

# THE FACE OF AMERICAN INSURRECTION

## Right-Wing Organizations Evolving into a Violent Mass Movement

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Presented to  
**General Audience**

Updated 1/28/2021

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# WHY STUDY WHO ARE THE INSURRECTIONISTS

- The “Who” is just as important as ideology and beliefs
- We need a nuanced understanding of “who” stormed the US Capitol on Jan 6, 2021 in order to know who we are dealing with and create viable solutions for the future.

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# RESEARCH APPROACH

- **Assess 193 individuals arrested by FBI, Capitol Hill Police, and DC Police for entering the US Capitol or breaking into the Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021.**
  - Primary demographics (age, gender, race, geography of residence)
  - Socio-economic factors (occupation, prior military/police service)
  - Affiliation in militias/organizations/groups existing prior to 2021
- **Compare to 108 right-wing extremists arrested by FBI for deadly violence, 2015-2020 and other data on past right-wing extremists**
- **Based on information from Official US Court Documents and open-source media reporting**
- **Comparable method to Pape et al, “[American Face of ISIS](#)” (January 2017).**

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# OVERALL FINDINGS

- **What we are dealing with here is not merely a mix of right-wing organizations, but a broader mass movement with violence at its core.**
- This is **fundamentally a political movement**, one not only centered in “red” parts of the country, but also consisting of pro-Trump supporters who are in the political minority in many places.
- Normal CVE won’t work in this case. What we need is not simply social programs for poor, unemployed or arrests targeting pre-existing extremist organizations, but de-escalation approaches for anger among large swaths of mainstream society.

# THE INSURRECTIONS **VS** PAST RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS

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## SPECIFIC FINDING #1

This movement's demographic profile  
is **different** compared to past right-wing  
extremists.

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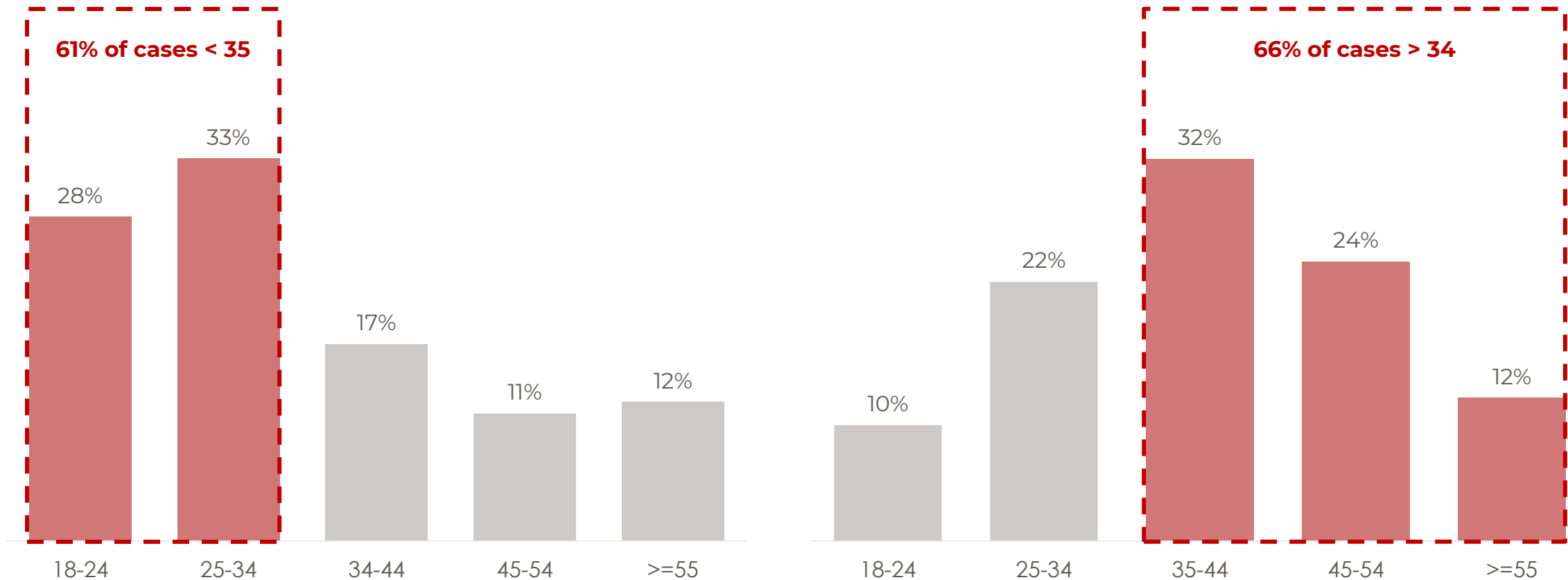
# SIMILAR RACE AND GENDER

- **Right-wing Extremist Arrests, 2015-2020**
  - 94% White
  - 94% Male
- **Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021**
  - 94% White
  - 86% Male

# INSURRECTIONISTS ARE MUCH OLDER, NOT JUST AGING OF POPULATION

Right-wing Extremist Arrests, 2015-2020

Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021

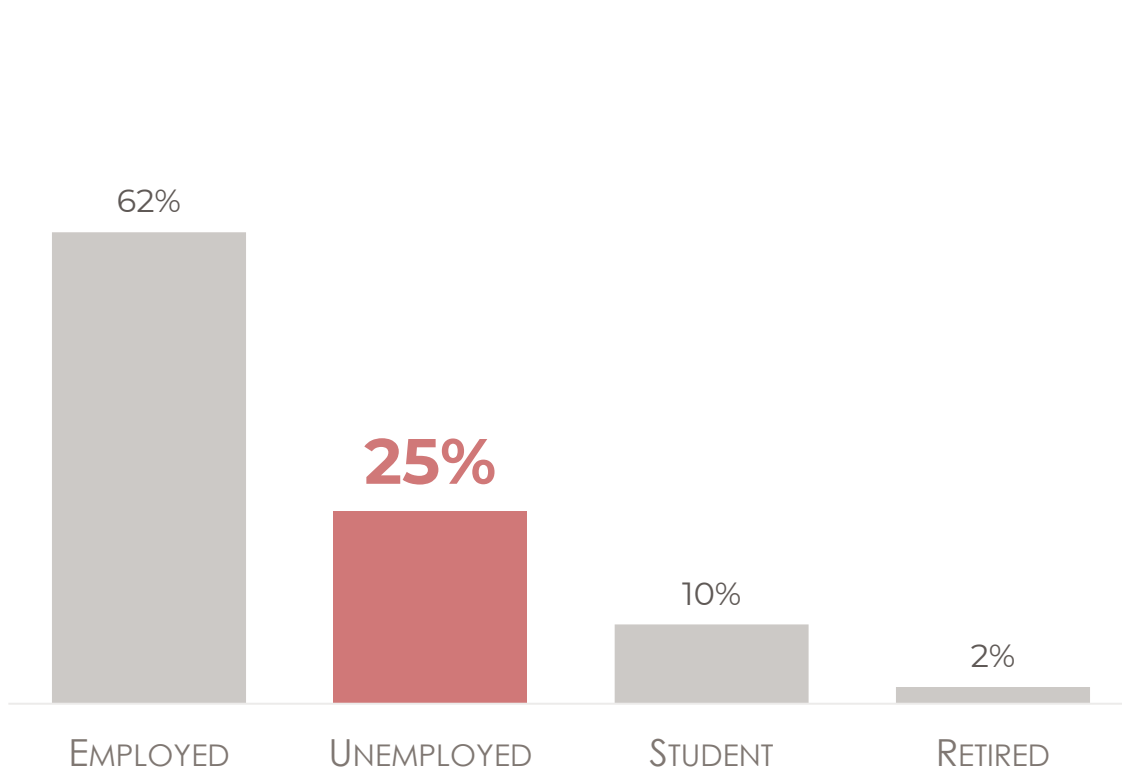


Note: Age known for 173 of 193 cases.

