

Domestic Security Threats Posed by Right-Wing Militia: A Case Study of Sheriffs' Perceptions in Rural Texas

John Fisher 

Independent Researcher, Odessa, Texas, USA

Email: texasfishers@sbcglobal.net

How to cite this paper: Fisher, J. (2024). Domestic Security Threats Posed by Right-Wing Militia: A Case Study of Sheriffs' Perceptions in Rural Texas. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 12, 207-228. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2024.125015>

Received: April 1, 2024

Accepted: May 21, 2024

Published: May 24, 2024

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

Over the past 30 years, the United States (US) has heard the narrative that the militia was dangerous to the established order, domestic security, and democracy itself. Since 1992, the US has witnessed an increasing number of extremist militia groups in opposition to governmental policies. This qualitative case study sought to explore the perceptions of Texas Sheriffs toward the domestic security threat of the right-wing extremist militia. The case study surveyed two different samples of Texas Sheriffs in 2015 and 2020, prior to and at the end of the Trump Presidency, respectively. The study's findings reveal that Rural Texas Sheriffs' attitudes and beliefs on the threat of extremism originate from outside their counties. They further show the necessity to differentiate between four distinct groups, collectively called the extremist far-right or the alt-right: 1. Sovereign Citizens, 2. Anti-Government Groups, 3. Hate Groups, and 4. The Constitutional Militia such as the Texas Lightfoot Brigades. In addressing these groups, the Sheriffs surveyed agree that extremism is dangerous at the national level but reject the claim that these groups are a serious domestic security threat within their jurisdictions. Most importantly, they believe that the extreme threat to domestic security is an urban problem, and the only threat to rural Texas comes from outside the county. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to all Texas Sheriffs but rather to rural Sheriffs.

Keywords

Texas Sheriffs, Right-Wing, Extremist Militia, Domestic Security, Domestic Terrorism, Worldviews

1. Introduction

On the morning of April 19, 1775, the Lexington and Concord Militias stood on the North Bridge to confront the tyranny of the British Crown and their attempt to disarm the civilian population. The British claimed that extremists in the colonies were fomenting revolution. Citizens claimed that carrying firearms intended to maintain peace and protect community members (Phillips, 2013). That April morning marked the start of the American Revolution, in which the militia fought against the perceived tyranny of the British Government and King George III. Although many may positively view the Minutemen who stood against gun confiscation, the militia has since been labeled as anti-government/anti-establishment and a grave threat to domestic security and American Democracy itself by those opposing government power and authority (Michael, 2006).

In 1823, Stephen F. Austin called upon a group of volunteers to protect the settlers from danger. A group of irregular militia was created. These young men came to Texas for adventure and excitement. The men had no flag or uniform and did not have a badge for decades. These men had to provide their own horses and gun. This militia was formed to protect Texas from the Comanche; Mexican Army, American bandits, and Mexican bandits were always outnumbered and never lost a battle (Swanson, 2021).

During Reconstruction, newly freed slaves were armed and given uniforms to be formed into voluntary militias (Glasrud, 2021). The Virginia Black militias were called upon to respond to “domestic emergencies and to generally provide law and order” (Glasrud, 2021: p. 6). Records indicate that the black militias responded to at least five statewide emergencies (Glasrud, 2021: p. 6). The thoughts of the local white population were that the black militia companies would be ceremonial and in parades, but in reality, these militia members fought against the tyranny of white supremacy and responded to domestic emergencies within the South (Glasrud, 2021: p. 7). These militias were created by the Radical Republicans, who were in charge of the Southern Reconstruction, to help control the white population (Glasrud, 2021: p. 7).

This study examines how the narrative that right-wing militia threatens domestic security holds true among Rural Sheriffs of Texas. This study seeks to answer the central question: Do the Rural Sheriffs of Texas support the narrative that right-wing constitutional militia poses a domestic security threat to their respective jurisdictions? This study attempts to answer this question using a qualitative case study research design.

This study draws on several theories, including the social conflict theory and the use of choice architecture, nudge theory, and Credulous Bayesianism, to explain how the control of power, perception, and worldviews are influenced and shaped. Controlling the narrative of in- and out-groups allows a group to maintain its power (Glaeser & Sunstein, 2008). The only way for an “out-group” to overcome the negative narrative is through critical social conflicts, up to and in-

cluding violence (Glaeser & Sunstein, 2008).

This study's significance lies in the fact that an understanding of the Sheriffs' perceptions of the right-wing constitutional militia will dictate the priorities to prepare County and Local Law Enforcement Agencies to respond to a domestic security threat posed by such groups within the State of Texas. Additionally, understanding the Sheriffs' perceptions of the right-wing militia will also provide insight into identifying the best practices to investigate, manage, and prosecute extremist groups within their respective counties.

This study is organized into five sections and a conclusion. The first section is the literature review, which discusses the militia and several types of groups that comprise the narrative description of the right-wing militia. The second section discusses this study's theoretical framework. The third section discusses the data and the methods used in this study. The fourth section reports the study findings and the major themes that emerged from the thematic analysis and includes quotations from the participating Sheriffs. The fifth section discusses the findings and implications of the study, suggesting the best practices for managing extremism encounters within the country. Finally, this section outlines the limitations of this study and suggests directions for future research.

The Office of the Sheriff was selected to complete this study because in the State of Texas, the Sheriff is each county's constitutionally-authorized law enforcement officer (Texas Constitution 1876 Art. 5§23). They are popularly elected to serve a four-year term and act as the conservator of peace. Technically, all local law enforcement officers answer to the Sheriff within county jurisdiction. Municipalities can create a police force; however, this is not required. A Texas Sheriff's Office is ultimately responsible for law enforcement within the county borders of its jurisdiction including within the cities. Municipal Chiefs of Police may not have a grasp of the happenings in the county and outside of the city limits. Thus, Sheriffs' perceptions were examined in this study over that of municipal chiefs of police.

1.1. Literature Review

This section reviews the literature on the American militias. It first provides an overview of how the narrative of American militia has evolved and then discusses the militia as a concept and the different forms it takes in the United States (US).

1.2. Overview of the Narrative

The narrative within the United States considers the Patriot Minuteman Militia of 1776 as the "good guys"; however, the British Crown viewed the militia as treasonous and in open rebellion to overthrow the established social order (Phillips, 2013). In Texas, the Ranger Companies are looked upon as the heroes of Texas. For the first 80 years of Ranger history they operated as a militia, called up to address crises and emergencies. Once the emergency was resolved the

Rangers were disbanded (Swanson, 2021).

