
A FRAME ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE AND ACCELERATIONISM IN COGNITIVE RADICALIZATION May 2024 Summary

This report contains top-line monthly numbers from a purposive sample of social-media channels, discussion forums, and web sites known for hosting misinformation, extremism, and conspiracism (MEC sector).

Richard Lee Rogers
Youngstown State University
Dept. of Criminal Justice & Consumer Sciences

Web Site: <https://www.rogersperspectives.com>
Email: rlrogers02@ysu.edu

June 29, 2024
All material © 2024 Youngstown State University

This project was supported by Award No. 15PNIJ-23-GG-01382-DOMR, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, and a faculty grant from the Ohio Supercomputer Center. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice, the Ohio Supercomputer Center, and the State of Ohio. See Appendix for further details. Top-line numbers from the Frames of Misinformation, Extremism, and Conspiracism project are reported separately.

Activity Summary (1 of 2)

Methodological Notes: Activity levels are measured as prevalence and density rates. Prevalence is defined as the % of posts with at least one key word, phrase, or stem identified with particular themes. Density is defined as the identified words, phrases, and word stems as a % of total words. Because the study of language and ideology is a key aspect of the larger project, results are limited exclusively to posts with at least 30 words (approximately 2 sentences).

General Trends

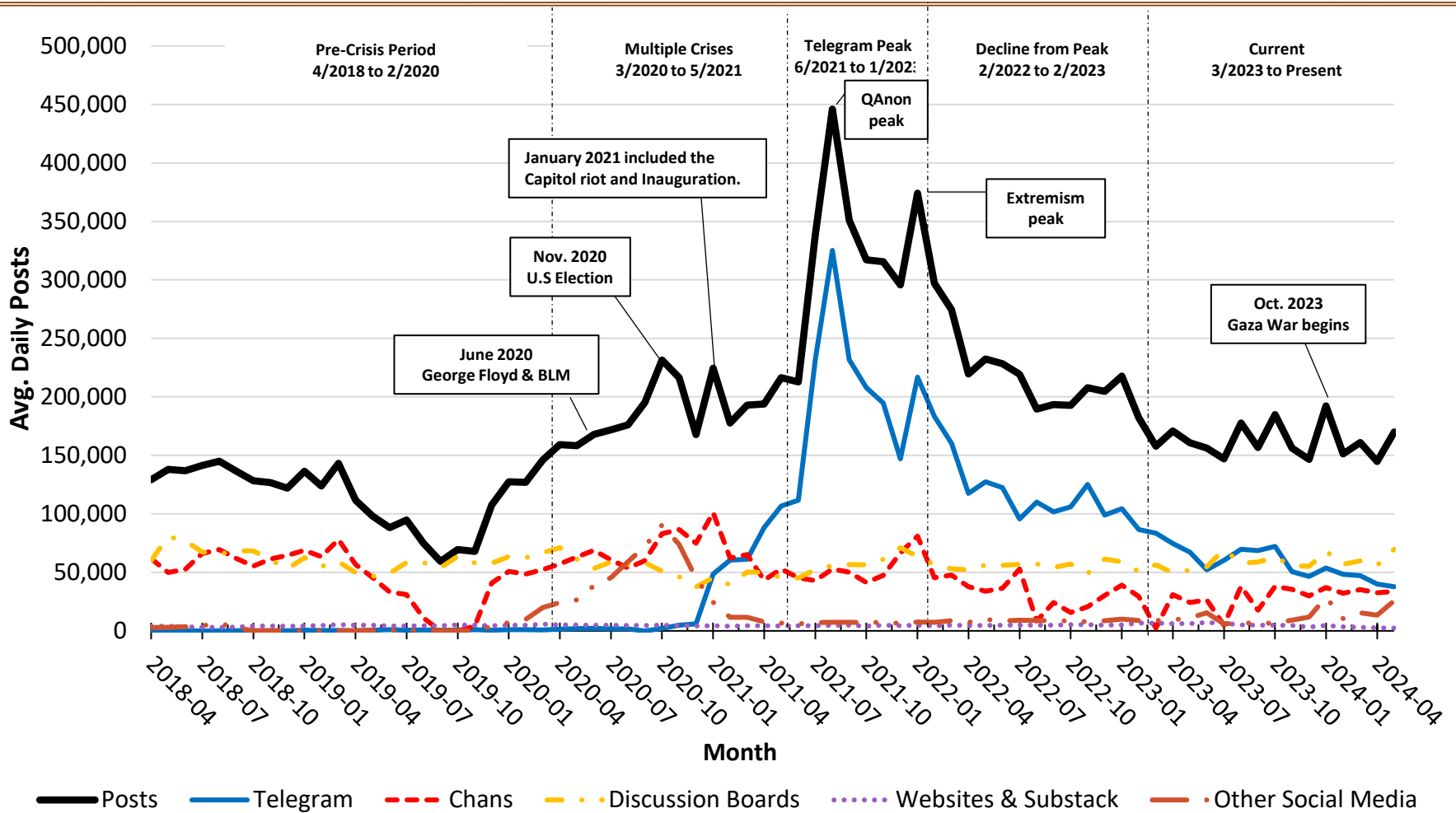
- In May 2024, the purposive sample of the MEC sector was 5,482 posts per day. This activity was 13.7% higher than April, 5.0% above the same month in the previous quarter, and 5.7% above May 2023 (Fig. 1).
- Word count in the purposive sample was 644,981 words per day. This activity represented as 14.1% increase over April, a model 0.9% increase over the same month in the previous quarter, and 3.3% below May 2023. (I am now tracking word count due to the additional of large texts and transcripts coming from sources such as web pages and videos (Fig. 2).

