation and perceiving the media as favorable, the more communicative action (Interaction Effect: Ethical Orientation x Hostile Media Perception).
- H6.b: There will be an interaction effect, on cross-interaction avoidance, between ethical orientation and hostile media perception. Specifically, the more the deontological ethical orientation and a perceiving the media as favorable, the less cross-interaction avoidance (Interaction Effect: Ethical Orientation x Hostile Media Perception).
- H6.c: There will be an interaction effect, on communicative action, between ethical orientation and projection bias. The more the deontological ethical orientation and the projection of a similar opinion, the more communicative action (Interaction Effect: Ethical Orientation x Projection Bias).

- H6.d: There will be an interaction effect, on cross-interaction, between ethical orientation and projection bias. Specifically, the more the deontological ethical orientation and the projection of a similar opinion the less cross-interaction avoidance (Interaction Effect: Ethical Orientation x Projection Bias).
- H7.a: There will be a three-way interaction effect, on communicative action, among issue motivation, ethical orientation, and hostile media perception. Specifically, the more the situational motivation and deontological ethical orientation and perceiving the media as hostile, the more communicative action (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Ethical Orientation x Hostile Media Perception).
- H7.b: There will be a three-way interaction effect, on cross-interaction avoidance, among issue motivation, ethical orientation, and hostile media perception. Specifically, the more the situational motivation and deontological ethical orientation and perceiving the media as favorable, the less cross-interaction avoidance (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Ethical Orientation x Hostile Media Perception).
- H7.c: There will be a three-way interaction effect, on communicative action, among issue motivation, ethical orientation, and projection bias. Specifically, the more the situational motivation and deontological ethical orientation and projection of a similar opinion, the more communicative action (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Ethical Orientation x Projection Bias).
- H7.d: There will be a three-way interaction effect, on cross-interaction avoidance, among issue motivation, ethical orientation, and projection bias. Specifically, the more the situational motivation and deontological ethical orientation, and projection of a similar

opinion, the less cross-interaction avoidance (Interaction Effect: Situational Motivation x Ethical Orientation x Projection Bias).

Method

A survey is used to gather responses from a diversity of participants and allow for the collection of self-report data (Weigold, Weigold, & Russell. 2013). This study seeks to describe the current attitudes of publics and counter-publics surrounding the social issues, hence implementing a descriptive survey (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). Surveys allow us to reach participants in their "realistic settings" without geographical limitations and with low cost (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). Issues with self-reports are well documented, but their utility is clear, and the method is commonly used in social research (Hoskin, 2012).

G*Power was used to determine the needed sample size to figure the required sample to develop ANOVA tests accounting for the two conditions as fixed factors. The parameters were set with a medium to small effect size (f=0.25), alpha =0.05, and Power (1-β)=0.95, and a total of 210 (N=210) were required to test the two levels of the independent variable. When planning the study, a sample size of 500 was first collected.

Pilot study

It is still crucial to delineate the process of data collection and study design that produced the main study analyses being reported in this thesis. A pilot study was done prior which uncovered a few concerns, resulting in adjustments to the final study design. This first data collection was done via MTurk with a $1.00 incentive. A total of 456 responses were collected. After excluding incomplete and inconclusive entries, a total of 381 (N=381) was selected and segmented into active pro-BLM (N=256), active anti-BLM (N=23), and passive publics (N=102). We could be sure of the results comparing active and passive publics with these

numbers, but not much for the other hypotheses requiring a comparison of Pro-BLM and Counter-BLM public groups. The results of the pilot study are not wasted, as they helped determine that active publics will show communicative behavior (CAPS and cross-interaction avoidance).

Hypothesis 1, in this case, serves as a preliminary or confirming hypothesis since the situational theory establishes that active publics would show communicative action, and it has been observed many times in the literature and supported by the results of this pilot data collection. The difference between the groups was significant ($p<.001$). Active publics showed more communicative action ($M=4.0$) than did passive publics ($M= 3.02$) when accounting for both opinion perception factors (HMP and PB).

The main concern with this data collection was the unbalanced responses we got in segmenting publics; only 23 respondents were identified as anti-BLM, which is less than 10 percent of the amount identified as pro-BLM, which caused problems in running the analysis for the rest of the hypotheses. New measurements were needed to have a more balanced comparison. However, this difference could be analyzed from three points of view: (1) the sample was showing how social views are weighted realistically, turning back to the Pew Research survey that shows that most of the U.S. population is pro-Black Lives Matter (Parker et al., 2020); or (2) we are dealing with a case of social desirability bias. A combination of both factors is not to be disregarded. These factors are predominant problems with research using self-reporting methods as they confound research results by providing false or obscuring relationships between variables (Van de Mortel, 2008). (3) this study's data collection method is skewed to disproportionately recruit one group more than the other. This is also discussed further in the limitations of the study.

From the observations from the pilot study and feedback received at the 25th International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC), a few changes were made to address these problems, which included adding screening questions to the survey which included a short description of all issue stances. Publics were classified into active pro-BLM and active counter-BLM. The latter included those who supported the All Lives Matter and the Blue Lives Matter stances, instead of active and passive denominations. The variable of communicative action was divided to address information transmission behaviors – information forwarding and information sharing. The compensation was also adjusted to $1.25.

Instrument

The summation method was used to categorize participants' ingroups, which has been used in research related to the STOPS and CAPS, instead of one classification question with a yes/no answer. The survey used in this study is a multidimensional instrument. It includes questions on media perception, attitudes around the BLM issue, communicative behavior, and demographic questions to help understand the sample's situation. The questions included:

Screening questions: a set of screening questions were added to the beginning of the survey, with a brief stimulus explaining the origin of the BLM movement and the narrative of its counter-movements (All Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter). These questions allowed the analysis to segment participants into pro-BLM and counter-BLM groups.

STOPS – problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement were used to categorize the public into active pro-BLM and active counter-BLM. A set of questions that assess situational variables was adapted to the study problem and rated on a 5-point Likert scale. **Problem recognition:** Items measuring problem recognition ask individuals to answer their level of agreement about the following statements: this is a serious national problem; this problem should be dealt with more seriously by the government and related organizations; there

should be immediate efforts to resolve this issue in the U.S.; I believe people need to pay more attention to this problem. **Constraint recognition:** these items ask about individuals' perception of efficacy in acting towards the recognized problem. The government and related organizations will consider opinions from persons like me on the issue; I (my efforts) can help resolve the problem; I can make a difference in the way the problem is solved. **Involvement recognition:** items that measure how involved individuals are in the issue. The questions include: the issue is significantly related to me; the issue potentially affects my family members/friends; I am connected with the problem and its consequences; the issue has serious consequences for me and for someone I care about. Active publics show high problem recognition, high constraint recognition and high level of involvement.

Hostile media perception – observed how individuals perceived the media we combined two items using median split to determine individuals' perception of the media opinion: one asking the individual's own opinion, and the other asking about how they perceive the media's coverage of the subject, questions 4.1 and 4.2 in the survey, according to the participants answer to these questions they were categorized as perceiving the same or counter-opinion as the media.

Projection bias – a similar method used above was applied here but combining the individual's own opinion to the question of how they think or project their opinion unto others, questions 4.1 and 4.3 in the survey, according to the participants answers to these items they were categorized into projecting same or counter-opinion as their peers.

Individual Ethical Orientation (IEO) – To understand an individual's ethical orientation, questions asked participants about a scenario that is not connected to BLM since social desirability bias, the tendency for research subjects to give responses they deem are socially desirable, instead of the answers that reflect their true feelings (Grimm, 2010), is an

issue hard to control in studies such as this one. These questions were about a stimulus different from the BLM to avoid priming and sensitizing participants (Grimm, 2010; Nederhof, 1985; Moy & Murphy, 2016). The problem with social desirability bias is greater in studies involving socially sensitive issues (Grimm, 2010). Therefore, separating and prompting this section of the survey first would allow individuals to think about their personal opinions instead of their opinions about the Black Lives Matter movement. (α= .872).

