

# THE FUTURE OF EXTREMISM AND EXTREMIST NARRATIVES IN AMERICA



A Threatcasting Lab Report





# THE FUTURE OF EXTREMISM AND EXTREMIST NARRATIVES IN AMERICA



Technical Report by Jason C. Brown, Renny Gleeson, Josh Massad

The Threatcasting Lab is supported by





# PARTICIPANTS

## **Anonymous**

**Cyndi Coon**, Threatcasting Lab

**John B. Edwards**, U.S. Secret Service

**Toby Kohlenberg**

**Joe Littell**, Army Cyber Institute

**Anna R Muldoon**, Arizona State University

**Majia Nadesan**, Arizona State University

**Amit Ron**, Arizona State University

**Rhyner Washburn**, University of Maryland

**Lena M. Young**, Academic Futurist

# ASU THREATCASTING LAB TEAM

<b>Brian David Johnson</b>	Director
<b>Cyndi Coon</b>	Chief of Staff
<b>Natalie Vanatta</b>	Senior Advisor to the Lab
<b>Jason Brown</b>	Ph.D. Student



## Arizona State University Threatcasting lab

The Threatcasting Lab at Arizona State University serves as the premier resource for strategic insight, teaching materials, and exceptional subject matter expertise on Threatcasting, envisioning possible threats ten years in the future. The lab provides a wide range of organizations and institutions actionable models to not only comprehend these possible futures but to a means to identify, track, disrupt, mitigate and recover from them as well. Its reports, programming and materials will bridge gaps, and prompt information exchange and learning across the military, academia, industrial, and governmental communities.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (BLUF)

This report shares the findings and conclusions of a study on the future of extremism in America. We use the Threatcasting methodology of inquiry and look at how extremism will manifest itself and how extremist ideologies, manifestos, and actions will motivate people towards violence in the year 2031, a decade away.

The Threatcasting Lab used a repository of futures models from previous threatcasting events that we mined for markers of extremism in America and hosted a workshop to generate additional models and insights.

The insights from previous data and the new models of extremism lead us to the following findings:

1. The rise of normative extremism. American extremism will continue to manifest violently as any other extremist action has in the history of humankind. A lack of personal agency, dissatisfaction with the status quo, perceived grievances, and threats to personal and group identities are the motivators we observed that spur an individual to seek violent solutions and work with groups with a violent agenda. The genesis of American extremism is the gap between the American dream (aspirational) and the American birthright (assumption of what you are “owed” as an American). The frustrations and perceptions and marginalizations failing to bridge this gap appear in this report as a lack of agency identity. What makes 21st-century American extremism different is the technology that it is riding on, the organizations that are fermenting and fomenting this identity crisis and the rise of what we call normative extremism. This new type of extremism sees attacks not just on people and property, but on the social norms underpinning the concepts of both the American dream and the American birthright.
2. Algorithmic amplification will help the fringe become mainstream. Although the call to violence is not new, what is novel to the future of extremism is the influence of information disorder machines and the speed of automated tools to connect people with similar worldviews and disconnect those with opposing views. Information disorder machines are the automated, adaptive, and individualized tools adversaries will use to “mechanize information disorder to influence, manipulate, and harm organizations and individuals.”<sup>1</sup> With social media platforms and personalized news feeds, algorithms will decide what information a person sees and what information is hidden from them. At the same time, algorithms tuned to maximize “on platform” time will show viewers increasingly controversial and oppositional ads, videos, and other content, because these are found to increase platform engagement.

1 Johnson, B. D. (2019). Information disorder machines: Weaponizing narrative and the future of the United States of America. Arizona State University.

3. “Extremism” in service to business is particularly virulent in America. The processes and procedures of corporations to achieve their goals may co-opt behavior that results in extremist-like actions. Corporate actions include advertising and adapting their message rapidly and at a very personalized rate. At the same time, the corporate push for pinpoint advertising is increasingly coming into conflict with viewers’ personal identities. Organizational perpetuation of extremism that exacerbates the agency identity gap between the American birthright and the American dream is more pronounced when one considers the market-driven economy that drives corporate values and goals.

In the next decade, people will - as individuals and in groups - decide that violent struggle is the only acceptable alternative to addressing grievances, regaining individual agency, and getting out of seemingly insurmountable problems. Violence will be increasingly not the last resort, but rather, a regularly reached-for tool to impose change on society.

This report also attempts to suggest what could be done to avoid, mitigate, or recover from American extremism’s threat futures. These actions include:

1. Monitor cryptocurrency transactions for payments and donations from alt-right supporters.<sup>2,3</sup>
2. Encourage social media platforms to self-govern extremist content and support investigations into these platforms when hate speech and extremist calls for violence violate laws and regulations.



3. Consider a forum to educate the American population on the difference between protected speech and when First Amendment rights are not applicable.
4. Continue to study the encrypted and private communication links between members of extremist organizations.
5. Continue to study the causes of identity conflict that prompt people to seek fringe and extremist points of view, especially calls to violent action.
6. Develop responses to future threats via laws, regulations, norms, collaboration, and cultural dialogue, as suggested by the Menzies Foundation.<sup>4</sup>
7. Have a cultural conversation about disinformation and its sources of potential turmoil and information disorder.<sup>5</sup>
8. Develop accountability and justice practices against those who put the hate in the heart of those who end up committing violent acts; this is akin to only “changing the faucet when the well remains poisoned.”<sup>6</sup>

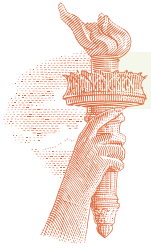
2 Timberg, C. (2017, December 26). Bitcoin's boom is a boon for extremist groups. The Washington Post. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/bitcoins-boom-is-a-boon-for-extremist-groups/2017/12/26/9ca9c124-e59b-11e7-833f-155031558ff4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/bitcoins-boom-is-a-boon-for-extremist-groups/2017/12/26/9ca9c124-e59b-11e7-833f-155031558ff4_story.html)

3 McLaughlin, J. (2021, January 14). Exclusive: Large bitcoin payments to right-wing activists a month before Capitol riot linked to foreign account. Yahoo!news. [https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/exclusive-large-bitcoin-payments-to-rightwing-activists-a-month-before-capitol-riot-linked-to-foreign-account-181954668.html?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter\\_axioscodebook&stream=technology&guccounter=1](https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/exclusive-large-bitcoin-payments-to-rightwing-activists-a-month-before-capitol-riot-linked-to-foreign-account-181954668.html?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axioscodebook&stream=technology&guccounter=1)

4 Menzies Foundation. (2020). Regional Cyber Futures Initiative: The future of risk, security and the law.

5 Conger, K., Alba, D., & Baker, M. (2020, September 10). False rumors that activists set wildfires exasperate officials. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/us/antifa-wildfires.html>

6 See comments by Omar El Akkad in Appendix 2.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PARTICIPANT LIST	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (BLUF)	8
TABLE OF CONTENTS	12
PART ONE: SETTING THE STAGE AND DEFINITIONS	14
PART TWO: OUR FRAMEWORK	22
PART THREE: DATA ANALYSIS	29
PART FOUR: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	36
THE RISE OF NORMATIVE EXTREMISM	36
ALGORITHMIC AMPLIFICATION	40
CORPORATE EXTREMISM	42
PART FIVE: INFLUENCE OF CURRENT EVENTS ON THIS ANALYSIS	46
COMMENTARY ON JANUARY 6TH, 2021	48
PART SIX: WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?	52
APPENDIX A - SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS	58
APPENDIX B - RAW DATA WORKBOOKS	70





## PART ONE

# PART ONE: SETTING THE STAGE AND DEFINITIONS

This project is a joint collaboration between the Army Cyber Institute at West Point (ACI), the insider threat program at the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security (OUSD(I&S)), and the Threatcasting Lab at Arizona State University. The insider threat program initially asked ASU to help produce a training document for identifying and mitigating insider threats similar to the graphic novel “Engineering a Traitor.”<sup>7</sup> Collaboration with ACI helped scope the project beyond insider threat to include a broader investigation on how fringe and extreme ideas become mainstream and acceptable.

We begin with defining key terms and set the stage for what types of behavior are included in our definition of extremism and what falls outside the boundaries of our study. In part two we introduce the framework that intersects various types of identity narratives and radicalization factors. This becomes the filter we use to examine previous threatcasting data models as well as newly developed models for American extremism. In parts three and four, we report on the methods

of analysis and initial findings from the priming data set (previous models) as well as the combined data sets (including new extremism models). This includes a discussion of how current events surrounding the 2020 presidential election and transition of power has affected our analysis. We also provide a commentary about how the extremist behaviors leading to the storming of the Capitol Building on January 6th, 2021 could be indicators of the environment that will persist over the next decade and provide evidence for a new type of extremism: normative extremism.

Extremism is a term derived from the adjective extreme, meaning something that is at a very pronounced degree or situated at the far range of something.<sup>8</sup> However, this immediately begs the question, from what perspective or starting point does an extreme viewpoint reside? This is very subjective as something that the “mainstream” considers extreme is obviously not to the person or viewpoint that is at the fringe; to them, the center point is where they are and the rest of the world is extreme in the opposite direction. Of course, this is a gross oversimplification

and there is a plethora of philosophy and political science theory that suggests the mainstream viewpoint is often more rational, stable, and generally good for society.

Within the context of our study on the Future of Extremism and Extremist Narratives in America, we have adopted the FBI's definition of extremism, which is, "encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economic goals."<sup>9</sup> There is no indication in the FBI definition that a person's ideology or personal viewpoint must be at the far range of politics and this removes the need to measure distance from the center. As long as a viewpoint condones or supports violence in lieu of other forms of conflict resolution, it meets the definition of extremism. This also allows us to carve a boundary between scenarios that might include far-edged religious or philosophical views that might

abhor all forms of violence, thus meeting the traditional understanding of extreme, but falling short of the definition of extremism. As such, we focus on scenarios that purposefully condone, support, or justify violence.

Interestingly, there are several types of violence that are included in our report. Physical violence and the threat of harm against other people is quite obvious, but what about violence against the environment? Does psychological violence (or the threat of it) also fall into the FBI's scope of extremism? How about digital violence such as doxing, cyber bullying, and so on?

Several scenarios explore these boundaries and suggest that violence is a necessary, but insufficient condition for understanding the narratives of extremism in the next decade.

**Extremism is "encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economic goals."**

**- Federal Bureau of Investigation**

7 Johnson, B. D., Winkelman, S., & Buccellato, S. (2018). Engineering a traitor. Army Cyber Institute at West Point.

8 Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/extreme>

9 Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2020). What is violent extremism? <https://cve.fbi.gov/whatis/>



# DEFINITIONS

---

Other definitions we considered that helped us form our boundary conditions:

**Terrorism** - always includes the use of or threat of violence; “violence against the innocent bystander”<sup>10</sup>

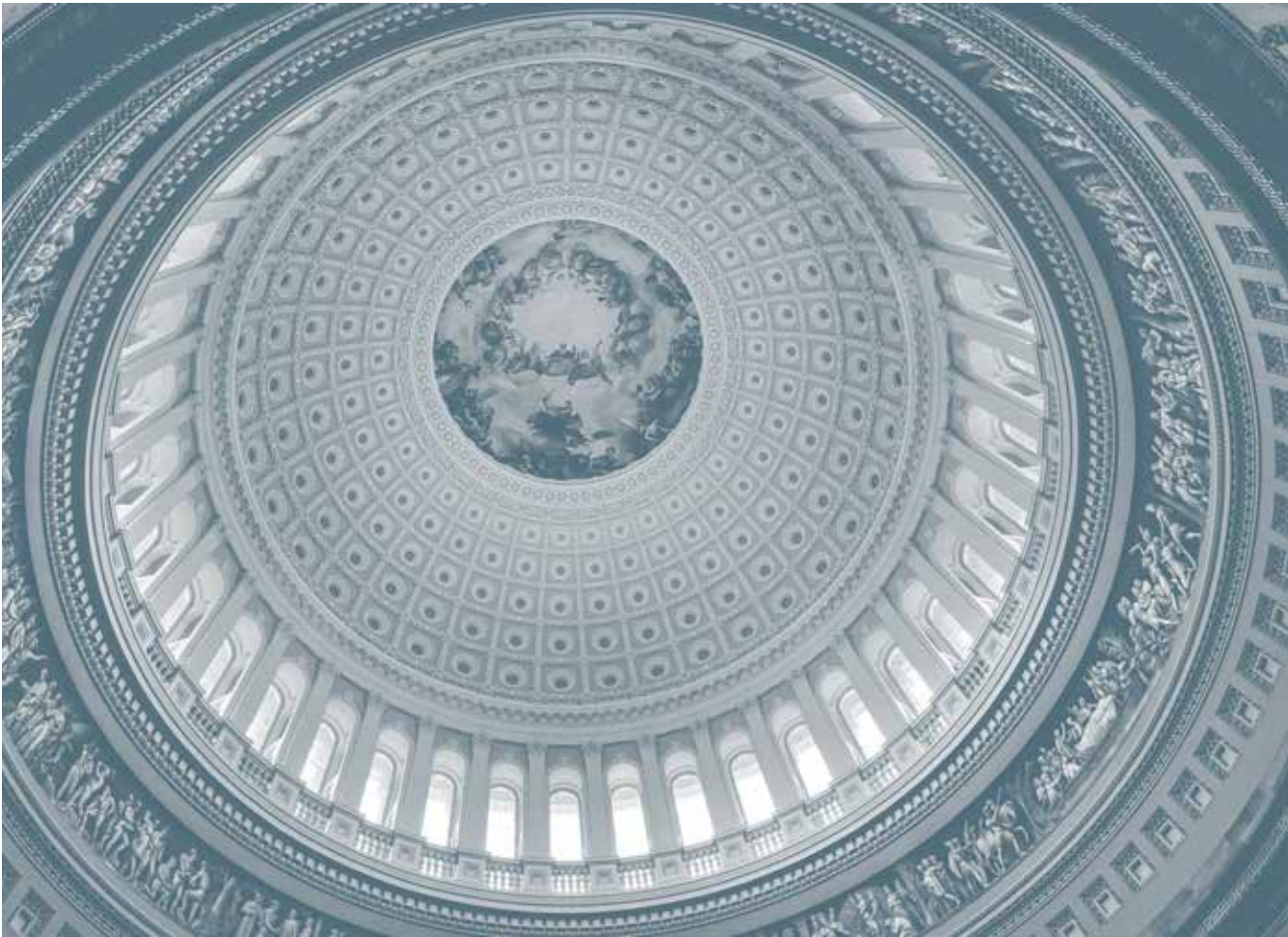
**Domestic Terrorism** - “involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States” and “intimidate or coerce a civilian population” and “occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States”<sup>11</sup>

**Insurgency** - “violence against the state”<sup>12</sup> - although, this definition is slightly thin; formal war is state-on-state violence and insurgency often comes from within a state

**Far-right extremism** - “sub-national or non-state entities whose goals may include racial, ethnic, or religious supremacy; opposition to government authority; and the end of practices like abortion”<sup>13</sup>

**Far-left extremism** - “sub-national or non-state entities that oppose capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism; focus on environmental or animal rights issues; espouse pro-communist or pro-socialist beliefs; or support a decentralized socio-political system like anarchism”<sup>14</sup>

**Radicalization** - The “process by which an individual, group, or mass of people undergo a transformation from participating in the political process via legal means to the use or support of violence for political purposes”<sup>15</sup>



10 Crossett, C., & Spitaletta, J. A. (2010). Radicalization: relevant psychological and sociological concepts. Asymmetric Warfare Group.

11 18 U.S. Code § 2331

12 Crossett & Spitaletta, 2010.

13 Jones, S. G. (2018). The rise of far-right extremism in the United States. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), November, 9.

14 Jones, 2018.

15 Crossett & Spitaletta, 2010.

**Narrative** - "Narrative is a rendering of events, actions, and characters in a certain way for a certain purpose. The purpose is persuasion. The method is identification."<sup>16</sup> Also can be: Storytelling that invites interpretation.<sup>17</sup> This report uses narrative to mean both the stories and the identity-driven meaning behind them and try to distinguish between the two. We acknowledge that there is an entire science behind narrative studies, storytelling, and the relationship between them; here, we simplify by using one framework of narrative identity and do not focus on storytelling, per se.

**Narrative Identity** - "reconstructs the autobiographical past and imagines the future in such a way as to provide a person's life with some degree of unity, purpose, and meaning."<sup>18</sup>

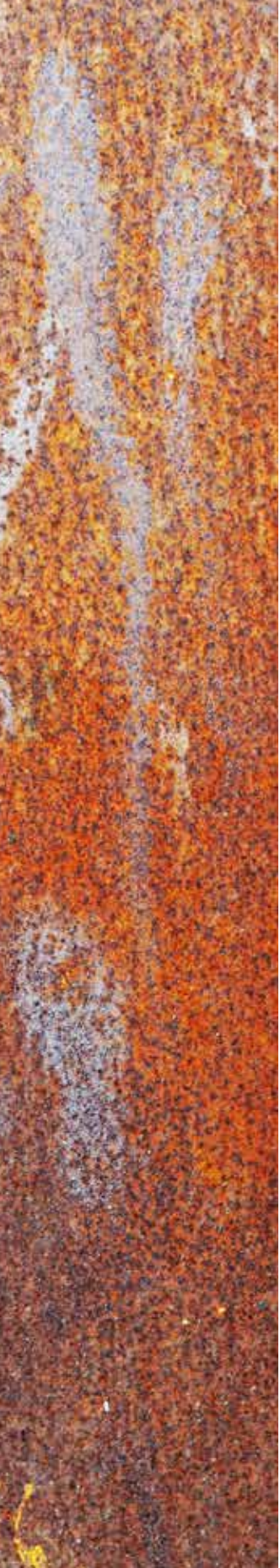
The final two boundary conditions we implemented were first, to exclude acts or threats of violence committed explicitly or indirectly by state actors and state-sponsored proxies. This falls in the realm of statecraft and international politics. Second, we generally exclude acts or threats of violence committed by criminal groups for the sole intent to make money, except where criminal group and state activity strategically coincide.<sup>19</sup> These two conditions allowed us to exclude normal affairs of statecraft and political/economic warfare; they are not as relevant to our analysis of extremism narratives within the United States. From the results of our data, criminal activity (and to a large extent, gang activity) does not have anything new to offer in the next decade that helps us better understand extremism narratives.

16 Maan, A. (2015). Counter-terrorism: Narrative strategies. University Press of America, Inc.

17 Dawson, J., & Weinberg, D. B. (2020). These honored dead: Sacrifice narratives in the NRA's American Rifleman Magazine. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41290-020-00114-x>

18 McAdams, D. P., & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(3), 233–238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413475622>

19 One interesting model from team WEST 11-2 imagined the Sinaloa drug cartel providing financing to Russian and Chinese hackers to compromise and exploit social media platforms to influence American youth to sell drugs for profit. While this is not extremism in the scope of this analysis, it is quite easy to imagine the drug cartel changing the influence effect to acts of violence rather than selling drugs for profit. The latter would be quite in line with the foreign policy aims of Russia and/or China.



“Narrative is a rendering of events, actions, and characters in a certain way for a certain purpose. The purpose is persuasion. The method is identification.”

- Dr. Ajit Maan



## PART ONE

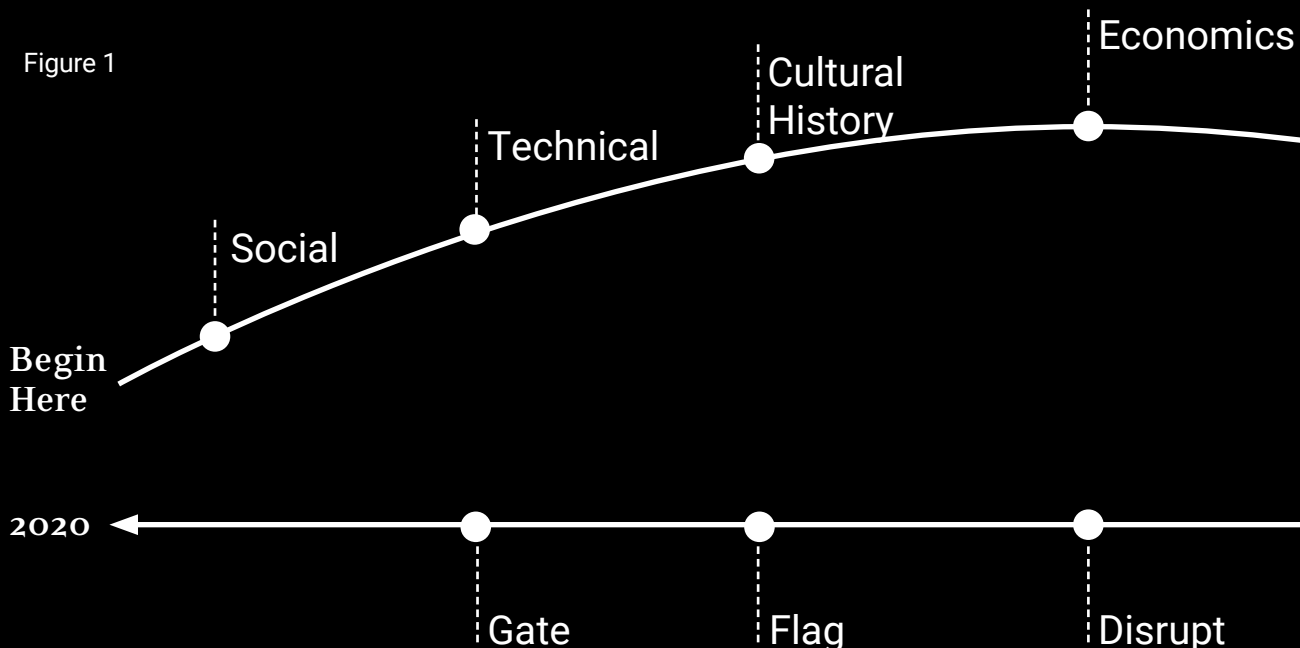
# INTRODUCTION TO THREATCASTING

Threatcasting is a conceptual framework used to help multidisciplinary groups envision future scenarios. It is also a process that enables systematic planning against threats ten years in the future.

Utilizing the threatcasting process, groups explore possible future threats and how to transform the future they desire into reality while avoiding undesired futures.

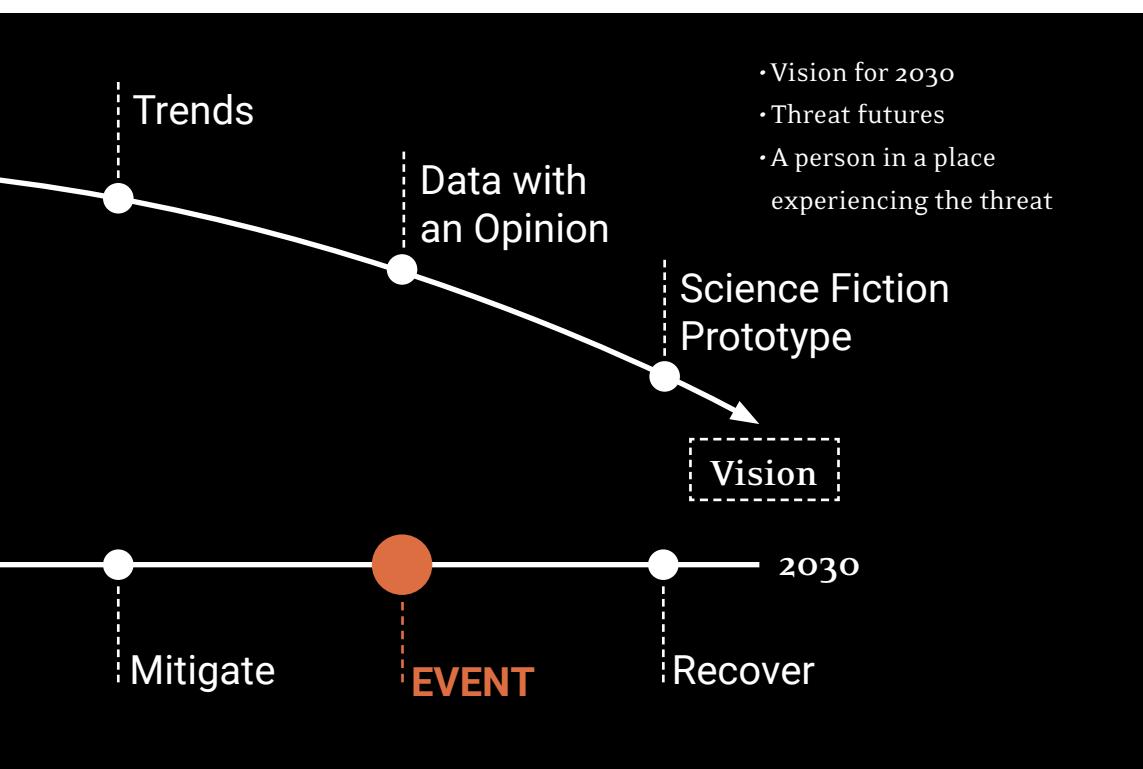
Threatcasting is a continuous, multiple-step process with inputs from social science, technical research, cultural history, economics, trends, expert interviews, and science fiction storytelling. These inputs inform the exploration of potential visions of the future.

