

“PATRIOTIC COUNTER-REVOLUTION”: THE POLITICAL MINDSET THAT STORMED THE CAPITOL

Analysis of Stated Motives of those Charged with
Storming the US Capitol on January 6, 2021

April 11, 2022



Photo Credit: [Lev Radin / Shutterstock](#)

Chicago Project on Security and Threats

University of Chicago
Pick Hall Suite 418
5828 S. University Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637
<http://cpost.uchicago.edu>

FOREWORD

The violent assault on the US Capitol that took place January 6, 2021 is a major act of domestic political violence the like of which is unfamiliar in recent U.S. history.

We need to take the threat of increased levels of domestic extremist attacks seriously. The 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

It is also vital to understand who we are dealing with in the new movement and targeting pre-2021 far-right organizations will not solve the problem. Political violence coming from a new mass movement requires new political solutions.

Given the political geography of the movement, President Biden may well get the most violent resistance from where he is politically the strongest. But 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.

We hope this report will shed light on the patterns of individuals within this movement in order to evaluate [Biden's Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism](#) and inform further policy.



Robert A. Pape, PhD

Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago

Director, University of Chicago Project on Security and Threats (CPOST)

INTRODUCTION: IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE STATED MOTIVES OF THE JANUARY 6TH INSURRECTION

On January 6th, 2021, the United States experienced an act of domestic political violence unprecedented since the US civil war. A violent mob of over 2,000 Americans, as estimated by law enforcement, breached the American Capitol to prevent the certification of Joe Biden as President of the United States.¹ Many thousands also battled with police outside the Capitol that day.²

The assault on the US Capitol was an “insurrection,” using the ordinary understanding of that term in politics, history, and society as a violent uprising against the authority of the US government to prevent the execution of its constitutionally mandated duties. Further, the assault involved collective political violence – breaking laws protecting property and people for political purposes by thousands.

As of January 1, 2022, 716 individuals have been charged with illegally entering the Capitol or Capitol grounds on January 6. Of these, 215 (30%) have been charged with acts of actual or threatened physical violence. Our database documents all individuals charged by FBI, Capitol Hill Police, and DC Police for entering the US Capitol or breaking into the Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021.

What motivated the January 6th insurrectionists? Why did they think they were taking action? Did different subgroups have fundamentally different goals than others, or does the range of variation in motives cross-cut subgroups and ultimately paint a relatively coherent picture of the overall “mindset” of the American insurrection? Did their arrest and the passage of time change their minds about their political motives for storming the Capitol and the legitimacy of the 2020 election?

This report answers these questions in two separate analyses:

First is an in-depth analysis of the **stated motives** of those Americans who have been charged for their part in the January 6 Insurrection.³ By stated motive, we mean public statements that an individual willingly gave as a reason for an action from November 7, 2020, the date when the presidential election was called by the national media, through the February 15, 2022, on social media, in media interviews, or in interviews with law enforcement made public through thousands of pages of court documents.

Second is an in-depth analysis of whether individuals **renounced their support** for the stated motives associated with January 6th. Here, we study the subset of the 114 of the 716 charged individuals who completed the judicial process through plea-bargaining and sentencing proceedings as of March 15, 2022, which allows for the full range of opportunities for defendants to disavow any of the set of identified stated motives in a context

¹ Ryan J. Reilly, “The Feds Have Made 625+ Capitol Riot Arrests. They Still Have A Long Way To Go.,” *HuffPost*, October 6, 2021, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/feds-made-capitol-riot-arrests-quarter-way-there_n_615c6afe4b0f7776310fe37.

² Dalton Bennett et al., “D.C. Police Requested Backup at Least 17 Times in 78 Minutes during Capitol Riot,” *Washington Post*, April 15, 2021, sec. Visual Forensics, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2021/dc-police-records-capitol-riot/>.

³ Robert A. Pape and Keven Ruby, “The Capitol Rioters Aren’t Like Other Extremists,” *The Atlantic*, February 2, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/02/the-capitol-rioters-arent-like-other-extremists/617895/>.

where doing so could mitigate penalties or otherwise benefit the defendant. To be clear, our purpose in our second analysis is to assess renunciation, repudiation, or back-peddling on the stated motives for the assault on the Capitol, not merely expressions of remorse for breaking the law.

Our report is divided into three main parts, each asking a different core question about the stated motives for the January 6th insurrectionists:

(1) Main Motive: Patriotic Duty

Question: What was the single most common motivation stated by the insurrectionists?

Answer: Systematic analysis of all public statements related to motive by those charged for January 6th offenses before, on, or immediately after the assault on the Capitol brings to light the sharply political nature of the behavior that these individuals thought they were engaged in. Of the 716 charged as of January 1, 2022, 398 or 56% made public statements on motive for entering the Capitol. Although 24% assert various versions of they were “swept up in the crowd,” the overwhelming majority (about 80%) assert one of five political motives: patriotic duty (41%), closely followed by anti-government animus (38%) and stolen election (36%), then, loyalty to Trump (23%) and fear of losing rights (12%). Individuals can have more than one motive.

(2) Ideological Cohesion: Remarkable Similarity Across All Insurrectionists

Question: Do stated motivations differ across different demographic groups, violence categories, or militia membership?

Answer: The five stated political motivations are remarkably homogenous across a wide range of sub-groups within the January 6th insurrectionists. We found no significant differences based on age, sex, race, occupation, education, pre-existing criminal records, those charged with violence, and those who had pre-existing militia ties. *All of these categories* shared the same basic motivations of patriotism, anti-government, and the belief that the election was stolen to highly similar degrees, suggesting that the January 6th insurrectionists shared a remarkably coherent political mindset as they collectively assaulted the Capitol.

(3) Renunciations: Few Accept Biden as Legitimate President

Question: Have the insurrectionists renounced the core political motives of the Insurrection?