Communicative action – To measure this variable, the questions asked about participants behavior. A few other situational statements are added to the survey to aid these preset variables, and statements from the CAPS model are also adapted to the problem of study to get insights into individuals' communicative behavior around the issue. These behaviors include information seeking, attending, forwarding, sharing, forefending, and permitting. To get more insight into communicative action, the results of CAPS were divided into information sharing (α=.813) and information forwarding (α =.830), which are information transmission behaviors. Sharing is a passive, reactive level when an individual only shares information after being prompted, and forwarding is an active way of transmitting information without being prompted first (Kim, Grunig, & Ni, 2010).

Cross-interaction Avoidance – This concept measures how the different publics interact (or not) with their counterparts. It is important to note that even though cross-interaction avoidance seems like a better way to conceptualize what is intended in this paper, when measuring avoidance, a mix of positive and negative items were used, later some were reverse coded to fit the same logic of measurement. A scale with different aspects of interaction preference were designed to see whether people feel more comfortable and/or are more likely to interact with those of the same ethnicity, same viewpoints, and same opinions as opposed to

other, accounting for the theory of social interaction and the concept of homophily, which is the tendency for individuals to communicate with those who are similar to them (McRcoskey, Richmond & Daly 1975; Ertug, Brennecke, Kovács & Zou, 2022). The items in the scale used a 5-point Likert scale, the set of questions include: I feel comfortable working with the same ethnic group (this item was reverse coded, to account for avoidance); I prefer to interact with those who have the same views as I have on the topic of race (this item was reverse coded); I would marry someone from a different ethnic group; I hesitate to express my honest views about racial issues because I fear that others might disagree with me; I would be surprised if a close relative of mine marries someone from a different ethnic group; When discussing an issue, I only try to convince others and my views do not change; I feel it is better not to discuss racial issues with different ethnic groups; I usually feel that my opinions are more persuasive than others' when discussing social issues. (α = .801).

Sample

The sample for the study was crowdsourced through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a tool that combines functions of recruitment, compensation, and data collection and is increasingly in use for social science research (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2016). The online survey is distributed through Qualtrics and distributed via MTurk. The prerequisites asked from the participants are: They must be 18 years of age or older, English speakers, residing in the United States. They must be aware of the happenings in the country, especially in the last decade at least. They must have the linguistic ability to understand the survey and communicate their answers to reduce Total Survey Error (TSE) (Moy & Murphy, 2016). A cash incentive of $1.25 was provided to each participant to enhance survey response rates (Millar & Dillman, 2011).

Sample Descriptive

The demographics of the sample were as follows: the highest percentage of participants were in the 18-29 years old category (N=245, 34.6%), followed by 30-39 years old (N=243, 34.3%), 40-50 years old (N=144, 20.3%) and 51 and older (N=76, 10.7%). According to gender, the sample had more males (N=418, 59%) than females (N=288, 40.6%); 0.4% were nonbinary or preferred not to answer. In ethnicity, the majority of the participants were Caucasian (N=515, 72.6%), followed by Asian or Asian American (N=60, 8.5%), Black or African American (N=57, 8%), Native American (N=46, 6.5%), Hispanic or Latino (N=30, 4.2%), the remaining .2% of participants are biracial and multiracial.

In terms of education and economic levels, the majority of participants hold a bachelor's degree (N=501, 70.9%). Others have completed a master's degree (N=163, 23.1%), associate's degree (N= 21, 3%), or some high school (N=13, 1.8%), and 9 (1.3%) participants have an education level higher than a master's degree. In terms of income levels, 36.7% (N=260) of participants earn between $46,000 - $60,000, 24.6% (N=174) earn between $31,000 - $45,000, 12.9% (N=91) earn $16,000 - $30,000, 12.4% (N=88) earn $61,000 - $75,000, 10.6% (N=75) earn $71,000 or more, 2.8% (20) earn $15,000 or below.

The survey also accounted for political affiliation. 35.1% (N=247) identify themselves as democrats, followed by republicans (N=132, 18.8%), socialists (N=113, 16.1%), and libertarians (N=87, 12.4%). 17.8% (N=125) answered "do not know."

Study 1

Design

Study 1 uses two 2x2 factor analyses. It observes hostile media perception and projection bias as independent variables and communicative action, and cross-interaction avoidance are the dependent variables.

- Hostile media perception: 2 (active public pro-BLM, active counter-BLM) x 2 (same-opinion perception, counter-opinion perception).

From the sample, 326 participants perceived the media to be of same opinion, and 364 participants perceived the media as counter opinion. 531 participants were active counter-BLM, and 164 were active pro-BLM.

- Projection bias: 2 (active pro-BLM, active counter-BLM) x 2 (same-opinion projected, counter-opinion projected).

From the same sample, 352 participants projected same opinion, and 343 projected a counter opinion. . 531 participants were active counter-BLM, and 164 were active pro-BLM. For study 1, demographic and psychographic variables such as age, education, political ideology, gender, and income were analyzed as covariates to get insights into their significance when comparing the groups. In the cases any are significant, details follow in the results section.

Results

The first step was to segment the survey participants into groups. These will be mentioned as pro-BLM and counter-BLM (those who support the All Lives Matter or the Blue Lives Matter movement). Segmenting participants in groups was the most challenging thus far. From the 1301 registered responses on the Qualtrics survey, 753 (N=753) entries were considered for the operational data. For an ANCOVA test, cases are excluded analysis by analysis (Cronk, 2019). For an entry to be entered into the analysis, participants must have

answered all questions used in the analysis. Both study 1 and study 2 used the same sample. According to completion of responses the sample decreased to 695 (N= 695) entries used in study 1. The statistical test used throughout studies 1 and 2 is a two-way between-subjects ANCOVA, also called factorial ANCOVA, which determines whether there is an interaction effect between two or more independent variables (*Two-way ANCOVA in SPSS statistics*). A benefit of using factorial ANCOVA is that it provides a source table that presents each variable's effect and all independent variables' interaction effects. It also provides the results for all of the control variables, in this case, education, income, race, police ideology, and age, making it practical for this analysis.

Communicative action

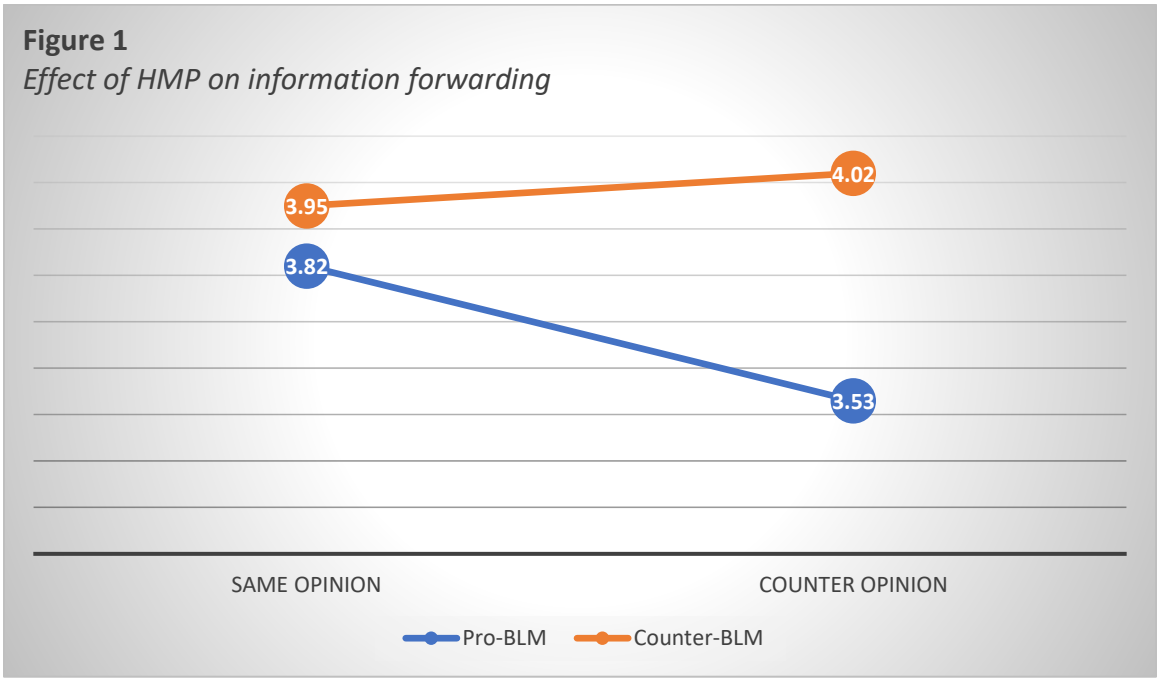
The analysis of communicative action considered the behavior of information transmission (information forwarding – active behavior, and information sharing – a more passive behavior). This study was designed as such because, among information acquisition, selection and transmission accounted for on the CAPS model, the latter is most closely connected to interaction within and between groups.