Crothers (2003) dismisses the links to the historical militia because the militia was not important to the victory of the American Revolution. Crothers (2003) supports his criticism of the myth of the militia in that George Washington repeatedly complained about the effectiveness of the militia (pg. 26). During the revolutionary war, armies massed in formation and exchanged volleys of rifle fire. The militia were a constant concern for the regular army because the militia did not fight that way (Crothers, 2003). There are several heroes of the militia, like Ethan Allen Francis Marion, Daniel Morgan, but their unorthodox fighting style was not respected by either side of the conflict (Phillips, 2013).

In Texas the militia was the Texas Rangers, established by Stephen F Austin in 1823 to protect the settlers from danger in the new territory of Tejas (Guinn & Guinn, 2022). These volunteers were called together to face the danger and then sent back to their farms, ranches and storefronts, and after the crisis was over they were sent home again (Ivey, 2010). When the Texas war for independence was won in 1836 the army was disbanded and the only agency protecting this new fledging nation was the Texas Rangers (Durand & France-America Film Group, 1995). Today these bold and courageous militia members and defenders of the Great State of Texas are identified as nothing more than a group of vigilantes (Swanson, 2021). After the War for Independence the Rangers adopted the Mexican police of “no quarter” (Swanson, 2021).

Historically, the idea of the American Militia was to defend freedom against tyranny (Phillips, 2013). On the 220th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution, that is, April 19, 1995, at 9:02 AM, a bomb exploded at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, Oklahoma City. Consequently, 168 people, including 19 children, were killed, and hundreds were injured; Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were arrested for perpetrating this atrocity. This attack on the federal government has been considered the worst act of domestic terrorism (Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI], 2016). McVeigh believed that he was protecting freedom and attacking freedom. However, according to the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial and Museum, McVeigh had it in his possession. It was reported that two books written by William Pierce under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries* (Macdonald, 1978) and *Hunter* (Macdonald, 1989), influenced McVeigh’s actions (Crothers, 2003).

It was initially reported that McVeigh and Nichols and Fortier were associated with the 51st Michigan Militia and the emerging “Patriot Militia Movement.” However, there is no evidence linking McVeigh to the Michigan Militia (FBI, 2016). Furthermore, spokespeople from the Michigan Militia denied any ties to McVeigh, Nichols, or Fortier and further denied that these men were members of their group (The Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2022). Nevertheless, the established narrative links McVeigh and the other two men with the militia and white supremacy, which continues to permeate the media.

Subsequently, there has been a focus on addressing all anti-government extremist groups as militias and emphasizing their alleged threats to American

domestic security (Michael, 2006). According to the most recent narrative, the anti-government militia is a threat not only to domestic security but also to democracy itself, which comes on the heels of the January 6 (J6) riots, commonly referred to as the insurrection (Durand & France-America Film Group, 1995).

The SPLC identifies all anti-governmental extremist groups as right-wing militias (DeWeese et al., 2022). Potok (2013) also suggested that right-wing militias encompassed all anti-government groups regardless of political ideology. Berger (2012) states that people on both ends of the political spectrum become extremists because they fear the collapse of the country's social and economic future. In June 2022, a national poll by the Morning Consult and Politico (2022) found that nearly three-fourths of the nation believed it was heading in the wrong direction. Both sides of the political spectrum, the left and the right, have responded through the rally theory, where people rally around a symbol of the nation to fight through a crisis, unite, and fight a common enemy (Stapley, 2012). The left has rallied around the slogans of democracy, inclusion, and equality and taking a stand against White Supremacy and Donald Trump's leadership. The right has rallied around the Constitution, individualism, gun ownership, and Donald Trump against the overreach of the deep state, swamp, and new world order (L.T. & Clark, 2022).

However, instead of uniting in opposition to a common threat to the country, groups have split left and right along political lines claiming that the other side is the evil that needs to be confronted (Berger, 2012). On the right, there exists the observed phenomenon of radicalization toward far-right extremism, which developed in 1994 (Mulloy, 2000). Subsequently, extremism is created through fear. For example, far-right militia extremism has been created based on the fear that the government wants to eliminate the Second Amendment and prohibit private gun ownership (McKinsey, 1999; Fezell, 1999). The narrative is that the far-right extremists have attached themselves to the Constitution and have an unhealthy commitment to the country and that anything that challenges their opinion of what the country should be and the direction it should take needs to be faced and confronted as an enemy, foreign or domestic (Parenti, 2009; Davison, 2006). In the face of increased radicalization and ultra-nationalism, there has been a threat of domestic terrorism, both violent and paper terrorism (Davison, 2006). The primary goal of these extremist groups is to force the government to adhere to their way of thinking, regardless of cost and without compromise (Davison, 2006).

Consequently, the militia has since been associated with rebellion and accused of posing a significant threat to domestic security and even democracy itself (Mulloy, 2000). Today, the militia attempts to call themselves patriots, but this claim is rejected by the accepted media and critics of the militia (Southern Poverty Law Center [SPLC], 1996).

1.3. The Militia

Turning to mainstream media sources across the country today will reveal that

the militia is a significant threat to the security of the US, if not to the very democracy that the nation is founded on. This narrative is supported through documentaries such as *Indivisible: Healing Hate* (2022), narrated by Mandy Patinkin, and available on Paramount+. Patinkin links hate groups to the militia and right-wing Trump supporters in this documentary. As presented by the [National Security Council \(2021\)](#), the narrative is that the militia perpetrates extremist crimes throughout the country. The umbrella term “militia” blurs the identification of extremist groups” ([Michael, 2006](#)). The actions of extremist groups, left- and right-wing political groups, anti-government groups, hate groups, and the constitutional militia are all described as the same “private militias” ([National Security Council, 2021](#)). Whether it is the slaying of nine Christians in a bible study, the shooting of Republicans at a baseball field, the arson attack at a mosque, the targeting of police officers in Dallas, or the J6 insurrection/riot, all of these events are portrayed as right-wing white supremacist militia extremism. [George Michael \(2006\)](#) states that choice architects blur right-wing extremism to paint all identified events as part of the “out-group” with the same brush.

This linkage between the militia and domestic terrorism has created a narrative that the militia is dangerous, which has continued through 2022 ([Mulloy, 2000](#)). The latest advent of the narrative that the militia is an extreme threat to domestic security has manifested today in discussions of the J6 insurrection ([Thompson & McCord, 2022](#)). Images of the violence perpetrated by the Proud Boys and Boogaloo Bois movement are splashed across media screens. They are mentioned in every commentary about the threat posed by the militia. These groups have been identified as extreme right-wing white supremacist supporters of former President Trump and the Republican Party ([Thompson & McCord, 2022](#)).

The following four distinct extremist groups are considered “militia”: sovereign citizens, anti-government groups, hate groups, and constitutional militia. Although all groups encompass the militia, it is necessary to identify their unique differences.