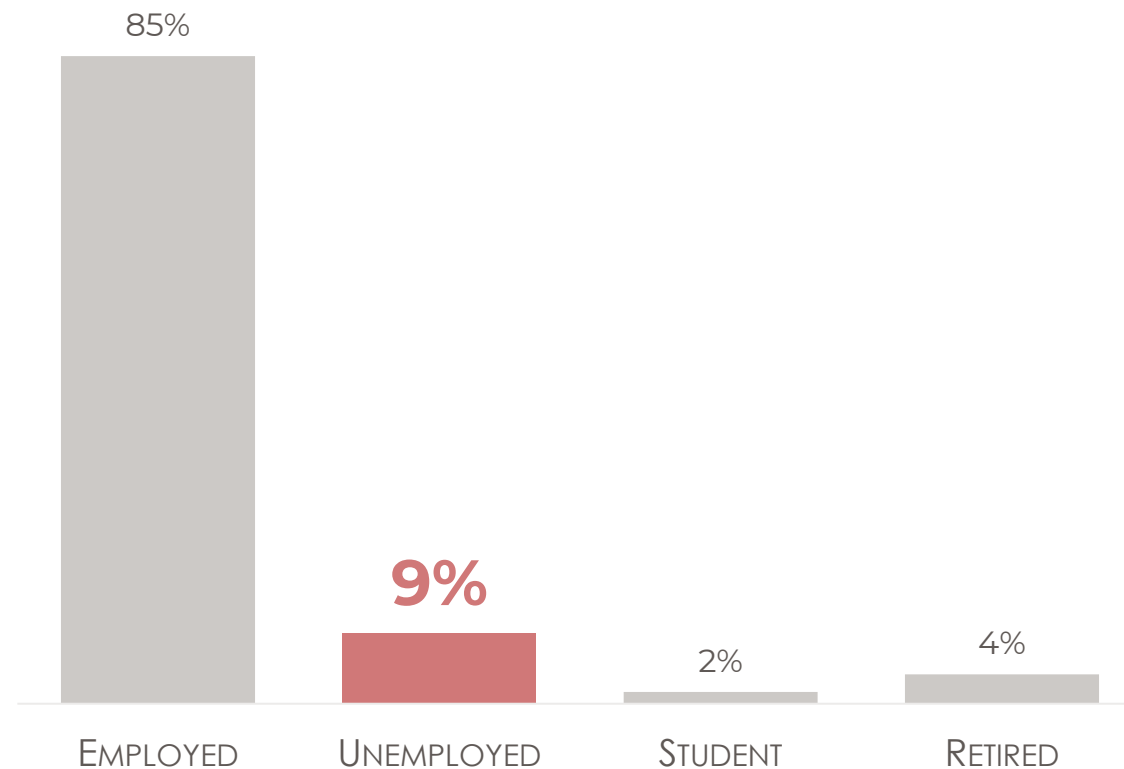


# MANY FEWER UNEMPLOYED

Right-wing Extremist Arrests, 2010-2020



Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021



Note: Occupation available for 182 of 387 cases. Source: START, PIRUS.

Note: Occupation available for 129 of 193 cases.

# MANY BUSINESS OWNERS/WHITE-COLLAR

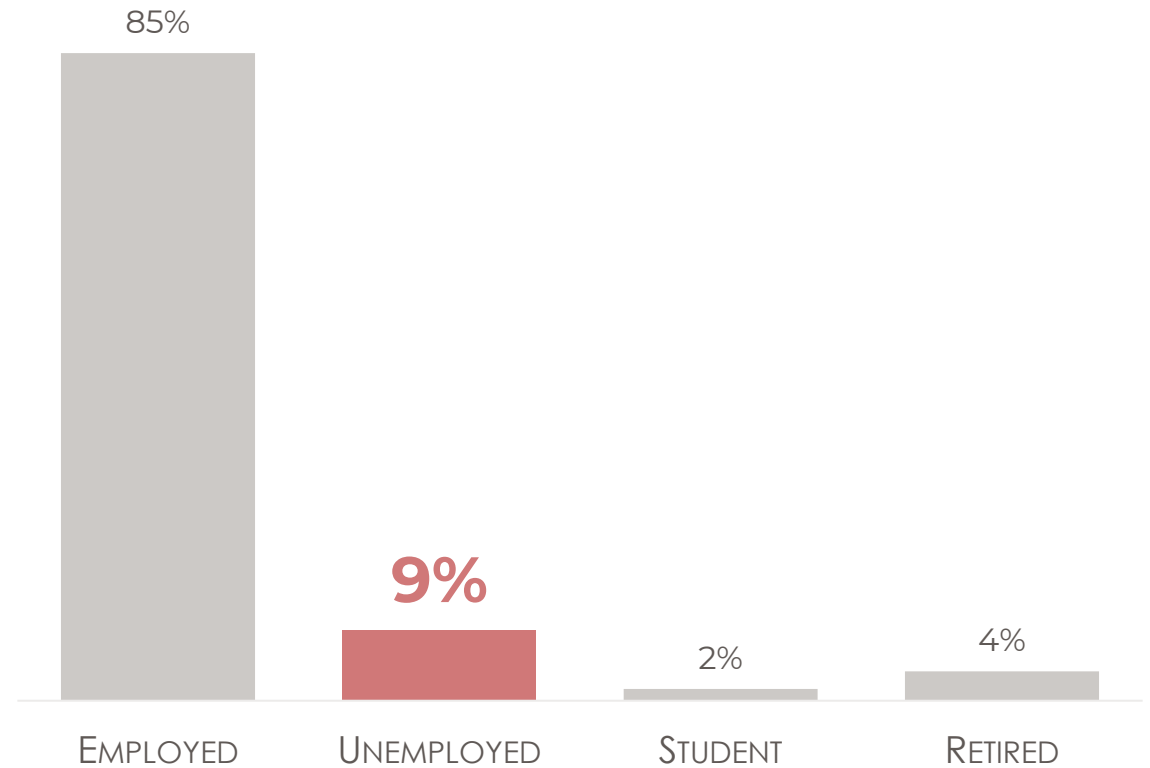
- **Business Owner: 13%**

- Owner, Ameri-I-Can Ammo
- CEO, marketing firm Cogensia
- Owner, Wholesale Universe, Inc.
- Owner, Matador Sport Fishing