A two-way between-subjects ANCOVA was performed to determine if pro-BLM and counter-BLM publics differ in communicative action after the different conditions of opinion climate (HMP and PB) were accounted for.

Hostile media perception. Information forwarding was significantly different between hostile media perception conditions ($F(1,680) = 20.93$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .030$). For counter-BLM publics, there was a slight increase in information forwarding in the situation where they perceived the media to be of the same opinion as their own (M=3.95, SD= .71), as compared to the situation where they perceived the media to be counter to their own (M= 4.02, SD=.73*)*. On

the other hand, there is a decrease in information forwarding for pro-BLM publics when the media was perceived to have the same opinion as their own (*M*=3.82, *SD*=.65*)* as compared to when they perceived the media to have a counter opinion (*M*=3.53, *SD*=.93*)*. Information sharing in this condition was not significantly different between the hostile media perception conditions (F(1,680) =1.68, *p* =.195, partial η^2= .002). Information sharing, as defined before, is a passive and reactive level of individual information transmission (Kim et al., 2010); this requires the individual to be prompted, which implies a certain interaction. At this stage, seeing it showing no statistical significance might also contribute to the assumption of this study, i.e., individuals are not interacting, or they are sharing very little information. Factors of age, political ideology, income, gender, race, and education did not show significance for either HMP or PB.

Figure 1
Effect of HMP on information forwarding



H2.a is partially supported by this analysis, as the groups show different communicative action tendencies by stance. Counter publics showed more communicative action, both information sharing and information forwarding, when they perceived the media as counter opinion. Which also calls the assumption of the spiral of silence to cause, as in this case, counter-

BLM publics, which according to the Pew Research Center, are the minority opinion in this case (Parker et al., 2020). As a seen minority and perceiving the opinion of the media as opposite of their, it is then predicted that they would show less communicative action. In this case, willingness to speak up might be more connected to situational variables other than to the projection of opinion. This observation might also briefly connect to flaming tendencies and online communication dynamics. From those, two questions arise: (1) how do the different publics share content? There might cases of forwarding the counter-opinion information with counterarguments and flaming statements against that point of view; (2) where are people forwarding information? This information sharing might be happening in the digital sphere. Literature calls for different affordances for minority opinion groups in digital environments *versus* presential (Suler, 2005). Digital means offer more assurances and sometimes anonymity to the information forwarder. Further into the discussion of results, it is described how participants prefer to have these social conversations (in-person vs online), and most responded said to prefer an online discussion when dealing with the BLM issue. More on this is explained in study 2 as well.

Projection Bias. The findings for projection bias were not statistically significant either for information sharing ($F(1,685) = .516$, $p = .473$, partial $\eta^2 = .043$), or for information forwarding behaviors ($F(1,685) = 3.36$, $p = .067$. partial $\eta^2 = .005$). Therefore, we cannot say that the observed mean differences were not due to chance. **H3.a** is thus not supported by the analysis due to the lack of statistical significance, meaning that projection bias does not affect communicative behavior. However, the original assumptions would predict a significant relationship between projection bias and communicative behavior, specifically information

sharing. Further research should expand this section in any future research about projection bias and CAPS.

Cross-interaction avoidance

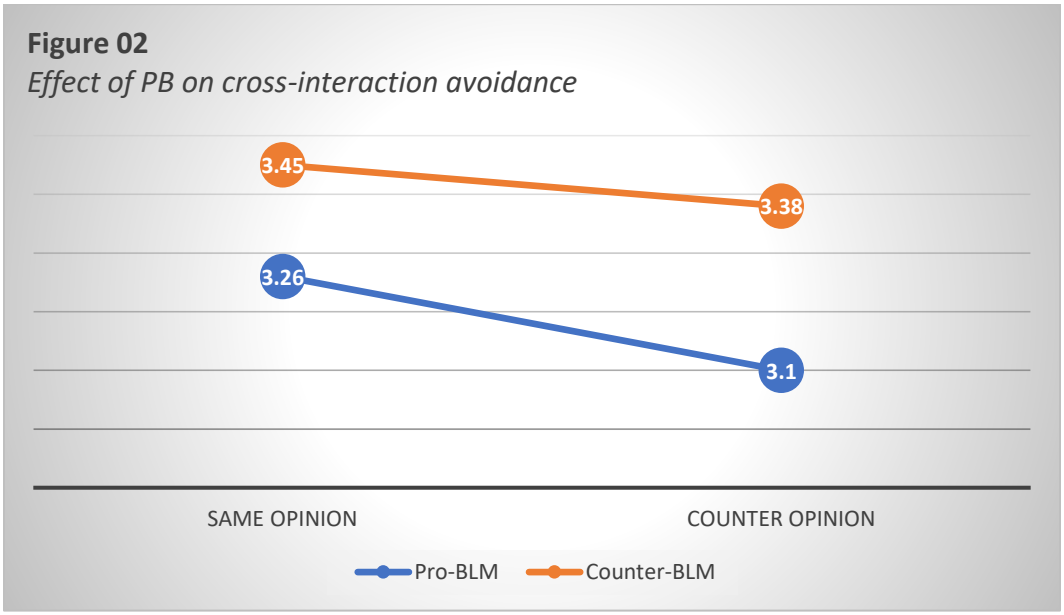
Hostile Media Perception. Cross-interaction avoidance was not significantly different between the groups in the different hostile media conditions (F(1,680)= .429, *p*=.513, partial η^2= .001), meaning that media perception did not influence cross-interaction avoidance. **H2.b** is then rejected as cross-interaction was not statistically significant in thi case, meaning we cannot infer that the results observed were not due to chance. In this condition, the factors of age (p=.04, $\eta^2 = .006$) and political ideology (*p*=.006, $\eta^2 = .011$) were significant for cross-interaction avoidance.

Projection Bias. Cross-interaction avoidance was significantly different between the groups in the different projection bias conditions (F(1,685)= 9.147, *p*=.003, partial η^2= .013). It is important to mention again that the items for cross-interaction avoidance were flipped in the survey. The questions were worded positively (instead of asking participants whether they avoided interacting with certain groups, the questions asked them whether they would interact with these groups). The cross-interaction avoidance items measure individuals' preferences by asking questions about whether they prefer or not to interact with people who share their same opinions. Therefore, the higher the mean value, the more cross-interaction avoidance behaviors individuals show. There is a slight increase in avoidance behaviors as the condition of projection bias changes. Counter-BLM groups interact more when they project that their peers have the same opinion (*M*=3.45, *SD*=.41*)* and interact less with people with a counter opinion (*M*=3.38, *SD*=.43*)*. The same is observed for the pro-BLM group. There is more interaction with the same

opinion peers (*M*=3.26, *SD*=.49) and opposite interaction tendencies when they project their peers/citizens have a counter opinion (*M*=3.10, *SD*=.44).