Figure 1



A cross-functional group of practitioners gathered for two days in February 2020, to create models of WMD threat futures. The outcome is the beginning of a set of possible threats, external indicators and actions to be taken. It is not definitive but does give the organization a starting place. Drawing research inputs from a diverse data set and subject matter expert interviews, participants synthesized the data into workbooks\* and then conducted three rounds of threatcasting sessions.

These threatcasting sessions generated approximately 45 separate scenarios, each with a person, in a place, experiencing their own version of the threat. After the workshop concluded, futurists at the ASU Threatcasting Lab methodically analyzed these scenarios to categorize and aggregate novel indicators of how the most plausible threats could materialize during the next decade and what the implications are for “gatekeepers” standing in the way of the threats.





## PART TWO

# OUR FRAMEWORK

This report uses a different approach than other threatcasting workshops. First, instead of being held in person, our work session was a distributed event held in several one- or two-hour Zoom sessions held over a week. Second, we took a hypothesis-driven approach to previous threatcasting data and tested it to see if it applied to the virtual work session's new data. Instead of immediately combing the raw data from the workshop modeling for themes and categories of extremism narratives, we started from a known theory based on academic research. We applied that to our new data set. We began our analysis by creating a framework for extremist narratives that draws on existing research from *Narrative Identity* by Dan P. McAdams and Kate C. McLean.<sup>20</sup>

The following is a list of narrative categories developed by McAdams & McLean as they researched the relationship between life stories and how individuals adapted to changes. In these changes, "People convey to themselves and to others who they are now, how they came to be, and where they think their lives may be going in the future."<sup>21</sup>

Sometimes these adaptations affected an individual's identity and the authors created a framework of seven "life-story constructs." We adapted these constructs to investigate whether extremist behavior could be a possible narrative that people would adopt into their identities under certain circumstances. The agency construct was by far the most common and most motivating factor in identity development, followed by several instances of coherent positive resolution, and a rare example of redemption. The remaining four constructs were not found in our data.

We found it strange that redemption had such a minor influence on the identity of future extremism. On the surface, the actor in some of our models appeared to want to "salvage" a bad situation they found themselves in and turn it into a positive change. However, as we dug into the source of their problem, frustration, grievances, and a certain degree of despair about not being able to affect the change they so desired through peaceful mechanisms and the rule of law, this led us to categorize most of these redemption stories as an agency construct of narrative identity.

TABLE 1: THE NARRATIVE IDENTITY FRAMEWORK	
Identity Construct	Definition
<b>Agency (A)</b>	"The degree to which protagonists are able to affect change in their own lives or influence others in their environment, often through demonstrations of self-mastery, empowerment, achievement, or status. Highly agentic stories privilege accomplishment and the ability to control one's fate"
<b>Coherent Positive Resolution (CPR)</b>	The extent to which the tensions in the story are resolved to produce closure and a positive ending.
<b>Redemption (R)</b>	"Scenes in which a demonstrably "bad" or emotionally negative event or circumstance leads to a demonstrably 'good' or emotionally positive outcome. The initial negative state is 'redeemed' or salvaged by the good."
<b>Contamination (Con)</b>	"Scenes in which a good or positive event turns dramatically bad or negative, such that the negative affect overwhelms, destroys, or erases the effects of the preceding positivity."
<b>Exploratory Narrative Processing (E)</b>	"The extent of self-exploration as expressed in the story. High scores suggest deep exploration or the development of a richly elaborated self- understanding."
<b>Communion (Comm)</b>	"The degree to which protagonists demonstrate or experience interpersonal connection through love, friendship, dialogue, or connection to a broad collective. The story emphasizes intimacy, caring, and belongingness."
<b>Meaning Making (M)</b>	"The degree to which the protagonist learns something or gleans a message from an event. Coding ranges from no meaning (low score) to learning a concrete lesson (moderate score) to gaining a deep insight about life (high score)."

Table 1: The narrative identity framework includes seven constructs that McAdams & McLean suggest people use to construct meaning about their lives.<sup>22</sup>

20 McAdams & McLean, 2013.

21 McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 233.

22 Adapted from McAdams & McLean, 2013.

Next, we crossed the narrative identity framework with our adaptation of a framework on radicalization and recruitment developed by Chuck Crossett and Jason A. Spitaletta on behalf of the U.S. Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group. This framework suggests sixteen risk factors for radicalization that the authors collated from a study of radicalization and counter-radical applications. Some models contained only a few visible risk factors, while others had nearly every one present.

TABLE 2: THE RADICALIZATION RISK FRAMEWORK		
Code #	Risk Factor	Definition
1	<b>Emotional Vulnerability</b>	A strong emotional attachment to something or someone that is disrupted or changed; e.g. family love, patriotism, loyalty, etc. Rarely seen alone without other risk factors
2	<b>Dissatisfaction w/ Status Quo</b>	A sense that how things are now are not what the person wishes them to be
3	<b>Personal connection to grievance</b>	Personally wronged in the past; could be perceived or actual and perpetrated by an individual or that state
4	<b>In-group delegitimization of out-group</b>	Being excluded from the in-group or a feeling of not belonging or "fitting in"
5	<b>Non-negative view of violence</b>	Violence as a solution is acceptable through acculturation by media
6	<b>Historical views on violence</b>	Violence as a solution is acceptable from personal experience (I see it all the time or I've used it before)
7	<b>Perceived benefit of violence</b>	Violence has been seen to be successful in solving problems (as a last resort or for a specific purpose)
8	<b>External support</b>	Support for violence comes from a benefactor (a nation-state or a corporation) - does not usually include money or materiel

<b>Code #</b>	<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Resources</b>	Availability of sufficient capital and materiel means to enact violent actions
<b>10</b>	<b>Social net</b>	The network of social ties needed to draw someone over the fence towards violence
<b>11</b>	<b>Perceived threat</b>	There is a sense of danger to life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness
<b>12</b>	<b>Extended conflict</b>	The animosities between groups or drive to violent solutions is not new and may be culturally and historically ingrained
<b>13</b>	<b>Humiliation</b>	A specific type of grievance when a person is removed from their position of status or the actions of others cause personal embarrassment; may also be a motivator for nation-states
<b>14</b>	<b>Competition</b>	Usually international competition between states (military, economic, etc); an individual loyal to the state may adopt their state's drive to be on top as a personal narrative
<b>15</b>	<b>Youth</b>	Younger individuals (teens & early adults) may be more likely to be drawn to violent solutions
<b>16</b>	<b>Resonant narrative</b>	For our purposes, not used, since this is the variable we are seeking to discover

Table 2: The radicalization framework contains sixteen risk factors observed across various studies of radicalization and counter-radical applications.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Crossett & Spitaletta, 2010.

We used the raw data models from five previously published threatcasting workshops and reports in the priming data set. These models helped us understand the conditions that may exist immediately prior to the commission of an extremist act, including recruitment, radicalization, or a nuanced attack on social norms. While created to answer the research questions of their own studies, these models were valuable in providing additional possible and probable futures in which extremist behavior manifested or could manifest. The following is the list of all the workshops and the abbreviations we use in the remainder of this report to refer to models from each workshop:

<b>DTRA</b>	Future of Cyber and Weapons of Mass Destruction	(n=44) <sup>24</sup>
<b>IW</b>	Future of Information Warfare	(n=18) <sup>25</sup>
<b>IDM</b>	Information Disorder Machines	(n=24) <sup>26</sup>
<b>WEST</b>	Report on the Future of Cyber Warfare (Threatcasting West)	(n=22) <sup>27</sup>
<b>ACI</b>	Future of Weaponized Artificial Intelligence	(n=14) <sup>28</sup>
<b>EXTR</b>	Future of Extremism in America	(n=12)

24 Johnson, B. D., Brown, J. C., & Massad, J. (2021). Digital weapons of mass destabilization: The future of cyber and weapons of mass destruction. Arizona State University.

25 Johnson, B. D., Draudt, A., Brown, J. C., & Ross, R. J. (2020). Information warfare and the future of conflict: A Threatcasting Lab report. Arizona State University.

26 Johnson, B. D. (2019). Information disorder machines: Weaponizing narrative and the future of the United States of America. Arizona State University.

27 Johnson, B. D. (2017). A widening attack plain. Army Cyber Institute.

28 Johnson, B. D., Draudt, A., Vanatta, N., & West, J. R. (2017). The new dogs of war: The future of weaponized artificial intelligence. Arizona State University.





## PART THREE

# DATA ANALYSIS

This section describes our initial findings from the priming data set, followed by an analysis of the additional models developed during the extremism threatcasting workshop. Recall that the priming data set was collated from five previously published threatcasting reports on the futures of information warfare, weaponized artificial intelligence, information disorder, cyber warfare, and weapons of mass destruction. We used a priming data set for two purposes. The first was to train our analysts to have a high confidence level in applying the frameworks consistently across several data sets. Discussing how we came to certain conclusions and agreeing upon the language and categories for different data points increased interrater reliability (~96%).

The second purpose of the priming data set was to revisit models from previous studies and look for insights that might answer research questions beyond what the models were originally intended to answer. This gives the Threatcasting Lab confidence that data collected in various workshops could prove useful to other

research questions and provides those data with additional longevity.

Although we excluded nation-state actions and criminal enterprises that support, direct, or condone violent acts within the United States as typical of statecraft and criminality, it was difficult to distinguish the threat and results of their actions from the threat and results of more categorically “true” extremists. This means that when we measure just the effect rather than the intent, or consider intent without considering the effect of those perpetrating violent actions, we lose clarity on the “why” these actions are extreme. Not all violence falls within our definition of extremism. This was the reason we chose to look at violent acts from the perspective of narratives: narratives of state-on-state conflict or narratives of criminal violence for profit are different than the narratives of U.S. citizens, tourists, immigrants, and other “internal” populations. The American birthright suggests that these individuals have a reason to be generally law-abiding and act in accordance with social norms rather than seeking violence.

Radicalization is the name given to the process of moving someone's identity from somewhere situated within expected social norms out to a fringe position where they either a) willingly choose violence or b) feel they have no choice but to choose violence as a means to resolve the dissonance in their identity.

The overwhelming majority of radicalization to extremist violence occurred because the actor felt their personal agency to direct their destiny was threatened. According to our framework, agency is "The degree to which protagonists are able to affect change in their own lives or influence others in their environment, often through demonstrations of self-mastery, empowerment, achievement, or status. Highly agentic stories privilege accomplishment and the ability to control one's fate."<sup>29</sup> The stories that accompanied the dissonance found in a lack of agency included individuals struggling against the rise of technology as an existential threat to humanity (DTRA Green 1, West Group 8-2, ACI Group 3-1), a religious zealot who felt their nation's politics wasn't progressing fast enough towards their idealized end state and began taking matters into their own hands (DTRA Red 2), or several individuals frustrated with the slowness of American bureaucracy and policies that exclude the minority interest (DTRA Neon Yellow Pawn 3, IW Teal 3).

Aside from the perceived suppression of one's agency, the other significant narrative was focused on righting previous wrongs, or something that McAdams & McLean (2013) called coherent positive resolution (CPR). Although never achieved in the snapshot in time that our models are being described, we found that CPR tends to be the goal of some extremist actions. The extent to which the tensions in the story are resolved to produce closure and a positive ending, occasionally including closure through violence, is a viable narrative for certain extremists. One such model illustrates a group of anti-vaxxers hiring foreign hackers to sabotage a device that could create on-the-spot genetically tailored vaccines. The anti-vaxxer group was trying to stop technology moving forward that conflicted with their world view, thereby bringing a positive closure (i.e. evidence that vaccinating is harmful to humans) (DTRA Orange 1).

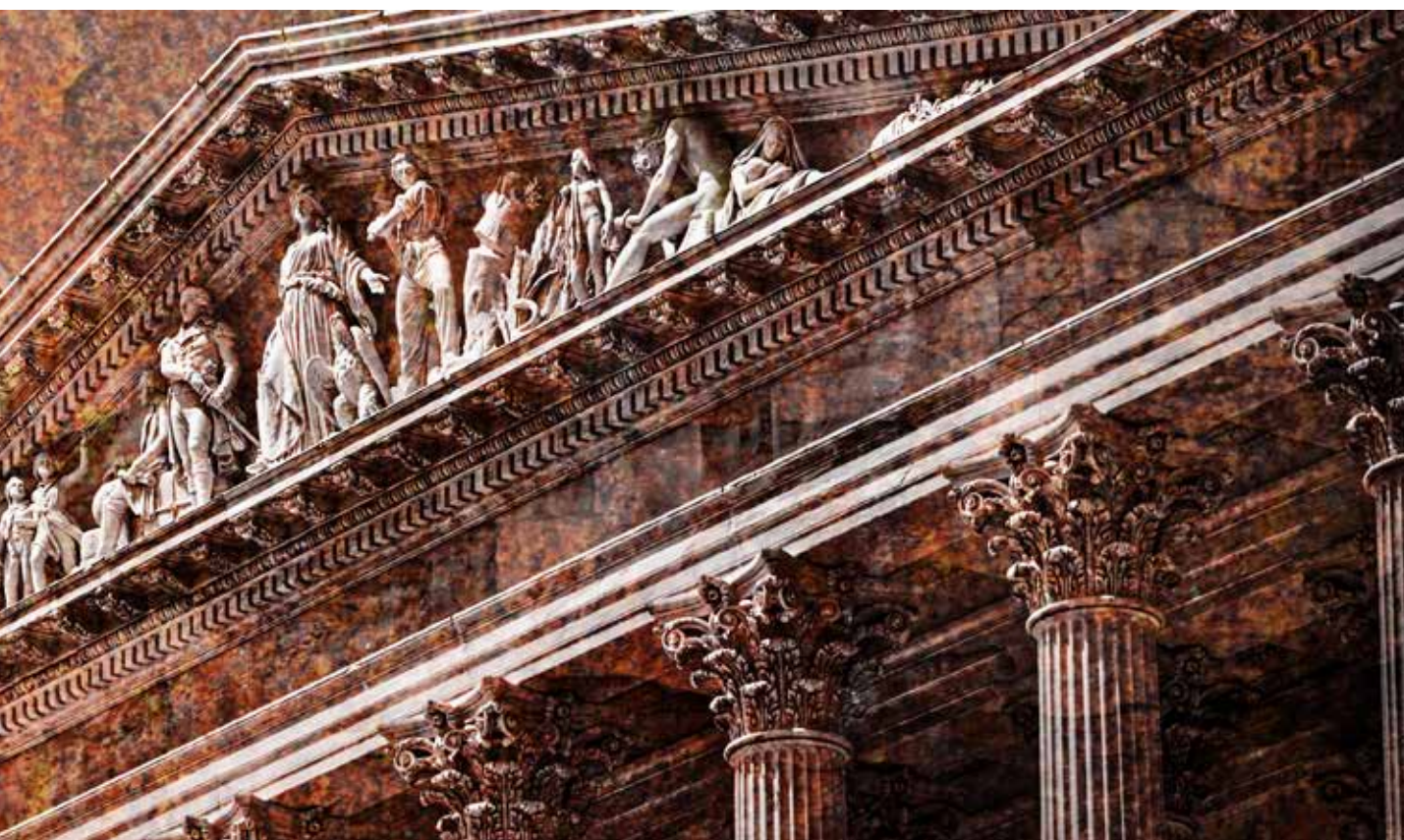
We applied the narrative identity and radicalization frameworks to the raw data models generated by five previously published threatcasting workshops (n=126). We also applied the boundary conditions previously listed (e.g. we excluded criminal, state-sponsored, or state proxy violence and scenarios without violence) and ended up with 40 violent or extremist-oriented threat models that contained extremist markers.

We then gave each model a narrative identity code (Con, R, A, E, CPR, Comm, M) corresponding to the primary narrative the threat actor was trying to achieve. While most of the models are written from the perspective of a “victim” or the actor experiencing that model’s threat, there is enough data to understand the narrative of the threat actor as well. In some circumstances, the threat situation was sufficient to radicalize the protagonist and lead them to violent actions, in which case, the narrative of the threat and the protagonist became the same. In other situations, the story of the threat suggested one type of identity (e.g., a redemption

story), but the actual narrative was different (e.g., an agency narrative) that the threat actor was trying to achieve. In a few cases, the difference between the story and the narrative was sometimes substantial and it was significant to our findings.

We also looked for radicalization factors in each of the 40 models and coded them 1-16, as listed in Table 2. The combination of the narrative identity code and the radicalization factors provided us with a code co-occurrence matrix shown in Figures 1 and 2 below. Darker yellow and red numbers indicate a higher co-occurrence between these two frameworks.





Codes	Codex																Totals								
	Agency (A)	Coherent positive	Communion (Comm)	Contamination (Con)	Exploratory narrative	Meaning making (M)	Redemption (R)	01. Emotional vulnerability	02. Dissatisfaction w/	03. Personal connection to	04. In-group	05. Non-negative view of	06. Historical views on	07. Perceived benefit of	08. External support	09. Resources		10. Social network	11. Perceived threat	12. Extended conflict	13. Humiliation	14. Competition	15. Youth	16. Resonant narrative	
Agency (A)								1	4	5	8	2	2	2	6	2	2	4	8		2	1		3	48
Coherent positive									1		1	1			1	1		2	1	1		1		1	11
Communion (Comm)																									
Contamination (Con)									1	1	2	1			1	1	1	1				1		2	13
Exploratory narrative																									
Meaning making (M)																									
Redemption (R)	1							1	2	1	1			2	1	1	1	2		2		1	1	1	17
01. Emotional vulnerability	4							1	3	4	1	1	2	3	1	2	4	4		2				2	34
02. Dissatisfaction w/	5	1		1				2	3	5	4	2	1	7	4	2	5	7		2		1	4	56	
03. Personal connection to	6			1				1	4	5	3	3	2	6	3	2	5	7		2	1		4	58	
04. In-group	2	1		2				1	1	4	3	3	1	5	3	1	3	5		2	1	1	5	44	
05. Non-negative view of	2	1		1				1	2	3	3		1	3	3		3	3	1	1	1		3	32	
06. Historical views on	2							2	1	2	1	1		2	1		2	2		1			1	18	
07. Perceived benefit of	4	1		1				2	3	7	6	6	3	2		4	1	6	8		3	1	1	6	64
08. External support	2	1		1				1	1	4	3	3	3	1	4		3	4	1	1	1	1	2	37	
09. Resources	2			1				1	2	2	2	1		1			2	2		1	1		2	20	
10. Social network	4	2		1				1	4	5	5	3	3	2	5	3	2		6	1	2	1		4	54
11. Perceived threat	6	1		1				2	4	7	7	5	3	2	8	4	2	6		3	1	1	5	68	
12. Extended conflict		1										1			1		1				1			5	
13. Humiliation	2							2	2	2	2	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	3			1	2	27	
14. Competition	1	1		1						1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1				1	13	
15. Youth								1		1	1	1		1	1			1		1				7	
16. Resonant narrative	3	1		2				1	2	4	4	5	3	1	5	2	2	4	5		2	1			47
Totals	48	11		13				17	34	56	55	44	32	18	64	37	20	54	68	6	27	13	7	47	

[Figure 1: Code co-occurrence from Dedoose - extremism workshop data only]

## ANALYSIS OF EXTREMISM WORKSHOP DATA ALONE:

1. Agency is the most frequently observed narrative identity type. When it is crossed with radicalization risk factors, the three most frequent risk factors are “Personal connection with a grievance,” “Perceived benefit of violence,” and “Perceived threat” each with (n=6).
2. The most frequent co-occurrence of radicalization risk factors with each other includes “Dissatisfaction with the status quo” and “Perceived benefit of violence” (n=7) followed by “Dissatisfaction with the status quo” and “Perceived threat” (n=7) followed by “Personal connection to a grievance” and “Perceived threat” (n=7). This means that radicalization to extremist action is most likely to contain elements of some dissatisfaction with how the world operates and a continued threat to a person’s way of life that has no visible end. Additionally, the threat to a person’s way of life is perceived to be strongest when it causes personal trauma, fear, anxiety, loss, or other grievance.



Next, we present the combined analysis from both the previous workshop data and the twelve additional models generated during the October 2020 work session.

Codes	Codes																								Totals
	Agency (A)	Coherent positive	Communion (Comm)	Contamination (Con)	Exploratory narrative	Meaning making (M)	Redemption (R)	01. Emotional vulnerability	02. Dissatisfaction w/	03. Personal connection to	04. In-group	05. Non-negative view of	06. Historical views on	07. Perceived benefit of	08. External support	09. Resources	10. Social network	11. Perceived threat	12. Extended conflict	13. Humiliation	14. Competition	15. Youth	16. Resonant narrative		
Agency (A)						1	2	12	27	21	10	10	11	23	13	15	14	21	10	8	6	6	14	232	
Coherent positive								1	8		2	4	2	4	3	1	2	2	3		2			3	33
Communion (Comm)																									
Contamination (Con)									2	2	2	2		2	3	1	1	2	2		3		2	24	
Exploratory narrative																									
Meaning making (M)	1							1		1					1	1	1	1						7	
Redemption (R)	2							4	8	6	3	5	1	5	3	5	1	8	2	6	1	2	2	64	
01. Emotional vulnerability	12	1				1	4		13	11	5	8	6	10	6	6	7	10	4	5		2	8	119	
02. Dissatisfaction w/	27	4		2			8	13		22	13	23	12	30	15	17	13	27	14	11	6	7	16	279	
03. Personal connection to	21			2		1	6	11	22		8	16	7	17	8	12	10	21	8	11	3	3	9	194	
04. In-group	10	2		2			3	5	13	8		13	8	14	8	6	7	11	7	6	2	4	11	140	
05. Non-negative view of	10	4		2			5	8	23	10	13		13	21	17	12	9	17	13	9	5	7	14	227	
06. Historical views on	11	2					1	6	12	7	8	13		14	8	6	4	8	6	4		4	8	122	
07. Perceived benefit of	23	4		2			5	10	30	17	14	21	14		15	12	11	23	12	8	5	7	16	249	
08. External support	13	3		3		1	3	6	15	8	8	17	8	15		8	7	13	11	2	6	5	9	161	
09. Resources	15	1		1		1	5	6	17	12	6	12	6	12	8		9	13	7	7	6	5	8	157	
10. Social network	14	2		1		1	1	7	13	10	7	9	4	11	7	9		10	4	5	3	2	9	129	
11. Perceived threat	21	2		2		1	8	10	27	21	11	17	8	23	13	13	10		9	10	6	5	12	229	
12. Extended conflict	10	3		2			2	4	14	6	7	13	6	12	11	7	4	9		4	5	2	5	126	
13. Humiliation	8						6	5	11	11	6	9	4	8	2	7	5	10	4				3	102	
14. Competition	6	2		3			1		5	3	2	5		5	6	6	3	6	5			1	3	61	
15. Youth	6						2	2	7	3	4	7	4	7	5	5	2	5	2	3	1			60	
16. Resonant narrative	14	3		2			2	8	16	9	11	14	8	16	9	8	9	12	5	2	3	3		155	
Totals	232	33		24		7	64	119	279	194	140	227	122	249	161	157	129	229	126	102	61	60	155		

[Figure 2: Code co-occurrence from Dedoose - both historical and workshop data]

## ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL AND EXTREMISM DATA TOGETHER:

1. The largest co-occurrence of narrative identity types crossed with radicalization risk factors include "Agency" and "Dissatisfaction with the status quo" (n=27) followed by "Agency" and "Perceived benefit of violence" (n=23) followed by a tie with the co-occurrence of "Agency" and "Personal connection to a grievance" (n= 21) and "Agency" and "Perceived threat." Agency, or more accurately, the perception that agency is somehow being taken away, is a narrative category that most strongly resonates for those turning to extremism.
2. The most frequent co-occurrence of radicalization risk factors with each other include "Perceived benefit of violence" and "Dissatisfaction with the status quo" (n=30) followed by "Perceived threat" and "Dissatisfaction with the status quo" (n=27) followed by "Non-negative view of violence" and "Dissatisfaction with the status quo" (n=23) and "Perceived benefit of violence" with "Perceived threat." Again, dissatisfaction with the status quo is a risk category in our models that motivates to a larger extent than other risk factors. Although more data is needed to specify the source of dissatisfaction, we can initially state that restrictions and frustrations that impede an individual's pursuit of the American dream tend to be more closely associated with seeking out extremist ideologies and acting out violent responses.