Sovereign Citizens. The sovereign citizen movement is a loosely connected group of anarchist individuals who believe that all forms of government are illegitimate ([SPLC, 2022](#)). However, the [Anti-Defamation League \(2016\)](#) identifies sovereign citizens as far-right-wing extremists because the most notable sovereign events involved the Montana Freeman (1996) and the Republic of Texas (1997), which were right-wing groups that refused to recognize the established government and used frivolous lawsuits to cripple the bureaucracy. This movement originated in the 1970s ([Beirich, 2012](#)).

Anti-Government Groups. The anti-government movement rejects the federal government’s authority and claims that it is tyrannical. The [SPLC \(2021\)](#) has labeled anti-government groups as anti-democratic hard-right movements that traffic conspiracy theories about illegitimate leftist elites seeking a new world order. Liberal watchdog groups, such as the SPLC, have identified groups like

the Boogaloo Bois, the Three Percenters, and Proud Boys as the core instigators of over twelve right-wing anti-democracy movements responsible for the J6 “insurrection” (Farivar, 2021).

Anti-government left-wing groups also exist, the most notable being Antifa or the Anti-fascists. This left-leaning group was responsible for many of the 2020 riots across the country in protest of the police killing of George Floyd. However, Bill Gertz (2020) reported that Antifa planned an anti-government insurgency as early as November 2019. While the media focuses on the threats posed by hard right-wing anti-government groups, the same Democrat Party members ignore the threats posed by left-wing groups (Schilke, 2022). Even FBI director Christopher Wray told Congress that Antifa was an ideology, not an organization or movement (Tucker, 2020).

Hate Groups. Hate groups in America have existed since the creation of the Ku Klux Klan in 1870 by Southern Democrats to combat the antiracism reconstruction era policies of the Republican Party (History.com Editors, 2009). Hate groups are also supremacy groups. The nation is familiar with the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Confederates, and other white supremacy groups that promote the supremacy of the white race over all others. Hate originates from all races, and hate groups use acts and threats of violence to influence the attitudes and behaviors of their target groups. All races in the US have supremacy hate groups that desire to place their respective races above others. White Power, Black Power, and Brown Power are all slogans of race-based hate groups that promote their race over others. Hate groups operate following the seven stages of hate and are not race-specific (Schafer & Navarro, 2003). Although Schafer and Navarro (2003) identify seven stages of development to hate groups they could apply to the creation of any extremist group.

Constitutional Militia. The constitutional militia phenomenon is based more on political ideology than on race, ethnicity, or religion, even though they are accused of such by watchdog groups such as the SPLC (Freilich & Pridemore, 2006; Potok, 2013). Although modern militia groups track their history from the John Birch Society and the patriotic groups of the 1960s, militia groups in America have been increasing in number and size across the country since the election of President Obama in 2008 (Potok, 2013). Initially, the nation experienced a noticeable increase in the number of anti-government militia groups in the 1990s due to perceived governmental misconduct in the incidents at Waco and Ruby Ridge (Freilich & Pridemore, 2006). However, militia groups today are also forming as they fear the federal government is becoming a dictatorship through its policies and laws enacted across the nation (SPLC, 2012). Consequently, US anti-government groups have reached record highs, and their troubling activities could lead to domestic terrorism (Freilich & Pridemore, 2006).

The American militia has long been a part of the history of the US. First, the militia started as civilians fighting British tyranny. The militia continued to protect the new settlers as they followed “manifest destiny” across the continent.

Finally, the militia was formed as a constitutional civilian unorganized force to aid the government when called. However, the militia's critics describe its members as extremists, white supremacists, and domestic terrorists. The militia has been linked to the actions of McVeigh and the J6 insurrection. The term militia has been used to collectively refer to anti-government groups, sovereign citizens, hate groups, and constitutional militia. However, using the militia as an umbrella term for all things extremist is erroneous.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on several theories, including the social conflict theory and the use of choice architecture, nudge theory, and Credulous Bayesianism, to explain how the control of power, perception, and worldviews are influenced and shaped.

Social Conflict Theory has been explained by several researchers, specifically Marx, as the conflict between those who hold power and those who desire it. Marx & Engels (2009) described the conflict between the “haves” bourgeoisie and the “have nots” proletariat or workers. The idea put forth by scholars such as Marx was that the purpose of the government was to control and distribute the scarce resources of the country to the people. The social conflict theory suggests that elites maintain oppressive control over the means of production and distribution of wealth (Bonger, 1916). Because of the oppressive control of wealth, Marx and Bonger both suggested that the working class and the poor would have to resort to violent conflict to overthrow the established capitalist order. Bonger (1916) states that as the working class and the poor fight to achieve equality and success in society, the social elite will fight to maintain the status quo. As the lower classes struggle for equality, the elites create a state of fear that further oppresses the lower classes.

William Bonger (1916) states that social conflict becomes violent as people fight for what they have and believe they are entitled to. Within the social conflict theory, there is a struggle between those who control wealth and those who desire to achieve equity. Bonger (1916) stated that violence is necessary because those with control refuse to give up. The social conflict theory suggests that without violence, social justice and equality cannot be achieved within society (Marx & Engels, 2009; Bonger, 1916).

Marcuse (1955) suggested that a change in the narrative was needed in the focus of social conflict theory because American capitalism created a state of complacency. American capitalism allows the working class to achieve a comfortable lifestyle regardless of how the social elite controls their interests and wealth. This complacency has caused the working class to lose interest in fighting for social justice and equality. In *An Essay on Liberation* (Marcuse, 1969), Marcuse stated that the class conflict between the oppressor/oppressed had been “blotted out by race conflict: color lines become economic and political realities” (p. 43. Para 1). Following Marcuse, the social conflict between wealth and

social class became secondary to the conflict between races and ethnicities. The “New-Left” philosophy states that Democratic Socialists in the left wing/progressive wing of the Democrat Party need to identify the oppressors as racists who intend to maintain the white control of wealth, industry, and government (Marcuse & Kellner, 2005).

Nudge Theory suggests that to change civic behavior and attitudes, choice architecture must be employed in the civic narrative (John et al., 2009). The narrative the in-group wants to promote above all other narratives is placed in front of the viewer to ensure that it is the version of the truth that the in-group wants to produce (Hall-Ellis, 2015). It continuously promotes one story to establish confirmation bias. People believe what is being told to them because they trust the source of their news (Allahverdyan & Galstyan, 2014).

Deviance is defined by actions and behaviors outside societal norms (Merton & Sztompka, 1996). Hate is defined as deviance because it is outside acceptable social norms, and most in society fear being labeled a racist (Potok, 2013). If the in-group continuously promotes a single narrative, including “MAGA is fascist” and “Republicans are extremists and white supremacists” it will be accepted as truth (Janis, 1973). This narrative has surfaced, especially since the J6 riots. The J6 riots have been labeled an insurrection, whereas the riots in the summer of 2020 are called peaceful protests.