Disorder and Violence

- In May, post activity about disorder rose 9.5%, and violence rose by 5.6%, which are growth rates less than the 13.7% overall (Fig. 2). At the same time, there was a slight decline in both disorder and violence densities in the purposive sample (Fig. 3).
- All tracked frames in the study showed disorder discourse at levels of “above normal” or higher, but only 5 frames showed “above normal” levels of violent discourse (Fig. 5 and 6).
- Masculinity had the highest disorder density in May at 3.23, more than 1 full point about the next highest frame, Public Safety (Fig. 5). The Alt-Right had the highest violent density at 1.37, only 0.01 above Antisemitism (Fig. 6).

Figure 1

Avg. Daily Post Activity by Month



Periods: The period of multiple crises refers to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, BLM protests, and 2020 presidential election activity. Telegram Peak highlights the rise of new extremist and conspiracists forums in the universe of platforms, many due to their expulsion from Facebook and Twitter and the collapse of Parler.

Figure 2

Avg. Daily Word Count by Month

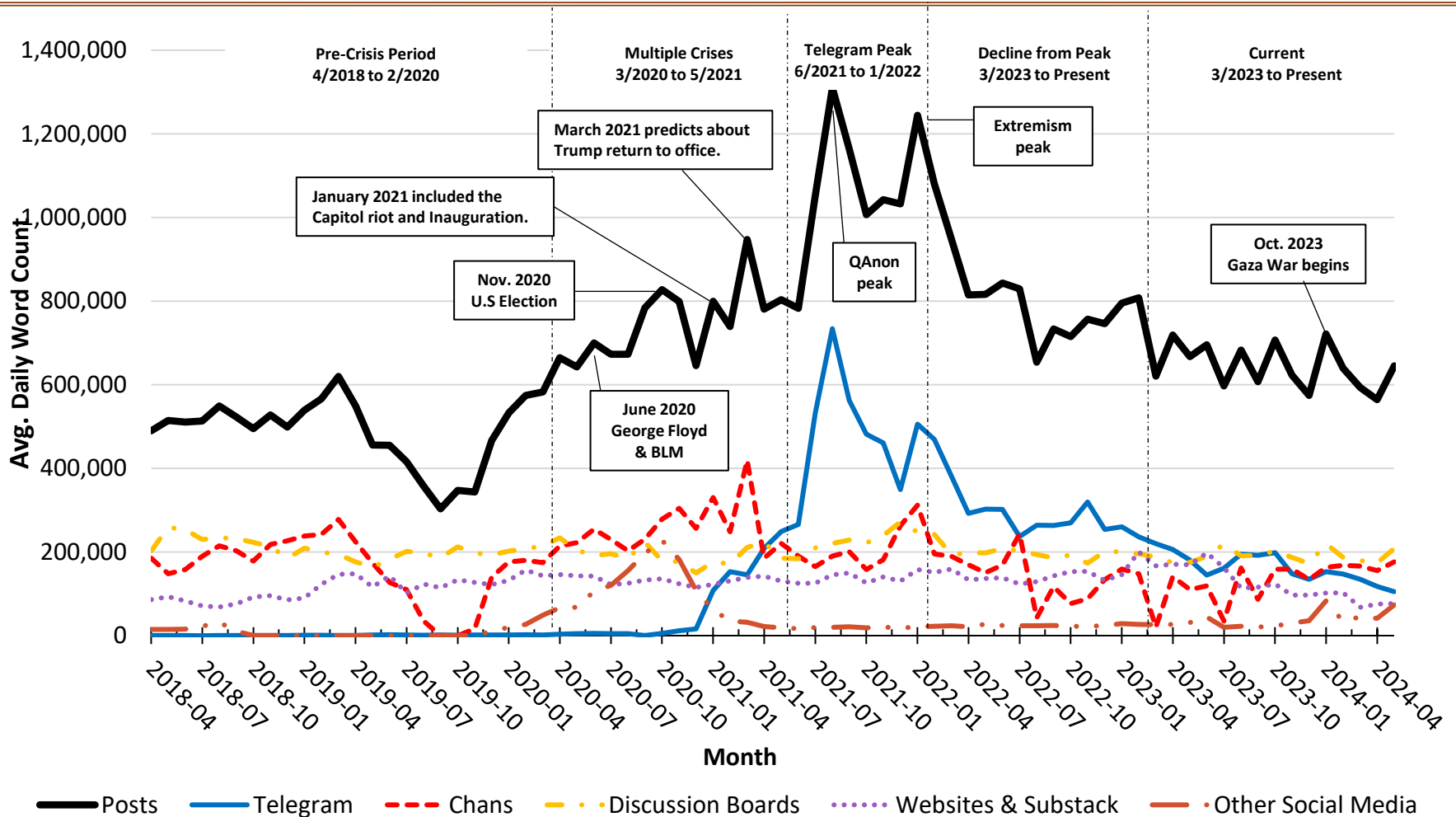


Figure 3

Avg. Daily Posts by Disorder Subframe by Month

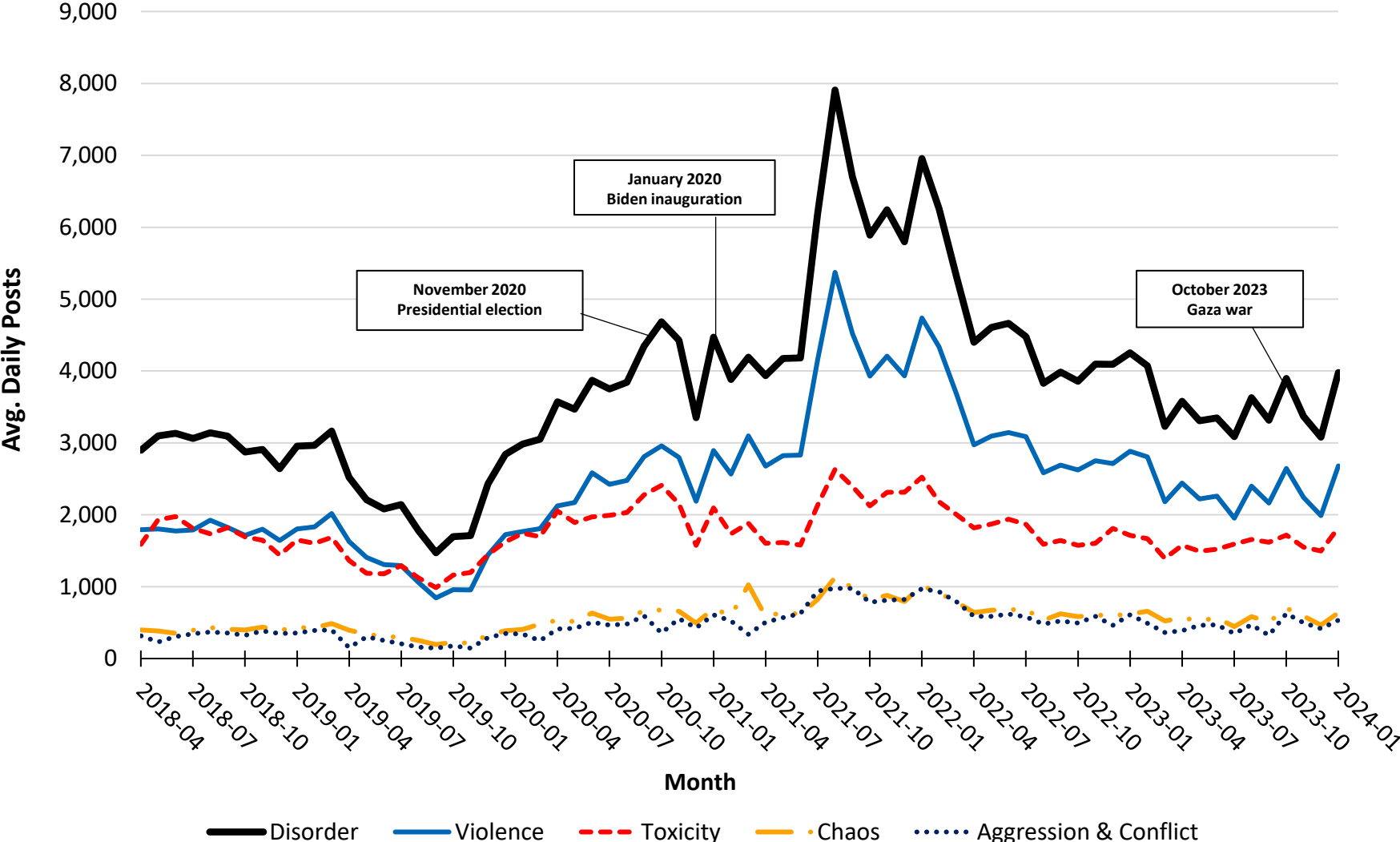


Figure 4

Disorder and Violence Prevalence and Density Rates by Month

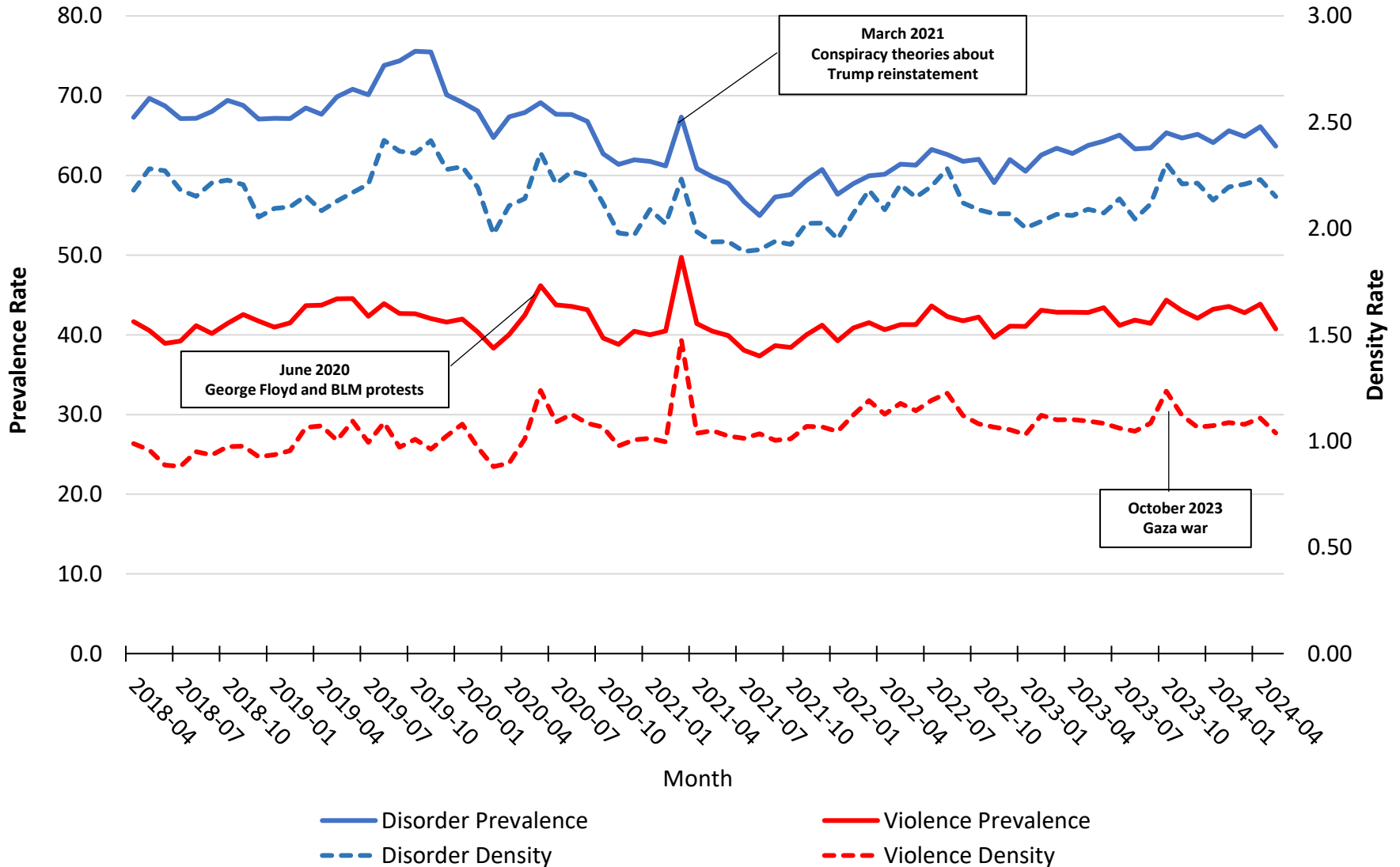


Figure 5

Density Rates by Disorder Subframe by Month

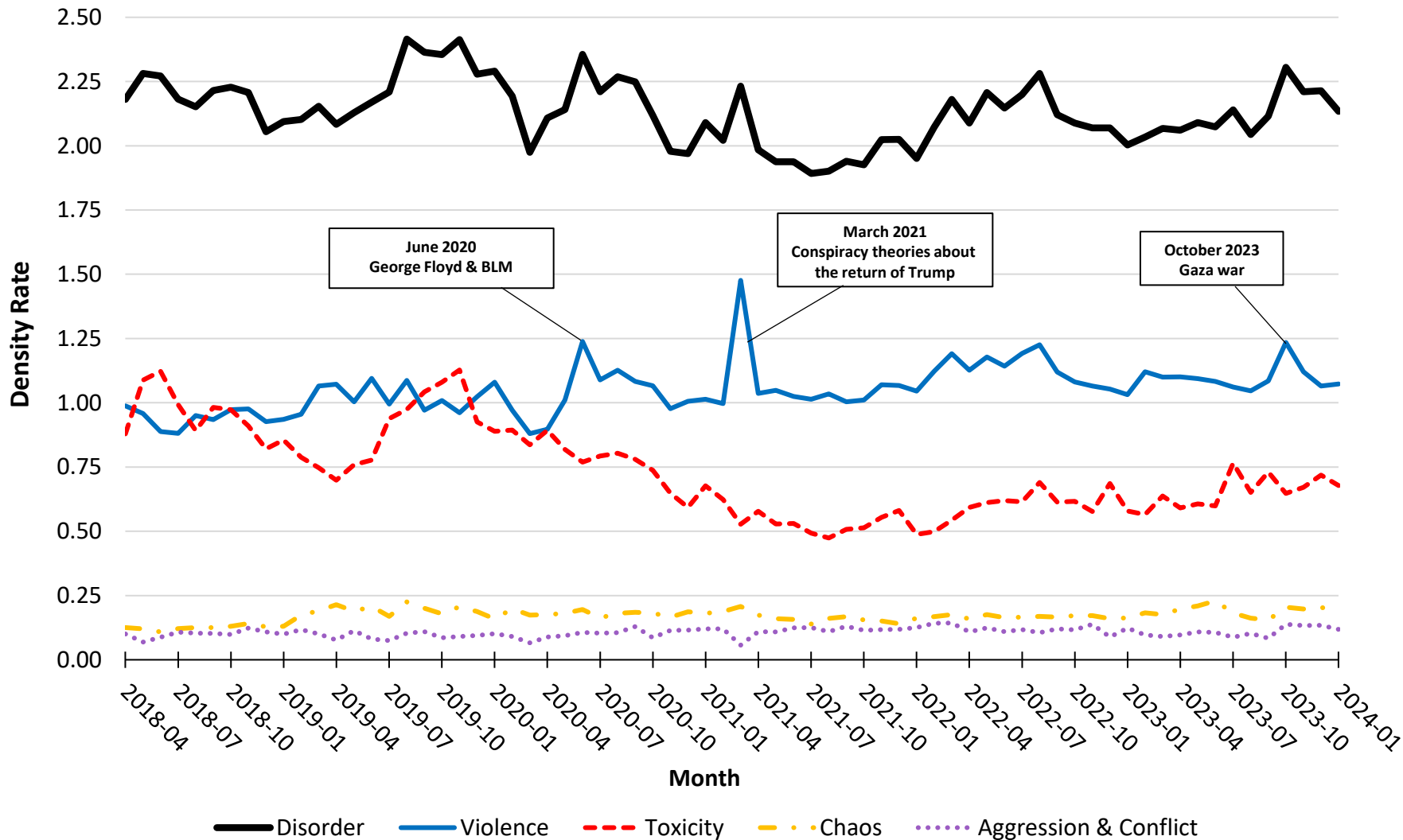


Figure 6

Disorder Density by Select Frame by Month