## PART FOUR

# DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS



## THE RISE OF NORMATIVE EXTREMISM

There has always been a sense of hope of improvement and even the Declaration of Independence gives an unalienable right of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Even if people do not explicitly know these words, they implicitly believe they can achieve them in America. Many of the models infringe somehow on the agency of a person to achieve the American Dream. The American Dream narrative includes rugged individualism, bootstrapping, and the availability of personal freedoms and liberties. When agency is compromised, there is a sense of restriction in the “pursuit” of what makes someone happy. When these rights and the dream of independent action, or agency, are threatened from external sources, usually countries, the nation has risen in armed conflict and gone to war. When these rights are threatened internally, the same verve rises in the hearts of Americans expecting protection for their dream of independent

action or agency. Often, our models envision a violent response to protecting the right to pursue the American Dream.

Violent extremism is not a switch thrown, but a journey taken. American extremism will manifest not only in physical attacks, but via extremist attacks on socio-cultural norms to lower the barriers to participatory extremism. “Norms”, as we understand them, are the social rules societies use to informally self-regulate. They impact legislative agendas and broader culture, and shifting norms can be exploited to fuel identitarian conflict (e.g., immigration, gay marriage, gun control, reproductive rights, reparations, et. al).

Extremists will attack mainstream social norms to redefine them in line with their objectives. To the extent their ideologies, activism, and financial support find common cause with legislators and lobbyists, they will seek to enshrine extremist ideologies into law and culture. Case in point: carrying long guns into the Michigan state house may have been legally permissible, but normatively extreme, a step taken in a radicalization

journey by several of the insurrectionists who plotted subsequently to kidnap the Governor of Michigan.<sup>30</sup>

American extremism will seek to redefine norms for many reasons - to generate sympathy (or at least, apathy) to enable "freedom of action"; to shift status quo to exacerbate schisms and create opportunities; and to attract new adherents. Domestic extremists actively seek to co-opt and redefine language and behaviors

traditionally associated with the "American Dream", e.g., the terms "freedom" and "patriot", and who can legitimately wear and wave the American flag.

Cultural norms will become a primary battleground against domestic extremism; combating and mitigating normative extremism will require further research beyond the initial findings of this report.

The general recourse for a person or a group to seek a redress for the grievances



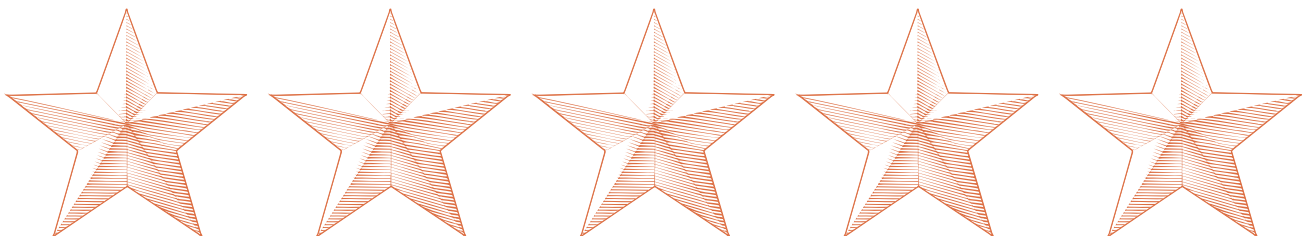
30 Bogel-Burroughs, N. (2020, October 9). What we know about the alleged plot to kidnap Michigan's governor. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/09/us/michigan-militia-whitmer.html>.

of agency restricted by the state should be through peaceful protest, petitioning for a change through elected officials, legal action, and other bureaucratic mechanisms. So what happens when the peaceful mechanisms for change are slow, cumbersome, restrictive, or appear to leave out a person with a perceived grievance? This appears to be the most common reason that individuals in our models step across the divide between peaceful protest and violent action, begin to attack social norms, or seek to change laws allowing for or when their actions become "extreme."

The justifications listed in our models include actions that intend to move the frustrations of restricted agency back towards a non-restricted agency. These justifications include compensation and protecting others. In the category of compensation, actors feel their agency can be restored when "someone" (often the government) provides acknowledgment that someone has a "thing" and someone else does not have it who should have it. Justice is one manifestation of this acknowledgment of imbalance. Someone "owes" someone else a thing and until that thing is returned, conflict is a worthy solution.

In the category of protecting others, groups move to extremes to defend some part

of their identity (or the identity of others) that is being threatened (again, often by the state, but sometimes by the "other" or the "outsider" that has a different identity). This latter category draws on the ideal that the strong should protect the weak. Pragmatism, altruism, nobility, or even exerting dominance could be an underlying philosophy why protection of the weak and vulnerable is such a strong motivation for emerging conflict. Sometimes these categories overlap as in the case of oppressed or marginalized identities - a cause worth fighting for might be because individuals see themselves as worthy and equal to receiving a certain kind of life as someone else, but for whatever reason, they do not have that equality. Loss of jobs, lesser status as an immigrant or foreign-born individual, and race inequities are some of the causes our models saw as worth fighting for. This has a sense of compensation to it: someone has something that others should have and there isn't a fair way to balance that "something." Often this "something" isn't tangible, like money, but rather intangible "somethings" are keenly felt as missing: for example, holding a job, being seen as a human being, or having a sense of belonging are things that need compensating for and could be worth engaging in conflict to protect.



## **DIA DE LOS MUERTOS**

*Thankfully, the ringing in Miguel's ears drowned out the screams and dulled the rattle-and-pop staccato of small arms fire. Seconds ago, the blast stabbed his ears with ice picks, kicked him in the skull, and threw him back; now he was slipping in and out of consciousness. The Dia de Los Muertos parade had been torn to bits, and above Miguel, spots and flashes strobed across his eyes in the shredded blue sky. One thought floated clear: a bomb may have gone off today, but the fuse was lit years ago.*

*Miguel grew up in Phoenix in a tight-knit, devoutly-Catholic, Mexican-American family. And through the lens of his community, the city seemed a riotous, exciting, welcoming place. Until it wasn't.*

*It started with the marches after the 2020 elections. Miguel remembered the first ones with signs about some "steal," but didn't think much about them - after all, he wasn't into stealing, either.*

*But the angry people kept marching - it seemed they were mad at everything.*

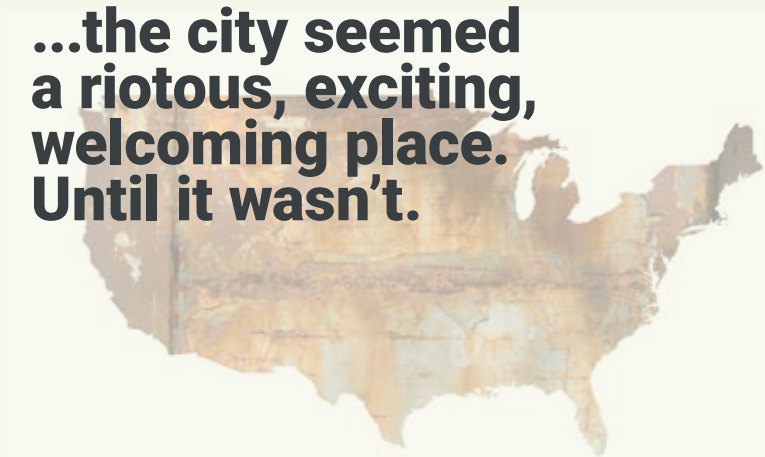
*New people - white supremacists - joined the marches and new signs cropped up that made his Mamá choke and Miguel's blood boil. His dad shouted at them, but the marches weren't breaking stuff, so the town let them go on. It turned into a weekend thing - white folks would set up arm chairs on the side walks to watch the marches, offer marchers drinks to beat the Phoenix heat. Smiling and clapping for the hate*

*marching by - people Miguel knew, people he'd respected. The signs got meaner, then started appearing on people's front lawns - first on lawns and in barrios Miguel knew not to hang out in, but then closer and closer to his neighborhood.*

*Businesses Miguel's community frequented, the restaurants his family loved, and the reception halls that hosted their Quinceañeras became too busy, too booked, or "unavailable." After Kamala Harris won the 2024 election, the Next Door app exploded with racial slurs, terrible words were muttered to young children in stores, streets were filled with hard looks and vandalism and attacks at night by "unknown assailants" who never seemed to get caught. In apps, online and on the streets, the message was clear: hate was ok. Miguel - and anyone like him - was not.*

*To turn the tide, the city council decided to set an example. In the spirit of friendship and gratitude for the hardworking, taxpaying, law-abiding Latinx citizens of Phoenix, councilors would march with them in the Dia De Los Muertos parade.*

**...the city seemed  
a riotous, exciting,  
welcoming place.  
Until it wasn't.**





## ALGORITHMIC AMPLIFICATION

---

In the next decade, algorithmic amplification will be included in the narrative identity of future extremism. Social media, information disorder machines, and artificial intelligence that both creates truth and checks facts will shape the forces of recruitment and amplification of grievances. There will likely be a growing trend of digital “violence” (in air quotes, because it does not conform to the traditional sense of physical harm). Character assassination, deep fakes, hacking of oppositional data streams and data repositories, and monetization of truth, facts, and science are markers of algorithmic/digital violence.

More importantly algorithms show selected bits of info that inflames and encourages hateful or oppositional content generation. In other words, algorithms trained to maximize monetization recognize that more interaction is generated on sites, public forums, and social media when discussing the opposition or by arguing. Maximizing content generation for profit will be done by stoking the fires of contention. In November, 2020, Facebook purposefully changed their news feed algorithm to lessen the amount of election-related misinformation users would see, yet a Facebook executive said these changes were never meant to be permanent.<sup>31</sup> This shows that organizations such as

Facebook can influence what we see by tweaking an algorithm - in essence, by just flipping a switch - to reduce disinformation.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Congress is currently scrutinizing Facebook for failing to make good on their promise to stop recommending political groups to viewers, something the company promised to do in light of Presidential election turmoil.<sup>33</sup>

Facebook is not alone in its culpability for showing extreme and polarizing content. YouTube, a subsidiary of Google, has been scrutinized for its algorithm encouraging users to move from lesser to more extreme content. In contraindicating reports, researchers have found that YouTube’s personalized algorithms suggested certain types of alt-right content.<sup>34</sup> In contrast, other research indicates that the algorithm pushes viewers to mainstream news and neutral content.<sup>35</sup>

Other algorithms will continue to maximize “content bubbles” so that people will only see information that conforms to or reinforces their point of view and will not be exposed to the same facts that their opposition will see. However, maximizing viewer “sessions,” page views, or time spent on the platform will continue to motivate social media companies and therefore changes to algorithms will not reduce the “bad for the world” content that viewers see. Instead, maximization will continue to seek ways for users to spend more time on the platform.<sup>36</sup> Thus, over the next decade, automatic tools, AI,

and algorithms will incite the separation, conflict, and contention that polarizes in-group & out-group camps. It is possible (although not fully depicted in our models)

that recruitment, radicalization, and pushing to extremist narratives of identity may be entirely algorithmically driven.

31 Roose, K., Isaac, M., & Frenkel, S. (2020, November 24). Facebook struggles to balance civility and growth. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/24/technology/facebook-election-misinformation.html>

32 LaFrance, A. (2020, December 15). Facebook is a doomsday machine. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/12/facebook-doomsday-machine/617384/>

33 Ng, A. & Yin, L. (2021, January 26). Lawmaker questions Facebook on broken election-related promise. The Markup. <https://themarkup.org/citizen-browser/2021/01/26/lawmaker-questions-facebook-on-broken-election-related-promise>

34 Horta Ribeiro, M., et. al. (2019). Auditing radicalization pathways on YouTube. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1908.08313v3>

35 Ledwich, M. & Zaitsev, A. (2019). Algorithmic extremism: Examining YouTube's rabbit hole of radicalization. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1912.11211>

36 Roose, Isaac, & Frenkel, 2020.





## CORPORATE EXTREMISM

---

In analyzing previously existing scenarios, we categorized and excluded instances where the author or instigator of a scenario was a corporation because a profit motive does not fit the traditional “extremist” narrative. This discussion centered around an event’s authorship rather than its effect on average citizens or their world perceptions. Scenario DTRA Orange 2 saw a corporation seeking to disrupt its marketplace competitors by what appeared to be an eco-terrorist dirty bomb, showing the “vulnerability of motivating populations as decoys”; ACI Group 5-1 imagined an insulin pump manufacturer hacking competitors products to sow distrust and confusion; IW Team Red 1 saw a Chinese multinational radicalizing indigenous populations to secure an expansion footprint on US soil. As we consider “extremism” in 2031, we would do well to add corporations as potential threat actors, albeit seen in a different light.

We use the term “Corporate Extremism” to describe extremist activity incited by legally incorporated business entities to protect and grow profit and markets with potentially lethal consequences to individuals, systems, and governments. This becomes more likely, and arguably quite muddled, when state actors, criminal enterprises, business concerns, and extremist ideologies find common cause

and provide ways to evade accountability.

Despite scenarios where a reasonable person could interpret the resulting activity as extremism, if the original actors were embodied as a corporation, we eliminated these models from our primary analysis using the radicalization and identity narrative frameworks. Still we did return to them for additional insight.

Corporations have historically worked to maximize shareholder value or to maximize profits in the market and over rivals. To the extent a given business’s interests align temporarily or long-term with hostile nation-states, criminal entities, or with extremist ideologies and can be influenced by proxies that obscure financial flow and make accountability and authorship

opaque, we should expect those avenues to be pursued. The extremist behavior that captures headlines may only be the tip of a new kind of iceberg: a vast interconnected structure of temporary alliances of convenience and common cause that melt when prodded, washing away accountability and legal consequences.

In the same way enemy states will test the boundaries of rules of engagement and play in the gray areas around the technical and legal definitions of war. We can expect corporate entities operating on their own or in conjunction with other threat actors to continually stretch the legal limits around amassing profit, capital,

and creating shareholder value. To the extent financing can be hidden through cryptocurrencies, and where international laws leave gray areas and accountability can be obfuscated, denied, or accrued to entities at a suitable legal/moral distance from a business, we should expect to see corporations leverage “extremist” behavior to meet their objectives. In many cases, the extremist behavior does include acts of violence, although not necessarily as a direct intent of the corporation’s profit-seeking actions.

This raises an important consideration: domestic extremists funded directly and indirectly, to further corporate agendas. Expect encrypted boardroom conversations that move from directly sponsoring athlete influencers to indirectly sponsoring extremist influencers.

IDM Blue Chip 2 says, “Influencers no longer considered [by] fringe or youth [as a] source of entertainment, but rather accepted as the predominant source of information. They are increasingly financed and influenced by foreign actors, which is broadly accepted or ignored as a new normal.”<sup>37</sup>

In the Extremism Workshop, EXTR Team Red developed a scenario in which timber tycoons leverage anti-government activists to help them fight off regulation by the destabilizing local government. EXTR Team Violet saw a paper mill intentionally paint whistle blowers as leftist extremists, noting, “companies are consistently found to be willing to use fear/violence to control protesters/whistle blowers.”

Corporations have histories of leveraging militias (South Sudan Oil Companies),<sup>38</sup> paramilitary (“Banana Block”)<sup>39</sup> and security contractors to protect their business interests. As EXTR Team Violet notes, “Corporations - particularly those backed by nation-states - have the ability to set the stage through integrated propaganda networks.” When these entities accomplish those goals by stoking local resentments and tensions, the results can look like extremism - and in some cases are intentionally disguised as such.

In the same way, we’ve seen political extremism techniques migrate from foreign theaters into the U.S. In some cases Political Action Committees and dark money groups finance these

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Specia, M. (2019, Sep 19). South Sudan oil consortium funded militias accused of atrocities, report says. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/19/world/africa/south-sudan-oil-militias.html>

<sup>39</sup> Colombian companies charged for crimes against humanity. teleSUR. (February 4, 2017). <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Colombian-Companies-Charged-for-Crimes-Against-Humanity-2017-0204-0010.html>

techniques and offer a separation for the beneficiary from accountability. We should not be surprised to see extremism-in-service-to-business-goals migrate from international to local “laundered” funding, cryptocurrencies, and “alignments of convenience” (e.g., under the Trump administration, fascist white supremacists and zionists supporting the same candidate).

In the next decade, we can expect social media “influencers” to be financed and weaponized to support business and attack competitors (as already happens in Amazon and Yelp! reviews).

Extremists, or those who espouse a traditional extremist narrative, will be paid to incorporate narrative threads that benefit specific corporate interests (e.g. hydroxychloroquine, etc.). Finally, “anti-government” activists will be co-opted to fight any form of regulation and destabilize regional and local governance through the use of personal social media and activist forums.

Thanks to the company intranet back channels, he knew who Antifa was and where they lived. And houses burned down all the time in winter in Maine.



## WINTER IN MAINE

*Winter in Maine gets in the bones. Layers help, but not for long, and working for Rumford Paper, Steve spent a long time outside, guiding log trucks into the bays and back out. An hour after clocking in and his fingers were frozen stumps again, but he waved in the next truck, and the next. RP work wasn't easy, but the work was ok and he could scratch out a decent life. More than a lot of folks could say in Maine - and less of 'em everyday.*

*Steve worked at "Old RP" for his whole life, like his dad and "yeye", gramps, before him. He always had to work twice as hard as everyone else, had to keep "proving it", because gramps was Chinese, and all the Songs looked it. Somehow in three generations, the wisecracks and worse never stopped. Steve just dealt with it.*

*Global competition hit RP hard, and in the last few years, layoffs, pay-cuts and double shifts helped, until it hadn't. On top of that, Maine winters were tough on equipment. Everyone drove late night truckloads of used chems, busted parts and machine oil to dump in the woods near the river to save the money to "properly dispose". Weren't proud of it, it's just that's what it took. Less costs, more jobs. Steve did the math and shut up.*

*Mouths to feed and all.*

*And now goddamn Antifa, here!? Steve saw it on the internal threads - not to everyone, just the people who cared about whether the goddamn place stayed afloat. So naturally he got it.*

*Anonymous stuff, first rumors, then stories about the RP Antifa rats willing to go on record, talking to city council about the dumping. Bastards were going to try to squeeze RP, make 'em clean up the dumping with money RP didn't have. Steve did the math: that'd mean jobs - more of 'em, maybe his? Maybe all of 'em? Gone.*

*Someone had to stop them. But who'd have the balls to do something about it? Waving in the next truck, hands blocks of ice, Steve knew who'd do something. Steve-goddamn-Song would. Thanks to the company intranet back channels, he knew who Antifa was and where they lived. And houses burned down all the time in winter in Maine.*





## PART FIVE

# INFLUENCE OF CURRENT EVENTS ON THIS ANALYSIS

As the analysis of this report was wrapping up, the United States experienced a severe test to the resiliency of the republic and the democratic processes espoused in the Constitution. Armed insurrectionists stormed the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on January 6th, 2021, in a violent display of support for extreme right-wing identity, claiming that the 2020 presidential election was illegal. The Congress debated on articles of impeachment against President Trump just days before the inauguration of President-elect Biden.

The fact that we are currently experiencing an extremist attack on the political processes and values of America influences to some degree our understanding of American extremism, but it does not alter our findings. Rather, it strengthens our observations of the data modeled by the threatcasting process: a group of citizens with a particular personal identity surround themselves with stories and information feeds that reinforce their view of the world. That narrative includes a sense of stolen agency, such that normal means of political protest and reconciliation were not going to return

President Trump to power. A ticking clock before the inauguration meant that swift violence was thought to be the only way to seize back their agency, and it was done by first attacking norms. Whether these insurrectionists believe they have retained their agency with their actions remains to be seen. However, it likely will mean a severe limitation to their personal freedoms through due process of law as these group members are identified and prosecuted.

Social media, encrypted communication platforms, and algorithmically curated news feeds enabled the means and methods of confirming their beliefs, organizing violent activity, and recruiting additional support. This application of technology will not diminish over the next decade without intervention by industry, government, and personal accountability.

In the next decade, the divisions between the in-group and the “other” will be amplified. People may consider others not of their political “color” as something worth exterminating, or at least subjugating. Unfortunately, this report does not have recommendations for

avoiding or mitigating the current political crisis. However, the recommendations for understanding and tempering the risk factors of future extremism remain valid. In short, we acknowledge the effect this event has on our analytical biases and consider it an update to the environment that will exist in January 2031. Over the next decade, the ripple effects of American extremists violently protesting what is normally a peaceful political process and by continuing to push the limits of normative self-regulation will shade and influence the future actions government, industry, media, and society will need to take to avoid future events like this.





## COMMENTARY ON JANUARY 6TH, 2021

---

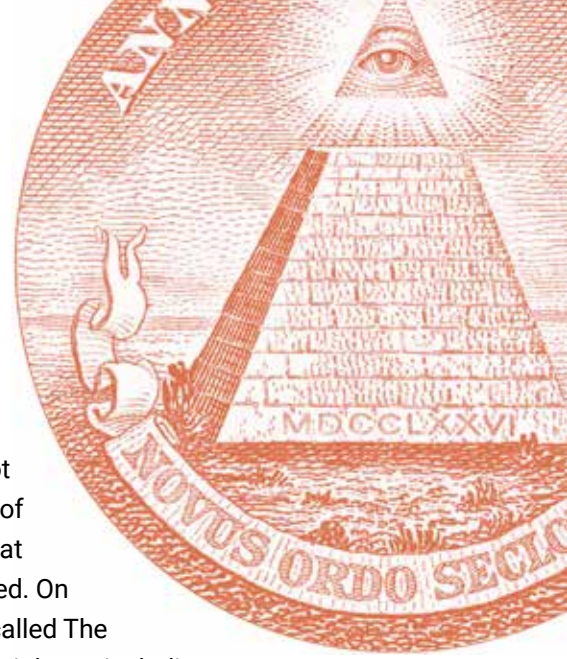
The storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021 seemed at the time to be impromptu. Although there were undoubtedly those who were spontaneous in their actions of storming the Capitol, it seems that many of the participants were there with the anticipation of violence. It appears there were false narratives propagated by not only right-wing leadership and media but there was also a ground swell of violent rhetoric in echo chambers of various right-wing communication formats. In the October 2020 Department of Homeland Security Threat Assessment, Director Chad Wolf stated that “I am particularly concerned about white supremacist violent extremists who have been exceptionally lethal in their abhorrent targeted attacks in recent years”.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the report points out that “Domestic Violent Extremists, specifically white supremacist extremists, will remain the most persistent lethal threat in the homeland.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, it is not as surprising as one would think that something as dangerous as January 6, 2021 would occur in the central halls of democratic power.

Participants of the violence originating from around the country suggests they found each other and communicated in several different ways. These seem to be mainly through websites chatrooms and communication apps. Zello is one of the ways they found each other and communicated. Zello is essentially a

walkie-talkie app where you can either have one-on-one conversations or set up rooms to communicate in groups.<sup>42</sup> Zello had at least 800 far-right channels and over 2,000 channels associated with militias or militarized social movements.<sup>43</sup> Zello was also used during the Capitol siege as communication tool between those at the Capitol and possibly those who were not there as with the documented discussion on the Zello channel “STOP THE STEAL J6” of “This is what we fucking lived up for. Everything we fucking trained for.”<sup>44</sup> Apparently, with the President’s encouragement on Twitter, channels on Zello increased in 2020 and included channels such as “Maga drag” or “Maga caravan.”<sup>45</sup> These groups or communities helped coordinate travel to DC with rendezvous points in several states so they could caravan to D.C. for the January 6 event.<sup>46</sup>

According to experts speaking with ABC News, in recent years, Parler, Gab, and other conservative-leaning sites helped create echo chambers for extremist views as well as violence. In addition, these are apps that helped to coordinate the attack on the Capitol.<sup>47</sup> Diara Townes, an investigative researcher at First Draft, a project that fights misinformation and disinformation, said the apps are echo chambers and that “they’re being pulled in...and not being able to relate back to reality.”<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the Vice President of the watchdog group Common Cause, Jesse Littlewood said:

*"These platforms are where individuals can see their worldview reflected and encouraged, even if in complete opposition to the facts," said Littlewood. "This avoidable tragedy [on Wednesday] was fomented for weeks based on the president and his Republican allies amplifying disinformation about the results of the election."<sup>49</sup>*



app creating an echo chamber because they don't recognize incorrect information.<sup>51</sup>

These posts are not just rare instances of violent language that are being highlighted. On a message board called The Donald, posts with violence including, "start shooting patriots," and "Kill these (expletive) traitors," had over 128,000 engagements by 4:23 pm EST on January 6.<sup>52</sup> These apps, or echo chambers, give insight into the internal narrative created in the last few years, especially since the allegations of a stolen election were made.