- **White-Collar: 27%**

- Google Field Operations Specialist
- Regional Portfolio Manager at BB&T Bank
- Doctors, Attorney, Architects

Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021

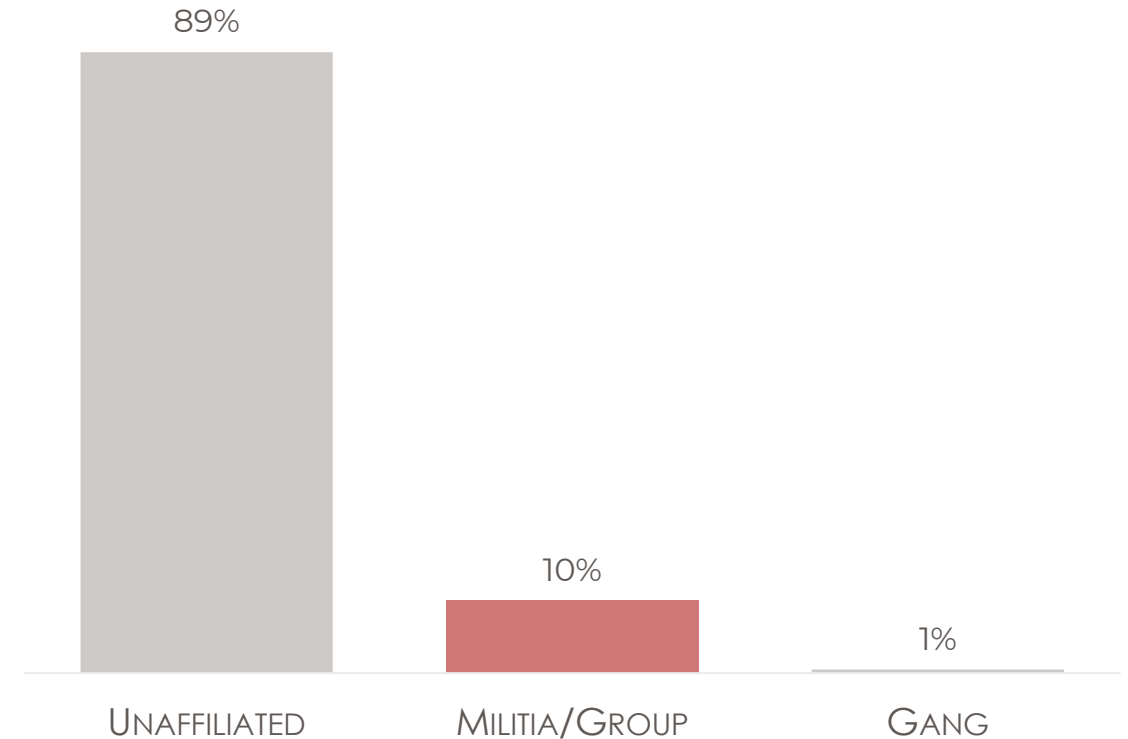


Note: Occupation available for 129 of 193 cases

# MILITIA/VIOLENT RIGHT-WING GROUPS INVOLVED

- Proud Boys: 10 arrested
- Oath Keeper: 4 arrested
- Three Percenters: 5 arrested
- Aryan Nations: 1 arrested

Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021



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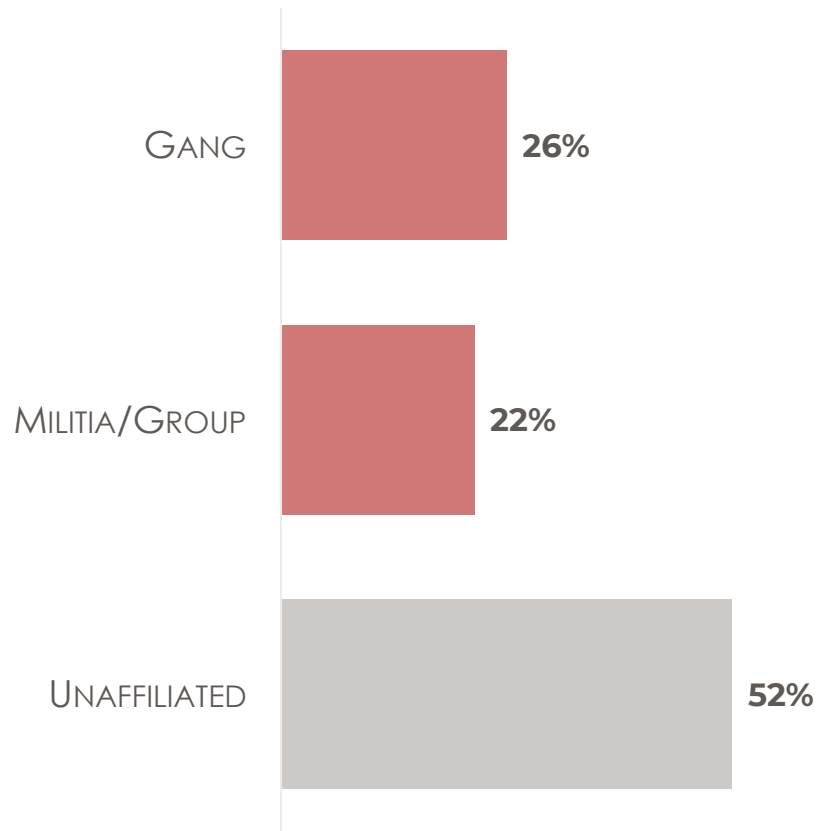
## SPECIFIC FINDING #2