Credulous Bayesianism and Groupthink are crucial to properly administering the social conflict theory (Glaeser & Sunstein, 2008; Janis, 1973). Janis (1973) identified eight characteristics common to groupthink. The theory of Credulous Bayesianism contends that social learning exacerbates polarization and extremism within societal groups (Glaeser & Sunstein, 2008). Outside voices are limited and even excluded as people assemble with other like-minded individuals. Credulous Bayesianism is a social learning process that considers private beliefs and seeks those voices that support that theory in a way that increases polarization (Acemoglu, Dahleh, Lobel, & Ozdaglar, 2011). As people increase their convictions, they seek others to support that belief, creating confirmation bias, and polarization expands to the point that it becomes acceptable to use violence against members of the ostracized “out-group” (Schafer & Navarro, 2003). Marcuse (1964), Bonger (1916), and Marx (2012) suggest that violence and rebellion are the only ways to overthrow the established order, as only so much can be accomplished through civil dialogue.

This project sought to explore the perceptions of various Sheriffs in the State of Texas that held off the right-wing militia.

2. Methodology

This study aims to investigate Texas Sheriffs’ perceptions of the domestic security threat posed by right-wing extremist militias. To answer this research question, a qualitative research design, particularly a case study, was used. Additionally, data were collected at two different times: in 2015 and 2020, prior to and

after the end of President Trump's term, respectively. The idea behind the scientific method is to repeat a previous study to discover whether the researcher obtains the same results.

In 2015, the Institutional Review Board of Walden University approved a study on Texas Sheriffs' Perceptions of the Militia Movement. All 254 Sheriffs were invited to participate in the qualitative case study. In this convenience sample, the first 12 Texas Sheriffs were included. Interestingly, only rural Sheriffs volunteered to participate in this study. The interviews were held in person at each Sheriff's Office and represented all sections of Texas: the Pan Handle, West Texas, Central Texas, South Texas, East Texas, and the Gulf Coast. Each interview consisted of seven questions. In addition, a follow-up question was asked to those Sheriffs who stated that there was no security threat in their jurisdiction, "What are the threats to domestic security in your county?" Each of the twelve interviews lasted between one and six hours, allowing the individual Sheriffs to opine on the issue of domestic security and the perceived threats posed to their respective counties. A written transcript and interpretation of each interview were returned to the respective Sheriffs to confirm accuracy and transparency. The participating Sheriffs were allotted two weeks to review the transcripts and elaborate on or change any misinterpreted statements. All statements made by the Sheriffs were coded, and seven main themes were identified. These findings are surprising, contradicting the commonly-accepted narrative.

In 2020, the author attempted to repeat the study in the fourth year of the Trump Presidency, with no significant reduction in right-wing patriot groups and an increased national divide. These earlier results were surprising and unexpected. If the results could be considered accurate, the same study could be repeated as science demands the same results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After four years of President Trump and an increase in the MAGA movement, the perceptions of the various Sheriffs should have changed. In 2020, the Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas Permian Basin authorized a new study that replicated the 2015 study. Because of the coronavirus pandemic and the fear of spreading the virus, all human-subject research had to be completed using the Qualtrics Survey Software. A virtual survey interview was created using the Qualtrics Survey Software, asking the same seven open-ended questions from 2015. The responses were in essay form, allowing Sheriffs to elaborate on their answers and explain their perceptions.

Between the two separate studies, 11% of the Texas Sheriffs participated in the study. In the 2021 study, according to pin locations, similar to the 2015 study, all participating Sheriffs were rural. In both studies, there was no participation from densely populated counties. Each Sheriff spent between two and twenty minutes with the survey. The written responses were entered into NVivo 12 to identify the common themes and attitudes.

Three theories drove the coding in this project: Nudge, Credulous Bayesianism, and Groupthink. All three theories influence perceptions, beliefs, and atti-

tudes, which, in turn, influence policy and policy decisions. The level one codes are indicators of each theory. The level two codes are words and phrases expected to be referred to during the interview. Finally, the last column signifies which of the seven interview questions was intended to garner the information needed to better understand the perceptions held by the Sheriffs interviewed. This guideline will help recognize emerging and more detailed codes and themes in understanding the perception of militia (Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) (Table 1).

These codes were identified and grouped into seven themes based on the interviews and survey questions.

3. Findings

The 2021 findings support those of the 2015 study. Although the comments were from different Sheriffs, they were familiar. The thematic analysis yielded seven

Table 1. Qualitative coding.

Theory	Level 1 codes	Level 2 codes	Interview Questions
Nudge	1. Choice Architecture	1. Dangerous	1 How do you perceive the anti-government “Patriot” Groups?
		2. Disgruntled Veterans	3, What, if any, domestic terrorism threats do these militia groups pose to society, and specifically to your county?
Credulous Bayesianism	1. Groupthink 2. Out-group Punishment	3. Violent	5 By what means have you developed your perceptions of the militia?
		4. Terrorists	1 How do you perceive the anti-government “Patriot” Groups?
Groupthink	1. The shared illusion of invulnerability 2. Manifestation of direct pressure on people who disagree 3. Fear of disapproval from “in-group” leaders 4. The shared illusion of unanimity 5. The enemy is evil, weak, and stupid 6. Unquestioned belief in the morality of the “in-group.” 7. Mind-guards to protect the group from conflicting information 8. Rationalization of warnings and negative feedback	1. Increased polarization	3 What, if any, domestic terrorism threats do these militia groups pose to society, and specifically to your county?
		2. Desire to punish militia members	4 What gaps exist in the preparations by law enforcement agencies to address potential threats posed by the militia groups?
Groupthink	1. Common attitudes 2. Repeating talking points from SPLC and A.D.L. nearly verbatim 3. Verbal attacks on “out-group.” 4. Mutual mistrust/dislike for members of the militia	3. Isolation of militia members	5 By what means have you developed your perceptions of the militia?
		1. How do you perceive the anti-government “Patriot” Groups?	2. What militias, if any, exist in your county?
Groupthink	1. Common attitudes 2. Repeating talking points from SPLC and A.D.L. nearly verbatim 3. Verbal attacks on “out-group.” 4. Mutual mistrust/dislike for members of the militia	1. How do you perceive the anti-government “Patriot” Groups?	3. What, if any, domestic terrorism threats do these militia groups pose to society, and specifically to your county?
		2. What militias, if any, exist in your county?	4. What gaps exist in the preparations by law enforcement agencies to address potential threats posed by the militia groups?
Groupthink	1. Common attitudes 2. Repeating talking points from SPLC and A.D.L. nearly verbatim 3. Verbal attacks on “out-group.” 4. Mutual mistrust/dislike for members of the militia	3. Verbal attacks on “out-group.”	By what means have you developed your perceptions of the militia?
		4. Mutual mistrust/dislike for members of the militia	

themes. Each of these topics is discussed further below.