40 U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Homeland Threat Assessment October 2020, p. 4. <https://www.dhs.gov/>

41 Ibid., p. 18.

42 Zello. (2020, June 10). Talkie App. <https://zello.com/product/push-to-talk-app/>

43 Loewinger, M. (2021, January 14). Revealed: walkie-talkie app Zello hosted far-right groups who stormed Capitol. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/13/zello-app-us-capitol-attack-far-right>

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Romero, L. (2021, January 12). Experts say echo chambers from apps like Parler and Gab contributed to attack on Capitol. ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/experts-echo-chambers-apps-parler-gab-contributed-attack/story?id=75141014>

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Jaffe, L., et. al. (2021, January 7). Capitol rioters planned for weeks in plain sight. The police weren't ready. ProPublica. <https://www.propublica.org/article/capitol-rioters-planned-for-weeks-in-plain-sight-the-police-werent-ready>

51 Romero, 2021.

52 Guynn, J. (2021, January 6). 'Burn down DC': Violence that erupted at Capitol was incited by pro-Trump mob on social media. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2021/01/06/trump-riot-twitter-parler-proud-boys-boogaloos-antifa-qa non/6570794002/>

People who study radicalization and weaponization of narratives such as Emerson Brooking, resident fellow at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab and co-author of *LikeWar: The Weaponization of Social Media*,<sup>53</sup> do not seem surprised by the events on January 6. Of that day, Brooking said:

*"Today's tragic attack on the U.S. Capitol is the result of a years-long process of online radicalization. Millions of Americans have been the target of disinformation and conspiracy theories until they can no longer tell the difference between reality and fiction. This moment has been building since 2016...President Trump lit the fuse. He has repeatedly used his social media accounts to spread falsehoods and to incite violence against American citizens."*<sup>54</sup>

It seems clear those involved in the January 6th violence and those participating in the echo chambers mentioned above, feel a perceived loss of agency. There is little argument against the fact that white Christians in America have had operational control on the steering of the U.S. However, it seems the predominately white Christian membership of the right-wing extremist groups may feel a loss of agency and operation control, leading them to be easily manipulated into believing some conspiracies explain why this is the case. It

can be easy to see how this would lead to right-wing extremist violent rhetoric and the belief that they are on the righteous side of patriotic duty to their country.





53 Singer, P. W. & Brooking, E. T. (2018). LikeWar: The weaponization of social media. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

54 Guynn, 2021.



## PART SIX

# WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?

In this final section, we recommend a few actions for different gatekeepers to take in order to avoid, mitigate, or recover from the threats of future extremism in America. Unfortunately, there are no silver bullets or quick solutions to diverting American attention away from the political and social schisms that have been evolving over the past decade. The next decade will continue to see a divided American narrative and polarization has set in around the words we use to tell it.

For the military, the fact that 1 in 5 defendants in the Capitol riots of Jan 6th were ex-military<sup>55</sup> is a wake-up call. When men and women who wore the uniform and swore an oath to sacrifice their lives to defend the Constitution attack its foundations, we have a serious problem that goes deeper than the organizations these individuals belonged to. We now have a clear need to recapture our own language about who we are, what we believe, and why it matters.

At America's birth, our founders recognized that "Freedom" was precious, hard-won and fragile; that "Freedom for All" required laws,

accountability, vigilance, and teamwork to defend. But over time, the meaning of "Freedom" has shifted from being a team sport to a zero-sum, "my-way-or-the-highway" freedom. We went from football to American Ninja Warrior. Today's freedom is more brittle, identitarian, and isolating. Freedom now connotes freedom from accountability and responsibility and community - the very pillars meaningful freedom requires - to freedom to do whatever gets me a win over my neighbor.

This twisting of terminology - that "freedom" is a solo show, that a "patriot" would attack US Institutions - is characteristic of the dangerous zero-sum game we are playing.

Consider research into "justice" as part of recovery (e.g., how will extremists and extremist networks be held accountable for their actions? What happens after the SWAT team takes out the "bad guy"? How will justice be pursued against both obvious threat actors who "pull the trigger", AND those who "put the gun in their hand and the hate in their heart").

Recovery should include efforts to reinforce societal norms and active measures to prevent extremists from capitalizing on high-profile events to recruit more mainstreamers into a movement, to foster sympathy for a movement, or generate apathy toward resisting a movement. There must be efforts focused on rebalancing normative conflict.

One of our subject matter experts, Omar El Akkad described the situation of normative extremism as a metaphor of a rusty faucet and a poisoned well: “You need to be able

to distinguish between the faucet and the well. It is very easy to develop a policy or policing strategy based on individual attacks. Someone goes into a synagogue and shoots it up. You arrest them, you convict them. Somebody shoots up a concert, you convict them. And you can go from faucet to faucet. Sometimes the faucet needs to be changed. Sometimes the faucet is rusty, but so long as the well is poisoned, it does not matter how many times you change the faucet.”



## INDUSTRY

- Develop safeguards for de-escalating and de-platforming inflammatory and controversial advertisements.
- Develop and adhere to standards of ethical conduct for social media platforms as if they were acting as a primary news source (hint: they already are).
- Identify and monitor extremist content creators; develop new ways to identify to viewers/users that the content is potentially harmful.
- Lead the cultural conversation about disinformation.



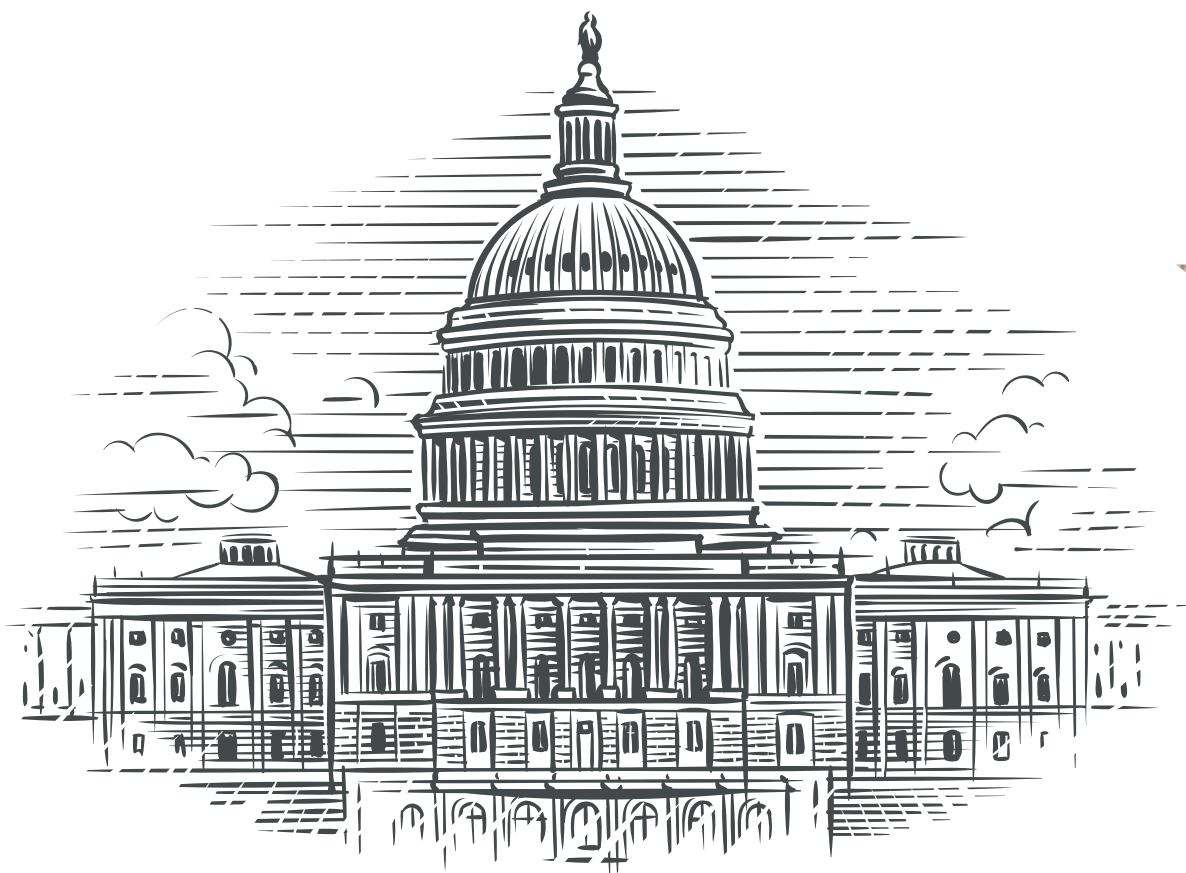
## ACADEMIA

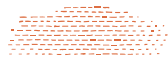
- Assist government and industry with researching and developing definitions of “extremist networks” including root causes, narrative schisms, and organizational support methods.
- Continue to study the causes of identity conflict that cause people to seek fringe and extremist points of view, especially calls to violent action.
- Research how public (i.e. social media) and private/encrypted communication mechanisms show markers of pre-violence activities.
- Accelerate research of crypto-finance forensics tools and applications.
- Research regulatory and legal frameworks around accountability (i.e. PAC funding of a far left- or right-wing politician whose narrative incites violence - who is legally and financially responsible?).
- Consider a forum to educate the American population on the difference between protected speech and when First Amendment rights are not applicable.
- Continue to study the causes of identity conflict that cause people to seek fringe and extremist points of view, especially calls to violent action.
- Research mental health trends for those affiliated with or leaning towards extremist actions and viewpoints.
- Research narratives of justice to understand how a marginalized population might restore confidence in the pursuit of the American dream.



## MILITARY

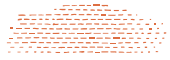
- Develop expectations and training about what to do when an individual encounters extremist speech, symbols, and actions within the unit.
- Help former service members feel like they still “belong” and “matter” to the service arms that trained them. Consider alumni programs and accountability sponsors for those most at risk of extremist actions, especially those separated for misconduct.





## GOVERNMENT

- Monitor cryptocurrency transactions for payments and donations from alt-right supporters.<sup>56,57</sup> “Bitcoin is the currency of the alt right,”<sup>58</sup> says Richard Spencer, and deserves scrutiny in its contribution to enabling extremism. We need a deeper understanding of domestic extremist funding.
- Lead national collaboration between government agencies, law enforcement, and military action plans to understand and counter extremist pre-violence activities: communication, recruitment, financing, materiel support.
- Establish a bi-partisan commission to define shared definitions for key terms in the “American Story” to iterate a more inclusive story that brings the fringes back “into the fold.”
- Develop responses to future threats via laws, regulations, norms, collaboration, and cultural dialogue, as suggested by the Menzies Foundation.<sup>59</sup>
- Create a safe (policy and legal) space for migrants & refugees of state violence to exist in the US. Develop a long-term strategy for repatriation, absorption, or path to citizenship.
- Communicate with and engage marginalized and isolated groups.
- Develop an online “co-voting” system for congress members to see how their constituents prefer them to vote on a bill.<sup>60</sup>
- Fund mental health research and mental health programs to safeguard at-risk populations.
- Demonstrate justice and accountability against those who enable and support normative extremism.



## OTHERS (NGOS, AUTHORS, MEDIA)

- Advocate for the government to create a safe (policy and legal) space for migrants/refugees of state violence to exist in the US.
- Battle disinformation through ethical standards, fact checking, and follow-up reporting.
- Lead the cultural conversation about disinformation. Collaborate with government and law enforcement to help identify false sources of information.<sup>61</sup>
- Create and maintain organizations and structures to bring together people from different backgrounds, ideologies, and parts of the country to engage and learn from each other.
- Investigate the drivers and detractors of universal basic income, and understand how to make it acceptable within the US narrative of self-reliance.<sup>62</sup>

56 Timberg, C. (2017, December 26). Bitcoin's boom is a boon for extremist groups. The Washington Post. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/bitcoins-boom-is-a-boon-for-extremist-groups/2017/12/26/9ca9c124-e59b-11e7-833f-155031558ff4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/bitcoins-boom-is-a-boon-for-extremist-groups/2017/12/26/9ca9c124-e59b-11e7-833f-155031558ff4_story.html)

57 McLaughlin, J. (2021, January 14). Exclusive: Large bitcoin payments to right-wing activists a month before Capitol riot linked to foreign account. Yahoo!news. [https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/exclusive-large-bitcoin-payments-to-rightwing-activists-a-month-before-capitol-riot-linked-to-foreign-account-181954668.html?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter\\_axioscodebook&stream=technology&guccounter=1](https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/exclusive-large-bitcoin-payments-to-rightwing-activists-a-month-before-capitol-riot-linked-to-foreign-account-181954668.html?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axioscodebook&stream=technology&guccounter=1)

58 Spencer, R. (2017, March 18). Twitter. <https://twitter.com/RichardBSpencer/status/843206485794471937?s=20>

59 Menzies Foundation. (2020). Regional Cyber Futures Initiative: The future of risk, security and the law.

60 EXTR Team Indigo 1.

61 Conger, K., Alba, D., & Baker, M. (2020, September 10). False rumors that activists set wildfires exasperate officials. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/us/antifa-wildfires.html>

62 EXTR Team Violet 2.

# APPENDIX A: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

These transcripts are from the subject matter expert inputs to the workshop. Videos of these interviews were provided to the workshop participants prior to Day 1 and serve as a baseline understanding of the current and projected environment germane to our understanding of extremism in America. The transcripts were transcribed verbatim by a software program (Temi.com) and are provided here without further editing for grammar or spelling.

## **Omar El Akkad, Author and Journalist**

Hi, my name is Omar El Akkad, a reporter and author. I was born in Egypt and I grew up in Qatar. I'm a citizen of Canada. And for the last six years now, I've been living in the U.S. I started my journalism career right around the same time as the Toronto 18 arrests, which were the biggest terrorism arrests in Canadian history. And I was on that case for about two years. Just covering the story of how these kids – and some of them were kids, some of them were 17 or 18 years old – how they went from this benign suburban upbringing to wanting to storm parliament and behead the prime minister. And so on. More recently I've been writing fiction. A few years ago, I published a novel called *American War* which is very much a story of radicalization and how somebody becomes an extremist.

So I've been asked to speak a little bit about some of the triggers that I've seen that sort of helped move somebody in that direction. The sort of central narratives that tend to go along with this kind of transition and some advice for somebody who might be on the policy or policing side of things as to how to think about this in the coming years. So from my very limited experience there tend to be about three major triggers that we saw when we were covering the story of people who, when we hear about them, we hear about them planning to blow themselves up or do something heinous, but how they got to that place. And we were covering the story of how they got to that place. There were usually three central qualities.

The first was a kind of insecurity, and that can go along one of many axes. The popular one that we think about culturally is religious. Because terrorism is a term that's been used overwhelmingly to describe people with a certain race, a certain background, a certain religion. So you get something who is insecure about their level of piety, the level of their religious commitment. But there are all manner of insecurities that can be exploited, some of which have to do with the person's status in life and where they feel they should be. The second major element is somebody to exploit that insecurity. So in the case of the Toronto 18 arrests, what we saw was that the majority of the people who were expected to undergo, you know, to, to take out to suicide bombings, to rush parliament Hill with guns, and so on and so forth, these were mostly younger men in some cases, teenagers.

And yet there were two or three guys who were older, who played the role of mentor and

the way this mentorship started, none of these guys plan to do any of this stuff themselves. They weren't going to blow themselves up. They were going to do any of that. What they were was a kind of spiritual guidance, which I put in huge quotation marks obviously. And the way that it started leads me to the third point, which is the gradual nature of radicalization. So when these guys first met these kids, they would show them pictures of people who had been shot at checkpoints in Israel and say, look at what's happening to your Palestinian brothers and sisters, look at what's happening to your Chechnyan and brothers and sisters, look what's happening to your Kashmir brothers and sisters. That was the start of it. Something relatively benign, someone just having a conversation with you, just talking about the events of the day.

And they would very slowly build that up until it got to the point where towards the end of this radicalization process, just shortly before the RCMP, the federal police in Canada, arrested these kids, one of these mentors took one of these kids up to the forest north of Toronto. He had him lie down in an open grave and explained to him that this was going to be his fate for eternity. He would just lie in this grave and have the worms eat his flesh forever if he didn't commit these acts. Now you can imagine if he started at that point, if that was the beginning of the radicalization process, there is no way that kid would have latched on to it. But what it was was an end point, an end point of a very gradual process, where these are the three triggers that we saw over and over again.

And I'm talking about them in the case of this kind of violence, but they very much relate to a white supremacist violence, any kind of terrorism, you are likely to find these kinds of triggers, a deep sense of personal insecurity relating to something existential and someone to exploit that insecurity, and sometimes it's a person, but sometimes it's an entire infrastructure of thought.

Sometimes it's a society or what you're hearing on radio or what people within a certain agency are telling you. And then the very gradual nature of it. You don't start out at the end point, you don't start out strapping the bombs to your chest. In terms of the narrative devices that go along with this. One of the ones that we saw overwhelmingly time and time again, is a narrative of dissonance and narrative of huge asymmetry between the individual's expectation of what life is supposed to be like and what their place in life is supposed to be like, and what life really is.

So sometimes that has to do with the axis of poverty, you know, not so much, you know, I expected to be a millionaire and I'm not, but I expect it to have a decent stable life and be able to afford, you know, a house or afford these staples that I was told were the makings of a normal life. And clearly society is not allowing me to do that. I'm wanting to practice my religion and clearly society is not allowing me to do that. You can see this along all kinds of different axes. I mean, not just poverty, Osama bin Laden was a member of one of the richest families in the world, but he had certain aspirations and a certain expectation of what life is supposed to be like related to religious supremacy and the reestablishment of the caliphate and all the rest of that.

That clearly was nothing like the society he saw around him, the hedonism and corruption at the upper echelons of Saudi society. So that narrative of asymmetry between what your expectations of life, of a good life and what society is handing you over, there was a central narrative we saw over and over again. The last thing I'll say is that, you know, for whatever

it's worth my advice, particularly for somebody in America, who's on the policing or policy side of this is you need to be able to distinguish between the faucet and the well. It is very easy to develop a policy or policing strategy based on individual attacks. Someone goes into a synagogue and shoots it up. You arrest them, you convict them. Somebody shoots up a concert, you convict them. And you can go from faucet to faucet.

And sometimes the faucet needs to be changed. Sometimes the faucet is rusty, but so long as the well is poisoned, it does not matter how many times you change the faucet. You will constantly have to keep doing it. If your systemic issues are not being addressed, you will continually have individual instances of violence that will each be horrific and will each need to be addressed, but will never stop and never abate so long as your systems are broken. So we live in a country right now where it used to be the case that if you were an extremist and you had extremist beliefs, you can hang out with your two other friends who believe those things or go out into the forest and start sending mail bombs to people or anthrax or whatever. But your neighborhood of extremism was very limited. And what's happened over the last 20 or 30 years is that your neighborhood has expanded greatly.

You believe in white supremacy and a race war and all the rest of that, there are Facebook groups for you. There is the entirety of AM radio. There is an entire news network that will coddle those beliefs. So what has happened over the 30 plus years or so in my experience of this country, is that the idea of being a loner with extremist beliefs has given way to entire neighborhoods. And from these neighborhoods, the likelihood of someone going from an extremist belief to an extremist act is exponentially higher. And so if you are dealing with policy related to extremism in this country, you need to figure out what it is to do about these systems that are allowing this thought to flourish. Because if you just go from chasing down one extremist, one violent extremist after the other, you will never stop that. So long as the well is poisoned, you will continually be changing faucets. So that would be my central piece of advice.

---

**Dr. Ajit Maan, CEO of Narrative Strategies, LLC, Professor of Practice, Politics and Global Security, Arizona State University, Faculty, Center for the Future of War, Weaponized Narrative Initiative**

I'm Ajit Maan, I'm a professor of practice at Arizona State University in global security and politics. I'm with The Center for the Future of War, as well as a brain trust member of the Weaponized Narrative Initiative. I'm also an affiliate faculty at George Mason University's Center for Narrative Conflict Resolution. I'm also the founder and CEO of the think-and-do tank Narrative Strategies. I'm a narrative strategist and a philosopher by training.

Let me just talk about what narrative is. From an academic standpoint, I'm bringing my academic knowledge of narrative identity theory into the arena of security and national defense and extremist recruitment. So when I use the word narrative, I'm not using it as interchangeable with story, and I'm not using it simply as a description of a type of communication, which is how militaries often think of it. They think of it as something that you do in IO. Narrative is a part of culture that we're born into that we don't have any choice about. And it influences us on a less than conscious level. That doesn't mean an unconscious level. Part of what inculturation and socialization is, is the internalization of the cultural narrative that you were born into.

That means that you get it on a very deep level. And it informs what you think about yourself, who you think you are, your identity in other words, and what you think you should do, how you think you should behave according to who you think you are. Most of us get that at even a

pre-verbal age. And we get it really well. I sometimes compare narrative in the cultural environment to gravity in the physical environment. It's just there. You don't need higher education to be able to live in a world where gravity exists. You may learn about it, but even if you don't, you can still manage your life. You don't have to learn about narrative to function within its expectation. Nobody has to sit you down and teach you about it. You just get it very early on.

On the other hand, it's not unconscious. So it's in that in-between space between conscious and unconscious; it's at the level that I call assumption. So for example, if I say to you, what's gravity, you can tell me what gravity is. Even if you just have a high school education. But you probably haven't thought about gravity this morning. You live in a world with gravity, you function just fine in a world where gravity exists, nobody had to educate you about it. And yet you don't think about it. That's the way it is with narrative. We functioned just fine in a world where narrative exists in our cultural environment. We don't have to be taught about it. We get it. And yet we don't think a lot about it. When a narrative, therefore is weaponized, what is being weaponized are people's assumptions primarily about themselves.

So narrative is integral to identity and it's integral to how we learn to give meaning to events. Narratives teach us that. So let me put it this way. A narrative is sort of like a cognitive scheme that you inherit unconsciously or less than consciously, and that cognitive scheme or meaning map in your head is generally shared by others in your culture. It's generally not shared by others outside of your culture. They have a different meaning map, different cultures have different narratives and different meaning maps. So that means that when an experience happens, an event happens, and the way you will experience it will depend on your meaning map, how you organize that information. It may be so a certain sound, for example, a siren goes off or, you know, you see a snake or, you know, something, one person from one culture may experience that is an extreme threat.

And another person from another culture may not even hear it. That siren sound may just be something that your brain dismisses depends on your background. Depends on what threats are in your environment, what your, what you've been taught about about your environment. So the way we process incoming information, experiences and events and so forth, it depends on our meaning map. In other words, it depends on our narrative. So now when it comes to extremist recruiting there is always a narrative involved and there's always manipulation of that narrative. Now let me stop here and also make a distinction between narratives and stories, narratives, like I just said are not unconscious, but they're not extremely conscious either.

They're in that in between space of assumption. Stories on the other hand, which are derived from narratives, which are born out of narratives are conscious. They're very conscious.

We like stories. You've heard people say that human beings are storytelling animals. We certainly are. We remember stories, we identify with stories. We like to tell stories. We are very receptive to hearing information coming at us in story form much more receptive

than any other form of information that you can convey. If you can convey it in narrative, in story form. Good. it will be remembered and the best kind of stories. I should not say best, but influential stories, whether for good or bad are those that tap into the narrative of the audience. When you tap into the narrative of the audience, you're tapping into that audience's identity. And we don't just have an identity. We have multiple layers to our identities. We have a very personal identity. We have a familial identity, we have tribal identity, we have large group identity, we have national identity and so forth. So if you can tell a story that triggers the narrative identity of the audience on as many levels as possible, you have a very influential story.

And because it's operating on the level of assumption, your audience is not going to be highly conscious of what that story is doing and how it is triggering them and triggering aspects of their identity or layers of their identity. So that's what makes weaponized narrative dangerous. It is because it is working on a less than conscious level. It is working on level of identity and on meaning making. So how do we protect people from that? How do we protect people from a weaponized narrative? We tell them how it works. I call it arming the sheep. And, and it's important for people to understand what happens even when in any kind of attempt to influence them in their behavior, whether it's for sales purposes or whether it's for you know, things like joining an extremist organization. It's important for people to know what happens when they're hearing a story and to practice here, listen to the story and listen to what feel, what is being triggered in you. There are methods to go about it, but it's important to understand what narrative is, what story is, how it triggers identity, so that when it happens, you can identify it and to practice doing it.