Figure 02

Effect of PB on cross-interaction avoidance



H3.b is then accepted, as projection of counter-opinion leads to increased cross-interaction avoidance. The effect size of projection bias in cross-interaction avoidance is large (partial η^2= .013). Another factor that should be looked further into in future research paths is the factor of political ideology (*p*=.001, $\eta^2 = .015$).

One reason for the different results when accounting for hostile media perception and projection bias might be the interpersonal side of the concept of cross-interaction, which involves any kind of interaction with a *person* from another opinion group. When people disagree, it is easier to respond to them directly, have a conversation, or actively stop interacting with them. When the media *disagrees*, there might not be a direct target for conversations or much that an individual can do besides forwarding that information with or without added arguments. This might explain why cross-interaction was not significant when accounting for hostile media perception. Information sharing and cross-interaction avoidance are connected in that both imply a kind of interaction. In cases where avoidance is high, there is no information sharing.

Analysis of interaction effects

Interaction between issue motivation and hostile media perception on information forwarding was statistically significant ($F(1,680)= 6.59$, $p= .010$, partial $\eta^2= .010$). This interaction was not significant on information forwarding ($F(1,680)= 3.22$, $p=.073$, partial $\eta^2= .005$). **H5.a** is partially supported, as significant interaction was found when analyzing information forwarding, but not information sharing.

There was no interaction between projection bias and issue motivation on information forwarding ($F(1,685)= .889$, $p=.346$, partial $\eta^2=.001$). There was also no significant interaction between projection bias and issue motivation on information sharing ($F(1,685) = .101$, $p=.750$, partial $\eta^2=.000$). **H5.b** is thus rejected. Projection bias and issue motivation do not interact in influencing information sharing (H2.a).

For cross-interaction avoidance, there was no interaction between issue motivation and hostile media perception ($F(1,680)=.187$, $p=.666$, partial $\eta^2=.000$) or between issue motivation and projection bias ($F(1,685)=.534$, $p=.465$, partial $\eta^2=.001$). **H5.c** and **H5.d** are thus rejected as well. Neither the interaction between issue motivation and projection bias nor between issue motivation and hostile media projection influences cross-interaction avoidance.

Study 2

Design

Like study 1, this part of the study also includes two analyses accounting for the different opinion perceptions. Ethics (deontology, teleology) and opinion perception (HMP and PB) are the observed independent variables, and communicative action and cross-interaction avoidance are the dependent variables.

- Hostile media perception: 2 (active public pro-BLM, active counter-BLM) x 2 (deontology, teleology) x 2 (same opinion perception, counter-opinion perception)

From the sample, 311 were teleologists and 379 were deontologists; 326 perceived the media as same opinion and 364 perceived the media as counter opinion.

- Projection bias: 2 (active pro-BLM, active counter-BLM) x 2 (deontology, teleology) x 2 (same opinion projection, counter-opinion projection).

From the sample, 311 were teleologists and 379 were deontologists, 352 projected the same opinion and 343 projected a counter opinion. Besides analyzing for the independent variables, the demographic and psychographic variables of age, education, political ideology, gender, and income were analyzed as covariates as well, and were analyzed where they showed statistical significance.

Results

Study 2 adds the variable of ethical orientation to the analysis. Study 1 established the effects of opinion perception. The next step is to examine how different ethical orientations affect communicative behavior. A three-way between-subjects ANCOVA was performed to determine if pro-BLM and counter-BLM publics differ in communicative action after different conditions of opinion climate (HMP and PB) are accounted for. For an entry to be entered into the analysis, participants must have answered all questions required for the analysis, hence the sample reduced to 690 (N=690) used in study 2.

Communicative action

Hostile Media Perception. The results show that ethical orientation was significantly related to information forwarding ($F(1,676)=6.59$, $p=.011$, partial $\eta^2 = .010$). The groups showed

significant differences when accounting for hostile media perception. The means are seen in the table below.

Table 01
Effect of ethical orientation on information forwarding

GROUPS	Ethical orientation	Hostile Media Per.	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Counter-BLM	Teleologists	Same opinion	3.80	.84	110
		Counter opinion	3.84	.82	110
	Deontologists	Same opinion	4.07	.59	149
		Counter opinion	4.15	.63	159
Pro-BLM	Teleologists	Same opinion	3.69	.70	36
		Counter opinion	3.61	.99	55
	Deontologists	Same opinion	3.99	.58	31
		Counter opinion	3.42	.87	40

The source table above shows that deontologists show more information forwarding behaviors for both issue stance groups, even though they also showed a decrease in sharing behavior as the projected opinion of the media was counter to their own. Ethical orientation was not significantly related to information sharing when accounting for hostile media perception (F(1,676)= 3.51, p=.061, partial η^2= .005).

Projection Bias. The results show that ethical orientation was significantly related to information forwarding (F(1,681)=6.08, p=.014, partial η^2= .009). The groups showed significant differences when accounting for issue projection bias. Ethical orientation was, however, not significantly related to information sharing (F(1,681)=3.63, p=.057, partial η^2=.005).

Table 02

Effect of ethical orientation on information forwarding

GROUPS	Ethical orientation	Projection Bias	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Counter-BLM	Teleologists	Same opinion	3.90	.74	112
		Counter opinion	3.73	.91	107
	Deontologists	Same opinion	4.18	.56	173
		Counter opinion	4.02	.67	139
Pro-BLM	Teleologists	Same opinion	3.61	.90	40
		Counter opinion	3.64	.87	53
	Deontologists	Same opinion	3.77	.73	27
		Counter opinion	3.6	.85	44

These analyses partially support **H4.a**, which states that those who identify as deontologists would show more communicative action. The question now becomes why the results differ in significance for information forwarding and sharing behaviors. Information forwarding was statistically significant for both hostile media perception and projection bias; meanwhile, information sharing was not significant in both conditions.

Cross-interaction avoidance

When accounting for hostile media perception, ethical orientation was not significantly related to cross-interaction avoidance ($F(1,676)=.158$, $p=.691$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$). Nor was it significantly related to cross-interaction avoidance when accounting for projection bias ($F(1,681)=.125$, $p=.724$, partial $\eta^2 = 000$). **H4.b** is therefore not supported.

The lack of significance or coherence in these results might be due to social desirability bias confounding the effects. It also calls for revision of the items measuring cross-interaction avoidance to account for the magnitude of interactions. Magnitude would include interaction at

the personal level (friends, family), at the professional level (coworkers, employers, employees, etc.), and there would also be questions of online cross-interaction. This study asked questions about preferred communication channels (in-person *vs.* online). The results showed that 66.8% of participants stated that they would prefer an online discussion about this issue rather than face-to-face discussions; 69.5% of participants agreed that they would express their opinions about the matter better in an online discussion or through texting; 65.2% agreed that online discussions are a better ground for discussion about this issue, and 69.4% agreed that social media allows them to express their opinions about the issue freely. This thesis also asks how communication in the digital world became more of a "give and give" dynamic instead of a "give and take" of information. Individuals participate in online discussions more, which can be impersonal and lead to passive engagement (Plumridge, 2020). Therefore, they might not be counting these actions as interactions. It is also crucial to consider the absence of dialogue in online discussions seeking clarification and understanding opinions. The results can be summed up to conclude that individuals are communicating more, but at the same time, they are avoiding counter opinions more. In answering a key research question for this study, it can be concluded that this lack of "give and take" of information leads social conversations to stagnate after some time. The question now becomes – how long do these conversations last and how do they usually work?