Answer: Few of the insurrectionists have disavowed the core motives common to the insurrectionists for justifying their actions in the first place. Although nearly all (84%) of the 114 who have completed the sentencing process in our study express statements of personal remorse for breaking the law, only 24 defendants – 21% of the total -- disavowed any of the core political motives of patriotic duty, stolen election, anti-government impulse, loyalty to Trump, and loss of constitutional rights, while 3 re-affirmed their core motive, and 87 made no statement relating to motives. In other words, nearly 80% did not repudiate the core stated objectives for storming the Capitol, even in a context where they could expect more lenient sentences. Only six of the 114 January 6th insurrectionists who have completed the normal judicial process publicly recognize Joe Biden as the legitimate president of the United States.

Main Conclusion: A Political Mindset of “Patriotic Counter-Revolution”

The mindset of the January 6th insurrectionists engaged in the assault on the Capitol can be called “Patriotic Counter-Revolutionary.” This mindset says that support for the US Constitution requires anti-government violent action—not for the purpose of destroying democratic institutions, but to *preserve* them in the face of imminent threat. For those who stormed the Capitol, their perceived certainty that the 2020 presidential election was stolen—encouraged by politicians and media figures—meant that Biden’s confirmation as President constituted a revolutionary threat. They perceived that by conceding his legitimacy, “weak” or corrupt politicians in both the Democratic and Republican parties would therefore suppress the sovereign will of the people.

As such, the main political motives of the January 6th insurrectionists revealed in our analysis – patriotic duty, the election being “stolen”, loyalty to Trump, a fear of lost rights, and anti-government animus -- are intimately connected in a common sense of purpose that helps to explain why violent action can appear justified. Public narratives of “Patriotic Counter-Revolution” are created through communication and social practices and redefine acts of harm to others, defiance of laws, and anti-government violence—normally considered significant violations of pledges to defend the US Constitution and American democracy—as legitimate acts of self-defense, community defense, and preservation of the American way of life.

Implications of the January 6th political mindset for the future. These political motives endangered democracy only because in this case they were all predicated on a clear falsehood -- as the 2020 election was not in fact stolen -- and on a conviction that violence was the only solution. Otherwise, the ideas themselves are surprisingly normal: Patriotic Americans should defend America and our Constitution against subversion. This underscores how efforts that undermine the legitimacy of elections can have dangerous consequences. If rooted in falsehoods about stolen elections, patriotic counter-revolutionary motives are dangerous to American institutions precisely because they justify insurrectionary acts by those who perceive themselves as protecting America.

Overall, these findings reinforce the disturbing conclusion of CPOST’s previous reports that politically violent extremism in America is moving from the fringe to the mainstream. Each of our three separate studies and their attendant updated reports over the past year – 1) the demographic and home county characteristics of the January 6th insurrectionists; 2) the scope and drivers of insurrectionist sentiments in the general US adult population based on nationally representative surveys; and now 3) the stated-motives of the January 6th insurrectionists – offers important specific findings on different aspects of the January 6th assault on the US Capitol and the continuing insurrectionist movement. Each study also has its own limits – for example, our stated motives report captures publicly stated motives, which may not reflect the full range of individuals’ motives. Given the limits of any one study and methodology, multiple studies are important to gain as full an understanding as possible of the insurrectionist movement. CPOST is doing this.

This report also includes appendices on coding of insurrectionist motives, data and methods, and the CPOST research team for this report.

1. THEY CALL THEMSELVES “PATRIOTS”

What were the mindsets and motives of those who stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021? The overarching political context of the attack on the US Capitol was the certification of Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 election, and the desire among those who opposed him and supported Donald Trump to see Trump remain in power. However, how individual participants understood their participation — what they saw as the purpose of their action before, on, or immediately after that day — is both more complex and varied. And while it is very difficult to assess motives with accuracy, it is nevertheless important to try. Understanding mobilizing grievances and motivations that shape risk of future mass political violence in response to election outcomes is key to understanding the threat of future political violence.

This section reports the findings of our in-depth analysis of the *stated motives* of those Americans who have been charged for their part in the January 6 Insurrection, 716 by January 1, 2022.⁴ By stated motive, we mean public statements that an individual willingly gave as a reason for an action on social media, in media interviews, or in interviews with law enforcement made public through court documents. By definition, a stated motive does not necessarily capture an individual’s full set of motives or prevent misrepresentation. However, over 90 percent of the statements collected in this report were freely given before, at, or immediately after the event—that is, during the time-period when they were in the midst of action—and so most likely to reflect their thoughts at this crucial time.

The primary criterion for including a statement is that it could be directly attributed to an individual who was charged with being in the Capitol on January 6 and expressed their motivation for being there. Paraphrased or secondhand statements are not included. While statements on or immediately after January 6 are preferred, the timeframe for included statements is broader: we include statements made between November 7, 2020—the date when the presidential election was called by the national media—and February 15, 2022. This range captures statements during the mobilizing phase for January 6 catalyzed by Joe Biden’s victory and allows time for new evidence of statements reported in court documents made public as a case moves through the legal process. Whenever they occur, to be included a statement must be a discrete reference to mobilization and follow a clear evolution to travelling to the Capitol.

Our analysis focused on six main stated motives among the charged: five political justifications and one non-political justification. These six primary motives were identified in a pilot study of 60 randomly selected cases as the most common, developed into a coding framework, and then applied by CPOST’s team of student Research Assistants to remaining 656 cases until all 716 cases were coded. The five political motives we discovered are:

1. Perceived patriotic duty
2. Conviction that the election was stolen
3. Anti-government sentiments
4. Loyalty to Trump
5. Belief that they’re losing their rights

The non-political justification is “being swept up in the crowd”, which also includes wanting to watch or document history. These motives are defined in greater detail below.