The findings found that very few rural counties identified active extremist and militia groups within their counties (**Figure 1**).

Of those participating Sheriffs, 76% stated that they had not experienced extremism or militia activities in their counties. Again, only 11% of Texas Sheriffs participated in this survey.

Theme 1: Sheriffs with no personal experience with the militia based their perceptions solely on media sources

Two Sheriffs in 2015, and two more in the 2021 study, stated that their only source of information about extremist groups was a specifically chosen media source. One Sheriff noted that:

Extremist groups are detrimental to the peace and tranquility of our great state. They are causing chaos and anarchy. These groups should be tracked down and intelligence shared among all law enforcement agencies.

Another Sheriff stated that:

I am not worried so much about the known groups; it's {sic} the little ones that are not known that worry me. I know in my community that a lot of people follow this administration (President Trump) religiously and refuse to question anything that has been done. They openly invite martial law and believe that it is what is needed at this time. They hate the left, but yet 16 years ago, you had to be on the left to be elected in this county. Now, if you are left, you are perceived as the enemy, even in this small county. I truly worry that our county will be split for years to come.

Those Sheriffs who limit their understanding of militias to major media sources agree that the threat posed by right-wing extremism toward domestic security is severe (**Figure 2**).

Theme 2: Those who had experience or sought a more dynamic understanding of the militia used more than just the media

Sheriffs with personal experience with the right-wing constitutional militia

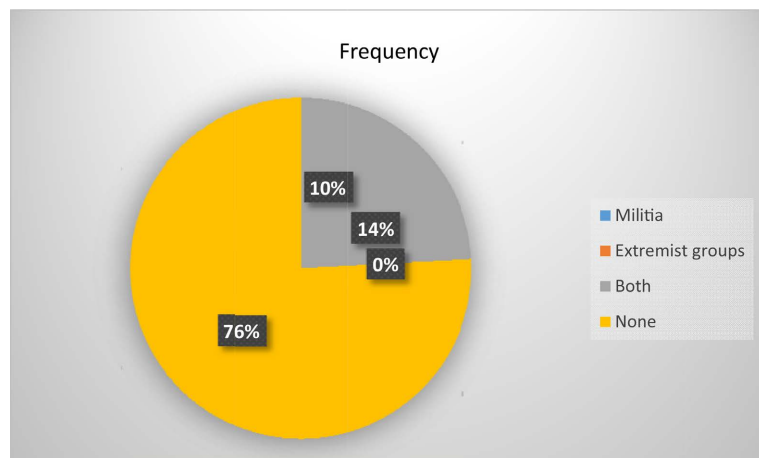


Figure 1. Percentage of extremist groups in counties.

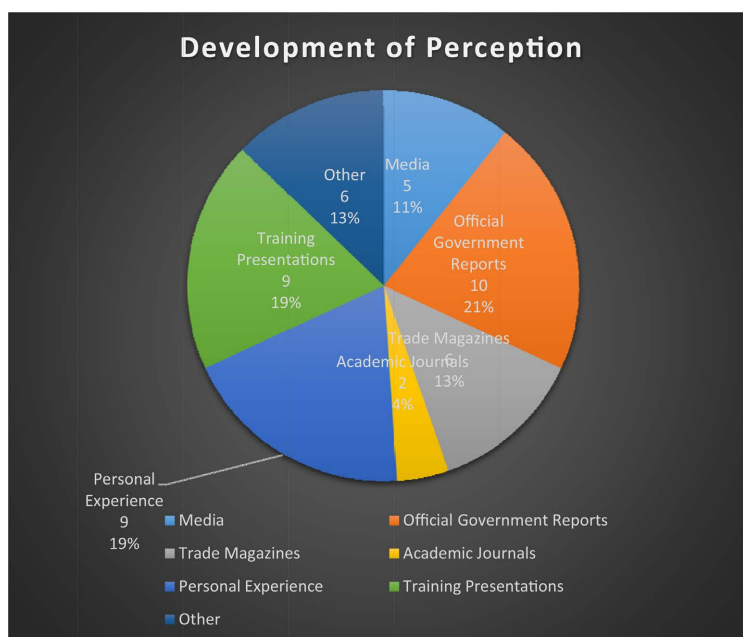


Figure 2. How has the Sheriff learned about the Militia?

and those who have conducted additional research have a different view of the constitutional militia. The vast majority of Sheriffs who participated in both sample groups had some experience with or conducted additional research with the militia. One Sheriff stated the following:

In my opinion, based on my own research and experience, I do not see them [the militia] as that big of a threat. They are overhyped. They are not as big or organized. There is propaganda that hypes them. Creating fear makes them a threat, and the media and special interest groups (e.g., extreme and homophobic so-called “Christians”) contribute to this fear.

A common theme shared by the Sheriffs is that the narrative from the national media and the Democratic government leadership is overhyped and publicized to the point that it causes fear and anxiety. Some Sheriffs also identified traditionally left-wing groups as a more significant threat to the community:

The number of “right-wing extremists” is vastly over-reported by the media and federal government. Antifa and BLM are a far greater threat to public safety than a hand full of redneck nut jobs.

Theme 3: It is essential to differentiate between the extremist groups that are all encompassed under the term militia

In his 2006 book *The Enemy of my Enemy*, George Michael states that extremist groups are labeled “militia” the same way.” (Michael, 2006) noted that the terms “extreme right,” “far right,” and “radical right” are used interchangeably. Sheriffs throughout Texas have argued that although these different groups exist, each group has different attitudes and beliefs; thus, they must be individualized because law enforcement will have to approach each group differently.

So there are groups within militias that are trying to support our Constitution and our laws and make the public aware that there is not enough activity in enforcement. Then there are opposite groups like the Republic of Texas; they are just anti-law. You know, “We do not recognize your authority.” So you have to weed out which one is the one that says, “we do not recognize any government authority,” and the threat that poses to society versus those people who are trying to assist law enforcement in a different venue. So it is a difficult balance there.

The Sheriffs identified four distinct groups that needed to be identified, investigated, and prosecuted. The groups are as follows:

- 1) Constitutional Militia
- 2) Sovereign Citizens
- 3) Anti-Government Groups: right-wing and left-wing
- 4) Hate Groups: white supremacy and black separatist

The SPLC has identified 26 anti-government groups and 52 hate groups within the State of Texas (DeWeese et al., 2022).