	May 2024	Total Study	Min.	Max.	Peak Month
Masculinity	3.23	3.28 (1)	2.99	3.60	06/2018
Public Safety	2.30	2.24 (3)	1.97	2.52	03/2022
Alt-Right	2.28	2.12 (4)	1.72	2.46	05/2022
Antisemitism	2.25	2.34 (2)	1.84	3.26	03/2022
Education	2.17	2.00	1.76	2.32	08/2019
Religion	2.11	2.00	2.00	2.26	10/2023
Other Conspiracies	2.08	2.05	1.78	2.54	03/2022
Paleolib & Freedom	2.07	1.96	1.65	2.23	06/2020 – George Floyd & BLM
Health	2.06	2.01	1.70	2.26	10/2023
Politics	1.99	1.95	1.68	2.25	03/2022
Alt Reality & Fringe	1.91	1.82	1.48	2.17	05/2022
QAnon	1.88	1.96	1.73	2.44	08/2022
Left & Extreme Left	1.86	2.11 (5)	1.50	2.52	03/2022
Health Misinformation	1.79	1.79	0.95	2.16	12/2020 – COVID vaccinations
Total	2.11	2.15	1.89	2.41	08/2019

Notes: Total Study column includes rank number for the 5 most violent frames across the whole study. Threshold levels determined by one-sample Z-test using 5 major news web sites (ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox, NBC News). For calculation and interpretation of density scores, see Appendix B.