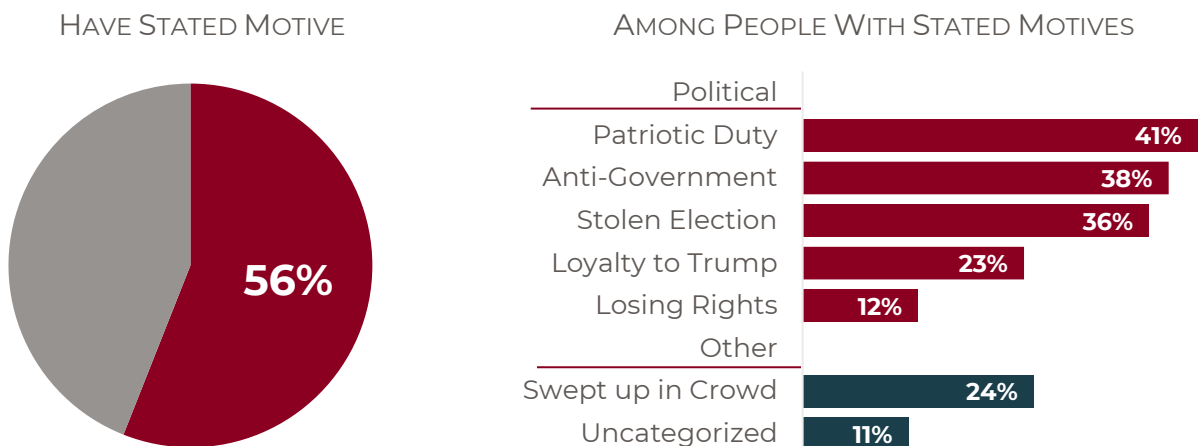
⁴ Robert A. Pape and Keven Ruby, “The Capitol Rioters Aren’t Like Other Extremists,” *The Atlantic*, February 2, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/02/the-capitol-rioters-arent-like-other-extremists/617895/>.

- **Patriotic Duty:** Statements of obligation to the United States, expressed both as an individual commitment and as part of a larger movement. Includes phrases like "We the People," "This is our house" and similar language.
- **Stolen Election:** Statements indicating intent to stop the certification of an election believed fraudulent or stolen.
- **Anti-Government Sentiment:** Expressed deep dissatisfaction with the government, current political leaders, and the view that the current government is corrupt or evil, call out traitors.
- **Loyalty to Trump:** Statements that express support for Trump, including that storming the Capitol was at Trump's behest.
- **Loss of Rights:** Statements proclaiming a dire threat to personal rights and freedoms.
- **Swept up in Crowd:** Statements that remove individual agency for crowd behavior, being "pushed along," "caught up in the moment," or because "everyone else was doing it." Also includes Statements claiming they entered the Capitol to "document/witness history" or for "sightseeing."

Importantly, a single statement can fall into multiple motive categories, and a single individual can have multiple statements and motives. Any stated motives that did not fit into these six categories were still collected as "Other" and reported as uncategorized. Cases with no statements on record or have statements lacking in any sort of motive are coded as "No Stated Motive." Of the 716 individuals arrested in 2021, 398 of them have a motive coded based on statements made within their court documents, media coverage, and social media presence. There were 818 total motive statements found among the 398 individuals with any stated motive underscoring that individuals can have more than one statement and more than one stated motive. 56% of all individuals who have been charged for their actions on January 6th made a statement about why they did what they did. Only 44% of the individuals who have been charged have made no statement of motives.

What did we find? Figure 1 below presents the results of our analysis based on 818 total statements, attributed to 398 of the 716 individuals charged with storming the Capitol.

FIGURE 1. STATED MOTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION IN JAN. 6 INSURRECTION



Note: Stated Motives available for 56% of those charged for breaking into the Capitol (as of January 1, 2022).
Updated: April 8, 2022.

Among those who have stated motives, the dominant stated motives are Patriotic Duty (41%), Anti-Government Sentiment (38%), Stolen Election (36%), and Losing Rights (12%). Surprisingly, Loyalty to Trump is only the fourth most common stated political motive (23%). Swept up in Crowd is asserted by 24%, and 11% have an uncategorized motive. Of those 11%, examples include “the police let me in,” “wrong place wrong time,” “I heard shots fired,” and “I was there in the name of Jesus.” Only 13 individuals (4%) had an uncategorized motive without also having one of the main six motives.

Based on their stated motives, the insurrectionists believed it was their *patriotic duty* to fight for America and save the country. Indeed, when justifying their actions – or arguing for the necessity of action – the insurrections often draped themselves and their cause in classic American patriot iconography, for example, by invoking “1776” and draping themselves revolutionary American flags.

What’s striking is how these different motives appear to coalesce around a coherent mindset that we call “Patriotic Counter-Revolution.” Patriotic Counter-Revolution refers to the idea that support for the US Constitution requires anti-government violent action, not for the purpose of destroying democratic institutions but to preserve them in the face of imminent threat. Narratives of “Patriotic Counter-Revolution” are created through communication and social practices that redefine acts of harm to others, defiance of laws, and anti-government violence—normally considered significant violations of pledges to defend the US Constitution and American democracy—as legitimate acts of self-defense, community defense, and preservation of the American way of life.