*Interviewer:*

*Great. That's a really good wrap up. The last question is something you mentioned earlier, do you think in the future of extremist narratives and recruitment over the next decade, what do you think is, is new? What do you think is going to change?*

*Dr. Maan:*

Probably only the effectiveness of reach. We can, you know, extremists will be able to reach people in ways that they hadn't been able to, to do before some of that technology, some of the technology will do that, but I think there are going to be, I, it, to tell you the truth of this, what really is effective is not going to change. It's just the manner of the transmission of that communication that will change, but identity is there and it's just going to be the thing that needs to be triggered for extremists. It's, they're going to do the same thing they've always been doing. It says old as the Hills, this stuff, what will be, you know, there are certain ways my first book was about this. There are certain it was called Counterterrorism Narrative Strategies. They're in it. I read Oh many hundreds of terrorist recruitment narratives from all ends of the political spectrum from all different times in history and from different places.

And there are very similar things going on. It's a very similar type of narrative that's being told. And it's one that I won't bore you with the details, but it will touch on the very

legitimate grievances of the target audience. And will in essence tell a narrative that gets the target audience to internalize socioeconomic things on the outside. So it's the, it's the it's pathologizing, a bad social situation, a negative set of circumstances on the outside. And it's essentially getting that recruit to understand that stuff as part of his diseased self; it's a pathologizing and an internalizing as though there's something wrong with it. And, you know, oftentimes the people that are being recruited are removed from the problem set. They could be, you know, 15 year olds in Sweden who suddenly internalize a socioeconomic problem set that they're not a part of, but that's a manipulation of their identity.

---

**Rebecca Morgan, Insider Threat Division Chief, Center for Development of Security Excellence**

My name is Rebecca Morgan. I have over three decades of experience in some form of law enforcement, investigations, and counterintelligence with most of those at the Department of Defense. My current title is the Insider Threat Division Chief at the Center for Development of Security Excellence, Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency but I am right now on a long term joint duty assignment serving as the Deputy Assistant Director, National Counterintelligence and Security Center Insider Threat Program/Deputy Director, National Insider Threat Task Force, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this threatcasting exercise with Arizona State University threatcasting lab. I am required to state that my responses to questions are my own and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of Defense or the DNI.

Having worked in the national security arena for many decades, I am deeply invested in the outcome of what extremism will look like in 2030. From a personal perspective, my home organization of DCSA (formerly known as DSS) was impacted by the Oklahoma City bombings in 1995 in which 8 individuals from our organization were killed. As an insider threat practitioner, I have also born the responsibility of helping the USG mitigate risk from trusted insiders whose extremist views led to the commission of negative acts. In the last year alone we have worked to address the shooting at Pensacola Naval Station in which a radicalized international military student killed three and injured eight others; the case of the USCG lieutenant Christopher Hassan who held white supremacist views and was plotting acts of violence against democratic leaders, members of the media, and others.

Extremists are those who hold extreme political or religious views and it should be noted that because both politics and religion are involved, the definition of extremism is fluid and subjective. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. It is worthwhile to look at past trends – cultural, socio-economic, and political that have led to rises in extremism before. At the turn of the last century, many extremist acts were associated with the rise of the labor movement and included a series of anarchist bombings in 1919 targeting government officials, religious figures, industry leaders, and others.

Throughout the last century extremist actions have also been associated with the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the environmental movement and in each of these extremist actions have been associated with both sides of the political spectrum – from far left to far right. Everything from tree spiking as an action against the logging industry to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. In each of these cases it's very important that we separate the politics – the political views held by the group – from the behavior of extremists within that group or movement. Broad reaction to specific extremist acts are often used politically to delegitimize certain beliefs and this can have an unintended consequence of further marginalizing a group and further inciting or galvanizing extremist behavior.

And from a national security perspective we ARE focused on violent extremism – those driven to acts of harm by their extreme beliefs rather than the beliefs themselves. But it is sometimes difficult to parse the two and to recognize when someone's extreme beliefs might be considered an indicator of potentially violent action without impinging on privacy and civil liberties, particularly first amendment rights surrounding freedom of speech. While there is significant case law identifying that threats of violence are not protected, it can still be a difficult task to ensure appropriate constitutional protections while attempting to deter and detect extremist behavior.

One way to address this is with a deeper understanding of what causes someone to progress from holding an extreme belief to acts of violence extremism. In counterintelligence and insider threat we often focus on motivations – from financial, to ideological, to psychological, to coercion and exploitation. However, I find these somewhat limiting in their forecasting ability.

Many of these same elements are what motivate anyone to do anything. And most people with for example financial problems will take a second job or cancel their cable, not commit espionage for money. Most people who are disgruntled at work will find a new job or go back to school for a new career path, not show up at work with a weapon.

So what is it that for some individuals removes any inhibition to betray – to betray their organization or the general social construct against violence? It seems that factors including untreated or undiagnosed mental health conditions can play a large role in not only the tendency to be radicalized but also toward acts of violence. In the insider threat realm we follow a model called The Critical Pathway, devised by Dr. Erik Shaw and his cohorts, which identifies specific external stressors and triggers that for some people, depending on personal predisposition, level of access, and other factors can lead to the commission of negative acts.

The personal predispositions can be dependent upon specific mental health diagnosis. Other factors may include socio-political status. From a criminal justice perspective we know that overall more men commit crimes, especially violent crimes, than women. This factor is not attributable to the fact that us girls have less larcenous hearts but due to the fact that in our society women are the primary caretakers of children. And there is a greater incentive to remain outside of prison to maintain a family structure. Also, looking over the

broad history of extremist behavior, acts of violence are seen as a last (or sometimes first) resort of disenfranchised and marginalized groups who do not have political power to affect change by other means.

Extremist acts – and extra-legal violence – has also been used by those in power to maintain the status quo when threatened by opposing political rhetoric or cultural movements.

In the present day we've seen actions including the Fort Hood Massacre, shootings in San Bernadino, the Boston Marathon bombing along with perhaps less overtly violent acts. For example, Reality Winner – a young NSA employee who leaked classified information because of her political views. Her anti-Trump position was arguably extreme and led to a negative act that while not violent can certainly be considered harmful. Adapting our definition of violent extremism to include acts of harm beyond the scope of active shooter/ bombing incidents will be important as we move further into the technological age. The global corona virus pandemic has certainly inspired extremist behavior with a dozen men recently arrested in a plot to kidnap two state governors over their role in managing the pandemic. But it has also led to extreme disinformation campaigns which may severely undermine public health and safety if it prevents people from participating in vaccination programs once they are available. While this is not an act of imminent violence, it can certainly lead to death and economic harm.

So Looking to 2030 and what factors may impact – I would say it is a certainty that climate change will have an impact on the face of extremism. Extremist behavior will be generated by both the polarizing political nature of the phenomenon but also by scarcity of resources which will lead to disenfranchisement/marginalization of some groups. Other potential drivers may be technology –with its capability to foster radicalization and provide a means for causing harm (logic bombs, ransomware, dis/misinformation campaigns, etc). It may also foster a sense of isolation in many as automated interactions continue to replace traditional personal engagements in the workforce and in day to day activities from dating to banking to religious affiliations. Political divisiveness – both alt left and alt right will likely continue to drive extremist behavior particularly as a shifting economy alters traditional work paths from manufacturing/blue collar to service/tech corridors.

Because there are likely many additional unforeseen forces that may impact extremist views and result in violent actions by some, it is more beneficial from a detection and deterrence perspective to focus on behaviors and activities indicative of extremism and violent behavior than on the specific motivations. By identifying actions early, proactive risk mitigation can limit the negative activity regardless of the purported "cause" for which it is committed and be broadly applied. This standardized application of risk mitigation tactics may limit accusations of profiling which can prove both problematic in its ability to address the problem (we don't know what we don't know) and, as I said earlier, can in and of itself exacerbate risk by galvanizing the sense of disenfranchisement and inciting further negative acts. There has been much good work focused on extremists, radicalization, and lone terror offenders by the FBI, by DHS, and others and it includes specific behavioral indicators. Consolidating these efforts into simple messaging that can be utilized by USG

personnel tasked with the counter extremism mission but also shared with external groups most likely to identify indicators (families, schools, religious and spiritual leaders, etc.). There was much success with See Something, Say Something campaign and it could be leveraged to increase the reporting of not just say – an unattended backpack – but other early indicators of potential extremist activity.

Aside from focusing on behaviors and activities indicative of risk vice specific subgroups or cohorts, taking a holistic approach to risk mitigation that addresses some of the root cause of extremist violence should be undertaken. Beyond the first responders, law enforcement, and intelligence communities who have traditionally addressed the problem of violent extremism, a whole of government and stronger societal approach would include private sector and academia to address increased availability and affordability of mental health care – including destigmatizing mental health treatment – to mitigate risk from those whose actions are predicated on specific psychological conditions; focus on engagement with marginalized groups may foster options for political engagement and social enfranchisement vice extremist activity; and less polarizing national discourse in both traditional and social media may prevent the normalization of extremist views which, for some folks leads to extremist acts.

Thanks for allowing me to opine on this topic. I wish you luck with the workshop and look forward to the associated research.

---

**Dr. Scott W. Ruston, Research Scientist, ASU Global Security Initiative**

My name is Scott Ruston. I am a research scientist here at Arizona State University's Global Security Initiative, where I lead a research pillar in narrative disinformation and strategic influence. My background is in narrative theory and media studies, and I've used that experience studying public sectors, strategic communication, national security implications of strategic communication for the past 10 years here at ASU, including initially focusing on how Islamic extremist groups use narrative in their recruitment of adherence their strategic communication campaigns, et cetera. Now I focus primarily on disinformation and especially the state sponsored disinformation activities. And I'm here today to talk a little bit about narrative as it relates to domestic extremism to seed or spark your threatcasting efforts. So first briefly, why is narrative so important? First and foremost, narrative is a cognitive process. It is about making sense of the world around us.

Putting pieces of data into a framework for understanding a structure or a schema. Sure. We can point to a novel or a film and say, look, that's a narrative. And yes it is. It's we tend to use that term to refer to those socio-cultural objects, those textual objects of films and novels and biographies, and any number of things as narratives. But I would argue that really what that is, is a pre-structured set of data. It's already pre-structured into a narrative format. And your role as the reader is to perceive the narrative structure that the author or the filmmakers have created.

I would also argue that scenes like Darth Vader's ship overtaking princess Leia in the opening scene of Star Wars is a set of data to be understood in a narrative context. But so, too, with news reports on the radio or television broadcasts or news articles in the newspaper or bits of gossip that you share over coffee at Starbucks, or the events that you witness outside the window, or that you participate in—all of those things are fair game for as the sets of data that slot into a narrative structure with which we make sense of the world. That structure creates relationships between the actors, the participants of those events, the events themselves. The relationships that get created are a key part of the power of narrative and how it functions as a sense-making cognitive process.

Another important element of thinking about narratives is that they operate as systems and there are micro narratives and meso level narratives and macro level narratives operating all the time. You often hear of personal identity narratives. That would be a micro narrative. But how you understand yourself within, say American culture, would involve the intersection of your personal micro narrative(s) and the macro level narratives about American culture that help shape the identity of [American] society. And we project our own story systems, our own narratives into that broader context from the micro up to the macro.

So I would argue that it's important to keep in mind that narrative is more than a theme. It's not a synonym for theme. It's not a synonym for topic. It's not a synonym for spin, and it's not a synonym for meaning. If it were, we should just use those terms and abandon the idea of narrative. Narrative is this cognitive process of understanding: the bottom up acquisition of data, whether you're observing, whether you're listening, whether you're watching the movie and the top down processing of that data into a structure that creates relationships between these people and actions and locations and the like.

So I'm going to describe to you some narrative systems that illustrate some of these principles. Hopefully I can tell you a story about some citizens who felt oppressed by an autocratic and distant government. Laws were enacted without citizen input. Law enforcement took liberties with the citizens and harmed the citizens. They've enforced the laws with little regard for citizens safety. A final action of oppression triggers some citizens to act, and they strike a blow against that distant government establishing resistance to that government. Now I've abstracted this for time and summarized it, but to put some specifics on it, in terms of narrative structure, there's a core conflict; it's a key element of narrative. And in this case, the core conflict is between the citizens of Massachusetts or what would become known as Massachusetts and the oppression wrought by the distant crown of England.

And that conflict has a core desire. That is, that is inherent within it, the desire to be free from that oppression, and then a series of events occur that complicate that freedom. British soldiers take over homes and businesses; the Boston massacre where British soldiers kill colonists; the tea act passes and that enrages a whole segment of colonial society. And all of these things create are, are slotted into those complicating actions of the goal of being free of oppression by this distant government and galvanizes the sons of Liberty to action, and they strike a blow [with] the Boston tea party, which resolves in establishing a resistance. Now I could paint this story system a different way. I could

say that there's a core conflict and again, this, these key elements of, of conflict desire, complicating action and resolution are important elements of the structure of narrative to pay attention to so told another way there's a conflict between citizens and a distant government, but now if we perceive that distant government to be Washington DC let's see what happens.

The conflict has a desire inherent within it, the freedom from that oppression and the desire to resist. And let's put some events in context that maybe are analogous to those ones. We just described particularly about law enforcement arm of this government being oppressive. Let's look at, let's put in sequence the siege at Ruby Ridge and the FBI ATF siege at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. These events reinforce the conflict and are complications in achieving freedom from (perceived) oppression. Perception of the government as the enemy galvanizes action, and the resolution of this particular narrative system is the bombing of the Oklahoma city building. So these two narrative systems share a similar arrangement of similar components, both have a conflict with seemingly distant autocratic governments seek freedom from that, and a series affronts lead to major action against the government, the structural elements of conflict desire, which creates a goal complicating a, it didn't talk about progressing actions, but those would be the actions along that trajectory that advanced towards a resolution and the resolution.

These are the fundamental aspects of narrative structure—that schema into which we slot events and people, et cetera. And that is a core underlying structure, common to many, if not most narratives, at least within Western culture. So one of these systems obviously is a core narrative of American culture and establishes the honored value of political protest. And another of these systems extends that story system, but with a more extreme resolution very often with extremist groups we see them build on widely held widely understood core cultural, or what are called master narratives. Those that are enduring over time, we still talk about the Boston tea party to explain the value of political resistance and the importance of representation in the appropriate response to a lack of representation. But the evolution of the stories that make up the system in the extremist context is taken to excess beyond the conventional bounds of social norms beyond the conventional bounds of mores.

And in other words, out to the extreme. So some ideas to take away with you as you apply the principles of narrative to your threat casting effort here one when evaluating the persuasive power or efficacy of narrative dispense with truth as a judgment factor, because it just doesn't apply. Narratives garner their power and their validity from coherence and fidelity. Coherence is the internal logic to the narrative. And fidelity is the degree to which it comports with narratives already understood by an audience. So you can see the fidelity between how that story of the Boston tea party and the story of the Oklahoma city bottom and line up sharing those components in a similar structure. Be attentive to the core elements that conflict, desire, complicating, and progressing actions and resolution. Now the resolutions might be explanatory for events that have already happened in the past, but most commonly we see in extremist narratives, they are aspirational.

They are projecting a vision of what should happen. They articulate the conflict very clearly through stories the desire, and then they've got an aspirational resolution and think about how those resolutions might come about through socially acceptable mechanisms. You know, things like voting things like judicial rulings, things like legislative action, things like civil disobedience or how they might come through non-socially acceptable mechanisms like violence. And there, you've got an idea of how extremists might evolve and adapt a widely held narratives about say American culture into, into the extremist dimension. Thinking about where extremism might go, and this might help with your, with your brainstorming cup testing efforts. Think about what master narratives of American political, social cultural identity shape your understanding of American values. Then take their core components and place slightly new actors in those narrative functional roles such as we did with the replacing King George as the autocratic distant oppressive government leader with Congress, for example replace colonize colonialists with contemporary citizens see where that takes you take the resolutions of American master narratives and take them beyond the bounds of the social norms.

And you'll be in the dimension of extremism. So hopefully these are some good tips, hopefully that makes some sense. And I bid you good luck and I look forward to reading the results of your forecasting efforts. Good luck Everybody.



# APPENDIX B: RAW DATA WORKBOOKS

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollup for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives

Limited media told us what was happening and we considered that to be what was happen, yet we now know with the rise of irresponsible media outlets we have lost our gatekeepers.

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

Corruption of Ideals and Corruption of Culture and seeds of power and Governments make money from chasing extremism. and it justifies their use of power/police-state/economics

Grouping 3: Industry

agenda-driven networks of "news" sites

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):

- 1) State Sponsored or Proxy
- 2) Nationlist
- 3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)
- 4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy
- 5) Opposition to government authority
- 6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

X

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

Volunteer Firefighter (Accidental Adversary)

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

A person named They. 29 years old. Digital community.

Where do they live?

Small rural town in East Oregon in physical, 24 hour news networks across all platforms digital.

What is the threat?

A new media network "Trump TV" across platforms, TV, Radio, Internet, Apps, Social Media and New wearable push devises. Contant streaming of hate messages.

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

They' recognizes that Fires are raging throughout their community and state and the western US and they are being told by this new multi-platform network that the fires are actually good for the community by reducing pain points that make your life hard. Fires make everything better!

Who else in the person's life is involved?

Known and unknown entities

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

Volunteer Firefighter (Accidental Adversary) wants achieve distruction as a visable portfolio ultimately leading to notoriety. Our volunteer firefighter wants to weaken the timber industry as heard on the New Netork across platforms. Volunteer Firefighter (Accidental Adversary) is afriad of getting caught before reaching goals and is afriad of fire because of the pain it can inflict. Believes being oppressed should be fought. Fears the nation is being lost because of this oppression and learns from the New Network that taking matters into your own hands is the only way.

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

Both fearfull of loneliness and isolation, not alot of friends or family to bounce thoughts off of. Makes sense in a vacuum.

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

A senior person at the wealthy timber tycoons office gets hacked and info on a secret plot is released on The New multi-platform network which has become the nationally popular platform. Data is stolen and shared. The hacker finds details of the "Fire" plot that has been executed over the last decade.

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

A mutual friend in the East Oregon community is named in the leaked info and 'They' now has an moment of clarity at also knowing the volunteer firefighter.

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

They discovers the new network via their digital community. Fake video that they believe is real and They never questions the validity of the video until much later.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

Digitally via video from digital community.

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

unknown

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

Lots of people watching/engaging in this new network makes the reach greater. It is a large network with large viewership so the ability to influence people through their perseved authority toward this endstate is at scale. Much like the "War on terror" drives curiosity to the cause. Digital connectivity is easier, finding 'people like me' on the network emboldens lone individuals to act.

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Stripping down the government by degrading the protections in place. The timber company pays the gov officials to share further disinfo.

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

Completely dark communication/media exchange. The AI inside the system of the Network writes it's own code adapting messages directly to the user.

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

The threat is injected into technology by mandating or creating a partnership such as a pre-loaded app to use the New Network across all devices and can then have their use tracked. The timber tycoon pays for it.

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

Apps, social media platforms, deep fake videos. Wearables (glasses, rings, watches, thread sticted into clothing)

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

For success - team up with a phone manf., news orgs., regulators/gov, perseved auth figures, influencers.

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

The network, the volunteer firefighter and "They" all are consumed by disinfo under a collective banner of fighting oppression. Freedom Fighters!!!

PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

What are the Gates?

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Loss of protections for media.  
Deregulations of lobbyist

What are the Flags?  
List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Democratize deep fake and disinfo  
All of US society has to loose trust in media but also all rep. media sources.

Milestones:

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Investment in build tech that can identify mis/dis info  
Invest in civics and citizen edu  
  
Regulations / laws /rules (such as movie ratings) around mis/dis info with punishments - go after violators!

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Democratic citizen run oversight committees on scale. In every town, city, state.

Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Group 1: Narrative

Narrative is like gravity " it's just there" - the taken for grantedness of narrative

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

Taking on 'the cause' from a shared cultural experience. No self-identification as an extremist.

Grouping 3: Industry

Rise of social media platforms as primary news sources

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationlist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

Qasim. 22 Yr old male. Syrian by birth. Legally living legally in US

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

Syrian Refugee community - and family. Migrated to US in 2016, legally to escape Assad regime/violence

Where do they live?

Worcester, MA (City was accepting of Syrian Refugees in 2016 and is known as a 'Sanctuary City')

What is the threat?

Lack of access to economy. Marginalization.

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

Access to employment was tenuous at best, eventually lost job during COVID when locally-owned construction company was bought out by a national company that was not open to immigrant employment opportunities in a 'lean' job market.

Who else in the person's life is involved?

Family and larger Syrian community, who have all witnessed discrimination in school/neighborhood. With the exception of the (informal) Syrian community and the (formal) mosque they attend.

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

Retaliation for loss of job and discrimination. Fear of systemic exclusion from jobs. Fear of America's attention away from refugee/immigrant issues and perception of xenophobic movements in US.

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

Perpetual 'displacement': Syrian character lacks ability to join the American story, unable to return to Syria due to ongoing conflict. Where does he 'belong'? UN Calls this Protracted Displacement.

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

**Part 1:** Similar to the Christchurch mosque shooting in New Zealand, Christian nationalists attack a cultural center festival in Boston, MA, killing and injuring dozens of people, some even close to Qasim. The event prompts a disruption in cellular traffic for the area, further isolating Qasim from his family and friends. Seeing the dozens of people killed and injured, his initial shock is brief given his own experiences in fleeing the civil war in Syria. "Doesn't change..." he says. "Syrians killing Syrians, Americans killed by 'Americans'..." However, once authorities arrive, many survivors feel they are initially viewed as suspects given the community's participants are mostly refugees or are hesitant to speak with authorities. This hesitancy stems from their own experiences with LE/security services in their former countries. The lack of understanding on the part LE is exacerbates this. Enraged by the attack and the lack of response/empathy by authorities, Qasim and some of his friends impacted by the terror attack, decide that they need to strike back, illustrate they will not be pushed out again. This is their home now. They are here to stay.

**Part 2:** After it confirmed the attackers where the American Patriots for Christ (APC), Qasim and his collaborators target an evangelical church in rural western MA where several APC members and their families attend for Sunday mass. Using a of mix of pool shock and brake fluid as hypergolic igniter with heating oil and gasoline mix to make a number firebombs, the group proceeds to the church on Sunday where they seal the exits of the church and proceeds to firebomb the church with the APC members and their families trapped inside. Qasim's attack is retaliatory for the Boston attack, but by burning the church, the APC see this as a declaration of war against their own Christian identity, therein rallying far-right groups to organize their own attacks across the country...

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat?  
What events or actions led up to it?

The attack pushed Qasim over the edge. He sees that the only way for him to survive in America is through action. make the statement he is here to stay and the old ways of America need to be burned away

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

Most similar attack is the Christchurch attack in New Zealand in 2019, however, instead of a lone gunman, this was a coordinated attack by multiple people part of a far-right extremist organization.

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

**PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)**

*Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)*

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

**PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)**

**Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.**

**What are the Gates?**

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

**What are the Flags?**

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

**Milestones:**

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

Part 1: Music and laughter interrupted abruptly by repeated "pop pop pop" crackle sounds. At first, it seemed like kids might be using firecrackers. However, Qasim and others quickly, instinctively, went from curiosity to panic. Then the screams started followed by more 'pop' sounds, and people started running and pushing, separating Qasim from his friends and family.

Part2: Aside from the timber burning, Qasim and his collaborators recognized a distinct smell. An odor they remember from Syria. That sickly metallic-musky smell when bodies are being burnt.

Part 1: Telegram private channels and coded messaging through Discord and Parler. Part 2: WhatsApp initially then to Signal.

In both part 2, the actor(s) did not need significant unique resources to execute both incidents. A basic knowledge of chemistry and firearms.

Part 2 is both a component of the Threat, but also a ripple effect.

Unsure how to capture this.... without a way 'back to Syria' the character is forced to remain in an environment that is not conducive to personal growth or safety. There is no safety in Syria (conflict/danger/destruction of cities) since 2013 and there is nothing sustainable in place here in the US.

Part 1: Non-college educated whites sensing their place and faith in the world is being "contaminated" by foreigners. The economic prospects for blue collar families are being supplanted by white collar jobs and transferring collar community jobs overseas. Moreover, the information environment is saturated with personalized news developed through biased algorithms within social media platforms. Similarly, Qasim is also locked out of the economic prosperity and his sense of belonging is shattered by the Part 1 attack. Part 2: The shared experiences of violence in Syria and the recent attack in Boston.

Part 1 and Part 2: In both parts, significant amounts of funding are not required.