Analysis of interaction effects

There is not a significant interaction between ethical orientation and hostile media perception on information forwarding ($F(1,676)=2.667$, $p=.103$, partial $\eta^2=.004$). No significant interaction was found in information sharing either ($F(1,676)=.779$, $p=.378$, partial $\eta^2=.001$). No significance was found on the interaction between ethical orientation and projection bias in either

information forwarding (F(1,681)= .300, p= .584, partial η^2=.000) nor information sharing (F(1,681)=.351, p=.554, partial η^2=001).**H6.a** and **H6.c** are then rejected. The same was true when analyzing ethical orientation and hostile media perception on cross-interaction avoidance (F(1,676)=1.254, p=.263, partial η^2=.002). And significance was not found in the interaction between ethical orientation and projection bias either (F(1,681)= 3.458, p=.063, partial η^2=.005). **H6.b** and **H6.d** are then rejected.

The three-way interaction effect among issue motivation, ethical orientation, and projection bias on information forwarding was not significant (F(1,681)=.316, p=.574, partial η^2=.000). The same was true for information sharing (F(1,681)=.818, p=.366, partial η^2=.001). The same was seen when analyzing projection bias. Not significance was found in either information forwarding (F(1,681)=.316, p=.574, partial η^2=.000). **H7.a** and **H7.c** are then rejected.

The three-way interaction effect among issue motivation, ethical orientation, and projection bias on cross-interaction avoidance was not significant (F(1,681)=1.122, p=.290, partial η^2=.002). The same is true when accounting for hostile media projection in this case (F(1,676)=.887, p=.347, partial η^2=.001). **H7.b** and **H7.d** are then rejected. Ethical orientation did not show interaction with any of the variables included in this analysis.

The combination of all observations in study 1 and 2 serve to answer the three research questions established in this research. **RQ1**: How does ethics influence communicative behavior amid a polarizing issue? Deontologists show more fervent communicative behavior than teleologists. Further and longitudinal analyzes are needed to examine how teleologists behave since the literature review points out that teleologists will have a delayed response ("Ethical Orientations: Teleology"). **RQ2**: Do the publics participate in conversations with their counter-

publics? The answer is no. The analysis points out that, in general, the public will avoid their counterparts, even with an enhanced environment that allows for more posting/sharing/forwarding of information and also allows for anonymity and distance; the communicative process online is very impersonal and of a passive engagement nature (Plumridge, 2020). **RQ3**: Why do social conversations stagnate? Further research is needed to provide a complete answer to this item but connecting to the research on hot-issue publics (Aldoory & Grunig, 2012), the lack of dialogue and delayed or never-arriving solutions contributed to the stagnation of social conversations. The heightened information forwarding capacities and no interaction with other opinions, described in research question two, can be called as opinion dumping. All opinions are posted online, and individuals do not engage in discussions, hence social conversations do not move forward. **RQ4:** What is the preferred arena for these discussions? Online vs in-person

Discussion

This thesis analyzed the relationships between ethical orientation and communicative behavior, and in so doing, it accounted for many variables of public opinion and activity. There were some expectations from the drawing board of the study. However, many of the questions were unanswered until running the pilot analysis and collecting new data. After the main analyses more research questions rose and will be discussed in the future research section. This was an insightful process, and I would like to highlight some of the findings in this section.

Some of the most important results of this study are the difference between perception of the opinions of media vs. peers/citizens and how these perceptions affect communicative behavior differently. The results were corroborating of the Edelman Trust Barometer, which states that in the issue of race peers are more influential in shaping individuals' views on racism

("Special Report: Brands and Racial Justice in America"). This insight is essential to practitioners, not just those in social or governmental institutions, in that more emphasis should be given in connecting with their public through community leaders/influencers more than the media or press releases as a better way to start conversations. Another significant insight was the added variable to communicative behavior – ethics. Understanding the difference between deontologists and teleologists provides insights into how fast or how aggressively people will come to the defense of their ideals. Those who work with any aspect of public management must understand their targeted audience's psychographics. Ethical orientation should be part of this same psychographics in understanding the public. More research in public ethics is needed.

This study also looked at the spiral of silence *versus* situational circumstances affecting communicative behavior. It was analyzed through the literature review, and the observations showed that in this case, those in the minority opinion group also showed communicative action, even though the channels and interactions of communication afforded them more protections than the ones accounted for in the original spiral of silence (Noelle-Neuman, 1974, Suler, 2005).

In the digital age, no organization, public figure, or strategic communicator can escape the trial of public opinion; therefore, studies that help understand it, follow its cycle, and predict trends are of crucial need.

Study 1 results show a significant relationship between media perception and information forwarding—counter-BLM publics forward more information when they perceive the media to be of counter opinion to their own. Projection bias did not influence communicative behavior in this sample, but it did influence cross-interaction avoidance. It can be stated that the more media and individuals consume, from both sides of an opinion, the more information they forward. Still, at the same time, these individuals do not participate in the exchange of information (no

significant information sharing, high cross-interaction avoidance). These results are confirming of homophily.

Study 2 shows that ethics influenced information forwarding behavior. Deontologists showed more communicative action than their counterparts. Ethics did not influence cross-interaction avoidance. The results of studies 1 and 2 show that the spiral of silence persists in inter-personal environments. Individuals are not speaking up with each other; they are forwarding their views via digital channels on the internet without much dialogue or exchange, making the current arena for communications counterproductive due to the lack of true interaction.

Limitations and Future Research

This survey study has shortcomings. The main concern for this study was the unbalanced responses received in qualifying the publics as either pro or counter the social issue. Surveys pose a problem in that there is no control over what an individual knows about the issue. However, a survey would still allow for gathering insights and drawing hypothetical designs and conclusions about the influence of individual ethical orientation. Due to the personal aspect of the study of ethical orientation and communicative action, it would be a better pathway to pursue longitudinal research and in-depth interviews or establish better causation/relationship between the variables. Attitudes change circumstantially, and this study uses one survey at a specific time; future research should use a combination of methods to get more insights. Surveys and interviews should be used in a longitudinal study that would follow an issue from the beginning of the spotlight discussions to the period the discussions reach a low level. A longitudinal study would help design the cycle of social conversations and hopefully add to the question of why

social conversations stagnate and provide insight that helps organizations navigate polarized public opinion.

Social desirability bias, the tendency participants have to present a favorable image of themselves (Johnson & Fendrich, 2005), is one confounding variable that lingers around topics of a heavy polarized nature, such as Black Lives Matter vs. Blue Lives Matter. As more research is done about the relationship of the variables in this study or any that presents a social issue, more ways to account for social desirability bias should be implemented, perhaps by using a scale that detects this bias (Van de Mortel, 2008, Randall & Fernandes, 1991).

Future research should also analyze an issue parallel to the news cycle duration. The factor of political ideology and cross-interaction avoidance should be researched further, as ideology was significant in every condition analyzed for cross-interaction avoidance.

When comparing deontologists to teleologists, this study falls short in describing these groups' specifics. Practitioners need to know who, among their target audience, is more likely to identify with either of these ethical orientations. Future research should look into describing and segmenting ethical orientations. A balanced purposed sample could be the way to achieve similar variances that would allow for comparison. A sample with a roughly equal number of participants in the issue stances, would allow for answers on the likelihood of an issue stance to identify as one ideology over another.

The study of public ethical orientation should combine multidisciplinary discussion. Adding a multi-focus and a review based on many disciplines to the growing theories of communicative behavior in divisive social issues would expand the interpretation of results and variables to analyze. This study established already in the overview and through the literature review that the changes in the capacity of information technology influence social dynamics.

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Appendix

Survey
Public behavior Social issues

Start of Block: Consent

Q1.1 I am **Imaculada Adolfo** from the Journalism and Mass Communication Department of the University of Oklahoma and I invite you to participate in my research project entitled **how active publics comment on divisive social issues**. This research is being conducted at Qualtrics and being broadcasted through Amazon MTurk. You were randomly selected as a possible participant because you are residing in the United States. You must be at least 18 years of age, you speak, read, and understand English to participate in this study.

Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions that you may have BEFORE agreeing to take part in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? The purpose of this research is to understand how different publics respond to socially divisive issues online and the likelihood of they expressing the same opinion in an in-person environment.

How many participants will be in this research? About 2000 people will take part in this research.

What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will answer questions about your opinion and attitudes about three topics:
- Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US
- Issue 2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants)
- Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions

How long will this take? Your participation will take approximately 45 minutes.

What are the risks and/or benefits if I participate? There are no risks and no benefits from being in this research.

Will I be compensated for participating? You will be reimbursed for your time and

participation in this research. Participants will receive their due compensation of $1.25 through the MTurk within two days after they complete the survey. In order to get compensation, you must enter the ***completion code*** at the end of the survey.

Who will see my information? In research reports, there will be no information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records. Data are collected via an online platform not hosted by OU that has its own privacy and security policies for keeping your information confidential. Please note no assurance can be made as to the use of the data you provide for purposes other than this research.

What will happen to my data in the future? After removing all identifiers, we might share your data with other researchers or use it in future research without obtaining additional consent from you.

Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

Who do I contact with questions, concerns or complaints? If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at imaculada.adolfo-1@ou.edu or my advisor, Dr. Jeong-Nam Kim at stops@ou.edu.

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

Please print this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher(s), I am agreeing to participate in this research.

This research has been approved by the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus IRB. **IRB Number: 13788 Approval date: 11/13/2021**

- ○ I agree to participate (1)
- ○ I do not want to participate (2)

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Instructions

Q2.1 The Black Lives Matter movement began in 2013 and emerged into national prominence in 2014 after the deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York City, at the hands of police. The movement has grown worldwide, particularly after the 2020 police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Many supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement believe that excessive police force is used against black people due to systemic racism. Protests against police brutality and systematic racism have occurred across the US and around the world.

The slogan "All Lives Matter" appeared in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. The slogan is often used by those who interpret "Black Lives Matter" to mean that 'black lives matter more than others' or 'only black lives matter.' While some view "All Lives Matter" as an inclusive phrase, others believe it provokes conflict and causes confusion in discussions about race and justice.

Blue Lives Matter is a pro-police movement that has risen in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. Blue Lives Matter is in support of law enforcement and disapproves of the anti-law enforcement sentiment that has increased since the death of George Floyd.

Q2.2 Please select the statement that best describes your stance

- ○ I am a Black Lives Matter supporter. (1)
- ○ I am a Blue Lives Matter supporter. (2)
- ○ I do not support either movement or have no opinion about this issue. (3)
- ○ I support both Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter equally. (19)

Q2.3 How do you feel about the Black Lives Matter movement?

- Strongly oppose (1)
- Somewhat oppose (2)
- neither oppose nor support (3)
- Somewhat support (4)
- Strongly support (5)

Q2.4 How do you feel about the All Lives Matter movement?

- Strongly oppose (1)
- Somewhat oppose (2)
- neither oppose nor support (3)
- Somewhat support (4)
- Strongly support (5)

Q2.5 How do you feel about the Blue Lives Matter movement?

- Strongly oppose (1)
- Somewhat oppose (2)
- neither oppose nor support (3)
- Somewhat support (4)
- Strongly support (5)

End of Block: Instructions

Start of Block: Individual ethical orientation

Q3.1 Please read the following passage and answer the questions.

Assume that you own about 1000 stocks for a consumer goods manufacturer named HUMAN-TECH. Please read the following information about the company and answer the corresponding questions.

Successful market performance of HUMAN-TECH

HUMAN-TECH has grown continuously over the last 10 years. This business growth has allowed the stock value to increase about 30% every year. Because the firm's services and products are more reasonably priced and of higher quality than competing services and products, the company will likely boast further increasing sales in the next 3-5 years.

However, HUMAN-TECH has been criticized for making contracts with factories in developing countries with poor working conditions, exploiting cheap overseas labor. Employees in those factories often work excessive overtime and are forced to stand for up to 24 hours. Also, it is alleged that the firm's suppliers wrongly dispose of hazardous waste, and two explosions last year killed four people and injured more than 150.

The following statements ask about your opinion regarding the above case. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Strongly disagree – Strongly agree)



Q3.2 I feel that the company HUMAN-TECH has no reason to worry about the critics of its management as long as it continues its success

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)



Q3.3 I believe it is more important for a business to be concerned with successful outcomes than the means to achieve those outcomes.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)



Q3.4 I feel that successful managerial outcomes are the most important aspect by which to judge a corporation.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.5 I think ethical business is mainly based on providing the greatest market success for the greatest number.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.6 Based on my moral standard, the company HUMAN-TECH is an ethical business.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.7 In order to turn profits, ethical managerial process can be compromised at times.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.8 I think an ethical business should avoid inflicting a loss on investors by any means necessary.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.9 I feel that the company HUMAN-TECH is a bad business even though it continues its success.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.10 I believe that successful outcomes above do not justify the means to those outcomes.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.11 I believe that following moral obligations in managerial process is the most important aspect by which to judge a corporation.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.12 Based on my idea of fairness, the company HUMAN-TECH is an unethical business.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.13 I think the company HUMAN-TECH company is unethical because it has little ethical concern regarding labor rights.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.14 I think the company HUMAN-TECH should abide by law in order to be an ethical company rather than to avoid criticism.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q3.15 Although the company HUMAN-TECH did not directly hire the overseas workers, the company should be responsible for their working conditions.

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

End of Block: Individual ethical orientation

Start of Block: General opinion about the movements

Q4.1
How favorable is your opinion about the Black Lives Matter movement?

- ○ very unfavorable (1)
- ○ unfavorable (2)
- ○ neither (3)
- ○ favorable (4)
- ○ very favorable (5)

Q4.2 What do you think the mass media's coverage of Black Lives Matter movement is?

- ○ Very unfavorable (1)
- ○ Somewhat unfavorable (2)
- ○ Neither favorable or unfavorable (3)
- ○ Somewhat favorable (4)
- ○ Very favorable (5)

Q4.3 What do you think is the opinion of the majority of US citizens about Black Lives Matter Movement?

- ○ Very unfavorable (1)
- ○ Unfavorable (2)
- ○ Neither (3)
- ○ Favorable (4)
- ○ Very favorable (5)

X→

Q4.4 How favorable is your opinion about the All Lives Matter movement?

- ☐ Very unfavorable (1)
- ☐ Somewhat unfavorable (2)
- ☐ Neither unfavorable or favorable (3)
- ☐ Somewhat favorable (4)
- ☐ Very favorable (5)

X→

Q4.5 How favorable is the mass media's coverage of the All Lives Matter movement?

- Very unfavorable (1)
- Somewhat unfavorable (2)
- Neither unfavorable or favorable (3)
- Somewhat favorable (4)
- Very favorable (5)

Page Break

Q4.6 How favorable do you think the majority of US citizens feel about the All Lives Matter Movement?

- ○ Very unfavorable (1)
- ○ Somewhat unfavorable (2)
- ○ Neither unfavorable or favorable (3)
- ○ Somewhat favorable (4)
- ○ Very favorable (5)

End of Block: General opinion about the movements

Start of Block: Cross-Interaction avoidance

Q5.1 In this section you will be asked questions about your interpersonal interactions.

Q5.2 I feel _____ working with the same ethnic group.