2. A REMARKABLY COHERENT MINDSET

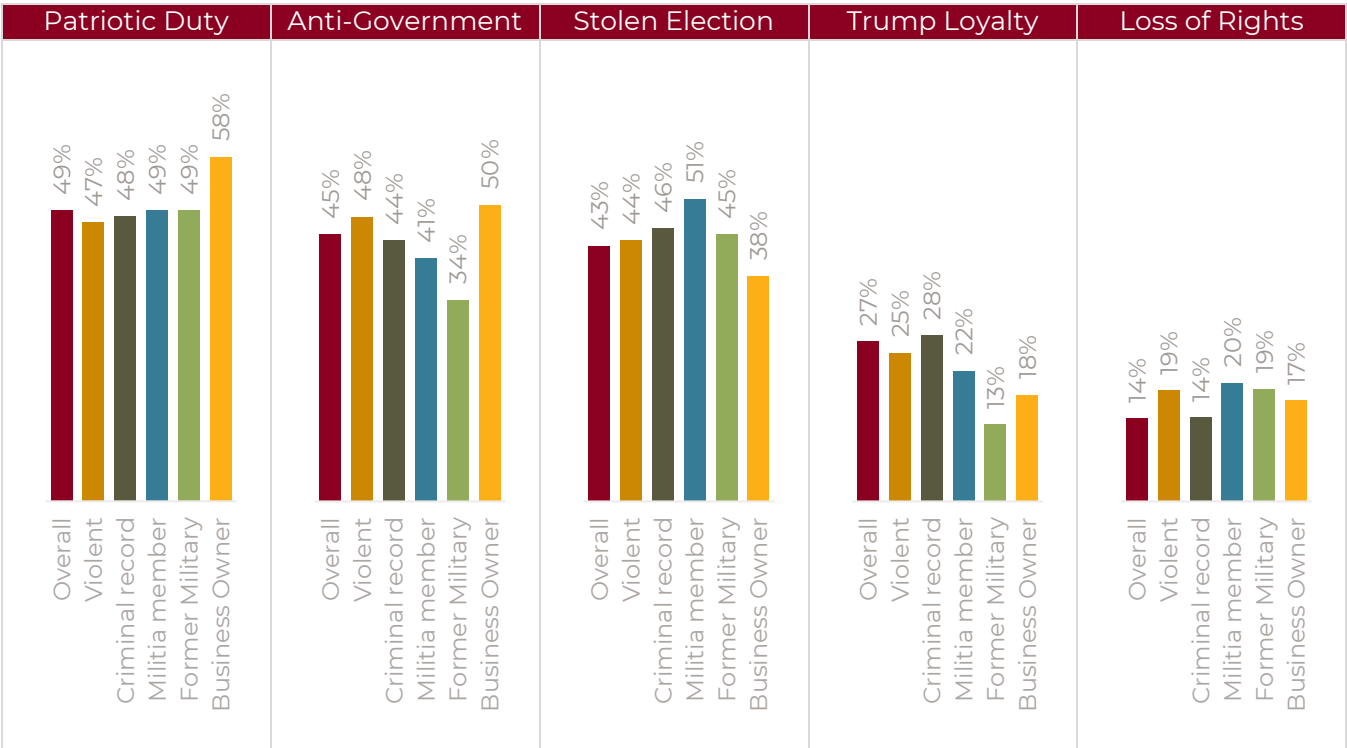
How shared are the motives identified above among the various groups represented among the 716 charged for participating in the January 6 attack on the Capitol? Many were charged with violent offenses, while others were not. Some were members of militia groups, veterans, or business owners. Some had criminal records. To what degree does the motivational profile vary between such subgroups? To answer these questions, we examine stated motivations for five different sub-groups:

1. Charged with violent crimes because of their actions on January 6th
2. Criminal histories prior to January 6th
3. Pre-existing affiliation with extremist right-wing militias, including but not limited to the Proud Boys
4. Prior service in the U.S. military
5. Business owners

We restrict this analysis to the 332 people who stated they were motivated by at least one of our five stated political motivations (excluding Swept Up in Crowd and uncategorized motivations).

Figure 2 below presents the percentage of sub-group members with a specific motive, by motive.

FIGURE 2. STATED MOTIVES BY KEY SUBGROUP



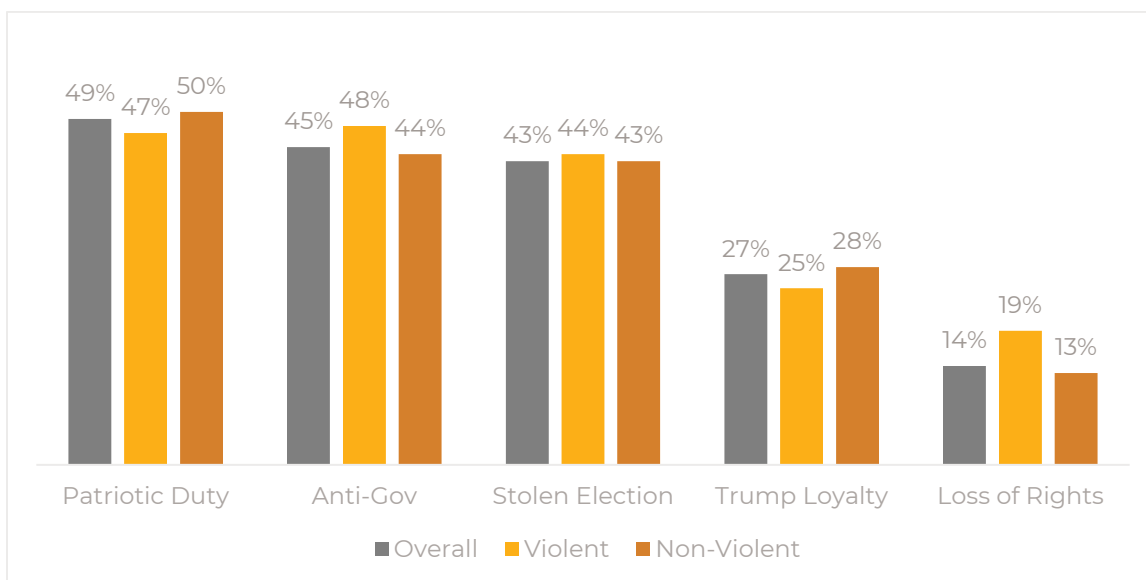
Note: Data on age available for all 716 charged for breaking into the Capitol as of January 1, 2022
Updated April 8, 2022.

An initial review reveals remarkable consistency between these different groups. However, examining the groups individually does reveal a few interesting distinctions between them.

Comparing Violent with non-Violent Charges

Of the 716 charged, 215 were charged with violent offenses in connection with their activity on January 6, while the remaining 501 were charged with only non-violent offenses. We identified stated political motives for 96 of the 215 charged with violence, and for 234 of the 501 that were not. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of those motives compared to the overall distribution of all 332 with such statements.

