

Querying QAnon: Cultural Reconstructions of Political Power: An Ethnographic Interpretation of the Conspiracy Community



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WRITER'S COMMENT: For my senior honors thesis, I elected to combine my academic interests in political science and anthropology with a research-based ethnography of the QAnon conspiracy phenomenon. In this excerpt, I explore why people have identified with QAnon between 2017 and 2021 by placing the conspiracy's current events and cosmologies in conversation with evergreen theories about how power manifests in America's cultural imagination. Drawing upon landmark and contemporary claims from sociocultural anthropology and political science, and captured experiences from participants in the conspiracy community, I speculate that QAnon articulates Americans' fundamental frustration with their political institutions through its processes of creative assembly. In other words, QAnon is about time travel, cannibalism, and child-preying cabals to its proponents—yet QAnon's particular imagery and macro-level behavior vocalizes people's distrust of the American political system, as the increasingly powerful mediating forces of globalization, capitalism, and social media amplify collective expectations for the government while introducing new avenues for knowledge formulation and political participation. My findings imply that conspiracy communities like QAnon's, without certain structural changes in national policy or realignment of information technologies, will continue to rapidly scale.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Through a combination of current events and cultural theories, Manasa crafts a thought-provoking essay that seeks to explain the origin and appeal of QAnon. Beginning with the Capital

attack and the jarring images Americans associate with that event, she details how the anti-establishment, conspiracy theorist group has gained traction and captured part of the modern American zeitgeist. Instead of overgeneralizing its supporters, she demonstrates the surprisingly relatable reasons that motivate people to join QAnon while at the same time highlighting the wide spectrum of beliefs amongst its proponents. She does this especially well when recounting her interviews, detailing everything from her initial contact with a subject to their mannerisms on the Zoom call. By weaving these together with QAnon's anti-party politics ideas and relevant academic scholarship, Manasa pieces together a skillfully written, unbiased narrative of a group that has deeper roots in American culture than many would otherwise guess.

—Jillian Azevedo, University Writing Program

Meet QAnon

Jacob Angeli strolls into the Senate chamber, American flag and megaphone in hand, and sits in the Vice President's seat. He tells remaining rioters that, unlike Mike Pence, they are “f*cking patriots” and asks one—whose red “Make America Great Again” hat pops against his camouflage jumpsuit—to take his picture (Mogelson, 2021). A half-masked policeman watches from twenty feet away and waits for the iPhone shot. As Angeli stands tall behind velvet drapes, his six-inch bullhorns zoom into focus for the camera; they perch on each side of an oversized, fur headdress stretching from his American-flag-painted face to his bare, Norse-symbol tattooed chest. The patterns on Angeli's body combine their cultural histories, articulating a new interpretation of patriotism that may be less skin-deep than imagined.

Angeli's decision to protest without a shirt, while at the same time wearing gloves and a fur hat for the Washington D.C. winter, makes his tattoos especially conspicuous. Tom Birkett, Old English scholar at the University College Cork, later identified a selection of them: the Othala runic letter, which symbolizes “inherited land” to White supremacist groups in Europe and the United States; a valknut image of Viking stones, which these groups have been co-opting to represent their belief in a violent struggle; and a Sunwheel, which the Anti-Defamation League has already listed as a Nazi-appropriated symbol for an idealized Aryan

heritage (Birkett, 2021). These symbols reinvent mythology for White supremacy, suggesting that forces outside of human understanding determine and dictate what certain people deserve. When Angeli stormed the Capitol in January 2021, along with thousands of others looking to overturn the 2020 presidential election outcome, his rhetoric raised a similar idea: that land is defined by its secret cultural history and ancestry, which only insiders can access. Days after the Capitol attack, Angeli told *The Washington Post* that, centuries ago, the secret society of Freemasons designed Washington D.C. around an ancient practice of aligning landmarks to accentuate the Earth's magnetic field. Angeli said the attack was an "evolution in consciousness," and when he marched toward the building he therefore felt "the special intensity that comes from alignment that put him in tune with supernatural forces . . . [the rioters] were actually affecting the quantum realm" (Kunkle, 2021). Angeli accordingly calls himself the QAnon Shaman.

QAnon is an assemblage of internet theories; its central tenet is that a secretive, elite group of Satan worshippers are orchestrating an international pedophile ring and scheming to undermine political systems' integrity. QAnon anticipates "The Great Awakening" to follow as Donald Trump, with help from self-proclaimed digital soldiers, turns the hidden battle against evil. The dispersed community's canonical goal is for the U.S. military to arrest these pedophiles, execute them, and establish martial law. This imminent event would result in global salvation and peace. QAnon emerged on the heels of Pizzagate, a debunked theory connecting Democratic Party leaders and restaurants with an alleged child-trafficking ring that a then-anonymous Twitter user launched just before the 2016 election. Exactly one year later, another anonymous user identifying as "Q," claiming to possess insider information, continued the conspiracy on the message-board website 4Chan. Since October 2017, Q has posted nearly 5,000 cryptic clues for its ever-compounding follower base to decipher (Aliapoulios et al., 2021). QAnon's official genesis dates to that first "Q drop," but the events it alleges date to well before 2016.