**The vast majority have no connection to existing far right militias or groups**

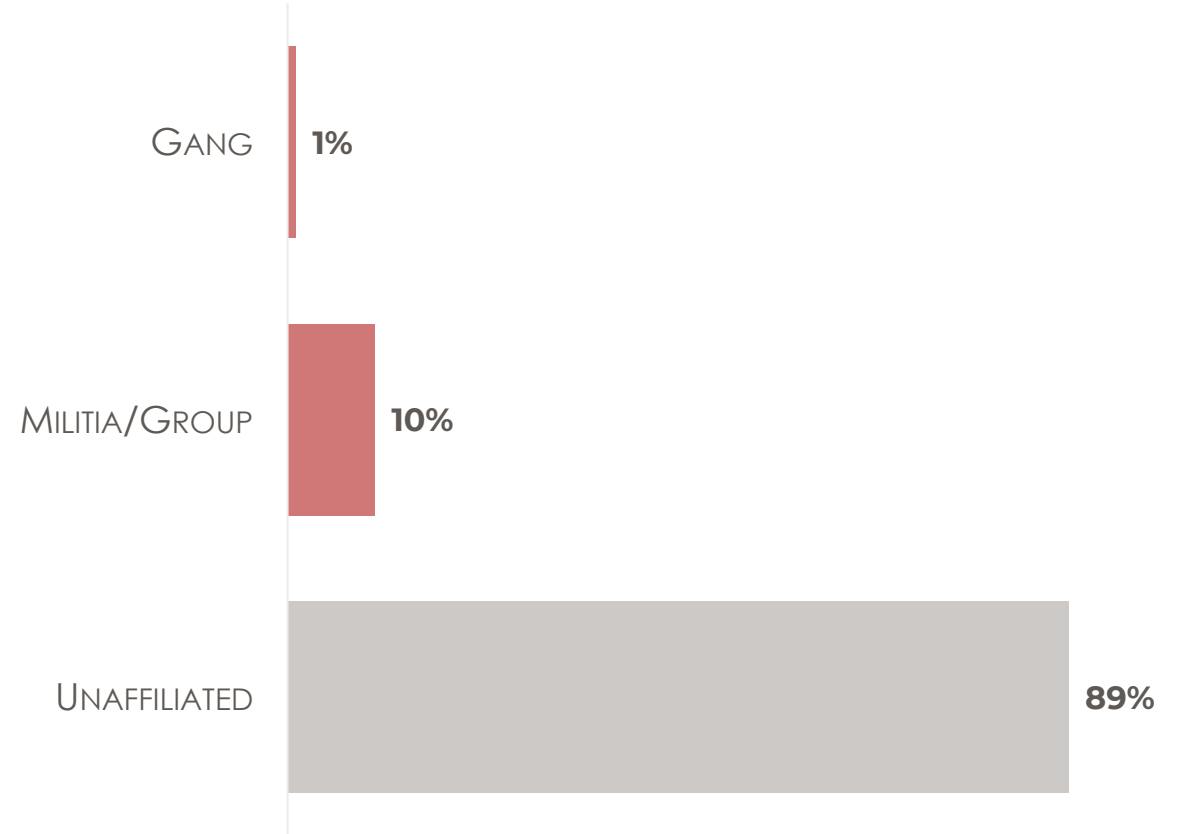
**“Normal” pro-Trump activists joined with the far right to form a new kind of violent mass movement**

# FEWER MILITIAS, ALMOST NO GANGS

Right-wing Extremist Arrests, 2015-2020



Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021



# TROUBLING OVERLAP BETWEEN MILITARY SERVICE AND MILITIA/GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- **35% with military experience are in militia/groups**
  - 3 Proud Boys
  - 3 Oath Keepers
  - 1 Three Percenters
  - 1 Other organizations
- **40% in militia/groups have military experience**
  - 1 Ex-Navy
  - 3 Ex-Marines
  - 4 Ex-Army