FIGURE 3. STATED MOTIVES: VIOLENT CHARGES



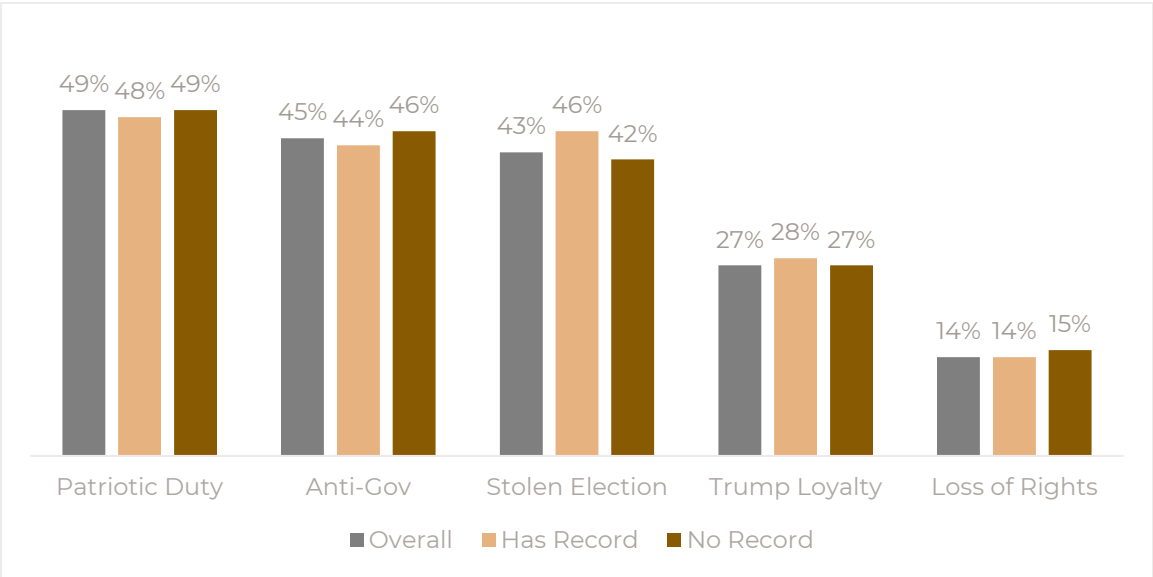
Note: Data on age available for all 716 charged for breaking into the Capitol as of January 1, 2022 Updated April 8, 2022.

There are no major distinctions in the stated motivations between those who committed violent acts and those who did not on January 6th. Across the board, the two sub-groups are only marginally different.

Comparing Criminal Record with No Criminal Record

Of the 716 charged, 215 have prior criminal records and 501 do not. We identified stated political motives for 99 of the 215 with criminal records, and for 231 of the 501 that had no evidence of prior criminality. Figure 4 below shows the distribution of those motives compared to the overall distribution of all 332 with such statements.

FIGURE 4. STATED MOTIVES: CRIMINAL RECORD



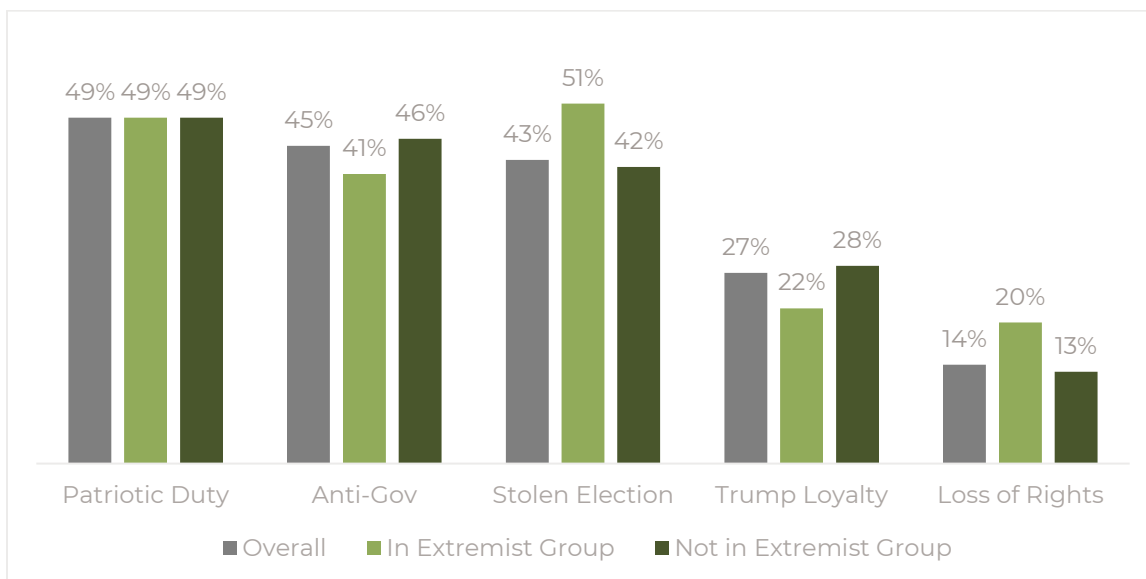
Note: Data on age available for all 716 charged for breaking into the Capitol as of January 1, 2022. Updated April 8, 2022.

As with violent offenders, there are no major distinctions in the stated motivations of those who had pre-existing criminal records and those who did not.

Comparing Militant Group Members with non-Members

Of the 716 charged, 102 are members of militant groups like the Oath Keepers, Proud Boys, and Three Percenters, while the remaining 614 are not affiliated with any group. We identified stated political motives for 48 of the 102 militant group members, and for 282 of the 614 that were unaffiliated. Figure 5 below shows the distribution of those motives compared to the overall distribution of all 332 with such statements.

FIGURE 5. STATED MOTIVES: EXTREMIST GROUP MEMBERS



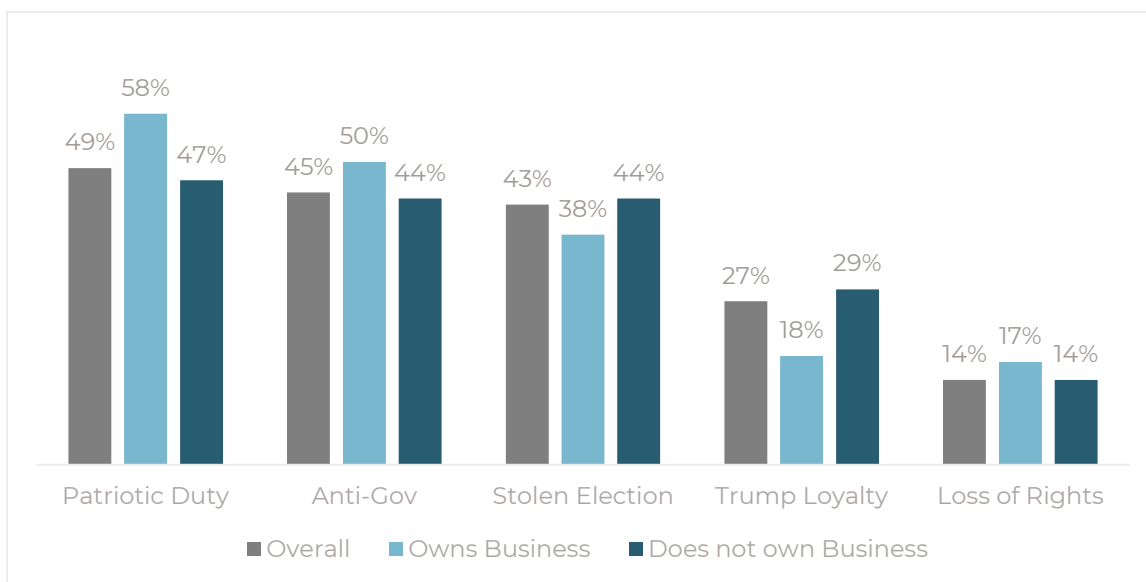
Note: Data on age available for all 716 charged for breaking into the Capitol as of January 1, 2022. Updated April 8, 2022.