Part 1: modified assault rifles w/ bumper stocks, social media and private messaging apps. Part 2: Pool shock, brake fluid, heating oil, gasoline, private messaging apps.

While not a citizen of the US, refugee status is 'temporary' not standardized between cities/states. This can create a grey area in regards to employment, medical, education, mobility within the US. Often, cultures will create their own 'ecosystems' of support. For this narrative, a collective of Syrian (Muslim) people provide a sense of belonging. As Omar el Akkad pointed out, this can be exploited by a mentor within the group to manipulate a person.

Again, not sure how (or IF) this is to be captured.... the national discourse around migration/immigration has waned since 2016, yet the human beings who entered from Syria (for example) remain living in the US. It seems to have fallen out of favor as a topic for policy, but the number of people living 'in the margins' of the US identity remains. When will this population begin to create - for the purposes of this exercise - extremist movements within the US? How will this sub-culture create a movement? Will it be positive or negative?

- 1 Physical presence of refugee/migrant in the US  
National discourse against the presence of Syrians (and others) become legitimized in society (online, news, public protests)
- 3 When a state/city changes their policies of sustain/support into policies of remove/repatriate.. then what?
- 4 Relying on a social (religious/political/cultural...) group for safety when formal systems fail.
- 5

- 1 unregulated social media
- 2 lax gun control
- 3 Public opinion for or against
- 4 Formation of cultural groups to protect/isolate themselves. Like a 'social black market'.
- 5

- 1
- 2

3	
4	
5	

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

1	Create a safe (policy and legal) space for migrants/refugees of state violence to exist in the US
2	Create a long term strategy of either (or both) repatriation or absorbtion.
3	
4	
5	

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

Oslo Express
2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollup for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives

Narrative and story are different in the narrative is unconscious and story is very conscience

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

Governments make money from chasing extremism. and it justifies their use of power/police-state/economics

Grouping 3: Industry

increasing partisan nature of US political discourse

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationalist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

state sponsored social worker  
mexican/american  
to receive acknowledgment and justice from a previous racist government (USA) in the new state  
accountability , anti-digitizing justice

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here: short sighted peace

Opposition to government authority

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

Laila is 40 year old mexican who was exiled from florida because of anti Immigration policies and moves back to live in post-racial society

Where do they live?

She lives in the Orlando florida

What is the threat?

The threat is a police state that oppresses people from expressing their identity. They use forced measures to keep a lock on aggressive human nature. Even though her family was compensated a bit, they are not allowed to express their identity and are expected to be happy with a general amnesty for the human rights violation which they agreed on democratically.

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

her son dies from previous injury and torture by Orlando Police yet there perpetrators are given full amnesty which angers her and her community. She tries hard to forgive but she needs closure which is only attainable if the commander who hurt her and her community members comes clean about how their people died/disappeared and publicly apologizes

Who else in the person's life is involved?

her ex-boyfriend who is part of an underground extremist group that fights the erasure of historical racism against minorities. He is a normal activist but in the new state he is considered extremist as the national identities encourage nostalgia to violence

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

The threat actor which is the new state policy wants to achieve peace. They hope that by granting the new nation equal opportunity and compensation that the citizens should be happy. They hope that by offering Rehab to the racists and aggersers they can be re-wired to their true empathetic nature which was corrupted by the old policies. The state is afraid of the outliers in society who would threaten this plan, they are afraid that celebrating old heros from both sides would instigate bad feelings and racism all over again. They want to bury the past forcefully.

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

This exposes that justice can't be by-passed without truth commission which would acknowledge oppressed people's suffering in the past. This would create extremist groups that will feel victimized again and will want revenge using force

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

Laila notices that the police officer that tortured and killed her son many years ago causing his death, lives in a nearby street. She couldn't stand seeing him living a normal life and given automatic amnesty

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

this prompts Laila to plan to bomb the local police station, demanding an apology and full report on how he died. She kidnaps him with few friends that are part of her ex-boyfriends group and they manage to convince him to do a public apology

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

The difference in this event which made her commit an extremist maneuver, is the fact that it's personal. It felt more unfair when personal

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

At first the threat of extreme policing feels justified due to security concerns in an increasingly unstable democracy.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

the government will announce more extreme measures, by taking away rights and due process. the Media and government agencies begin to make announcements about the new policies on social media and through mass media outlets..

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Humane treatment of citizens and the rule of law keep most people from committing extremist action.

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

advanced surveillance equipment employed against average citizens

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

What are the Gates?

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

1

2

3

4

5

What are the Flags?

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

1

2

3

4

5

Milestones:

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

1

2

3

4

5

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

1

2

3

4

5

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

Team Blue
2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives

Narrative and story are different in the narrative is unconscious and story is very conscious

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

Extremism in response to extremism

Grouping 3: Industry

Virtual geography is similar to idea of radicalization "neighborhoods"

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):

- 1) State Sponsored or Proxy
- 2) Nationlist
- 3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)
- 4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy
- 5) Opposition to government authority
- 6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

5) Opposition to government authority

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

Hispanic male ASU student on the verge of graduation from with a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication. He grew up in the Catholic Church with a very religious family, and while it is a part of his life, he stopped going regularly when he started college.

Where do they live?

Phoenix, AZ

What is the threat?

Constant low level violence between disparate ideological groups , started largely by white supremacist pushback to the events of 2020 -- the resurgence of BLM, the Governor announcing that Indigenous Peoples' Day would be held alongside Columbus Day, etc. They started hosting rallies, but didn't get violent until after the election of 2024

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

Bystander who has experienced violence between ideological groups to include shootings and the use of improvised explosive devices. His family has stopped holding big family events in public spaces; when Quincaneras used to be held in Encanto Park, which always has green grass, beautiful tree cover, and water, now they have to hold them inside. It's getting hard to find affordable places, because the VFWs and similar organizations are becoming more overtly white supremacist and won't host these families, providing paper-thin "excuses."

Who else in the person's life is involved?

Friends and classmates within ASU. Since they are local to the area, the family is also experiencing the same level of violence and are sometimes afraid to go to church services or public gatherings.

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

All ideological groups ultimately want to gain power and influence in the local politics while also attempting to eliminate their ideological counter. In our specific case, the white supremacist groups would like to see an end to immigration from non-white countries, a concerted effort to "round up" and deport those in the country illegally, or any immigrant here legally but who commits any crime. They want to re-establish their Euro-centric views as dominant and end things like Black History Month, and to revise school curricula to exclude what they see as "broke and woke." They use terror to try and scare the minority communities in the Phoenix Metro Area to either leave the area or go into hiding, though the more extreme ideologues view complete extermination of these groups as the ultimate goal, believing in their supremacy not just on a cultural level but biological.

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

Loss of trust in democratic institutions

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

Dio de los muertos parade is attacked by a coordinated car bombing and small arms attack following the local government support for the hispanic community. This cause the Hispanic community to rally around their own safety while accepting support from local communities who have also been victims of the ongoing violence.

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

They agree to join a friend from childhood who is participating in an event that the student sees as an appropriate response to the act of violence in order to document it as a journalist

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

Low level violence and lack of response to it from government officials has removed trust in government agencies, creating a climate where both sides feel the need to defend their own communities

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

Because this is a long term, low burning threat, he doesn't remember the first time there was violence; it's always been background noise. But the Dia de Muertos bombing is different -- it's large scale and impacted more than the target communities as 'sympathizers.' What he doesn't understand right now -- and likely won't for some time, given his future involvement in the organization -- is the level of radicalization of his own community, not just the white supremacists who targeted them.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)	Mostly digitally, through word-of-mouth, and through ideologically-tinged news that agrees with his view points.
What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?	Creating networks of people to find information and resources relating to the response to the threat, closed chat groups, end-to-end encryption
What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?	As news of the conflict goes national, it inspires similar acts from both sides in other locations, escalating national tension and the potential for violence

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?	- Political neutrality of law enforcement and the intelligence community. - Societal norms surrounding overt racism. - Possibly: case law about what constitutes "incitement of violence" -- does online count, etc.
New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?	Distributed communication networks to avoid internet shutdowns enable continued action despite government efforts at comms blackouts
Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?	Increasingly secure communication methods cheaply for civilian populations and a focus on communication mechanisms that can't be tracked or accessed by the government
Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?	Social media and secure messaging platforms allow for quick response and swarming techniques for attacks and retaliation. Social media also allows for greater reach of messaging and recruitment within the extremist groups
Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?	The white supremacists groups need at least passive condonement from the police to where the police are no longer useful in their communities to combat the threat against minorities. They also need to keep recruiting military, LE and vets to increase their level of technical acumen as well as perceived threat by minority groups. Minority extremist groups also need to recruit from these pools in order to understand the TTPs that would thwart their efforts. Industry, particularly independent social media platforms, will openly support these efforts as "protected by the first amendment" -- see 8Chan and 8Kun as examples of advocacy.
Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?	Idea that there is no recourse outside the community itself and that self-defense is the only option. Narratives about combatting the current government and its agents as necessary for survival. Narratives about freedom, self-governance, and visions of America. "Replacement" narratives within the white-supremacy extremist groups, and self-defense narratives among the minority-majority extremist groups; not much different than today's extremist narratives, but exacerbated especially in white supremacist groups by shifting demographics, particularly in Arizona.

PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

What are the Gates?

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

1	Outreach to affected communities
2	
3	Continued efforts to focus on and thwart white supremacy and white supremacists groups. (LE)
4	Study and combat mis/disinformation to slow polarization and spread of antigovernment conspiracy
5	

What are the Flags?

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

	Joe Biden wins the 2020 presidential election, and the Republicans hold the senate. After the appointment of Amy Coney Barrett to the SCOTUS, both minorities and white supremacists feel aggrieved and angry at the outcome and the current government. In 2024, the pendulum swings overly Republican and protectionist. Joe Biden's presidency was hamstrung by an uncooperative senate and the blame is misplaced. Joe does not run for reelection and the DNC proposes a more leftist candidate, who loses in a landslide to the Republican candidate. This candidate follows the mold set by Trump, and politicizes the Justice Department, the Intelligence Community, and the Military. The white supremacist groups test the waters and find a sympathetic government who will turn a blind eye to some, but not all, of their illegal activities.
1	Movement towards advocacy journalism after debates about truth, "both sides reporting", and the reaction to it -- pendulum swing toward the other extreme
2	Greater spread of recruitment, mis and disinformation through social media and secure communication platforms
3	Access to surveillance software and technology that allow for better planning and tracking of rival groups while remaining out of harms way. These platforms can also be weaponized as we've seen from ISIS in Northern Iraq and Syria. They can be used simply as a harrassing tool to certian populations to know they are being watched.
4	Social media 'bans' on certain groups leads to strengthened perceptions of persecution and righteousness, and hardened communications and communities in other online fora
5	Police unions gain/maintain force and political power, protecting those in their ranks who are part of extremist groups and who perpetuate violence against minorities in the name of "safety"

Milestones:

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 
- 1

Greater trust within the population of government and democratic institutions
- 2

A handle on what is fact versus what is disinformation and propaganda (Not sure who wrote this-- fact vs disinformation is no longer the problem. It's getting people to care about facts.)
- 3

An honest attempt to shutter outside influence and their proxies within the US
- 4

Recommitment to the end of race-based policing; concerted, public efforts to root out racist or racist-sympathizing police to earn public trust of minority communities
- 5

Create conversations across polarized lines to pull people back together and change the underlying narratives of dehumanizing the other side

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 
- 1

Improved trust in government and institutions (could be improved transparency, de-politicization, etc)
- 2

Improved social conditions to reduce the tensions driving moves toward polarization and radicalization
- 3

Focus on deescalating social tension over time to reduce the potential for long-term conflicts
- 4

Create and maintain organizations and structures to bring together people from different backgrounds, ideologies, and parts of the country together and engage (preferably through non-government organizations)
- 5

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

Team Indigo- "Rotten Apple"

2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollup for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Grouping 1: Narratives

Limited media told us what was happening and we considered that to be what was happen, yet we now know with the rise of irresponsible media outlets we have lost our gatekeepers.

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

Polarity and Internet based atroglythmic poloarziation

Grouping 3: Industry

Virtual geography is similar to idea of radicalization "neighborhoods"

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationlist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

China

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

23 year old, mixed heritage female. Iranian, Russian, Cambonian, Philapean, Sudan heritage. Raised in the USA in a Tiny Home Commune. Agnostic beliefs. UBI is common place in the US. In lieu of a college education, everyone is able to self-actualize. (PUT A NEW WORD HERE) Everyone is specialty trained in AI field and AI's have taken over as social media influencers. She gets her news and daily updates from social media.

Where do they live?

Dilaitated Silicon Valley. Converted old Apple building into apartments. AI started a fire and kicked everyone out, and Silicoln Valley is no longer viable.

What is the threat?

Deep Fake causes Cyberware similar to the Cold War that has Economic Implications and threatens UBI

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

1. China shows Fake 9/11; Video of the White House exploding is show through the media (like the "Hunger Games") fake videos are shown as if they are happening in real time; 2. China blames this on Britain (our biggest ally); 3. Everyone comes together to cyber attack Britain (everyone is a hacker); 4. Cyberwar between US and Britain caused by China; 4. Cyber Marshall Law ensues-"The Switch" turns cyber OFF

Who else in the person's life is involved?

Online Community using Iphone 22's; Her online groups included; a group for her Iranian, Russian, Cambonian, Filipino, Sudan heritage, tiny home commune's all connected

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

China/Russia want the US to attack Britain and break our special relationship to make us more vulnerable. They are afraid of the US being the biggest superpower

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

It exposes the naivety of the citizenship to believe information without fact checking

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

She gets the news of the attack from her community and agrees to begin attacking Britain along with them without verifying the information herself. For several weeks leading up to the event, she has seen "news" stories about individuals and companies being hacked by adversaries and her government did not take action.

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

Joining a hacking\_group/crusade

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

This event gave her a percieved threat to her personal safety and she no longer believed her governemnt would take action to protect her.

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

She sees the "live" feed of chaos in DC, with a replay of the attach on the White House. This creates a sense of fear and urgency in her. She will not see that the video playing is a fake video loop of an incident that never took place.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

She receives the information and video replay from the people in her community through their online communication, views the action as a point of view through her internet connected glasses/contact lenses as if she is there in person

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

Using her in home technology to connect with her community

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

Makes it much easier to fake something like blowing up the white house then having to actually do it. Makes it much easier to start a war or some sort of national reaction by only using technology

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Most or all citizens can code, higher grade deepfake technology, fake news flaggers,

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

Create new game/social apps to target the population without government/law enforcement oversight. Post/share fake news stories more frequently to avoid being flagged and removed. Create new "sources" and/or "profiles" that are not already laled as fake or associated with the adversary. Sharing more stories that create doubt and fear in citizens. Spread the notion of every person for themselves, being self sustaining and capable.

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

Business models that focus on people's vulnerability; businesses to help potential employees or employers find jobs/people to work those jobs; fake/alternative education/technical education companies promising employment to individuals, fake service firms to help grow businesses; people often hire contractors from websites-foreign/spy actors who pose as contractors to complete jobs while siphoning information for their countries agencies

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

New journals that offer less stringent publishing guidelines which promise to reduce the number of gatekeepers and let academics publish for a fee, research/writing consultant agencies built to offer spies information to new/innovations or implications for those innovations and plans to use them. Research sharing/input platforms built to help academics share information or research ideas across disciplines and universities. Future technology-satellite internet available to everyone (Universal Wi-Fi)

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

IT support. Pair up with educational programs, gaming software companies, technology companies that allow the adversary to reach the population wherever they go.Polling/Research support to keep track of what popular trends are and how to stay engaged with the targeted population.

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

Stories of American relationship problems with Britain, they are relying on the online cultural relationships to help create an instant online army, the fake video of Britain blowing up the White House, China/Russia defend their actions by saying American politics and war mongering are ruining the world, they believe themselves to be the rightful head superpowers of the world. Distrust in our own government to protect us. "I'm the last man standing ideology."-Last-survivor mentality

**PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)**  
**Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions.**  
**Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.**

**What are the Gates?**

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

- 1 Media sources being more responsible about fact checking and remaining politically neutral
- 2 Fund highschool, undergraduate and graduate students to work on real time identification of deepfake video, audio  
Create or utilize already established foresight units who concentrate on trigger events causing instant offensive digital reaction from the citizenry. Due to the extremely high percentage of digital natives in the US who will have the skills to react in an offensive manner
- 3 without a central government command structure directing them.  
Government Leadership Message: leadership needs to work to rebuild a working relationship between the parties and remove the "us vs them" message being sent to the public
- 4 Cultural Awareness, Mindfulness and Community Relations: neighborhoods/communities should regain the social aspect and relationship building with neighbors. By losing the socialization, people are becoming more divided. By strengthening in person
- 5 relationships, people will better appreciate those around them with differing opinions. This can be supported by gov, LE, and industry

**What are the Flags?**

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

- 1 Dark web communities, novel media platforms not widely shared
- 2 Hacker communities utilizing AI and other resources/skills to create deepfake video techniques not widely known or studied  
An increasing number of U.S. citizens becoming digital natives while learning coding skills is a double edged sword. No longer will the military be the only capable entity with the ability to quickly assemble a large force of proficient coding technicians to accomplish a particular objective.
- 3 Who are the vulnerable populations? Will this change? Our youth are the targets for many new technologies: we need to counter this by using the platforms to share positive messages and teach mindfulness, cultural awareness, and cyber security awareness
- 4 Divisive groups. There will always be extreme thinkings and doers. How do we counter their thoughts and behaviors so they are not normalized? The media plays a large part in this. Educating the media on dangers of labeling groups and giving them power, sharing
- 5 viral news stories that do not have the public's best interest in mind, etc.

**Milestones:**

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1 EDUCATION- for leadership, social media platforms, and protection agencies to understand the intrinsic values of citizens
- 2 Government rebuilding citizen trust in the legislative, judicial and executive positions at local, state, and federal levels
- 3 Government leadership to create unity amongst citizens and reignite global trust (NAFTA/United Nations, etc.)
- 4 Communication to marginalized groups and isolated groups that American stands to protect ALL citizens
- 5 AI/Advanced Technology to identify, track, and eliminate deep fakes and misinformation

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1 Add stakeholder groups to gatekeepers (everyday citizens from polarized groups, allow them to "have a seat at the table"  
Use technology to include citizens in government (I.E. When senators vote on bills; have an online vote with the citizens from that state that goes directly to the senator, so they can see the consensus from the state on that bill)-remove the need for physical letters, meetings, or waiting on the phone for hours to talk to a representative
- 2 Have vetted news sources and SECURE websites where citizens can fact check articles that is easily accessible
- 4 Some type of unification platform/campaign/actionable event/or presidential speeches that have messages and actions of inclusion
- 5 Consider mixed-party elections or restructuring (I.E. One Republic and One Democrat running on the same ticket)

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

Violet
2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives

--

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

<a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MaSip5AtKrhoW7xb26ZacSYvHy-Foa7nQ1ewP1uWfw/edit?pli=1#gid=1643317378">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MaSip5AtKrhoW7xb26ZacSYvHy-Foa7nQ1ewP1uWfw/edit?pli=1#gid=1643317378</a>
---

Grouping 3: Industry

--

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationlist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)  
7) Corporate sponsored terrorism

Workers rights // Labor and Laws // Corporate Loyalty //

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

Rumford Mill - terrorist/extremist activity by company supporters trying to silence the whistleblowers
--

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

Lifelong company employee, parents worked for the company, grandparents did as well. Previous generations were able to live well on the income from the Mill but this is no longer the case. He is racially chinese and so has always had his loyalty questioned. As a result he is even more aggressive about demonstrating his loyalty
--

Where do they live?

Outskirts of Rumford Maine
----------------------------

What is the threat?

The company says that the whistleblowers are putting the entire company and all jobs at risk
--

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

Disaffected young men in with last good job- anxiety and feeling of threat as family and others no longer have the good paying job // rise in automation also increases threat //
---

Who else in the person's life is involved?

The CEO/Owner of the company who is seeing profit margins decrease and costs for environmental impact mitigation increase, increased automation by competitors, increased global competition. He is looking for ways to silence whistleblowers or anyone complaining about how the company does things.
Other companies around the U.S. and worldwide facing similar threat of displacement and loss of income

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

The actor is hoping to keep their job and prevent the company from shutting down, which would "destroy their town and their whole way of life" // looking for sense of purpose and in doing so, is more ideological. This makes people ripe for extremist indoctrination.
---

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

The increased population of people in a low status role creates people who are insecure and looking for purpose and have time to explore/lean into that role
--

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

They hear on the company's social media groups and internal messaging system that despite years of layoffs and reduced benefits, that the company is at risk of shutting down completely due to whistleblowers/employees who disagree with the company's choices.
---

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

This is a pattern that has been seen before in labor/corporate conflicts, people whose jobs/livelihoods are threatened are often willing to take actions that would seem extreme in other circumstances. Companies are consistently found to be willing to use fear/violence to control protestors/whistleblowers
---

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

This is the same as previous instantiations of this kind of situation but the difference is that this now could apply to "gig economy" workers or groups that we are not expecting
--

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

They see an attack on their way of life and their sense of self as their personal identity is inextricable from the corporation for which they work. They see attacks from other people in the community against the company they work for, and therefore come to its aid and defend it based on their interlinked identity.
--

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

Internal systems, then discussed on pseudo-separate social media
--

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

The widespread push toward extremism and corporate identity exist throughout the internet. Corporations--particularly those backed by nation states--have the ability to set the stage through integrated propaganda networks.

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

This type of threat is global and has repercussions in many societies. For example,

**PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)**

*Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)*

**Barriers and Roadblocks:** What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

The most evident barrier to corporate-endorsed violent extremism is the state's ability to control corporations and to hold them criminally liable. Additionally, naming and shaming campaigns (boycotts) are highly effective at impacting a corporation's bottom line. Lastly, the board and shareholders of a corporation could also act as spoilers.

**New Practices:** What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

Mass media and disinformation campaigns; playing to sentimentality of the past; fear of the future and uncertainty; identifying the job with the sense of a person's self worth; international political instability and the reach of national agendas via their corporate entities (including clandestine psyops and disruption campaigns)

**Business Models:** What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

**Research Pipeline:** What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

The internet. Capture of legal institutions and community boards who propagate laws. Capture of local law enforcement.

**Ecosystem Support:** What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

**Narrative Identity:** What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

This is actually the key part of the story. The actors have identified with the corporation and seen violence exist in areas where other options were removed. The lack of options leads to only one perceived COA: violence, which is a mentality that is carefully nurtured by the corporate entity.

**PART FOUR-- Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)**

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

**What are the Gates?**

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

1

2

3

4

5

**What are the Flags?**

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

1

2

3

4

5

**Milestones:**

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

1

2

3

4

5

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

1

2

3

4

5

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

Robinhood Restitution
2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives	Narrative structure contains a core conflict and a core desire
Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment	3 main triggers for terrorists and violence: 1. Insecurity relating to something existential 2. Someone to exploit that insecurity 3. Gradual nature of radicalization (small conversations built to extreme ideologies)
Grouping 3: Industry	Extremist groups move to centralized platforms after deplatforming

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):

1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationlist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

X

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

This is a band of threat actors living in poor red States. They're hackers, they are young and they are angry about the mistreatment of poor red states as opposed to the lifestyles in the wealthier blue states. They are feeling everything was taken from them and they're going to seek justice.

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

College student, 2nd year communications major, living with roommates, renting and apartment. Male age twenty years old. Named Bobbie Paul

Where do they live?

Los Angeles in the Wealthier Blue State of CA. It is an August day 115 degrees outside. The wealthier States still have full export industry. They're still making money. They're still able to function such as coastal communities.

What is the threat?

It's 2031 and we're living separately, but near or requiring some kind of exchange an advanced state IDs or information to go state to state. We have borders closed around each state. It's a pretty extreme place that we live in now. So knowing that's the environment we live in has a real nationalist focus. If our citizens in 2031 are living in this space, could there be something like a youth up rising that is occurring creating extremism because these kids have lived in and have grown in these sheltered bubbles. The US is now an environment and how you could sort of segregate state by state. I mean, if you were to talk about that a year ago, it would seem like it would easily be 10 years out. And yet we saw the start of it with coronavirus, right? I mean, there's times where you couldn't go into New York, Hawaii and so on. That would have been pretty unimaginable a year ago to say, no, the States aren't going to put up a virtual wall that doesn't allow you to come into the state. That's absurd. We're United States of America. And yet here we are. Another example is the signs saying don't pass recreational marijuana proposition because we don't want to be California. We were not like them. So those kinds of sentiments are already here, they're here in 2020. It is Peaceful. Everybody's real peaceful about the transition into a land of divisive separation until the States decide to not support the federal government and the fed gov then can limit what they give to the poorer states. Money will be transferred to the federal government but they do not provide for the poor states but instead keep all moneys as corrupt bodies. Food disparities between the rich and poor States. There are far fewer resources now in the States, and poor support from the federal government. Some realized that they have less resources and major differences between red and blue states and this encourages a desire to punish and seek a violent outcome. Disinfo is used to prop it up even further and exploit this idea to encourage action from youth in the red, poorer states against the wealthier blue states. Creating a network of extremists in all the poorer red States communicates digitally because they're all in the connected color. The youth start to recognize that these wealthier States are right next door. They're not receiving the resources they were promised from the government. They are mad and this leads to extremism towards launching action to insight civil war, after ten years of peace inside the separation zones.