Level of Discourse
High 2.41
Mod. High 2.06
Above Normal 1.71

Figure 7

Violent Density by Select Frame by Month

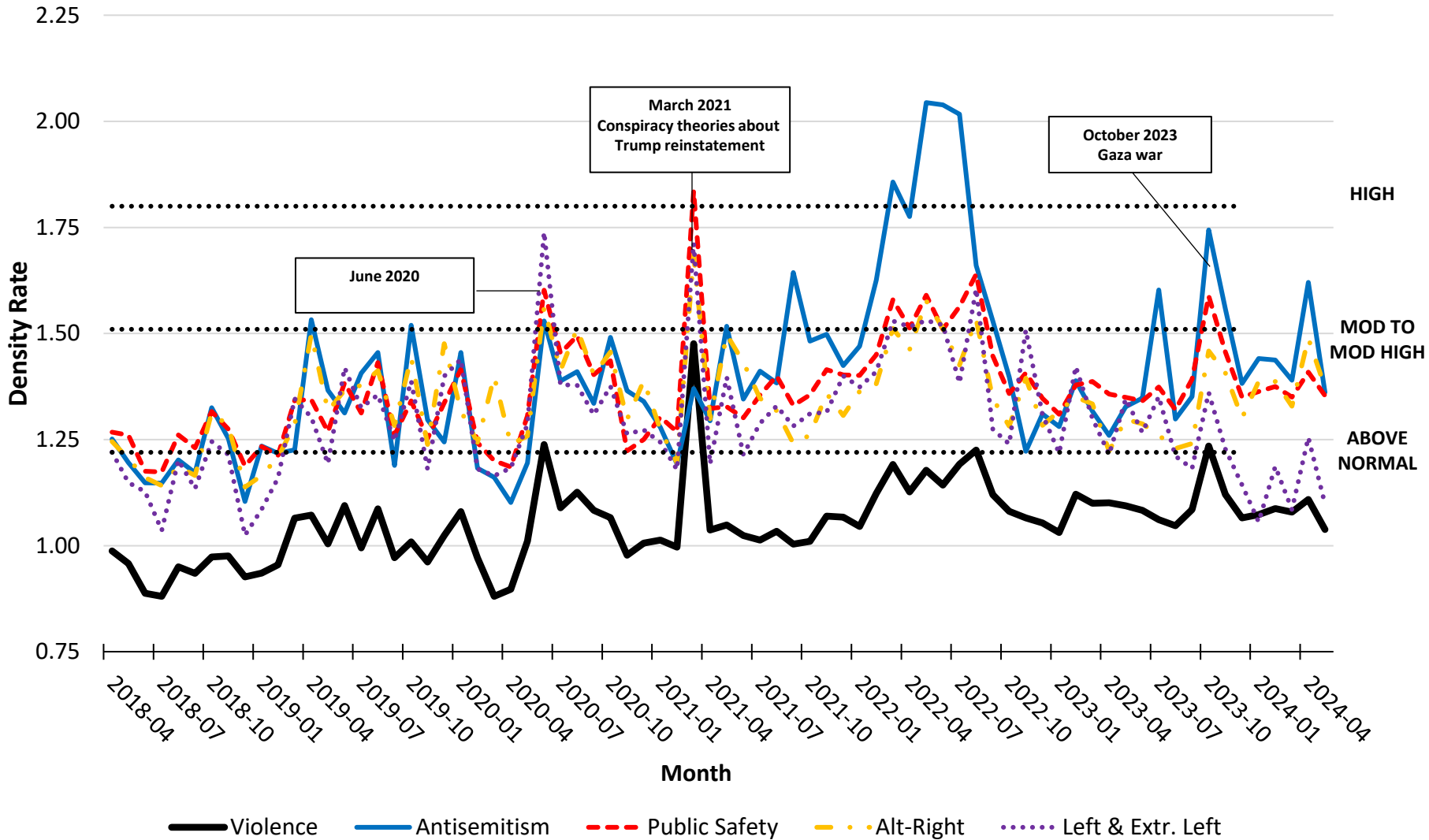
	May 2024	Total Study	Min.	Max.	Peak Month
Alt-Right	1.37	1.36 (3)	1.14	1.68	03/2021
Antisemitism	1.36	1.43 (1)	1.10	2.04	05/2022 & 06/2022
NWO Conspiracies	1.26	1.28 (5T)	1.04	1.56	03/2022
Public Safety	1.35	1.38 (2)	1.17	1.84	03/2021 – Return of Trump conspiracies
Paleolib & Freedom	1.27	1.28 (5T)	1.08	1.57	06/2022 – George Floyd / BLM protests
Education	1.22	1.22	1.01	1.50	05/2022
Politics	1.21	1.27	1.07	1.65	03/2021 – Return of Trump conspiracies
Religion	1.14	1.14	0.97	1.63	03/2021 – Return of Trump conspiracies
Masculinity	1.06	1.12	0.89	1.57	03/2021 – Return of Trump conspiracies
Health	1.12	1.15	0.92	1.56	03/2021 – Return of Trump conspiracies
Extreme Left	1.10	1.31 (4)	1.02	1.74	06/2020 – George Floyd / BLM protests
Health Misinformation	1.17	1.17	0.71	1.61	06/2020 – COVID during BLM protests
Alt Reality & Fringe	1.09	1.14	0.88	1.41	06/2022
QAnon	1.11	1.15	0.93	1.89	03/2021 – Return of Trump conspiracies
Total	1.04	1.06	0.88	1.46	03/2021 – Return of Trump conspiracies