Here we see interesting distinctions. Militia members are more likely than non-militia members to state that the 2020 Presidential Election was stolen (52% to 43%) but profess lower loyalty to Trump, but the differences are modest.

Comparing Business Owners with non-Business Owners

Of the 716 charged, 128 are business owners, while the remaining 588 are not. We identified stated political motives for 66 of the 128 business owners, and for 264 of the 588 non-business owners. Figure 6 below shows the distribution of those motives compared to the overall distribution of all 332 with such statements.

FIGURE 6. STATED MOTIVES: BUSINESS OWNERS



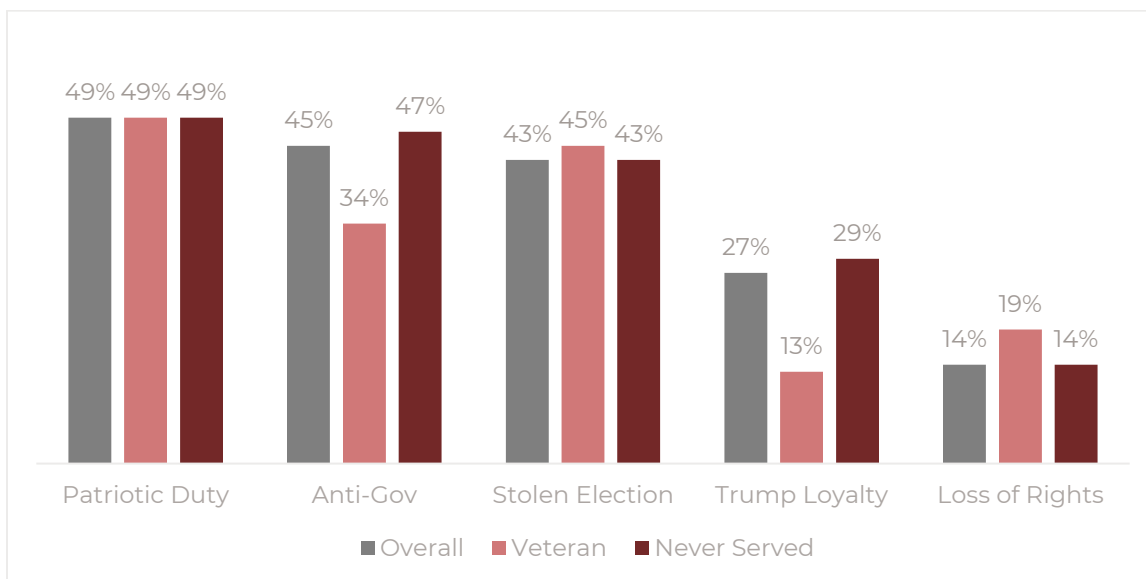
Note: Data on age available for all 716 charged for breaking into the Capitol as of January 1, 2022. Updated April 8, 2022.

Business owners have two distinctions compared to non-business owners. First, they are more likely to be claim motivation by a sense of patriotic duty (58% to 49%). Second, they are less likely to claim motivation by a particular loyalty to Trump (18% to 27%). These differences continue to be modest.

Comparing Veterans to Those Who Never Served

Of the 716 charged, 106 are veterans who previously served in the US Armed Forces, while the remaining 610 never served. We identified stated political motives for 46 of the 106 veterans, and for 284 of the 610 non-veterans. Figure 7 below shows the distribution of those motives compared to the overall distribution of all 332 with such statements.

FIGURE 7. STATED MOTIVES: VETERANS



Note: Data on age available for all 716 charged for breaking into the Capitol as of January 1, 2022. Updated April 8, 2022.

Two things distinguish the motivations of veterans from those of other groups. Notably, veterans are less likely to claim an anti-government motivation, and they are also less likely to claim motivation because of loyalty to Trump.

3. FEW PUBLICLY ACCEPT BIDEN

One way to judge the strength of the insurrectionist movement one year after January 6 is to examine statements by those charged for (1) expressions of regret for breaking the law, harming people, or damaging property, and (2) repudiation of the insurrection and its political motives. We fully expect to see expressions of regret, as contrition is a factor in sentencing. An explicit renunciation goes beyond remorse statements that accept personal responsibility for harm and disavows the object for which the harm was done. Just as soldiers can regret harming civilians in a war but not repudiate the core motives for that war, so too is there a difference between regret for breaking the law during the Capitol assault and rejection of the reasons for the assault themselves.

For this analysis, we restrict our sample to those who have been sentenced for their actions on January 6th. This allows for the full range of opportunities for defendants to offer statements of remorse or repudiation.

114 of the 716 had been sentenced as of March 15, 2022; this is the population most likely to have gone on the record with regrets or renunciation. We examine all plea agreements, defense sentencing memoranda, sentencing hearing transcripts and media coverage of sentencing hearings available as of April 7, 2022

Of the 114 people who have so far been sentenced, 113 had government sentencing memos and 109 had defendant's sentencing memos (many of which included letters by the defendant to the court). These defense sentencing memos are often sources for expressions of regret or renunciation. For the five cases where a defendant's sentencing memo was absent, we have sentencing hearing transcripts for two and media coverage of sentencing hearings for the remaining three.