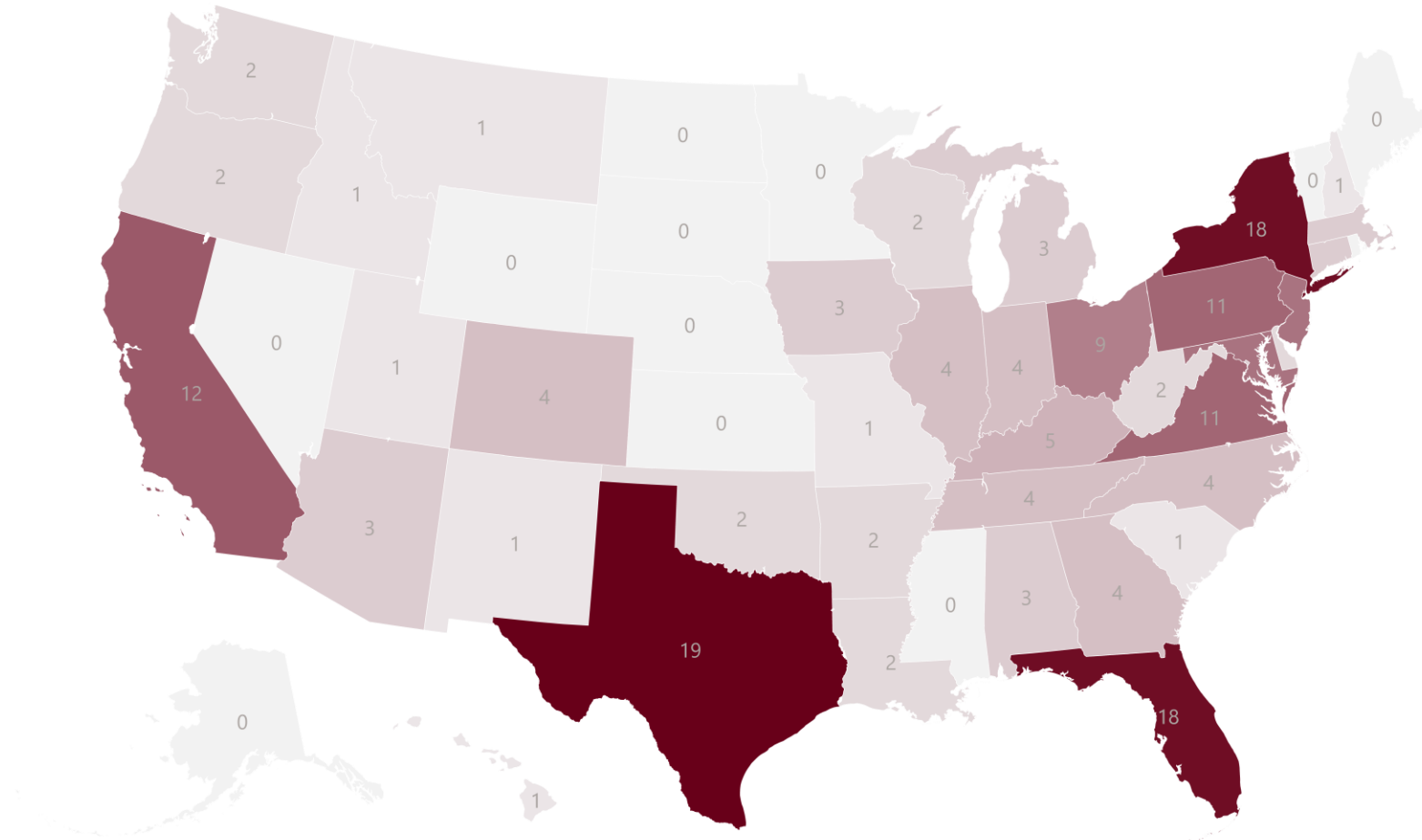
Note: Out of 23 confirmed ex-Military

Note: Out of 20 confirmed members of militias

# WHERE THE INSURRECTIONISTS CAME FROM AND WHY

# INSURRECTIONISTS FROM 39 STATES

## Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021



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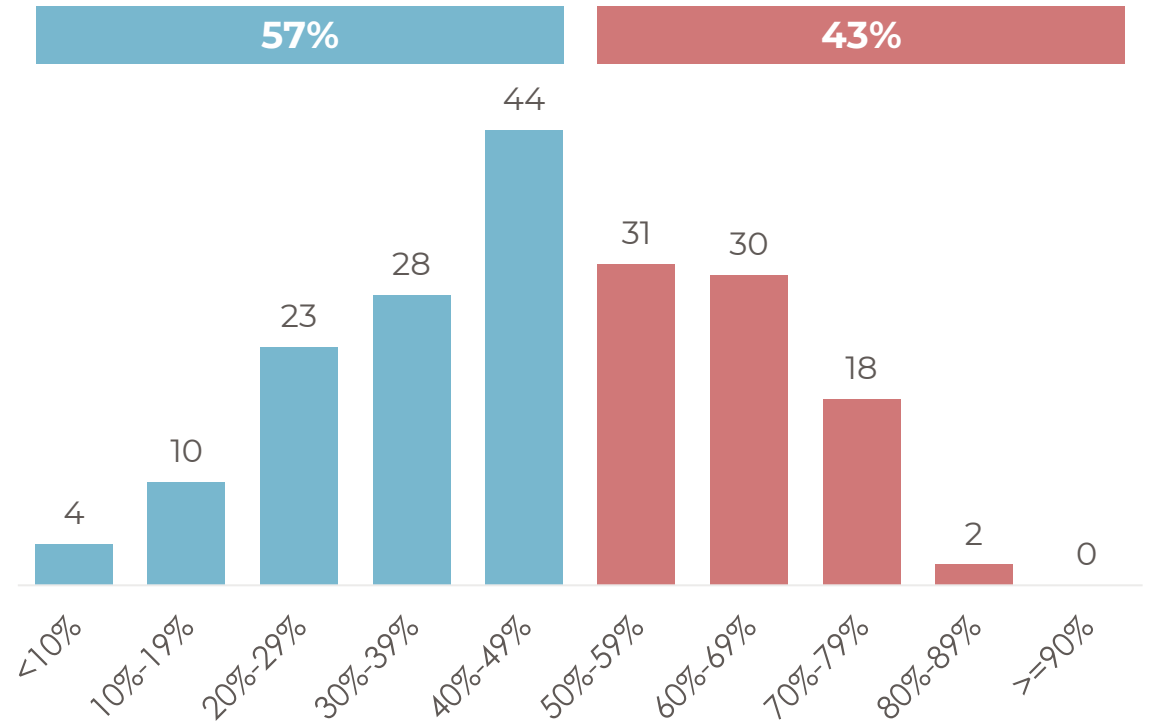
Note: 221 cases. Current as of Jan. 25, 2021.



# MORE FROM COUNTIES **BIDEN** WON

- 190 arrested with known county
- 151 unique counties

**Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021  
By Home Country % Trump Vote**

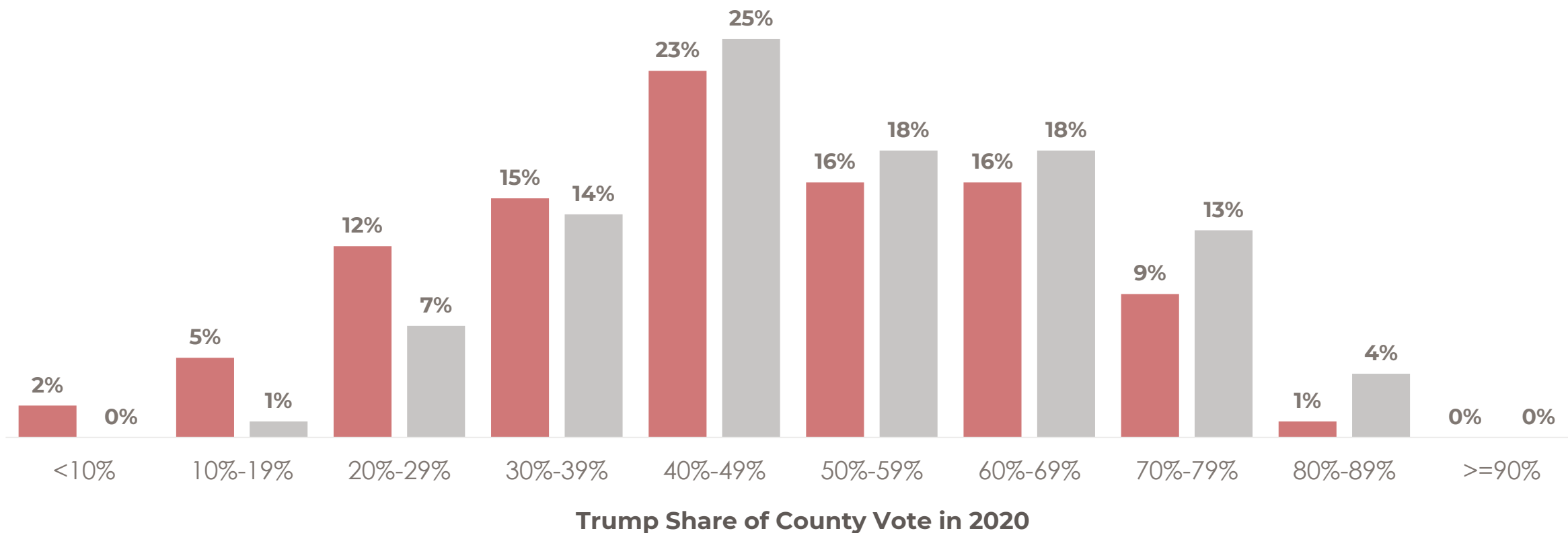


# MORE FROM COUNTIES **BIDEN** WON

Correlation between the number of voters and likelihood of insurrectionists

## Capitol Hill Arrests, 2021 by Home County Vote Share for Trump

■ % OF INSURRECTIONISTS    ■ % OF ALL TRUMP 2020 VOTERS IN SIMILAR COUNTIES



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# WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THE COUNTIES

- Overall, the Biden counties versus the Trump counties that produced insurrectionists are more unemployed, more mixed race, and far more big city.
- Telling example is Dallas County, Texas – which produced 4 insurrectionists and had a vote for Trump at 33%, unemployment is just at the national average, and 67% white.

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## WHAT'S REALLY SPECIAL ABOUT THE COUNTIES

- Most important, the more Trump voters in a county – even in counties Biden won – the greater likelihood that county would send an insurrectionist to the US Capitol. This is because there are twice as many people who live in Biden counties compared to those who live in Trump counties, which means that when Biden “wins” a large urban county, there are often still vast numbers of Trump supporters in that county.
- This will come as a surprise to many Biden supporters, who presumably think that the insurrectionists are coming from red counties – rural, almost completely white, and with high unemployment – far from Biden strongholds.