- ○ Extremely uncomfortable (1)
- ○ Somewhat uncomfortable (2)
- ○ Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (3)
- ○ Somewhat comfortable (4)
- ○ Extremely comfortable (5)

Q5.3 I prefer to interact with those who have the same views as I have on the topic of race

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)



Q5.4 I would marry someone from a different ethnic group

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)



Q5.5 I hesitate to express my honest views about the racial issues because I fear that others might disagree with me

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q5.6 I would be surprised if a close relative of mine marries someone from a different ethnic group

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Q5.7 When discussing an issue, I only try to convince others. My views do not change

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)



Q5.8 I feel it is better not to discuss racial issues with different ethnic groups

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)



Q5.9 I usually feel that my opinions are more persuasive than others' when talking about social issues

- strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither disagree nor agree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

End of Block: Cross-Interaction avoidance

Start of Block: Level of agreement

Q6.1 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements

---

Q6.2 I believe the Black Lives Matter Movement is a social movement created in response to racism and violence perpetuated against Black People

- Strongly disagree (14)
- Somewhat disagree (27)
- Neither agree nor disagree (28)
- Somewhat agree (29)
- Strongly agree (30)

Q6.3 I think the Black Lives Matter movement is about reverse racism

- Strongly disagree (27)
- Somewhat disagree (28)
- Neither agree nor disagree (29)
- Somewhat agree (30)
- Strongly agree (31)

Q6.4 I believe the Black Lives Matter movement is a divisive movement

- Strongly disagree (16)
- Somewhat disagree (27)
- Neither agree nor disagree (28)
- Somewhat agree (29)
- Strongly agree (30)

Q6.5 I believe the Black Lives Matter movement is all about violence against white people

- Strongly disagree (31)
- Somewhat disagree (32)
- Neither agree nor disagree (33)
- Somewhat agree (34)
- Strongly agree (35)

Q6.6 I believe the Black Lives Matter protesters are vandals

- ○ Strongly disagree (31)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (32)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (33)
- ○ Somewhat agree (34)
- ○ Strongly agree (35)

Q6.7 I think the Black Lives Matter movement fights against all types of racial injustice

- ○ Strongly disagree (19)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (27)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (28)
- ○ Somewhat agree (29)
- ○ Strongly agree (30)

Q6.8 I believe the Black Lives Matter movement advances a communist agenda

- ○ Strongly disagree (20)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (27)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (28)
- ○ Somewhat agree (29)
- ○ Strongly agree (30)

Q6.9 I believe the All Lives Matter movement is an attempt to distort he message from the Black Lives Matter Movement

- ○ Strongly disagree (21)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (27)
- ○ Neither agree not disagree (28)
- ○ Somewhat agree (29)
- ○ Strongly agree (30)

Q6.10 I believe saying “Black Lives Matter” does not mean “all other lives do not matter”

- ○ Strongly disagree (31)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (32)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (33)
- ○ Somewhat agree (34)
- ○ Strongly agree (35)

Q6.11 I believe the All Lives Matter movement downplays the current racial issues in the United States.

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.12 The phrase “All Lives Matters” is being used to dismiss, ignore or deny problems of racial discrimination and violence

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.13 The All Lives Matter movement is being used to avoid acknowledging social problems in the U.S.

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.14 People in power will use shadowy means to gain profit or other advantages, rather than lose power.

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.15 There are always powerful groups plotting to sway the outcomes of elections.

- Strongly disagree (36)
- Somewhat disagree (37)
- Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- Somewhat agree (39)
- Strongly agree (40)

Q6.16 Nothing in politics or world affairs happens by accident or coincidence.

- Strongly disagree (36)
- Somewhat disagree (37)
- Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- Somewhat agree (39)
- Strongly agree (40)

Q6.17 Many major events are guided by the actions of a small group of influential people.

- Strongly disagree (36)
- Somewhat disagree (37)
- Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- Somewhat agree (39)
- Strongly agree (40)

Q6.18 There are people with power who will do anything to hide the truth from public scrutiny.

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.19 I feel that the U.S. government and/or governments of other countries are hiding the existence of aliens and unidentified flying objects (UFOs).

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.20 I think Princess Diana's death was an assassination by the British spy agency (M16) related to Diana's relationship with a Muslim billionaire, not an accident.

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.21 I think the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not committed by the lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald, but was rather a detailed, organized conspiracy to kill the President.

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.22 I feel that recent changes in my company were the product of careful conspiracy by a small group of influential people

- ○ Strongly disagree (36)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (37)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (38)
- ○ Somewhat agree (39)
- ○ Strongly agree (40)

Q6.23 The Black Lives Matter movement is a false front for powerful people who wish to create societal instability.

- ○ Strongly disagree (37)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (38)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (39)
- ○ Somewhat agree (40)
- ○ Strongly agree (41)

Q6.24 Many participants in Black Lives Matter protests are paid political actors recruited to make support for the Black Lives Matter position look greater than it really is.

- ○ Strongly disagree (41)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (42)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (43)
- ○ Somewhat agree (44)
- ○ Strongly agree (45)

Q6.25 Media agencies work together to make police killings of people of color seem like a more serious problem than they really are

- ○ Strongly disagree (31)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (32)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (33)
- ○ Somewhat agree (34)
- ○ Strongly agree (35)

Q6.26 The violence that occurred during Black Lives Matter protests was initiated mainly by right-wing actors to discredit the Black Lives Matter movement.

- ○ Strongly disagree (31)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (32)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (33)
- ○ Somewhat agree (34)
- ○ Strongly agree (35)

Q6.27 Police, prosecutors, and judges work together to ensure that police do not face consequences when they kill Black people.

- ○ Strongly disagree (31)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (32)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (33)
- ○ Somewhat agree (34)
- ○ Strongly agree (35)

End of Block: Level of agreement

Start of Block: Problem recognition

Q7.1 This is a serious and national problem

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q7.2 This problem should be dealt with more seriously by the government and related organizations.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q7.3 There should be immediate efforts to resolve this issue in the US

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q7.4 I believe people need to pay more attention to this problem

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Problem recognition

Start of Block: Constraint recognition

Q8.1 The government and related organizations will consider opinions from persons like me on the issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q8.2 If I try, opinions from a person like me on COVID-19 can affect regulations related to the issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q8.3 I (my efforts) can help in resolving the problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q8.4 I can make a difference in the way the problem is solved

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Constraint recognition

Start of Block: Involvement recognition

Q9.1 The issue is significantly related to me

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q9.2 The issue potentially affects my family members/friends

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q9.3 I am connected with the problem and its consequences

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q9.4 The issue has serious consequences for me and for someone I care about

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Involvement recognition

Start of Block: Situational motivation

Q10.1 I am curious about the issue

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q10.2 I often think about the issue

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q10.3 I want to better understand the issue

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q10.4 I made the issue my priority these days

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Situational motivation

Start of Block: Referent criterion - Generic

Q11.1 The next few sections will ask you your opinions about the following issues/problems in the US. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

Q11.2 I know how to deal with this issue

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q11.3 I have good ideas about how to deal with this issue

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q11.4 I could really come up with a plan to deal with this issue

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q11.5 I have a clear idea and direction to deal with this issue

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Referent criterion - Generic

Start of Block: Referent criterion - Affective

Q12.1 I strongly support a certain way of approaching this problem

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12.2 I have a preferred way for how this issue should be settled solved

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○



Q12.3 I want people and the government to push the problem-causing entities (nation/organization/company/group) to deal with this problem

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12.4 This issue makes me experience anxiety or anger

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12.5 This issue has made me an advocate for the position I now hold

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (21)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (22)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (23)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12.6 This issue has caused me to be more determined about fixing it than other problems I have experienced

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12.7 This issue has caused me to be more determined about fixing it than other problems I have experienced in the past.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12.8 I have developed a specific goal or direction about how this problem should be addressed.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12.9 I am very confident about my opinion on this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Referent criterion - Affective

Start of Block: Referent criterion - Factual, experiential referent criterion

Q13.1 I know details of what causes this problem and what should be done about it.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.2 I can provide friends and people a detailed history and causes of this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.3 I avoid wishful thinking and stay objective about this issue to solve it more effectively.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.4 About this issue, I can distinguish between what I want to see from what I need to see to solve it better.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.5 I have developed knowledge about this issue to avoid thinking emotionally about it.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.6 I have faced a similar problem in the past.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.7 I have concrete ideas about how to deal with this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.8 I am confident about my knowledge about this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13.9 Past experience has provided me with guidelines for solving this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Referent criterion - Factual, experiential referent criterion