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

By Hacking, they get into the state funds. They reroute the money from the wealthy blue States to the poorer red states noncredit institutions in their account. Bank accounts are emptied. Self Cleansing Intrusion Tolerance (SCIT) attacks shut down the power grid and, and water. All the systems are shut down from the band of hackers. By doing a SCIT attack, shutting down the water system, fire departments can't fight the fire as effective, which means more homes are burning down. Without electricity a city the size of LA jumps into chaos quickly.

Who else in the person's life is involved?

Neighbors, family, friends, it affects all of LA, CA

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

The divisiveness have made people turn incredibly local. So localist/tribal mixed with national. How will shutting down all the systems, make them feel like what was stolen is going to come back to them? It will give them Justice

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

It's an effort of dividing people by color coding, which becomes left, right, red, blue, conservative, liberal, all of those things. People want to show off their portfolio of things they are engage in, participate in and believe in.

**PART TWO: Experience Questions** (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

*Experience Questions (pick at least 4)*

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

the divisiveness to separate them by Red/Blue, they are separated in how they go about their lives, such as only

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

All of a sudden Bobby Paul living in the August heat of LA with no air conditioning and power. And which means there's no internet. That's another, another way of tracing to the local level, the local electricity company.

Bobby Paul shouts "Holy crap, it looks like the whole city's out. There's no communication." They don't know if it's just a phenomenon of nature and they don't really know what to do. Runs outside without any reserve to see if other people are out there.

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

They have a slogan or there's some kind of blue balloon and the other side stolen from them in some kind of stone in the corrupt tree. They believe they've been stolen from through corruption. And so they're going to go seek back what was taken from them. It was like cultural Robin hood.

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

Power is out, air is off, water is out, internet out, cell phone service jammed. No way to communicate or have basic needs met. No idea what is going on or what happened.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

Bobby Paul and his roommates run on foot to their nearby college and use it as a sort of safe zone. There's generators in the basement because they have to keep their servers from get overheating. So they think I'll go there cause there's a generator and maybe there'll be, and then they get there and realize it's still chaotic. They get frightened and they start to build barriers around the outside of the building they are in. And so now we turn this college campus into ground zero.

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

We know that all the air conditioning's out, no power, no internet, no way of tracing local. No way of communicating. When this suddenly happens Bobby Paul is in his apartment, it's an August hot day, 115 degrees. Bobby Paul walks outside and goes to a nearby Ice cream shop where he see's one of his roommates and others gathering. There's somebody at the ice cream shop that has a ham radio you know, old school, like a satellite phone. No outside communication from traditional sources. They gather around this ice cream shop and they all start listening to the ham radio satellite phone.

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

After LA as a model - other large cities are hit

**PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor** (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

*Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)*

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Robinhood hackers from the poor States have to jump over the hurdles of governmental protections in place, which are weak and easy to topple. To achieve their outcome, to jump over the grid, security has to be relaxed. They know how to hack grids, that's been possible for a long time. It's not really anything to overcome. That's possible easily. It's been in that space for a decade, two decades. It's always existed really.

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

This is not a new, highly sophisticated type of attack. It's more about hacking the people cognitively and how it has developed so it's not the technology that we're talking about. What's driving us society towards this.

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

All of this unfolding is like human psychology on repeat, it's like in going through and really answering each of these with, instead of, you know, what technology is available that can be used to develop this threat. It's what psychology system.

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

What kind of advanced cognitive thievery, so meaning capturing part of individuals' cognitive capacity and swaying it so much so that it's a cognitive practice that now is so prevalent because as a culture, we didn't do anything about information disorder at all. We don't care, dis/mis/mal info and just let it take hold. We just to let it fly. So then our culture that enables all of these kinds of things in this human space that their cognitive abilities have been so diminished.

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

A radical reimmersion of cognative understanding of truth a way to break down dis/mis/mal info as a society mutually agreed upon.

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

The hackers fully believe they have been wrongs and are lead further down that path by dis info that shows them all that they are missing out on and they are focused on righting things for more equity between the wealthy and poor states.

**PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders** (from the perspective of the defenders)

**Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.**

**What are the Gates?**

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

Equitable resources:  
Hacks happen every single day, so it's not what we're talking about is different than in the counter-terrorism space, how individuals get radicalized, we're talking about the human psyche evolution. And you're trying to prevent an individual from becoming radicalized and then conducting some sort of attack. That's what we're trying to do and talk about is how do we prevent the deterioration of society, which would lead to folks turning to extremism as a way of lashing out.

1 Available Resources: Federal, state, local going to some areas and not going to another, which is creating the haves and the have-nots and further dividing the country.

2

What are the Flags?

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

	Budgets - funding allocation
	Keeping an eye on budgets of communities. If you knew what the budget of each state or each municipality within was, and there was a tracking system.
3	Necessities: A checklist of basic necessities met, and that would require big government, little government, industry partners, social service organizations.
4	Governmental Transparency: Cognitive technology tools can help move government transparent. It's about communicating what government is doing - clearly. BTW Bobby Paul just learned about these laws that passed
5	five years prior so he is connected with how they work.

Milestones:

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

	Signs of segregation: The example of the Shiites and the Sunni's and Iraq. You've got neighborhoods that are raging. It's a
1	new version of segregation versus based on the color of your skin 50 years ago.
	Lower education outcomes: So people aren't completing high school in mass, education is just over. Schools that are, pro-
2	angry and nationalists ideals versus, pro Democracy.
3	They've organized:public engagement is consumed
	Data sold to wrong parties. Businesses where their entire business is based on monitoring illicit activity and then reporting
4	it out and selling that data to interested parties.
5	

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

	Educating: Educators, report how the segregated education is working out.
2	Caring for mental health: Mental health professionals who are seeing the impact of the injustice that's occurring.
3	just government looking into this, you know, who knows when there's a hacker kind of uprising occurs because they can
	Society Tracking Matrix: There could be a matrix built to monitor when people are not feeling great and here's the data to
4	prove it. And then we go fix it.
5	Follow Sentiment: monitor the sentiment of wealthy and poor states for independent, non-governmental organizations

	Gate keepers: Educators, Government national state, local, social service agencies because they would have the pulse of
1	how things such as food scarcity and shelter
	Trade associations, businesses that monitor this stuff that could all be on some grand sort of steering committee who all
2	along are watching.
	Deterioration detection tools - to where it's a new normal to track all citizens cognitive deterioration caused by lack of
3	resources and disinformation penetration.
4	
5	

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

Sys-rupt31
2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives

macro level narratives

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

The amount of energy required to maintain extreme beliefs is significantly reduced due to the ease of finding people who share your views

Grouping 3: Industry

algorithms decide what we see on social media

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):

- 1) State Sponsored or Proxy
- 2) Nationlist
- 3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)
- 4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy
- 5) Opposition to government authority
- 6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

Non-state, semi-organized, transnational movement. Socioeconomic movement of people left out of COVID vaccine distribution.

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

Manuel "Manny" Rodriguez is originally from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, informally known as one of the "maquila capitals" of the world. When he was 17, his abuela, Isabel, sent him to live with his uncle Javi in Pueblo, Colorado, so he could get away from the violence in Honduras and have a chance at real life. Both Manny's were killed by gang violence which has gripped Honduras for decades. To secure his future in the US, Isabel and Javi agreed Manny should go through the US Army for naturalization, hoping this will guarantee his new American life. In 2021, after serving 4-years in the U.S Army, receiving an honorable discharge was naturalized as a U.S. citizen. Initially, Manny was pleased with his path in life and his newly achieved American citizenship but soon found life after service a difficult transition. Although he was an able technician in the Army, he was frustrated over the challenge of finding a decent job with benefits following the protracted economic contraction caused by Covid-19.

Where do they live?

A large beef meatpacking operation near Amarillo, Texas offered the highest wages available. Manny took the work despite its risks, but became increasingly distraught over the declining health of his co-workers, who suffered from "Long-Covid" (chronic covid) and were also prone to viral re-infection at the plant with newly mutated viruses, despite the company's best sanitation efforts.

What is the threat?

Desperate for work, Manny couldn't quit, and therefore became increasingly agitated by the conditions he and other meat packers endured, recognizing that many of them persons of color and immigrants from LATAM. He was especially outraged that those most vulnerable to Covid-19, were forced by economic necessity to be "at risk". It was at this point Manny began connecting online with vets in private Facebook groups, who were experiencing similarly disenfranchising economic conditions.

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

They all shared common suspicion that the economic and policy responses to covid-19 prioritized New World Order agendas (e.g., globalization, free trade, financial capitalism, digital currency, etc.) over plight of domestic workers, particularly people of color. They felt disposable in an economic and political terrain that was increasingly inequitable with no opportunity rungs left available. They felt that they needed to support one

Who else in the person's life is involved?

Lives in Amarillo Texas and works JBS Beef meatpacking plant north of Amarillo, Texas

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

Threat is endemic covid-19 induced economic depression

**First Arc (2021-2024):** Our character (Manuel) is just one of countless US citizens working in the Trade Sector (Blue Color) experiencing fewer economic opportunities. The threat of covid-19-induced death and illness experienced in the meatpacking plant exacerbated marginalization and increased anger at system for betraying him personally and his "people." **Second Arc (2024-2031"the Event"):**

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

Manny's abuela, Isabel. Raised since he was 5 when his parents were killed by gange violence in Honduras. Uncle Javi, Manny's maternal uncle. Helped him get started in US and is a ranch hand in Colorado and Texas.

workers' revolution, a shift opinion to support protest even violent action against corporation that want to "automate the working person's job away". Reveal the hypocrisy of the COVID-19 vaccine/placebo.

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

As we talked about, maybe this one 'event' is a coordinated three-prong approach.

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

While Manny has maintained online relationships with military buddies and family abroad, his marginalization has compelled him to become a conduit for his activism (which is later seen as extremism). He coordinates his social movement through his family in Honduras and leverages is military buddies (former Cyber SMEs from USAF and USArmy) to manipulate information online.

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

Up until 2024, Manny was still developing his knowledge and skills (and his sense of marginalization). By 2024 he has formed a network and an effective transnational 'team.' In 2024 their 'attacks' are single and focused. From 2024 to 2031, they realize that one big event will be their magnum opus.

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

Maybe this is too early for the 2020-2024 Timeline. Is this his 'event' or is it smaller actions leading up to ONE BIG COORDINATED attack? Threats will be ambiguous at first, seemingly disconnected. Manny and his group learn how to access the new generation of RPM (Remote Patient Monitoring) networks. Recovering or patients with mild COVID symptoms are monitored by their physicians through a network of at-home vital signs. Patient facilities rise when using this system. At first it appears the network is flawed. The stocks of Motorola, (NAME OF MEDICAL EQUIP CORP) and other leaders in the industry tank. Only too late to people realize it was intentionally corrupted, not flawed. Manny and his group form their own underground information system. They realize that most people get their news from online sources through social media and if those stories (photos, videos, text, source documents) are manipulated to tell 'our truth' to fight 'their lies.' Automated meat processing plants, lumber companies, parts suppliers, shipyards and medical labs all begin to discover malware buried in their software.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

As social movements around the globe become more active, they need not directly connect with one another or even coordinate efforts. A database hack in Saudi Arabia inspires a similar event in Central America. A large scale social protest in Detroit is televised and the next day the same protest chants appear on hundreds of posters carried during a violent crowd at a soccer tournament in Estonia. Populations left out of the COVID vaccine distribution scheme are all 'communicating' anytime their protests are televised/posted online. Movements no longer need to consolidate their groups; they all see and hear one another through their actions. The idea of the 'sleeper cell' has evolved in this global environment. Manny's group can operate in isolation and autonomy; feeding the broader cause.

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

As mentioned, online provides everything he needs. Former military cyber SMEs provide him tech support, online social networks are coordinated via free apps.

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

Distrust in 'truth' and automated systems grows.

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Cyber-security is much more sophisticated and difficult to evade. Surveillance is ubiquitous so connecting online becomes risky.

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

New distributed network attack strategies are devised to mask source of attacks and new hacking technologies that allow Manny's group to exploit existing networks. These forays lead Manny's group to dark web agents and criminal networks. Manny's group despises these elements but finds them to be a necessary evil because they have access to information and secure servers/networks. The revelation that the monitoring program had been designed to fail solidifies the original threat - covid and personalizes it as Manny and his friends feel that their "people" are at existential risk.

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

Manny's group engage in pay-for-hack exploits to fund their network needs. The deeper they go into these networks the more exposed they become to various state actors and other elements selling access to more than medical records <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/23/us/politics/energetic-bear-russian-hackers.html>

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

Manny's group realizes that the most profound way to bring the PTB (powers that be) to their knees is through a sustained power outage. The grid's vulnerabilities were for sale and they figured that one big strike would be more impactful than their ongoing tactical assaults

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

The key to bringing down the grid is to destroy critical transformers. These are huge and not easily replaced. They are not well defended. Manny's group doesn't deal with explosives so they need to partner with underworld friends to take out the transformers. Although critical infrastructure will be impacted in the impacted area, Manny and his friends see this act as the least violent option for forcing authorities to confront the fraud and betrayal of public trust.

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

Manny and his friends see no future for themselves or "their people." They are desperate for "survival." They do want to hurt people but they mis-understand the ramifications of "bringing down the grid"

PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

What are the Gates?

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

- 1 Enforcement of health tech regulations
- 2 sophisticated threat intelligence collection and analysis capabilities
- 3 A thin line between the IT/OT environment in critical infrastructure.
- 4 Funding and logistical capacity to provide the vaccine globally
- 5 Legal precedent to regulate social media

What are the Flags?

List out what the Defenders ***don't*** have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

1

2

3

4

5

**Milestones:**  
What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

2023: The global economy falls into deep recession do to increased COVID-19 mortality rates in Global South countries as well as in low-income, marginalized communities in Global North countries

2024: Isabel dies from COVID-19. Manny finds out the vaccine she took was a placebo

2026: Manny finds out his job will gone, replaced by a machine.

2027: Black Hat "d3x0r" release new malware variant allowing users to drop Ryuk ransomware to attack Citric vulnerability on IoT devices

2028: Triton 2.0 is observed in the wild and is linked to attack on water treatment plant in King County, Washington

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

1

2

3

4

5

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

The Oslo Express
2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollup for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives

Narrative is like gravity " it's just there"

Narrative is developed and maintained through passive and active experiences/inputs.

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

Corruption of Ideals and Corruption of Culture and seeds of power

Grouping 3: Industry

Slow social media action against extremist content

friction between intervention and business models

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationalist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

Racial / Ethnic supremacy

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

African/American running to to become the first black senator from GA

Where do they live?

Atlanta, Georgia

What is the threat?

Chararter Assianination and the threat of violence

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

Social Media starts slowly and syndicated news picks up the unverified news and portrays it as truth.

Who else in the person's life is involved?

The Greater African American Community

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

They want to prevent a minority from taking a national office in order to maintain the dominant culture

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

Dis and Misinformation campaigns can effect regional power dynamics faster and the damage be irreversible

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

He woke up one morning in the midst of a tough election campaign, to find a totally fabricated story "trending" on twitter

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

Spend time and energy combating false narratives and threats of violence

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

the scene will appear to be just another dirty campaign add run by his opponent. he doesn't realize that machine learning and AI are behind the smear campaign.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

social media platforms and legacy news outlets

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

need to launch an effective counter cyber campaign to protect his reputation and family

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

good people will no longer desire public office for fear of these sorts of fake incidents.

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

social media platforms restricting content, making credible sounding content, reaching the audience

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

AI and machine learning for sparsing and finding new forums to deliver content

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

Social Influencers funded to spread messages that radicalize over time

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

AI bots that can talk like humans. AI able to read forums and translate my narrative in a way that speaks to the audiences.

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

actor needs massive computing power, will need to be linked to a research, industry or government entity that supports the mission.

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

Historical references to eugenics such as Population Bomb by Paul Ehrlich as real science that backs the messaging and narratives.

**PART FOUR– Backcasting - The Defenders** (from the perspective of the defenders)

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions.  
Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

**What are the Gates?**

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

- 1 Media literacy and awareness training.
- 2 regulation of social media platforms
- 3 requirements on news outlets to have standards on verification
- 4 AI security tools that detect deep fakes and false stories
- 5 special cyber security protections for Candidates running for public office.

**What are the Flags?**

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

- 1 Large part of the Public that only gets news and information from unverified social media platforms
- 2 Siloed public that is suceptable to believing the most lurid details about a public figure from social media
- 3 the widespread public use of AI and Machine learning as an offnsive cyber weapon
- 4
- 5

**Milestones:**

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

Team Blue
2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

Link: Research Synthesis Workbook

Grouping 1: Narratives

Extremism isn't new, but method of how these stories are communicated have advanced

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

Corruption of Ideals and Corruption of Culture and seeds of power

Grouping 3: Industry

algorithms decide what we see on social media

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationlist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

Focused "Cause"

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

Matt, although he is more known by his alias Righteous Babalon, is a single, 27 year old white male college drop out. He works from home doing freelance network security engineer. He is tall and underweight with an uneven smile. With an unusal forward lurch from years profecting his craft, RB has fully indulged hacker and geek culture. Typically clad in an old trenchcoat, tourbillion watch, and carrying a custom made mechanical keyboard, he is the ubermensch of pen testing. At home he is also a member of an apocalyptic extremist organization called Techno-Jihad, who seek to accelerate global warming to bring upon the end of the world.

Where do they live?

He currently lives in Seattle, WA, but grew up in the small town of Columbus, IN which is the cross roads of Art, Technology, and Christian dominionist theology

What is the threat?

This organization sees the writing on the wall for climate change and doesn't believe any government or religion is doing anything to stop it. Instead they feel the need to accelerate the impacts to bring on the end of the world. Due to their celebration of technology, they have been led to a belief that they can shape the world following the apocolapse ultimately uploading their contiousness to the cloud to achieve technological divinity.

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

Followingn mass migration from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, Techno-Jihad has gained a following on deepweb image boards and secure messaging apps. A convergence of social media bringing normies from typical social media websites like Youtube and Reddit and building off the belief that world is ending has gained mass popularity. Thoses individuals who see typical spiritualism and religion as fairytales have brought them to the technological fringe. This as led Rightious Babalon to not only join, but take a strong position in the movement. He has become a key player in attacking the US engery infrastutute to release more methane into the atomosphere, causing an increase in global Earth temperatures.

Who else in the person's life is involved?

His family is largely of the dominionist sort, but he escaped that stifling life to start anew in the tech promised land. He doesn't know any of his fellow hackers in real life but he has created strong relationships with them.

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

Since they are accelerationist, they want to bring upon the end of the world. They feel as though it is ineivatable so they should have control over the rebuilding of the world. They do this essentially by being the opposite of the ecoterrorists, destroying safegaurds, and mechanisms that slow the cooldown.

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

It exposes the weakness of US Energy Infrastructure, the ties to christian apocolapse narratives that may be present to non religious communities, failures of governments to protect society.

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

Accelerationist groups come together because algorithms on social media begin showing them each other's videos. Groups pushing to bring about the end of the world for many reasons - religious, environmental, tech-acelerationism, etc - move to speed up climate change as a way to destabilize systems and force their visions of the end of the world.

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

Lack of action on climate change, combines with his upbringing in apocalyptic churches to convince him that the only way to save humanity is to speed the end of world and force change. While his role is mostly hacking, his actions become more and more extreme as he dives deeper into apocalyptic idologies.

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

As the US improves infrastructure, energy in particularly becomes less fragmented and more connected. Such improvements have increased overall cybersecurity, but have left the grid more susceptible once breached.

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

His early experiences with YouTube videos pushing him increasingly more apocalyptic visions leads to his focus on accelerationist methods. He becomes convinced only by speeding up the Singularity can humans be saved -- without physical bodies or needs or greed, people can exist solely at the top of Maslow's hierarchy and self-actualize. Through social media, he becomes connected to many religious and technological groups also working to speed the end of the world and begins to work to hack power and methane plants.

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

In his daily life, he appears awkward but relatively normal. He connects to family through standard channels and remains connected to friends and family who have no idea what he is involved in.

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

He mainly uses channels encrypted with block chain and inaccessible to the public. He has set up encrypted channels for several related organizations to communicate outside the view of intelligence and law enforcement. His primary skills are in hacking and computers, so his role is focused on digital attacks on infrastructure, organizations, and companies.

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

Attacks on infrastructure release methane that speed climate change, leading to increasing protests and pressure to address the issue and find the responsible groups. Tensions over climate change ripple globally, inspiring more groups to join the effort and others to attempt to stop them.

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Cultural: Suspicion between specific apocalyptic groups and the technical/hacking communities need to be overcome, but currently none of them trust each other. Legal: The SCOTUS adopts such a broad definition of protections for free speech that social media companies are never held liable for the content they produce/host

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

Blockchain-encrypted communications; successful cyber attacks or physical attacks on power grids and chemical plants that produce greenhouse gasses

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

Not new, but the problem of tech algorithms connecting various conspiracy communities gets worse to protect profits

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

Worms that can infect industry have already been used (Iran centrifuges). Encryption is already functional, but will likely improve as block chain becomes more possible with increased computing power. The ability to copy and move brainwaves to digital spaces would be necessary for Matt's focus on the singularity.

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

Matt himself is the ideal threat actor - a hacker with the skills to carry out attacks, create encrypted comms networks, and hide the actions of the group to protect themselves. They also need to secure a private cloud infrastructure to hold their singularity for the rest of eternity once they upload their consciousness. Industry remains uncommitted to rooting out dangerous ideological groups hosting themselves in public or semi-public spheres.

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

Matt has judged the world to be unworthy and undeserving of its riches, and has become part of a small group intent on bringing the world to a fitting, apocalyptic end, and controlling the technical world they'll create in its aftermath. He sees the dominionists as a growing powerful movement that he can ally with, and over time his personal narrative shows great parallels with the narrative of the dominionists: the inherently corrupt nature of the flesh and the physical world, that the only way to obtain "what should be" is through the destruction of what currently is. These narratives -- one of apocalyptic Christianity where the unworthy will be left behind to die and the worthy will be taken to heaven, and one of apocalyptic environmentalism, where we have shown we do not deserve the earth and should bring about its destruction, saving only some of humanity via technology -- seem disparate, but actually have a similar structure and building blocks.

PART FOUR-- Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

What are the Gates?

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) **do** have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Improve industrial control system security at various targets, like power plants and methane plants
- Improve ability to intercept encrypted information once block chain encryption becomes widely available
- Reduce the connection of various conspiracy communities by constructively addressing algorithm issues on platforms like YouTube
- LE passing on taking seriously threats from dominionist groups as "individual events" like Waco rather than underlying belief systems that evolve into violence
- 

What are the Flags?

List out what the Defenders **don't** have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Spread of apocalyptic ideas, cults, and politics to many populations in narratives and in accelerationist actions
- Increasing severity of climate change impacts without government action
- Alliances between apocalyptic groups a varying strains and the development of their ability to cooperate
- SCOTUS ruling upholding broad protections according to Section 230
- 

Milestones:

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1 Fixing SM algorithms pushing people to more and more extreme content
- 2 Improving of US Energy Infratstructures, both digitally and infrastructurally
- 3 Governments working to quell issues related to climate change
- 4 Increase security of Internet of Things devices to prevent attacks and protect populations from generalized attack
- 5

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1 Fixing SM algorithms pushing people to more and more extreme content
- 2 Improving of US Energy Infratstructures, both digitally and infrastructurally
- 3 Governments working to quell issues related to climate change
- 4 Maintain non-digital backup systems for critical infrastructure in case of attack or loss of power
- 5

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

[Link: Research Synthesis Workbook](#)

Grouping 1: Narratives

The self-identification as an extremist is rare.
--

Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment

women's role as caregiver reduces their tendency to become extremists
---

Grouping 3: Industry

Ideals of virtual geography stronger than ideals of physical geography
--

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationlist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

Focused Cause: Women's Right
------------------------------

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?