# PRELIMINARY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

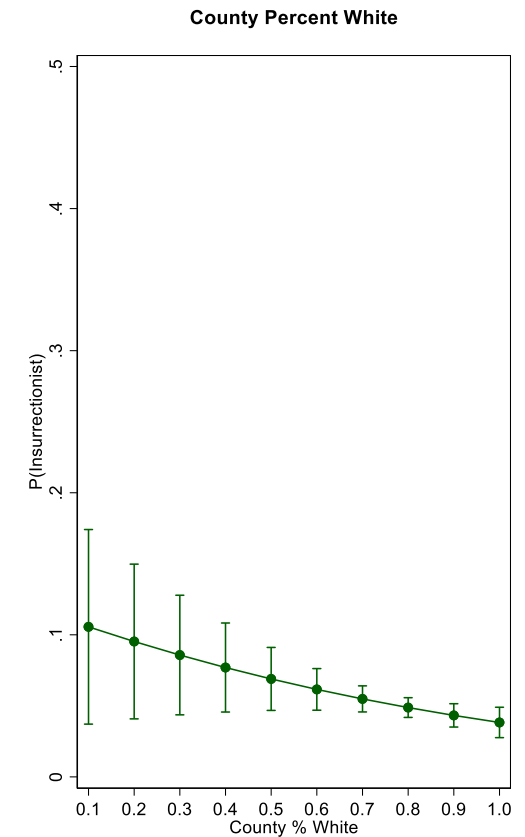
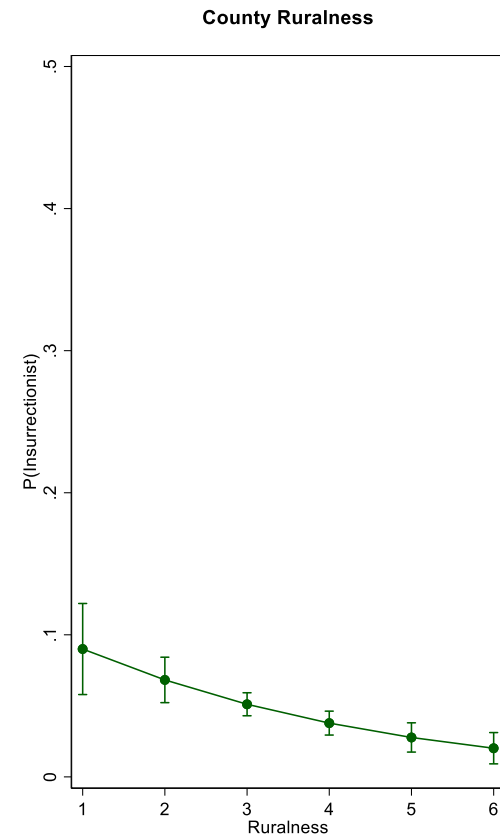
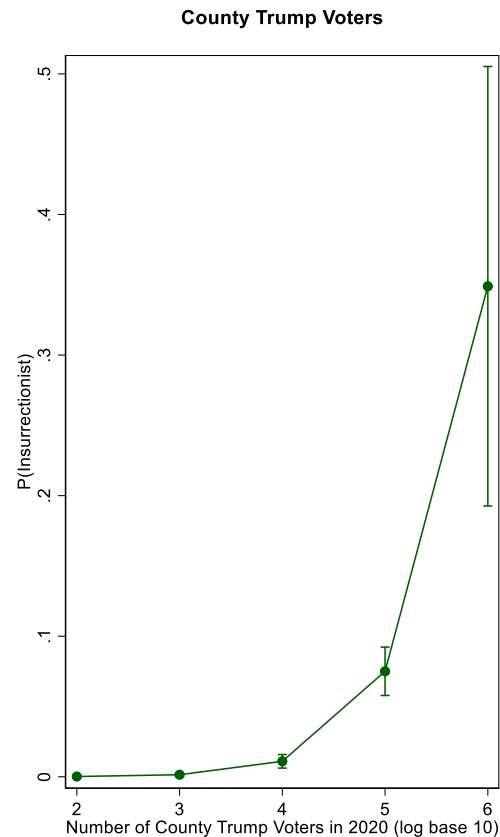
## Logistic regression, probability of at least 1 insurrectionist from county types

### Regression Results: Effect of County Characteristics on Probability of at Least 1 Insurrectionist

	Probability of at least 1 Insurrectionist
County Number Trump Voters (log b10)	7.60*** (1.93)
County Unemployment	0.99 (0.05)
County Voted for Trump	0.89 (0.21)
County Percent White	0.21* (0.15)
County Ruralness	0.70*** (0.07)
Constant	-9.76*** (1.48)
N	3112
pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.303)

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses  
\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001

### Predicted probability of at least 1 Insurgent, by County Characteristic



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# COUNTIES PRODUCING INSURRECTIONISTS

## Reflect national averages on race, vote, urban vs. rural, and unemployment

- 39% of insurrectionists came from “purple” counties – where the percentage vote for then President Trump ranged from 40-60% – which comprise 41% of the US population, about normal.
- 12% of insurrectionists came from counties with less than 60% white populations, which comprise 13% of the US population, again normal.
- 18% of insurrectionists came from counties that are more rural than urban, which comprise 23% of the US population, almost normal.
- 44% of insurrectionists came from counties with slightly higher than average unemployment, a finding that becomes more interesting as we go deeper.

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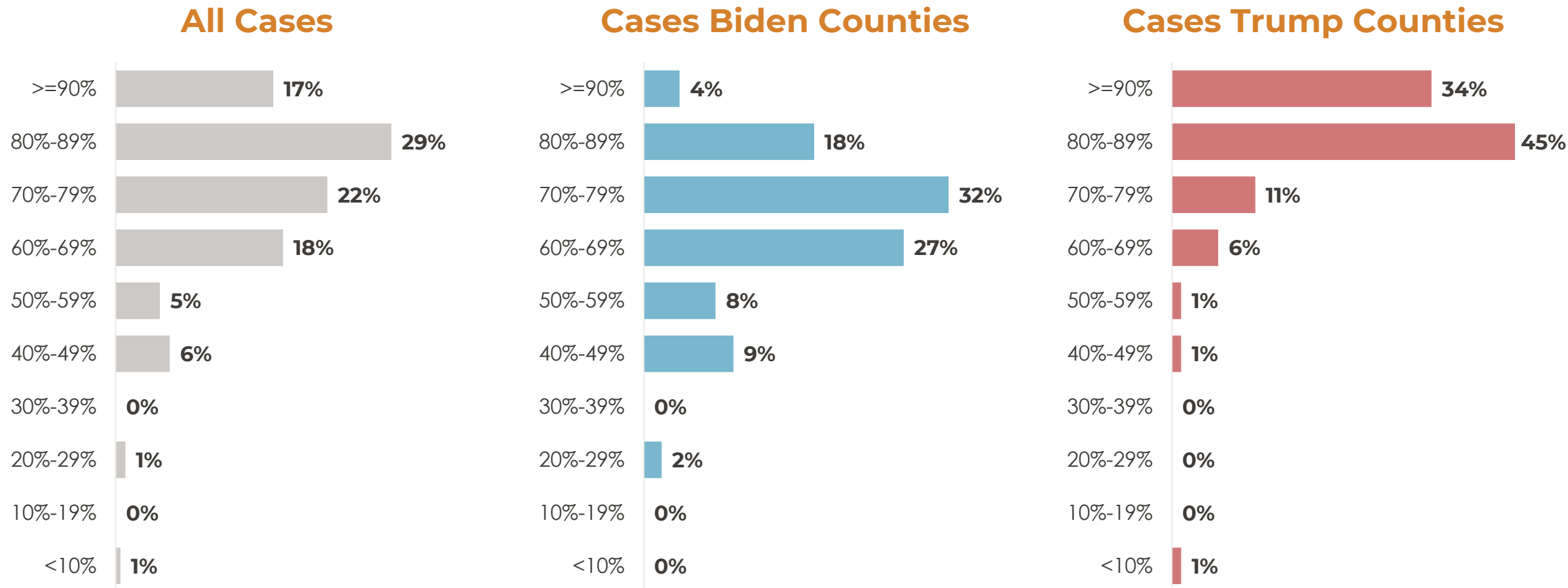
# BIDEN VS TRUMP COUNTIES

## More Urban, less white, more unemployed

- 56% of the insurrectionists from Biden counties are also counties with greater than average unemployment (most 1-3% more), compared to 26% of insurrectionists from Trump counties with the same profile.
- 22% of the insurrectionists from Biden counties are also counties with more than 80% white populations, compared to 72% of the insurrectionists from Trump counties with the same profile.
- 56% of the insurrectionists from Biden counties are also counties in the largest urban areas, compared to 2% of the insurrectionists from large urban Trump counties (38% come from areas that are more rural than urban).