Theme 4: Constitutional Militia is not a threat

As mentioned above, the Sheriffs in the sample believe that it is essential to differentiate between the four categories of extremist groups. The Sheriffs suggest that the constitutional militia, and to a point, sovereign citizens, do not pose a significant threat to domestic security in rural Texas. Several Sheriffs have stated the following variations.

It is my belief that the ROT [Republic of Texas] and the Sovereign Citizen movement is a fringe element that poses very little threat to society or my county. However, I do believe we will see their numbers increase due to the growing distrust of the federal government in society. I believe La Raza and movements like them pose a moderate risk to society and my county. The anger toward the federal government for the apparent lack of border enforcement is great. This translates to a special interest in Latino groups that call for the reacquisition of ancestral lands to become more active and vocal.

Another Sheriff stated that the greatest threat to his jurisdiction was not the militia but the federal government as follows:

I have no concern to speak of about the militia being a security threat, a national security threat. I have more concern about the federal government being a threat to national security than the militia. I said this earlier, and I want to repeat it. I am not talking about the FBI. I am not talking about the DEA. I am not talking about the ICE. I am not talking about the Border Patrol, and I am not talking about the law enforcement portion of the federal government. They are very hard-working men and women who are here to prevent and solve criminal activity, period. I am talking about the regulatory bureaucracies of the federal government. Like the Bureau of Land Management and EPA are the two most significant.

Another Sheriff stated as follows:

The number of “right-wing extremists” is vastly over-reported by the media and federal government. Antifa and BLM are a far greater threat to public safety than a hand full of redneck nut jobs.

Let me ask you a question. What do you call a group of ranchers with guns protesting the creation of a pipeline across their land? A militia? Extremists? I tell you, I call them ranchers and concerned citizens, and if there is an emergency in my county that my deputies and I can't handle, they are the people I am going to call. If you see a riot in Minnesota and Portland, I will call the so-called militia.

Of all the rural Sheriffs that participated in the project, 94% claimed that extremist militias were not a threat to their specific jurisdictions (**Figure 3**).

Theme 5: There is a need for more education and training for the deputies to be able to identify groups operating in their respective county

The first answer to every policing issue is training and knowledge, which can create better police officers. The Texas Sheriffs believe that more training and knowledge of extremist threats are needed to ensure that their deputies are prepared to identify and manage encounters with extremists.

I think knowledge and training are the best preparations. I believe that more specific training on the ideology and tactics of these groups would benefit law enforcement greatly.

Two things: funding and education, at least to identify these groups. I appreciate that you are researching all extremism, both left and right, and not just what we hear on TV and the news. There is a threat from both left and right, and no one is looking at the threats posed by left-wing extremists like Antifa and BLM.

Few Sheriffs believe that there are no gaps in training and preparedness; they, instead, argue that the real problem is that politicians are more interested in political positioning than in addressing issues truthfully.

There are no gaps in the preparations by law enforcement; the gaps exist between the ears of the politicians who do not allow them to be dealt with in the manner that they so thoroughly deserve.

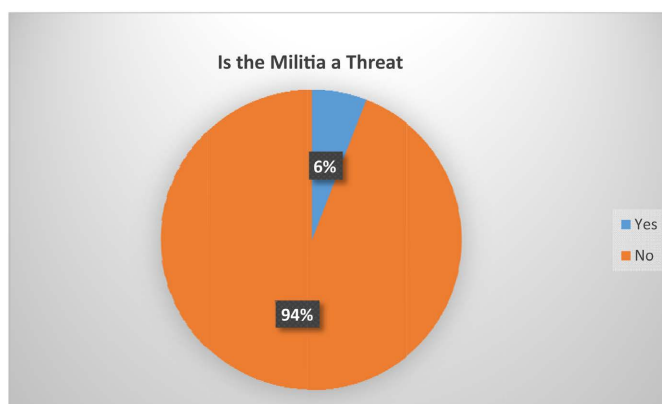


Figure 3. Is the Militia a threat?

Comments such as these may have been made because of the project's timing. The survey was completed during the summer of 2020, when the BLM/Antifa riots, protesting police brutality and the death of George Floyd, were calling for dismantling law enforcement agencies across the country (Moule, 2020).

Theme 6: Not enough staffing or funding to combat extremism

In exploring the gaps in their preparedness in an emergency involving extremism within their jurisdiction, the Sheriffs typically responded that they did not have the staffing to address wide-scale riots as seen on the Bundy Ranch in 2014, during the Occupation of the Malheur Wildlife in 2016, or the various city riots throughout the summer of 2020.

A large gap. My agency employs three officers, including myself. We have two state employees who reside in my county, but during a threat, they will be sent to another location. My agency would not be able to deal with any threat by these groups due to our size.

Several of the Sheriffs' Offices in rural Texas lack the staffing to address such threats. In addition, with the "defund the police" movement, Sheriffs' Offices do not have the funding available for training and preparedness for extremist activities (National Police Support Fund Staff, 2021).

Theme 7: Greatest threat of extremism comes from outside the county

The participating Sheriffs in this sample understand that extremist groups can pose a threat to society in general, but they do not recognize any threat within their respective communities. They expressed concern about the extremists coming from outside the county to cause problems:

While we know of no organized groups in ***** County, we occasionally encounter members of such groups (sovereign citizens) traveling on the Interstate thru ***** County. In general, they are non-compliant and vigorously question the officer's authority to make the stop and are reluctant or refuse to properly identify themselves. If an arrest is made, they question the officer's authority and may resist. They will not recognize the court's authority and will not participate in hearings.

Rural Texas Sheriffs are more concerned with the threats of political left-leaning extremists coming into the county than the right-wing extremists.

Personally, I do not believe there is any place in Texas for this type of behavior. It is being overrun by an out-of-control generation that has no respect for the flag or family.

It is my belief that the ROT & Sovereign Citizen Movement is a fringe element that poses very little threat to society or my county. However, I do believe we will see their numbers increase due to the growing distrust of the federal government in society.

I believe La Raza and movements like them pose a moderate risk to society and my county. The level of anger toward the federal government for the apparent lack of border enforcement is great. This translates to a special interest in Latino groups

that call for the reacquisition of ancestral lands to become more active and vocal.

Sheriffs have identified that the primary issue they have experienced with extremist groups is their lack of respect for the government's authority. Anger toward the federal government's policies creates extremism on both sides of the political aisle.

4. Discussion

All the participating Sheriffs agreed that it was vital to differentiate between various forms of extremism. They identified four types of extremism that must be identified singularly; sovereign citizens, anti-government groups, hate groups, and the constitutional militia. Collectively, the Sheriffs stated that each group poses a specific threat to the domestic security of the greater nation but not in their jurisdiction. Subsequently, each group poses its own unique threat to the State of Texas and needs to be confronted based on the danger they pose. The Sheriffs agree that attempting to lump all extremist groups into a single group of right-wing, white supremacist extremist militia is a mistake.