For a defendant to be coded as expressing remorse, they must make a direct statement of remorse or regret for their actions on January 6th; for example, "I should not have gone inside." For a defendant to be coded as expressing renunciation, either they, or their lawyer speaking on their behalf in a legal document, must specifically renounce some element of the principal motivations for the events on January 6th. Because repudiation is harder to identify than remorse, we established strict guidelines for what constitutes repudiation, laid out below:

- **Patriotic Duty:** I was not doing my patriotic duty. Storming the capitol was not patriotism. My actions were not patriotic. The people there were not patriots.
- **Anti-Gov't:** I changed my mind; the government is not corrupt.
- **Stolen Election:** I no longer think the election was stolen. Biden is the duly elected president -- distinct from acknowledging fact of Biden as president.
- **Loyalty to Trump:** I would never vote for Trump again. Trump misled me/us.
- **Loss of Rights:** I changed my mind; my rights are not being infringed upon.

For example, a specific example of a statement repudiating patriotism might be "My actions on January 6th harmed American democracy," or "harmed America" or simply "was not patriotic." If we do not observe

defendants renouncing core political motives related to the insurrection before, during, or immediately after sentencing, we have no evidence of renunciation even during conditions where such statements could mitigate penalties or otherwise benefit the defendant.

What we found is that statements of regret are common, with 96 of 114 defendants (84%) indicating some degree of remorse over their behavior. It is perhaps somewhat surprising that 16% of defendants did *not* express some degree of remorse.






Renunciation of core political motives is much less common than remorse. We found only 24 statements of repudiation among our 114 candidates (21%). Of those, most specifically rejected the idea that January 6th was a patriotic act (14 of the 24). Only 6 of our 114 candidates now say that the election was not in fact stolen (5%).










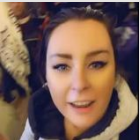
114	People Sentenced	96	(84%)	Remorse for Breaking the Law
		24	(21%)	Repudiations of Political Motives
		6	(5%)	Now Say Biden is Legitimate President


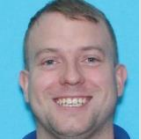

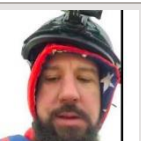
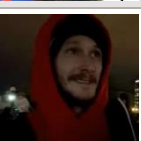



4. APPENDIX: SELECTED CASES


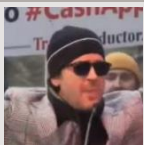



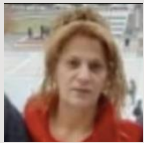
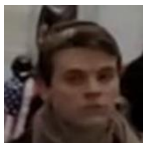

A main finding of this report is that the individuals charged for participating in the January 6th, 2021 breach of the U.S. Capitol to stop the certification of Joseph Biden as the President of the United States are most likely to explain their motivations as product of *patriotism* (P), but also *anti-government sentiment* (A) and *the belief that the 2020 election was stolen* (S). Other less common motivations include *loyalty to Trump* (T) and the *belief that their rights are being lost* (L). Table 6 below presents quotes from 31 of the 716 cases which illustrate the kinds of statements that these individuals have made to explain their actions on January 6th (or to justify them before the fact) and common combination of motives found in our study.

TABLE 1. MOTIVE STATEMENTS EXAMPLES

	Name	Home State	Stated Motive Types	Statement Example
	Billingsly, Steven	OH	A; S	"Yeah, baby- storm the Capitol! That's where the thieves are!" "We're going through that barricade. Fuck you people, this is our house."
	Bisignano, Gina	CA	P;S;T;L	"We the people are not going to take it anymore. You are not going to take away our Trumpy bear. You are not going to take away our votes. And our freedom that I thank God for."
	Brock, Larry	TX	P	"Patriots on the Capitol. Patriots storming. Men with guns need to shoot their way in."
	Brown, Gabriel		P; A; S; L	"You stole the Senate from us, you stole the House from us, and now you think you're going to steal the presidency from us? Let me tell you something—you want to take peaceful revolution away from us? Well you better prepare for fucking violent revolution. I don't want violence. I believe in peaceful resolve. But you're making it goddamn impossible for us."
	Caplinger, Jeremiah	MI	P; S; T; A	"My rage toward the establishment, Democrats and RINO Republicans is great." "Think of Pompeii when it was destroyed by Mount Vesuvius."

	Name	Home State	Stated Motive Types	Statement Example
	Cordon, Kevin	CA	P; S	We're here to take back our democratic republic. It's clear that this election is stolen, there's just so much overwhelming evidence and the establishment, the media, big tech are just completely ignoring all of it. And we're here to show them we're not having it. We're not- we're not just gonna take this laying down. We're standing up and we're taking our country back. ..."
	Eckerman, Michael	KS	P; A	"I don't know her name, all I know is we went there (Capitol) as patriots. She is dead because we're here. These mother fuckers are traitors, they are fucking traitors!"
	Genco, Raechel	PA	S; L	"The people san[g] the Star spangled banner 2 time then started chanting whose house? Our house! When asked to leave they did... These were people who watched their rights being taken away, their votes stolen from them."
	Harkrider, Alex	TX	P; L	"We need all the patriots of this country to rally the fuck up and fight for our freedom or it's gone forever. Give us liberty, or give us death. We won't stand for it."
	Ianni, Suzanne	MA	S	"We were expressing our First Amendment rights to protest an illegal election....It was very moving, very inspiring. It's what America is all about."
	Jackson, Emanuel	MD	P	"Fighting for America. We've been taken over by globalists, by the Chinese. Fighting for America. I'm not here for Trump. I'm here for America."
	Lang, Edward	NY	L	"No one wants to take this and die for our rights, but dying for our rights is the only option that any person with a logical brain sees right now. This is it."
	Little, James	NC	P; S	"We are stopping treason! Stealing elections is treason! 'We're not going to take it anymore!"
	Martin, Benjamin	CA	A	"You guys are not doing your job. You swore an oath. You're bound by your word. Move out of the way and let us in. Move out of the way and let us in."
	Montoni, Corinne	FL	P; A; T; S; L	"Insurrection Act Coming in hot. Void the fraudulent 2020 election, arrest these traitors and restore order and faith in our justice department." "Even if Trump loses (which I don't believe he will) he has cemented himself as our leader. He will have even more