# BIDEN COUNTIES SENDING INSURRECTIONISTS ARE MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE

## Cases by County of Origin, County Percent White

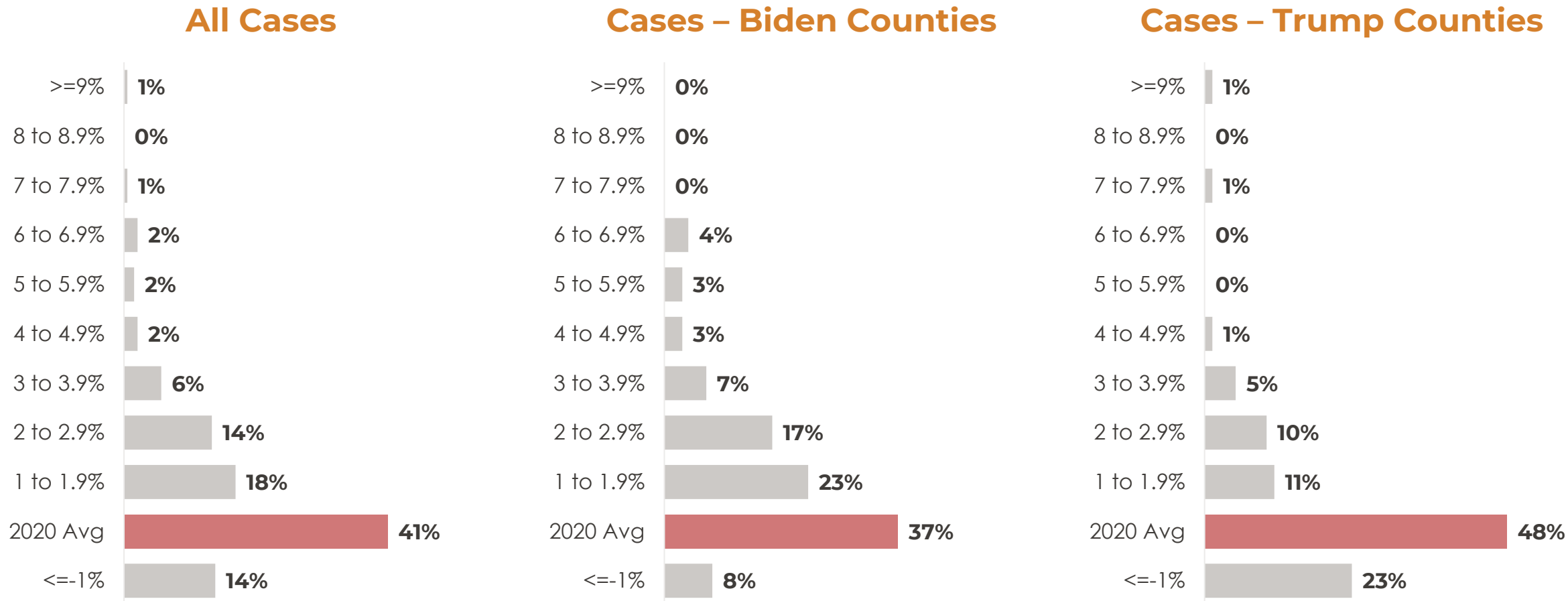


Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Division, County-level demographics for 2019.



# BIDEN COUNTIES SENDING INSURRECTIONISTS HAVE **HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT**

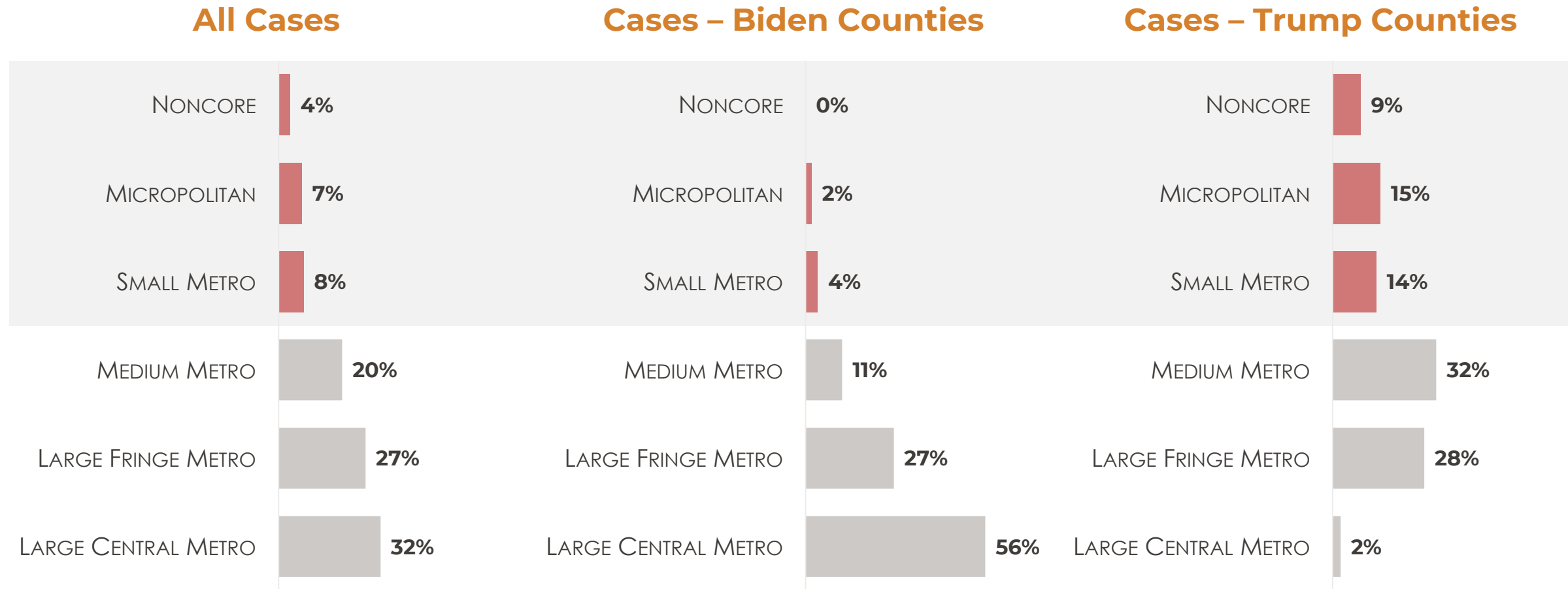
## Cases by County of Origin, County Unemployment Relative to 2020 Average



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, County Level Unemployment Jan – Nov 2020.