If a jurisdiction has an issue with an "extremist militia," the Sheriff should intervene. The Sheriff should be able to achieve a favorable resolution if the group is a Constitutional Militia, because these militias recognize the constitutional authority of the Sheriff. One Sheriff stated that the best way to manage the constitutional militia was to talk with militia groups. In addition, he has three identified militia groups in his county (Three percenters, Texas Lightfoot Infantry, and the Texas Brigades) and has a file on each of the leaders of these groups, and he speaks with them regularly. Other extremist groups do not respect the authority of any law enforcement agency, let alone the Office of the Sheriff, and a positive outcome is not possible.

The study's findings underscore the vital importance of open communication between the County Sheriff and militia groups. The only way to maintain order in the county is to understand what is going on and to speak with people within the jurisdiction. This practice is called community-oriented policing by academia, but many Sheriffs call it policing. The relationship between people and the police is vital for maintaining order and civility. When this relationship breaks down, extremism expands because the government cannot be trusted.

Rural Sheriffs in Texas are concerned with the threat posed by extremist groups. Sheriffs have identified that the threat of extremist domestic violence comes not from the militia but from extremist groups from outside their jurisdiction coming into the area and causing trouble.

Sheriffs also identified that the greater threat to domestic security posed by right-wing extremism is within larger metropolitan areas. They suggest that any such threat in rural Texas would be an overflow from major metropolitan areas, such as Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and even El Paso. None of the Sheriffs interviewed believed that a domestic security threat would originate in rural Texas.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations. First, the sample size was small. Only 11% of the state Sheriffs participated in the study on both occasions. However, a small sample size is common in qualitative research. Huberman and Saldaña (2014) identified the need for a smaller sample size when conducting qualitative research as it allows for more detailed answers, not just a multiple-choice survey. Future research should repeat this study to obtain a higher response rate.

Another limitation of this study is that it only reflects the opinions of Rural Sheriffs in Texas. Although political affiliation was not included in the survey, Rural Texas Sheriffs as a whole, tend to be more politically conservative than Sheriffs in other parts of the country. It would be interesting to determine whether the same results could be found in a more Democrat Party controlled jurisdictions. Future research should include urban Sheriffs with a larger population. Another aspect of future research is to repeat this project in other states. Rural Texas has a reputation for its rugged individualism and conservative beliefs. Conducting this research in a part of the country, which does not have a similar reputation, may provide different results.

5. Conclusion

This study surveyed the Rural Sheriffs of Texas in 2015 and 2020. Rural Sheriffs were surveyed to explore whether the narrative of the domestic security threat of right-wing extremism held true within their specific jurisdictions. This qualitative case study hoped to explore the perceptions of Texas Sheriffs toward the domestic security threat of right-wing extremism. Sheriffs of Texas were invited to answer seven questions to test the narrative that the right-wing militia posed a severe threat of domestic terrorism. The findings of this qualitative study show that Rural Texas Sheriffs' attitudes and beliefs have not changed, and that there is no domestic security threat in Rural Texas. The greatest threat of extremism can be found in the major urban areas. Furthermore the Sheriffs identified four distinct groups, collectively known as militia, and stated that they need to be categorized as such. The participating Sheriffs identified the following groups; sovereign citizens, anti-government groups, hate groups, and the constitutional militia. However, in addressing these groups, the Sheriffs did not support the claim that these groups seriously threatened domestic security.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Acemoglu, D., Dahleh, M. A., Lobel, I., & Ozdaglar, A. (2011). Bayesian Learning in Social Networks. *Review of Economic Studies*, 78, 1201-1236.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdr004>

- Allahverdyan, A. E., & Galstyan, A. (2014). Opinion Dynamics with Confirmation Bias. *PLOS ONE*, 9, e99557. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0099557>
- Anti-Defamation League (2016, February 6). *Sovereign Citizen Movement*. A.D.L. Backgrounder. <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/sovereign-citizen-movement>
- Beirich, H. (2012, October). Dealing with the “Sovereigns”. *Intelligence Report*, 147, 42-45.
- Berger, J. M. (2012). Extremists. *Foreign Policy*, 196, 62-63. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1112121270?accountid=14872>
- Bonger, W. A. (1916). *Criminality and Economic Conditions* (Translated by Henry P. Horton). Little, Brown and Co.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. SAGE.
- Crothers, L. (2003). *Rage on the Right: The American Militia Movement from Ruby Ridge to Homeland Security*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Davison, J. (2006). The Politics of Hate: Ultrnationalist and Fundamentalist Tactics and Goals. *Journal of Hate Studies*, 5, 37-61. <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.41>
- DeWeese, T., Boldin, M., & Baldwin, C. (2022). *Anti-Government Movement*. Antigovernment Movement. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/antigovernment>
- Durand, A. L., & France-America Film Group (1995). *Texas Rangers: Six Brave Men*. Broadcast, Public Broadcasting Service.
- Farivar, M. (2021, January 17). *Researchers: More than a Dozen Extremist Groups Took Part in Capitol Riots*. VOA/USA. <https://www.voanews.com/a/2020-usa-votes-researchers-more-dozen-extremist-groups-took-part-capitol-riots/6200832.html>
- Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) (2016, May 18). *Oklahoma City Bombing*. Famous Cases: Oklahoma City Bombing. <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing>
- Fezell, H. J. (1999). What to Do If the Police Come to Confiscate Your Militia Weapons. In D. J. Mulloy (Ed.), *Homegrown Revolutionaries* (pp. 400-403). Essay, Arthur Miller Centre.
- Freilich, J. D., & Pridemore, W. A. (2006). A Reassessment of State-Level Covariates of Militia Groups. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 23, 527-546. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.654>
- Gertz, B. (2020). Antifa Planned Anti-Government Insurgency before George Floyd Protests: Law Enforcement Official. *The Washington Times*. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/jun/3/antifa-planned-anti-government-insurgency-george-f/>
- Glaeser, E. L., & Sunstein, C. R. (2008). Extremism and Social Learning. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1080245>
- Glasrud, B. (2021). *Brothers to the Buffalo Soldiers: Perspectives on the African American*. Univ. of Missouri Press.
- Guinn, J., & Guinn, J. (2022). *War on the Border: Villa, Pershing, the Texas Rangers, and an American Invasion*. Simon & Schuster.
- Hall-Ellis, S. D. (2015). Nudges and Decision Making: A Winning Combination. *The Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances*, 28, 133-136. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BL-07-2015-0015>