	Name	Home State	Stated Motive Types	Statement Example
				influence being free from the rules of the presidency. This has just begun. Hold the line." [Parler]
	Montoya, Samuel	TX	P; A; S; T	"As you can hear, people are ready to die for their country. If we lose America, we have nothing left... I told you before folks, it feels like 1776 to me... People are ready for freedom. People are ready for liberty...I'm directly in front at the police line with other Trump supporters, other red-blooded Americans who simply wanna support their country and are not gonna have it stolen by thieves in the middle of the night."
	Nichols, Ryan	TX	P; S	"Patriots stood their ground today! (American flag emoji) We aren't done yet, either! You want to steal our election, and not hear us in court? Good! Now you'll have civil unrest!"
	Orangias, Michael	KY	L	"To keep America good... Keeping the freedom of speech there.... If we let the left continue what they're doing, they're going to keep taking more and more..."
	Quaglin, Christopher	NJ	S	"You upset? Think it's off? Voter fraud? Antifa says fuck you and they stole the election. You americans aren't welcome here anymore. #IMFIGHTINGBACK If you like, share it!!!! We need people!!!!"
	Seitz, Ethen	OH	P; S; T	"When the coup is already happening against Trump through a fraudulent election. The patriots in DC were here to show WE THE PEOPLE will not allow our country to be stolen! #StopTheSteal #MarchForTrump."
	Shively, Barton	PA	S; L	"What's the point?... We're losing our freedom? What do you mean what's the point?... What are we supposed to do? OK. Supreme Court's not helping us. No one's helping us. Only us can help us. Only we can do it. Whatever we have to do. What do you think 1776 was?" [CNN]
	Simon, Glen	GA	A	"This is what a tyrannical government gets treated like. We bust in this bitch and show 'em who the fucking boss really is." "This is our house! Free men don't ask for permission!"
	Spigelmyer, Paul	PA	S	"What happened at the capital yesterday should and must continue till this election fraud is stopped."

	Name	Home State	Stated Motive Types	Statement Example
	Stotts, Jordan	MN	P; S; L	"They attack our religious freedom, freedom of speech, and our freedom to do as we please! They work for us and have no right telling us what we can and can't do! I'm sick of it and so are the Patriots! With God on our side we will prevail!"
	Straka, Brandon	NY	P; A	"Patriots at the Capitol — HOLD. THE. LINE!!!!...It was freedom loving Patriots who were DESPERATE to fight for the final hope of our republican because literally nobody cares about them."
	Strand, John	CA	P; S; T	"I am incredibly proud to be a patriot today, to stand up tall in defense of liberty & the Constitution, to support Trump & #MAGAforever, & to send the message: WE ARE NEVER CONCEDING A STOLEN ELECTION."
	Tew, Tyler	ID	P; A; S	"There is respect to the police, at the door they are trying to convince the police to stand down, respectfully and allow the protesters to occupy OUR, the PEOPLE's CAPITAL BUILDING. What other options do we the people have when if we allow this to go through there will never be another fair election for generations to come!"
	Watson, Sean	TX	P	"No, I don't regret it. I'm actually proud of what I am doing. I feel like I am fighting for my country."
	Weyer, Sandra	PA	P; S; T	"I seen no riots. I saw Patriots sick of being lied to and the election being stolen from us! I saw no violence from the Patriots!"
	Wood, Matthew	NC	A; S	"Our election was stolen. The system is against us. I stood up to our tyrannical government. You can keep sitting or you can do something about it like we did today. Our nation has experienced necessary revolts before. Hopefully, Congress will listen to the PEOPLE."
	Yoder, Isaac	MO	P; T	"We were there to preserve our country." "It was turning out to support our president, but also to stand up for our country and it's much bigger than Trump and the election."

5. THE DATA

The report presents data on the stated motives of the individuals charged with participating in the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol.

Below we describe the data on charged insurrectionists and the method used to code state motives.

Insurrectionist Data

The Chicago Project on Security and Threats (CPOST) conducted a comprehensive review of the 716 individuals. The Department of Justice is pursuing up to 2000 cases of individuals who participated in the January 6 Capitol Insurrection. The cases are compiled from court records, department of justice records, and media reports.

To be included in the data, an individual must be charged with directly participating in the breach of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021 to stop the certification of president elect Joseph Biden as the 46th president of the United States.

Common charges include:

- Entering and Remaining Capitol Building/Grounds
- Parading, Demonstrating, or Picketing in a Capitol Building
- Obstruction of Official Proceeding
- Assaulting, Resisting, or Impeding Certain Officers
- Conspiracy

We exclude the cases where direct participation cannot be verified. For example, we exclude cases of individuals charged with curfew violations in the immediate vicinity of the Capitol on the evening of January 6, 2021. We also exclude cases of individuals who are likely to have participated but were arrested prior to the Capitol breach.

6. RESEARCH TEAM

Robert Pape, PhD – Principal Investigator

Keven Ruby, PhD – Senior Research Director

Kyle Larson, PhD — Senior Research Associate

Sabreena Croteau, PhD Candidate – Deputy Research Director

Student Research Supervisors – Emerson Ahn, Mateo Garcia, Sam Levy, and Adele Malle

Research Assistants:

Abby Kolidek

Andres Kelley

Anupriya Nag

Areej Mughal

Astrid Weinberg

Bailey Tucker

Christine Jonglertham

Clara Sandler

Derek Jones

Dora Gordon

Dushan Arsov

Fawwaz Hafizh

Fiona Brauer

Francesca Lupi

Henry Branch

Jack Howard

Jared Brodie

Lola Fisher

Lukian Kling

Maggie Mills

Maya Russell

Meena Rakasi

Nat Larsen

Narain Dubey

Nevada Shannahan

Rachel Kessler

Rebecca Barel

Ritwik Bose

Robert Brown

Sarah Bonnem

Vishan Chaudhary

Vivek Parthasarathy

William Pitch