# BIDEN COUNTIES SENDING INSURRECTIONISTS ARE **MORE URBAN**

## Cases by County of Origin, Urban vs Rural Counties



Source: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Rural Classification Scheme for Counties (2013).

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## SPECIFIC FINDING #3

Storming the US Capitol was an **act of political violence**, not merely vandalism or trespassing for other purposes.

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# PRESIDENT TRUMP MOBILIZED THE VIOLENT MASS MOVEMENT

- A man from Kentucky, said, “He marched to the U.S. Capitol because President Trump said to do so.” (FBI interview)
- A business owner from California said, “She felt called upon by President Donald Trump to travel to D.C. to change the outcome of the election, which she believes was stolen.” (Beverly Hills Courier interview).
- A US Navy veteran from Arizona, who invaded the Capitol in a Viking costume, said “he was in Washington as part of a group effort with other "patriots" from Arizona at the request of President Trump.” (FBI Interview)
- A northern California resident said, “She heard President Trump tell the crowd to go to the U.S. Capitol... decided she wanted to be part of the crowd, and she walked to the U.S. Capitol.” (FBI interview)
- A woman from Texas, said she entered the Rotunda because “He said, ‘Be there,’ and So I went and I answered the call of my president.” (KTVT-TV Fort Worth interview)

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## KEY IMPLICATION

**Left to its own, the movement may well grow**

**Ingredients are all there to accelerate movement growth:**

- A leader with demonstrated support for extra-legal activity
- Grievances perceived by large masses of people (stolen election)
- A Deadly Focal Point event: The Jan 6 storming of the US Capitol, leaving 5 dead

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# SPECIFIC IMPLICATIONS

- Given the political geography of the movement, President Biden may well get the most violent resistance from where he is politically the strongest.
- On the upside, this is also where President Biden presumably has the strongest networks and so could engage the movement effectively at the local level.
- Most importantly, we need to do more to understand who we are dealing with in the new movement. Targeting pre-2021 far right organizations alone will not solve the problem. Political violence coming from a new mass movement requires new political solutions.

# TOP LINE CONCLUSIONS

- **Not about right-wing organizations, it is about a Violent Mass Movement**
  - From all over country: 41 of 50 states
  - 89% unaffiliated with pre-existing militias/extremist organizations and groups
- **Trump is clearly the leader of that mass movement**
  - Unlikely to have come together without Trump
  - Many say they were following Trump's call to action
- **The Movement Demographic Profile has changed compared to past right-wing extremists**
  - 67% are 35 years and older – a rate for this age group near double past RW extremists
  - 13% are business owners; 27% white collar – only 12% unemployed – compared to 25% unemployed for past RWE
- **Ingredients are all there to accelerate movement growth:**
  - A leader with demonstrated support for extra-legal activity
  - Grievances perceived by large masses of people (stolen election)
  - A Deadly Focal Point event: The Jan 6 storming of the US Capitol, leaving 5 dead
- **This is not about a few hundred arrests. We need to understand who we are dealing with in the new movement. Targeting pre-2021 far-right organizations will not solve the problem**

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# ADDITIONAL METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION

- Given the striking findings, it is helpful to explain more fully our methodology and its limitations.
- For both the Capitol Hill arrests and those arrested for far-right deadly violence from 2015-2020, our team of over 20 researchers reviewed all official court documents related to each arrest — which includes criminal complaints, statement of facts, and affidavits — and conducted searches of media stories and interviews related to each person on comprehensive and up to date databases like Newsbank. The number of documents and media stories is over 1500.



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# ADDITIONAL METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION

- “Organization affiliation” refers to any mention of any connection to a militant organization in any of these documents, including references in social media posts, where an organization is defined as an entity that has a process by which members identify themselves, such as donations, membership dues, or participation in organized face-to-face meetings.
- The court documents are produced by FBI, US Capitol Police, and Washington DC police agents who routinely identify group affiliation of individuals arrested. In fact, it is one of their primary concerns. We err on the side of inclusion; we code as affiliated if they are members or directly indicate support through wearing patches, apparel etc.

# LIMITATIONS

- For both the Capitol Hill and 2015-2020 analyses, we relied on arrests as the defining threshold for inclusion of cases. This creates a common inclusion rule across the pools, but also has limitations since decisions to arrest by different agencies may occur under different circumstances, police arresting on the spot while the FBI arrests after investigation.
- To test for the impact of different arresting agencies, we partitioned the Capitol Hill arrests into two sub-groups – those arrested by the FBI and those by Washington DC or US Capitol Police – to see if there are notable differences. We found virtually no important changes. For example, 60% of the police arrests are individuals who reside in counties that Biden won, compared to 57% of the total. 12% come from counties that are less than 60% white, the same as for the total.
- We also examined the impact of adding in the 42 cases that we excluded because they were not explicitly charged with being on the Capitol grounds, so the total now is 235. Again, no meaningful change. For example, 52% of the 235 are individuals who reside in counties that Biden won and 12% come from counties that are less than 60% white.

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# RESEARCH SUPPORT

## The following researchers assisted in the data collection for this report

- Emerson Ahn
- Aidan Aronoff
- Vishan Chaudhary
- Bertrand Chu
- Rachel Citrin
- Lola Fisher
- Mateo Garcia
- Jacob Gillis
- Carolyn Hammond
- Anton Harrington
- Samuel Levy
- Adele Malle
- Eliza Migdal
- Grey Moszkowski
- Reilly O'Flaherty
- Grace Penta
- Ava Sharifi
- Matt Sheppard
- Donna Son
- Dylan Suffredini
- Ketaki Tavan
- Natalie Ye

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# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- We need a nuanced understanding of “who” stormed the US Capitol on Jan 6, 2021 in order to know who we are dealing with and create viable solutions for the future. Accordingly, CPOST has conducted a systematic analysis of the complete set of individuals arrested by the FBI and Washington DC police for offenses related to the storming of the US Capitol, numbering 235 as of January 28, 2021 and expected to grow.
- This analysis uses official court documents and media sources of the primary demographics, socio-economic characteristics, militant group affiliations, over 1,500 documents.
- Of these 235, 193 have been specifically charged with being inside the US Capitol or breaking through barriers to enter the Capitol grounds. We analyzed these 193 as our primary focus and compared our findings on the Capitol Hill insurrectionists to the demographic profile of the 108 individuals arrested by the FBI and local police for deadly violence related to right wing political causes from 2015-2020 using the same methodology. The Chicago Project on Security and Threats has over 15 years of experience conducting demographic studies of international and domestic terrorists. For an example, see our [American Face of ISIS](#) study (2017).