Notes: Total Study column includes rank number for the 5 most violent frames across the whole study. Threshold levels determined by one-sample Z-test using 5 major news web sites (ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox, NBC News). For calculation and interpretation of density scores, see Appendix B.

Level of Discourse
High 1.96
Mod. High 1.61
Above Normal 1.26

Figure 8

Violent Density by Month for 5 Most Violent Frames by Month



Notes: See Appendix C for total recovered posts by frame. Frames are not mutually exclusive.

Appendix

Funding Statement

Disclaimer

This project was supported by Award No. 15PNIJ-23-GG-01382-DOMR, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, and a faculty grant from the Ohio Supercomputer Center. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice, the Ohio Supercomputer Center, and the State of Ohio.

Frames of Misinformation, Extremism, and Conspiracism

This project operates **of** under two titles. The original title, Frames of Misinformation, Extremism, and Conspiracism (“Frames”, for short), describes an omnibus project that started in early 2021. activity reporting is the first step in addressing key qualitative questions about how conspiracists and extremist movements coopt existing mainstream beliefs and practices to legitimate their positions and mobilize followers. The original questions included the following:

1. What frames are used to legitimate extremist views and interpretations of current events?
2. How has the use of frames in support of extremism changed over time?
3. What interactions are forming between frames?
4. To what extent do extremism, conspiracism, and fringe beliefs constitute a unified system of ideology, and to what extent are they decoupled?
5. To what extent are extremism, conspiracism, and fringe beliefs becoming mainstream?

Some specific issues are tracked with an eye on further research:

1. To what extent is religious discourse turning militaristic?
2. To what extent is political discussion turning violent? Most notably I am paying attention to the ongoing promotion of conspiracy theories surrounding the 2020 presidential election.
3. How is the core mythology of QAnon evolving?
4. How is QAnon and other New World Conspiracy theories interacting with religious communities?
5. What is hypermasculinity, and how is it influencing extremist discourse?
6. What conspiracy theories and misinformation are infiltrating the discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Frames project uses the Ohio Supercomputer Center (OSC) with computer time funded through an OSC faculty grant available to any faculty member in the State of Ohio.

A subset of the Frames research has been funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) under Award # 15PNIJ-23-GG-01382-DOMR, A Frame Analysis of Violence and Accelerationism in Cognitive Radicalization. This subset of the Frames research looks specifically at the use of violent language in the MEC sector.

The monthly data collection and the issuance of top-line numbers in this report are regarded as part of the omnibus project and would happen without the NIJ funding. Because the top-line numbers feature definitions of disorder and violence generated by the NIJ-funded research, I have added the NIJ disclaimer to this report.