Sally Mae Jo is 30 year old active duty Air Force, wife to civilian, and mother of 2 children under the age of 4.
---

Where do they live?

Buckley AF Base, Denver, CO
-----------------------------

What is the threat?

Caren B. Smith is a 43 year old AF vet, mother and wife who Sally met through a moms in uniform group. Due to their similarities in life and experience, Sally sees Caren as a mentor. Sally confides in Caren about the difficulties of being an active service member, wife and mom simultaneously.
---

Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.

Sally is being told to take birth control in order to pursue her career path. She does not like what is it doing to her body and wants to stop. Caren is enraged that Sally is in this situation, invites Sally to her "group" event. Caren says the group can help her with the chain of command issue. Caren explains another friend of hers had a similar situation with her command. A group member was able to hack into the military database and manipulated the commands files, prevented the supervisor from making rank, and changed service member orders which reassigned missions and duty station assignments. Sally then realizes the dangers of this group and is worried about Caren's involvement.
--

Who else in the person's life is involved?

Sally's family (husband and children) and commanding officer; potentially everyone on Sally's base
--

What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?

Recruit Sally as an extremist to further their fight for women's rights. Gain classified military information from Sally to further the group's activity. They are afraid of male dominance, in military and domestically; women being downgraded as citizens and losing rights.
--

What vulnerabilities does this expose?

Individuals (specifically women in the military) psychological depravation and need for emotional support
---

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?

One on one conversation between Sally and Caren. Leading up the event, the women connected and bonded, sharing experiences in life and in the military.
---

What will this make your person do that they normally would not?

Being exposed to the extreme beliefs and actions, Sally realized Caren is a threat to national security. This changes her trust in Caren.
---

What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?

--

When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?

Sally first sees a support group that she can relate to in regards to her personal and career struggles. They provide advice and emotional support. Once she sees the threat, she is conflicted: Sally sees Caren as a friend and does not want to believe Caren is serious about the actions of this other group. Sally sees the danger of what Caren is saying, but she does not see how great of a threat this group really is.
--

How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)

--

What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?

Classified information, service members personnel identifying information, military movement/schedules/orders
---

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

If the adversary gets their hands on the service member movements, they will know all of the training and locations. They will know when and where to attack planes, ships, etc. The enemy knows our positions on land, cyber positions, space etc. This puts the military members, command, stations, families and more in danger.

**PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor** (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

**Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)**

**Barriers and Roadblocks:** What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Access to military base, situational awareness of military operations, access to confidential military cloud, need to know military culture

**New Practices:** What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

social engineering techniques formed by the group (building relationships with vulnerable women that have access and sharing stories that create a sense of desperation)

**Business Models:** What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

**Research Pipeline:** What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

Advanced hacking tools/people for hire with ability to break into military cloud, use social media algorithms to find vulnerable targets.

**Ecosystem Support:** What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

**Narrative Identity:** What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

Men are oppressing women's rights. The party is afraid of losing control over making their own decisions in regards to their bodies, lifestyles, etc. If the men are not put in their place, women will be pulled from the military and workplace and encouraged to stay at home, similar to what was seen in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. They see themselves as Wonder Woman, warriors for all females.

**PART FOUR- Backcasting - The Defenders** (from the perspective of the defenders)

**Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions. Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.**

**What are the Gates?**

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) **do** have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

- 1 Invest in cyberdefense tools and training for the military
- 2 Invest/create passive cyberdefense technologies that can work faster
- 3 Policy writing creating environment where women are not second rate citizens
- 4 Promoting and developing leaders that have gender equal thinking
- Build programs for female military members with civilian spouses or single parents with limited supports and teach coping skills and how to mitigate a careers, being a spouse, and motherhood. (Expand current programs, if any, and normalize the use of them.) Research female career timeframes in comparison with healthy ages for childbirth, and deployment schedules, etc.

**What are the Flags?**

List out what the Defenders **don't** have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

- 1 Group-think in private social media groups
- 2 Online privacy: social groups can hide/block access to outsiders
- 3 Drastic changes in attitude/actions towards military norms, customs, and expectations
- 4
- 5

**Milestones:**

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1 More easily accessible 24 daycare center
- 2 Options other than separation for members with childcare limitations
- 3 Consider "break" from service or ability to move from action service to reserve service
- Training to change culture of "your child did not come in you seabag"; more understand commands with better options for members
- 4 options for members
- 5 New options for filling deployments billets

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1 Peer-reviewed Research: Case studies of women and their military careers and challenges they face
- 2 New Plan: Developing new culture towards women and their needs/roles as caregivers (family, medical, etc.)
- 3 Gatekeepers: make adaptable plans/policies
- Include all stakeholder in the decision making process (input from career service member, single parents, and separated/retired members and policymakers, etc)
- 4 separated/retired members and policymakers, etc)
- 5

Team Members:  
Team Title:  
Estimated Date of the Threat:

2031

Data Points

NOTE: Pick a data point from each of the research areas in the Research Synthesis Workbook (the rollout for each "SME Grouping" or topic)

[Link: Research Synthesis Workbook](#)

Grouping 1: Narratives	Anti-Government Group with a series of extremist believes that capture different portions of the population
Grouping 2: Extremism & Recruitment	
Grouping 3: Industry	

Threat Actor or Adversary

NOTE: Pick a Threat Actor / Adversary / Extremist category (generally categorized by motive):  
1) State Sponsored or Proxy  
2) Nationlist  
3) Focused "Cause" (i.e. environmental, abortion, etc.)  
4) Racial / Ethnic supremacy  
5) Opposition to government authority  
6) Organization (e.g. political party, special interest group, religious group, etc.)

Put your Threat Actor or Adversary here:

anti-government group with christian(ish)-backing, no longer being allowed to set their beliefs as the social standard which is perceived as invasion of religious freedom. They choose to set up an alternate authority "because the government isn't taking care of us"
---

PART ONE: Who is your Person?

NOTE: Remember to give as much detail as possible. Try to use the data inputs you selected from above. The power is in the details. Scribes please write as though you are writing for someone who is not in the room.

Who is your person and what is their broader community?	Normal North Dakotan and local cop, watching a friend slowly convert to extremism. Then their friend attacks them despite having previously shared views. They had gone to Blue Lives Matter events but the friend started migrating into the extremist fringes and advocating more and more violent responses.
Where do they live?	North Dakota after decline of FRAC-ing boom -
What is the threat?	Major economic downturn and misplaced anger create under underlying environment leads to violent extremism
Briefly describe how your person experiences the threat (The Event) and possible 2nd/3rd order effects. Include what their reactions might be.	A local law enforcement officer has friends in a community who begin drifting anti-government. The anti-government group (Steve) goes after Angie, the county clerk and drive on her lawn, kill her dog, etc. Bryon (Local Officer) pushes back and is then autroczized.
Who else in the person's life is involved?	Angie, his friend who is the county clerk. She denies permit requests from the antagonist becuae of an endangered turtle and as a result becomes the target of their terrorism plans. Steve, his friend who has developed extremist views and is the leader of the terrorist group
What specifically does the Adversary or Threat Actor want to achieve? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor hoping for? What is the Adversary or Threat Actor frightened of?	Steve wants the success, status, and security that he had previously had during the fracking boom to come back.
What vulnerabilities does this expose?	The use of purity testing to create more extremist views; the ability of major stressors to change people's outlook- the tenous nature of enduring personal relationships

PART TWO: Experience Questions (from the perspective of "the person" experiencing the threat)

Experience Questions (pick at least 4)

"The Event" - How will your person first hear about or experience the threat? What events or actions led up to it?	The threat to the LEO (law enforcement officer) occurs after he stands up for the country clerk Angie, who has been terrorized by the group for not issuing permits.
What will this make your person do that they normally would not?	The person is placed between an allegiance to his identity as a LEO and Gov't Employee and his friendship with the fracking workers and ranchers.
What is different and/or the same as previous events or instantiations of the threat?	The protests that he once attended with his friends are now being held against him. The violence has escalated and the attacks are becoming more and more extreme. For example, as he drives around one night, a molotov cocktail hits his car cruiser and burns it. He escapes but this incident, coupled with a standoff on federal facilities, brings in the Federal Gov't (who the extremist want to target anyway) and force the LEO to be fully viewed as "part of the Govt"
When the person first encounters the threat, what will they see? What will the scene feel like? What will they not see or understand until later?	Failure of legal rational authority for white men vs. and move to traditional authority on a traditional family structure (patriarchy). The taking back of power and reomvng consent of the governed.
How will information be delivered to the person? Where and how will the person connect and communicate with others? (family, aid agencies, federal, state and local authorities, professional network)	Around Town- at the local bars - goes from being a local hero to a parriah with some, and ignored by others who did not like him before anyway. (i.e. Native American Anti-Fracking protesters).
What will the person have to do to access people, services, technology and information they need?	

What are the broader implications of a threat like this? What might a ripple effect look like?

National implications as FRACing and antigovernment groups bring in similarly minded folks from all over the country. Large network.

PART THREE: Enabling Questions - Adversary or Threat Actor (from the perspective of "the party" bringing about the threat)

Enabling Questions (pick at least 4)

Barriers and Roadblocks: What are the existing barriers (local, governmental, political, defense, cultural, etc) that need to be overcome to bring about the threat? How do these barriers and roadblocks differ geographically?

Not many barriers to this scenario. The biggest is the anti-government group's willingness to escalate from driving on people's lawns to killing animals to assualting an officer's car, to finally getting into a shootout with local and federal LEOs.

New Practices: What new approaches will be used to bring about your threat and how will the Adversary or Threat Actor enlist the help of the broader community?

Classic approaches of land seizure, community ostricism, etc.

Business Models: What new business models and practices will be in place to enable the threat? How is it funded?

Funding comes from anti-gov't groups; propaganda from foreign adversaries; fed by a media that seeks extremist viewpoints to attract more eyeballs to stories;

Research Pipeline: What technology is available today that can be used to develop the threat? What future technology will be developed?

Guns, bombs, etc. Nothing too high tech is required.

Ecosystem Support: What support is needed? What industry/government/military/criminal elements must the Adversary or Threat Actor team up with?

The legal framework to build up a massive weapons cache by the anti-government group. Mortgages on the properties that are being siezed to lack of payment; repo laws from non-payment on items / businesses started during the fracking boom that have now gone under. (e.g., one the extremists is a bar owner)

Narrative Identity: What stories does the threat use to legitimize their actions or reduce inhibitions to use violence or betray trust? Who do they believe themselves to be?

PART FOUR- Backcasting - The Defenders (from the perspective of the defenders)

Examine the combination of both the Experience Questions as well as the Enabling Questions.  
Explore what needs to happen to disrupt, mitigate, and recover from the threat in the future.

What are the Gates?

List out what the Defenders (government, law enforcement, industry, etc) *do* have control over to use to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These are things that will occur along the path from today to 2031.

- 1 Large economic downturn in a once rich industry
- 2 Anti-gvoernment spending intitatives become primary talking points in media
- 3
- 4
- 5

What are the Flags?

List out what the Defenders *don't* have control over to disrupt, mitigate and recover from the threat. These things should have a significant effect on the futures you have modeled. These are things we should be watching out for as heralds of the future to come. What are the incremental steps to stated adversarial strategies? What are technological/scientific advances that could be repurposed?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Milestones:

What needs to happen in the next 4 years (2021-2025) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

What needs to happen in the next 8 years (2021-2029) to disrupt, mitigate and prepare for recovery from the threat in your future? What are our actionable objectives? What are our actionable objectives? What decisions can be made if things are not going as the gatekeepers plan?

- 1 Drive UBI, specifically a campaign to make it acceptable within the US narrative of self-reliance
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

GROUP 1 - Narratives				
Data Point #	Summary of the Data Point	Implication	Why is the implication Positive or	What should we do?
1	Narrative isn't necessarily the same as story but is a part of culture	Your identity depends on the narratives around you	modifying identity is a very strong motivator for new behavior	"arm the sheep"
2	Extremism isn't new, but method of how these stories are communicated have advanced	novel ways to communicate outside of the reach of regulation or even cultural norms	communication mechanisms are neutral, but opacity about the message intent could be harmful	Deterrence and detection: Focus on the belief or narrative more than the act of violence
3	Similar to Mis/Dis info campaigns, limit of news channel options people are struggling to determine what is and what isn't Fact. Our neighborhood is now global.	People become extremists or threats is going to increase in volume and will be increasingly difficult to identify.	Negative	Disrupt by bringing down to a more manageable volume. Start with info/media campaigns. What can Gov, industry, public/private sectors due? Build a coalition.
4	Narrative and story are different in the narrative is unconscious and story is very conscious	Narratives and stories become insular to a group.	Narratives become stories; those stories become 'weaponized' to rationalize extremist acts	Identify when stories transition from 'pro' (our story) to 'anti' (our fight)
5	Narrative is like gravity " it's just there"	Narrative is developed and maintained through passive and active experiences/inputs.	Negative because actors can manufacture narrative through authentic/inauthentic stories. We take narrative for granted.	SM platform regulation enhancements; e.g. "media black out" for elections vs. free speech implications
6	Extent to which America become more or less common in a shared narrative to what extent they are shared narratives and when did people think their narratives were shared only to learn the narratives were not the same?	The idea that there is only one American Narrative People are not in full command of their own decisions and thoughts.	The one American Narrative gets 'owned' by a group, thereby removing other narratives from the collective culture	Create strong community/subculture leadership that comes together to co-build / repair.
7	Cognitive thievery was the Limited media told us what was happening and we considered that to be what was happen, yet we now know with the rise of irresponsible media outlets we have lost our gatekeepers.	Loss of opportunities, the function of gatekeeping is lost.	Negative Negative and This is also an opportunity because there are more stories to be told but with the negative of each citizen has to vet what is try.	Create a an Information Czar
8	micro level narratives	how you see yourself in American culture	neither - demonstrates your identity within that culture	Democratic Leadership
9	macro level narratives	Shape identity of the broader culture	neither - but cannot assume that all who label themselves "American" see that narrative the same way	
10	narrative structure contains a core conflict and a core desire	what you want to be and what you are could be the elements of this conflict	if positive, may lead people to aspire to a "higher" standard; if negative, may lead people to rebel against the things expected of them	
11	The self-identification as an extremist is rare.	Actors do not project (or adopt) the idea that they are extremist, but rather promoting a worthy cause for a larger group	With conflicting causes coming in contact (politically, through informal empowerment/depowerment, social influences, policy etc), extremists become 'soldiers engaging in a battle' between ideologies	
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

## GROUP 2 - Extremism & Recruitment

Data Point #	Summary of the Data Point	Implication	Why is the implication Positive or Negative?	What should we do?
1	Terrorism used to describe certain race, background, religion	A "Smith" last name versus an "El Akkad" last name have different reactions in the public eye someone behind the curtain who is not directly involved in extremist actions	overemphasis on profiling versus someone slipping unnoticed rarely does a "lone wolf" exist without some type of support	follow the data that connects people to actions & intent
2	role of the mentor in recruitment & radicalization insecurity with one's identity (religious identity - not pious enough, not committed enough; status in life, etc..)	a common factor for leading someone to seek a way to balance this insecurity with their desired identity	online identities may be different than in person	
3	Changing definition of terrorism	The strict definition we've had of physical violence (or the threat thereof) may be too narrow	The definition will be abused by terrorist groups in order to avoid legal consequences	Find a way to make the definition more agile and able to keep up with the world
4	Differentiating between people who just want to talk and those who are willing to act will be harder		the balance between respecting privacy and 1st Amendment rights vs. finding/preventing extremism is hard	
5	recruiters move slowly and start with tolerable "education" of the target then moving to more and more aggressive conversion	Most of the time recruiters won't start with obviously problematic suggestions which means it is harder to define clear lines where the targets should report "say something"	Negative: social engineering has always worked, there's no reason to think it will stop	This is a known pattern that we have created educational solutions for in the past. We can make this part of required education for children as part of school curricula
6	Conflicts between identity/expectations and reality (whether economic, ideological, or other)	Changing social conditions may reduce radicalization	Both: connections to social conditions allows the potential to change those, but that is also a thorny problem itself	Examine the social conditions most likely to lead to radicalization and potential intervention points to change them
7	Slow process of increasingly intense thought	Radicalization is a process, not a moment	Positive: Many intervention points along the way Negative: harder to see slow changes in ideology	Think about how to engage in counter-narratives throughout the process, not just when radicalization is complete
8	"there has to be someone to take advantage of the target's insecurities"		the pool of targets will never disappear but we can make the consequences of being caught recruiting higher	The approach of making the consequences for the party with malicious intention (e.g. making consequences higher for offering a bribe than accepting it or higher for dealing drugs rather than consuming them) seems applicable here
9	"I want to practice my religion (in specific ways) and society isn't letting me	Regardless of the level of religious freedom we respect, there will always be groups whose beliefs are contrary to equal freedom for others.	We can't expect this to disappear as an issue no matter how we try to respect religious freedom	Set limits to religious freedom so that it cannot be used as a shield for extremism/violence/threat of violence
10	"you need to consider that the well might be poisoned"	chasing individual terrorists/recruiters will not address the root of the problem	the changes required to actually address the reasons people are disgruntled are much more far reaching and require improving the quality of life for targeted	Reduce income inequality, increase education
11	"those in power will use terrorism/extremism to keep power when they feel threatened"	the urge to stay in power is dangerous and likely to encourage terrorism	People/groups who previously were advocates of using legitimate paths to gain/change power are likely to change their tune once they have power and see a potential to lose it.	Leverage American narratives to drive the concept that it is better to lose while upholding our ideals than to win by betraying them (e.g. if you can't win when everyone votes then you shouldn't try to restrict access to legitimate voters)
12	"there will be unintended consequences if we respond strongly to a single extremist act/group"	aggressive response will likely produce more potential terrorists		
13	the "motivation"-oriented approach doesn't seem useful since the motivations apply so broadly and don't have clear causal relationships with the predicted behavior			
14	"what is it for some individuals that removes their inhibition against betrayal?"	This is backwards - the people who are performing the acts have likely decided it isn't betrayal but rather demonstration of loyalty		
15	preservation of family structure/not being available as a parent may be a motivator for women to commit terrorism less than men	deeper connections to community may be a positive toward reducing people's willingness to cause harm		
16	Seeking or trying to maintain power seems to be a key motivation	May be ways to empower without encouraging violence	Neutral - potential interventions and understanding of motivation	
17	Mental Health issues are underlying cause	Stressors exacerbate mental health, and economics and health concerns are major stressors (Post COVID)	Negative- although public health funding could assist with treatment and lower stressors	
18	Willingness to betray (MICE) Money: Ideology: Compromise: Ego	They do not see it as a betrayal but as a loyalty to another group	The factors are so broad that it makes it difficult to address these issues.	
19	Corruption of Ideals and Corruption of Culture and seeds of power			
20		More disinformation readily available to the public affecting attitudes towards policies and each other	Positive Implication:???? Negative Implications: Creates more polarization/fractured citizenship/Normalizing polar opposites	Engage media and political leaders to engage in threat assessment/Educating the media and leadership in proper terminology because what they say can be dangerous for the public
21	Poliarty and Internet based alrogtiyhmic poloarization women's role as caregiver reduces their tendency to become extremists	women fall under the radar	Negative: encourage women for more criminality	women should be under the same scrutiny
22	The amount of energy required to maintain extreme beliefs is significantly reduced due to the ease of finding people who share your views			
23	Weaponization of AI and synthetic media - and syntheic media envronemnts			
24	<u>it justifies their use of power/police-state/economics</u>	less funding for social security and education	citizenship	the police started the problem in the first place
25	Means agnostic algorithm that aim for a desired outcome, which the attain, but the collateral negative externalities are massive (failure to price in collateral damage means- the only cost is blowback)			
26	Conflict between removing root of problem, you need to address the underlying issue that make people go to extremes; you can also threaten power structure and this can lead to more extremism			
27	3 main triggers for terrorists and violence: 1. Insecurity relating to something existential 2. Someone to exploit that insecurity 3. Gradual nature of radicalization (small conversations built to extreme ideologies)	Similar to conditioning seen in cults; focus on the insecurities for prevention	Positive: Recognizing the formula. Negative: How do we address the insecurities to ensure individuals are not at risk of being extreme?	Develop at risk programs similar to DARE
28		Similar to conditioning seen in cults and gangs; focus on the insecurities for prevention; suggests a way to address at risk individuals (possibly focusing on children as a starting point of prevention)		
29				

30	Dissonance and asymmetry in narrative devices	By highlighting the inconsistencies between what is expected or the "way things should be" in an ideal world, people are motivated by anger to change it, possibly through violent means	Negative: different personal narratives of "how it should be" – religious or cultural supremacy, e.g. - difficult to change	
31	Backlash from extremist groups from being policed			
32	Faucet vs well	Whack-a-mole efforts directed at individual extremists do nothing to change the poisoned well; may create martyrs that plays into the cause; implies that we can only act after crime occurs (including conspiracy) As certain groups attack based on race/religion, those groups will arm and defend themselves	Negative, but via a positive: Keeping to democratic principles makes it difficult to police; but other orgs aside from LE could help defuse and prevent radicalization	Using big data or qualitative, ethnographic research to understand underlying motivations and issues, to give information to gov't organization or NGO to improve the condition
33	Extremism in response to extremism	In order to gain political clout, groups will align themselves with extremist ideas and conspiracy to engrain themselves in order to secure votes	Negative because one set of extremism with breed another similar to the troubles.  Negative because it will add credance to these extremist ideals pulling them closer to mainstream	
34	Extremism into mainstream			
35	Civil liberties and privacy: balancing extremist thought vs extremist action in policymaking			
36	Lack of options creates a willingness to move to extreme responses. It doesn't matter whether the lack of options is real or perceived			
37	Syrian Refugee accepted into Sanctuary City. Does not have rights as a US Citizen (access to employment,economy, education, etc) but cannot return to Syria as long as conflict continues.	Syrian character lacks ability to join the American story, unable to return to Syria due to ongoing conflict. Where does he 'belong'? UN Calls this Protracted Displacement.	This creates a catagory of identity within the US that may not be included in the American story, or may not allow access to "the American identity." This disenfranchisement can be manipulated, as Omar el Akkad points out, by a mentor	Create a standardized (across communities/states) understanding of a refugee's status and access to the economy/safety/community. Determine how this trend of 'modern migration' fits into the American culture and existance.

# GROUP 3 - Industry

Data Point #	Summary of the Data Point	Implication	Why is the implication Positive or Negative?	What should we do?
	slow social media action against extremist content	friction between intervention and business models	tendency to think of commercial entities as always seeking the return on investment or being "subject to shareholders" so this friction will continue until that changes negatively impacts people's understanding of truth; trusted contacts provide links and the reader does not do independent fact-checking --> leads to acceptance of misinformation	
2	rise of social media platforms as primary news sources	opportunity to distribute many world views, some of which are extreme		
3	algorithms decide what we see on social media	easy to create a news or information bubble	reinforces and accelerates content to similarly-minded individuals	
4	increasing partisan nature of US political discourse	hazy lines between extremist (anti-government) and mainstream discourse; even politicians publish inflammatory content	polarization, fewer compromises in political process leads to less governmental stability; less trust in government; more calls for individual/collective action	
5	haziness of discourse	provides "cover" for outsiders (state actors) to undermine US democracy through information operations	undermines stability and trust of government; reduces US world standing/power	
6	removing extremist content is a game of "whack-a-mole"	additional reliance on automated tools to assist in discovery & flagging of extremist content	transfers agency of what "truth" is to algorithms	
7	agenda-driven networks of "news" sites	curation of certain types of news allows sites to "launder" propaganda & influence	propaganda & influence content seems to be above-board "news"	
8	need friction (speed bumps & gates/fences) within systems to slow extremist content	platforms' business models want laissez-faire regulation	government imposition overriding business models requires a paradigm change	
9	ideals of virtual geography stronger than ideals of physical geography	less of an anchor in the country's theoretical ideals means the narrative isn't universal within a country's borders		
10	Virtual geography is similar to idea of radicalization "neighborhoods"	more susceptibility to extremist conversion	New avenue for research on communities if virtual geography can be a method	Study all of it!
11	Online spaces change spread, but not necessarily narrative	Mapping virtual spaces and connections between groups		Study narratives and drivers across types of technology (including off-line mechanisms)
12	Extremist groups move to centralized platforms after deplatforming	Focus on narratives, not tools	unsure	
13		Allows networks to regroup after being deplatformed, continues to spread and grow	neutral, slows growth, but allows better centralization and radicalization	
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Visit [threatcasting.com](http://threatcasting.com) for more information