Start of Block: Information seeking

Q14.1 I often search for more information about this issue on Internet.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q14.2 I have searched for more information about this issue on the websites or experts in the related industry.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q14.3 I often search for news articles or blog postings related to this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q14.4 I have spent some time and effort to find information related to this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Information seeking

Start of Block: Information attending

Q15.1 I pay attention to TV and/or radio programs discussing this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q15.2 I pay attention to family members/friends who discuss this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q15.3 If the CDC and/or NGOs publish/distribute free information packets related to this issue, I am willing to read them.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Q15.4 I may take some time to listen if someone tries to give me information about this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Information attending

Start of Block: Information forwarding

Q16.1 I am willing to spare my time to discuss this issue with someone I do not know well.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q16.2 When there are opportunities, I explain this problem to my family members and/or friends.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q16.3 I (often) have conversations with people around me about this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q16.4 I look for chances to share my knowledge and thoughts about this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Information forwarding

Start of Block: Information Sharing

Q17.1 I may not initiate, but I am willing to have conversations about this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q17.2 My family members/friends tend to ask my opinions about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q17.3 I join in conversations about this issue if someone else brings them up.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q17.4 When others bring up the problem/issue, I enjoy talking about this problem/issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Information Sharing

Start of Block: Information forefending

Q18.1
I can easily judge the value of information about this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18.2 I know where to go when I need updated information regarding this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18.3 I have a selection of trusted sources that I check for updates on this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18.4 Some publicized statements about this problem are worthless.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18.5 I have ignored some information about this issue that I knew was wrong.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18.6 Others respect my perspective on this issue because it is simple and clear.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18.7 I resist some persuasive efforts about this issue.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18.8 I am careful in accepting information regarding this issue because of the vested interests of those who provide the information.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Information forefending

Start of Block: Information permitting

Q19.1 I welcome any information about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q19.2 I am interested in all views on this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q19.3 I have listened to media reports on this problem even if I didn't agree with them.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q19.4 I like to discuss this problem with people who disagree with my opinions to broaden my perspective.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Information permitting

Start of Block: Retrogressive cognitive labor tendency

Q20.1 The next few sections will ask you your opinions about the following issues in the US. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

Q20.2 I still diligently check for new information about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q20.3 I make sure to get updates about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q20.4 I seek out new information and exert opinions on this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q20.5 I am interested in the new ideas related to my choice (stance) about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Retrogressive cognitive labor tendency

Start of Block: Multilateral retrogression

Q21.1 I've found a couple of ways to deal with this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.2 I like a few different suggestions for addressing this problem, even some are contrary to each other.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.3 I am considering different options to address this problem, and I will follow whichever works best.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○



Q21.4 Being pragmatic and flexible is key for solving this problem; I don't mind being seen as indecisive.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Q21.5 I have multiple options in mind for what to do about this problem, and I am still comparing them.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.6 I will not hesitate to change my chosen approach to one that works better to address this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.7 I have a good list of options for what to do about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.8
I have a few options for dealing with this problem that I think are viable, and I can elaborate on detailed plans for them.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.9 I continue to check for additional options for dealing with this problem by consulting knowledgeable sources and experts.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.10 It is better to change someone's mind about this problem, even if there is sunk cost, than to stick to what doesn't work.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.11 Although I've made up mind on what to do about this problem, if experts advise otherwise, I will change it.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.12 It is difficult to change course in solving this problem, but if necessary, I will start over with a new plan/idea.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.13 For this problem, I am willing to keep trying new ideas until it works out.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21.14 I am considering a few options for solving this problem at the same time and will see what works better.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Multilateral retrogression

Start of Block: Singular retrogression

Q22.1 I pay attention to new updates for my choice (stance) for this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.2 Because I've spent so much time determining what I should do about this problem, it is difficult to change my mind.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.3 I have sufficient proof that this problem should be approached in the way I've concluded.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.4 I have a good argument and evidence, and I usually win debates on what should be done about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.5 I seek out new information about this problem to inform my position on it and my approach to it.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.6 I stay updated on news information that might affect my current position on this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.7 It is easy to argue with evidence in favor of my approach to this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.8 While I carry out my approach to this problem, I will continue searching for information about it.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.9 I've already made up my mind (made a choice) on what I am going to do about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.10 This problem requires action, not hesitation.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.11 There is sufficient evidence on what we should do about this problem; what we need is to take action.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.12 I am tired of seeing inaction on this problem in the name of caution.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.13 I want to convince people with similar concerns that they need more actions and less thinking.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.14 I've learned enough about this problem to know the right thing to do.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.15 I am confident that my current approach to this problem will work out.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q22.16 I can persuade others who have similar concerns that my approach to this problem will serve them better.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Singular retrogression

Start of Block: New public typology items

Q23.1 There are conflicting ideas to this problem, and I avoid taking sides or overcommitting to one aspect.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23.2 There was not much left to be learned about this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23.3 I have been thinking on this problem before it became a media spotlight.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23.4 I won't do anything about this problem until it really affects me.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23.5 I currently do not feel strongly enough to pursue this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23.6 I have remained involved in this problem for a long time.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23.7 I have recently become active on this problem.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23.8 I have been "desensitized", and do not believe that this problem will get better.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: New public typology items

Start of Block: Online vs in-person discussion

Q24.1 I prefer to participate in discussions about these issues online rather than face-to-face.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q24.2 I express my ideas more when participating in online discussions or texting about these issues.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q24.3 I think online discussions offer a better ground for discussions about these issues.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q24.4 Social media allows me to express my opinions freely about these issues.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Issue 1: Racialized Police Brutality against Black Citizens in US (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue2: Continuous Pandemic (Covid-19 and New Variants) (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Issue 3: Rising US-China Tensions (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Online vs in-person discussion

Start of Block: Demographics

Q25.1 What is your age?

- ○ Under 18 years old (1)
- ○ 18-29 years old (2)
- ○ 30-39 years old (3)
- ○ 40-50 years old (4)
- ○ 51 - and older (5)

Q25.2 Which gender do you identify as:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Nonbinary (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q25.3 What is your education level

- Some high school (1)
- Associate degree (2)
- Bachelor's degree (3)
- Master's degree (4)
- Higher than a Master's degree (5)

Q25.4 Ethnicity:

- ○ Asian or Asian American (1)
- ○ Black or African American (2)
- ○ Biracial (3)
- ○ Caucasian (4)
- ○ Multiracial (5)
- ○ Native American (6)
- ○ Hispanic or Latino (7) _____

Q25.5 Annual income

- ○ $15,000 or below (1)
- ○ $16,000 - $30,000 (2)
- ○ $31,000 - $45,000 (3)
- ○ $46,000 - $60,000 (4)
- ○ $61,000 - $75,000 (5)
- ○ $71,000 or more (6)

Q25.6 Which of the following best describes your political affiliation?

- Democrat (1)
- Republican (2)
- Libertarian (3)
- Socialist (4)
- I do not know (5)
- Other (6) _____

Q25.7 How do you describe yourself to be?

- Very Conservative (1)
- Somewhat conservative (2)
- Neither (3)
- Somewhat liberal (4)
- Very liberal (5)

Q25.8 Please state whom did you vote for in the 2020 elections?

- Joe Biden (1)
- Donald Trump (2)
- Other (3)
- I did not vote (4)

Q25.9 Do you work in any law enforcement facility (police precinct, military, justice system, etc.)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q25.10 Do you have a relative or a close friend working in law enforcement (police precinct, military, justice system, etc.)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Verification code

Q26.1 Thank you for participating in this study. Your completion code is below.

Please COPY and PASTE this as a proof of participation to receive payment.

If your code in the survey does not match the code you put down, we cannot pay you for your participation.

Payment should be received within two days of participation

Survey code: V3BX!ns

End of Block: Verification code