- History.com Editors (2009, October 29). *Ku Klux Klan*.
<https://www.history.com/topics/reconstruction/ku-klux-klan>
- Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Sage.
- Ivey, D. L. (2010). *The Texas Rangers: A Registry and History*. McFarland.
- Janis, I. L. (1973). Groupthink and Group Dynamics: A Social Psychological Analysis of Defective Policy Decisions. *Policy Studies Journal*, 2, 19-25.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.1973.tb00117.x>
- John, P., Smith, G., & Stoker, G. (2009). Nudge Nudge, Think Think: Two Strategies for Changing Civic Behaviour. *Political Quarterly*, 80, 361-370.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2009.02001.x>
- L.T., & Clark, C. (2022). *8.22.22: And We Know Interview—Clay Clark Presents Salvation Experience, Tour Purpose, Trump, and More*. Rumble.
<https://rumble.com/v1gy5gf-8.22.22-awk-interview-clay-clark-presents-salvation-experience-tour-purpose.html>
- Macdonald, A. [William Pierce] (1978). *The Turner Diaries: A Novel*. National Vanguard Books.
- Macdonald, A. [William Pierce] (1989). *Hunter*. National Vanguard Books.
- Marcuse, H. (1955). *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Beacon Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1964). *One-Dimensional Man*. Beacon.
- Marcuse, H. (1969). *An Essay on Liberation*.
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/marcuse/works/1969/essay-liberation.htm#s2>
- Marcuse, H., & Kellner, D. (2005). *The New Left and the 1960s*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203646007>
- Marx, K. (2012). Class Conflict and Law. Marx. In T. A. Severance, & A. S. Bruce (Eds.), *Classics of Criminology* (4th ed., pp. 166-172). Essay, Waveland Press.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2009). *Communist Manifesto*. Pathfinder.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/owc/9780199535712.001.0001>
- McKinsey, J. A. (1999). H.Q. Bunker. In D. J. Malloy (Ed.), *Homegrown Revolutionaries* (pp. 396-397). Essay, Arthur Miller Center.
- Merton, R. K., & Sztompka, P. (1996). *On Social Structure and Science*. University of Chicago Press.
- Michael, G. (2006). *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right*. University Press of Kansas.
- Morning Consult, & Politico (2022, June 12). *National Tracking Poll 2206078—Politico.com*. National Tracking Poll.
<https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000181-65d7-dbd-a1d9-e5ff96cd0000&nname=playbook&nid=0000014f-1646-d88f-a1cf-5f46b7bd0000&nrid=0000014e-f115-dd93-ad7f-f91513e50001&nlid=630318>
- Moule, R. K. (2020). Under Siege? Assessing Public Perceptions of the “War on Police”. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 66, Article ID: 101631.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2019.101631>
- Mulloy, D. J. (2000). *Homegrown Revolutionaries: An American Militia Reader*. School of English and American Studies.
- National Police Support Fund Staff (2021, March 11). *There Are Three Reasons for De-*

- fending the Police Is a Bad Idea*. National Police Support Fund.
<https://nationalpolicesupportfund.com/3-reasons-why-defunding-the-police-is-a-bad-idea/>
- National Security Council. (2021, June 15). *White House National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism 2021 06 15: Free Download, Borrow and Streaming*. National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism.
<https://archive.org/details/white-house-national-strategy-for-countering-domestic-terrorism-2021-06-15>
- Parenti (2009). Terrorism and Super-Patriotism. *Sociological Viewpoints*, p. 25.
- Phillips, K. (2013). *1775: A Good Year for Revolution*. Penguin Books.
- Potok, M. (2013). The Year in Hate and Extremism. *Intelligence Report*, Spring (149), 39-59.
- Schafer, J. R., & Navarro, J. (2003, March). *Seven-Stage Hate Model: The Psychopathology of Hate Groups*. Office of Justice Programs. <https://doi.org/10.1037/e315272004-001>
<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/seven-stage-hate-model-psychopathology-hate-groups>
- Schilke, R. (2022, August 23). *Widow of Slain Retired Capt. David Dorn Criticizes B.L.M. and Kamala Harris*. Washington Examiner.
<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/wife-murdered-black-cop-criticizes-black-lives-matter-op-ed>
- Southern Poverty Law Center (1996). *False Patriots: The Threat of Antigovernment Extremists*. Office of Justice Programs.
<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/false-patriots-threat-antigovernment-extremists>
- Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (2012). Intelligence Briefs: Patriot Groups See Defense Act as Prelude to Dictatorship. *Intelligence Report*, Summer (146), 5-6.
- Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (2021). *Anti-Government Movement*. Southern Poverty Law Center.
<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/antigovernment>
- Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (2022). *Sovereign Citizens Movement*. Southern Poverty Law Center.
<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/sovereign-citizens-movement>
- Stapley, C. (2012). The Domestic Rally Effect and Terrorism. *Global Security Studies*, 3, 11-20.
- Swanson, D. J. (2021). *Cult of Glory: The Bold and Brutal History of the Texas Rangers*. Penguin Books, an Imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.
- Texas Constitution (1876). *Article 5§23*.
- The Constitutional Rights Foundation (2022). *The Aftermath of Terror*. Constitutional Rights Foundation.
<https://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-11-4-a-the-aftermath-of-terror>
- Thompson, C. W., & McCord, M. (2022, June 12). *A Look at the Role Armed Militia Groups May Have Played in the Weeks before January 6*.
<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/12/1104460671/a-look-at-the-role-armed-militia-groups-may-have-played-in-the-weeks-before-jan->
- Tucker, E. (2020, September 18). *F.B.I. Director Says Antifa Is an Ideology, Not an Organization*. AP NEWS.
<https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-ap-top-news-elections-james-comey-politics-bdd3b6078e9efadcfcd0be4b65f2362e>

Appendix

The Questions

1. Do you have active militia groups in your jurisdiction?
2. Please identify any extremist groups.
3. What, if any, domestic terrorism threats do these militia groups pose to society, and specifically to your county?
4. What, if any, domestic terrorism threats do these extremist groups pose to society and specifically to your county?
5. What gaps exist in the preparations of law enforcement agencies to address potential threats posed by the militia and/or extremist groups?
6. What sources of information have influenced your perceptions of the militia and extremist groups? (select all that apply)
 - a) Left-Wing Media Sources
 - b) Right-Wing Media Sources
 - c) Official Government Report
 - d) Trade magazines (i.e., The Blues, Texas Sheriff's Association Today, AELE).
 - e) Academic Journals (i.e., Justice Quarterly, Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Sage Publishing)
 - f) Personal Experience
 - g) Training Presentations
7. Is there anything else you would like to say about extremist groups within Texas that you would like to share?