In our video interview, Julian*, who closely identified with QAnon between 2017 and 2019, told me, "It's just been there forever Most people believe this is a war between good and evil that goes back thousands of years, right, like they literally believe this, that the cabal has been in control of humanity. For the entirety of human existence until Donald Trump." QAnon's early "hidden human history" incorporates ties

to the city of Atlantis, Plato, and Pythagoras, the Knights of Malta, Ancient Aliens, and a supposed Aryan race. It is important to note that any linkages in Figure 1—particularly from the pink “Antiquity” category—might be central to some individuals’ interpretations of QAnon but irrelevant to others, depending on where they consume QAnon news or engage in its community discussions. I often recall that when I asked Anthony* about how he became interested in QAnon at the beginning of our phone call, he explained cosmic stages of alignment to me. Anthony said he was not well versed in recent news, but that he became aware of the cabal and deep state over thirteen years ago when reading books on elites’ ancient entanglements with Illuminati groups, metaphysical laws, and U.S. politics.

My observations suggest that the vast majority of Q followers do agree on an evil cabal existing from at least the mid-twentieth century onward, and that its members gained greater control of the U.S. government following President John F. Kennedy’s assassination in 1963. They claim that Trump presents the first chance in history to overthrow the cabal. In our Zoom discussion, Clark*, who participated in the Capitol insurrection along with QAnon Shaman Jake Angeli, said that although President Joe Biden is another deep-state puppet, now Trump can continue his true presidential mission under less cabal scrutiny, as he intended. Some Q followers, however, believe Biden’s election is further proof of the cabal’s criminal obstruction of government operations. And



Figure 1. “Key to the Q-Web” from the *Deep State Mapping Project* by Dylan Louis Monroe, 2018.

Note: The key is coded to categorize nine major sections of QAnon’s web and their pathways.

other Q followers continue to share their own theories on alternative corners of the internet: alleged cabal members include Hollywood elites like Ellen DeGeneres, Oprah Winfrey, and Anderson Cooper, who takes his transgressions a step further by eating children and working as a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency; industrial bleach is a miracle COVID-19 cure, yet COVID-19 is also an inside plot from nefarious government agents; Donald Trump is saving America with a time-viewing machine passed down from Nikola Tesla; Trump is also a regular time traveler who once dated his daughter Ivanka; the film *The Matrix* is actually a documentary; underground military bases are being prepared for interplanetary war; and everyone is a clone of someone else. QAnon's fragmentation does create varying levels of support among Q followers per each of its seemingly endless theories. Fragmentation, however, appears to be a strength. Because QAnon's design is amorphous, unlike prior national conspiracy webs surrounding presidential assassinations or moon-landing attempts with strict sets of "facts" from singular sources of news, it is able to capture greater segments of the American population, who choose from QAnon's buffet of mundane to seemingly science fiction theories to find their truth.

Theoretical Theories about Theories

Some early social theorists would argue these science fiction ties are incompatible with the United States' economic output and capitalist structure. Roughly one hundred years ago, Max Weber hypothesized that advanced societies had become "disenchanted" along with the spread of capitalism and secular hyperrationality; supernatural beliefs fell away in this transition to modernization, as they no longer met a functional purpose (Weber et al., 2020). Around the same time, Émile Durkheim claimed that in "primitive," clan-like societies, people are highly religious and share a collective conscious of ideas, while in advanced, industrialized societies with an increased division of labor, people are secular and often hold more independent ideas (Durkheim, 1933/1984). While Weber and Durkheim suggested that societies walk a temporal path to modernity via industrialization, abandoning now-incompatible traditions of magic and religion along the way, others trouble this framework. E.E. Evans-Pritchard responded soon after with his ethnography of the Azande tribe in North Africa. Evans-Pritchard suggested that beliefs in magic, or witchcraft and sorcery, do serve a functional purpose to explain chains

of events and structure society (Evans-Pritchard, 1976). Peter Geschiere adds that ideas and practices regarding witchcraft are actually modern, malleable, and intertwined with a state's political power; its ritual beliefs and practices reflect contemporary society and arise from it (Geschiere, 2000).

Jean and John Comaroff agree with Geschiere, arguing that appeals to enchantment, which value religion and culture, are actually intensified by contemporary processes of capitalism, globalization, and postcoloniality. The Comaroffs attribute rural South Africa's rapid growth in witchcraft-related ritual murder between the 1980s and 1990s, in which people accused wealthy elites of diverting the flow of production for selfish reasons via magical, monstrous mechanisms, to millennial capitalism—essentially capitalism around the year 2000's spirit of messianic, enchanted possibilities—and a culture of neoliberal globalization (Comraoff & Comraoff 1999, 2000). QAnon similarly alleges that elites extract wealth and life from poor and vulnerable people's bodies using hidden, underhanded power. And despite being rooted in the highly industrialized United States, QAnon is anything but hyperrational (for the scope of this study, I will define hyperrational as the categorical rejection of invisible forces' ability to influence visible, physical things, including people). QAnon's grounding in non-scientific, clan-like beliefs, which Weber and Durkheim tied to "primitive" societies, dissolves Weber and Durkheim's imagined boundaries between magic and modernity, suggesting that one begets the other. The conspiracy community presumes that the war between good and evil has persisted over thousands of years, but also that it must urgently be addressed now that the cabal has more powers and technologies at their disposal. One popular theory alleges that elites harvest a hormone called adrenochrome from children—it oxidizes when they experience fear—and use this physical compound for Satanic rituals or sell it on the black market, even though mainstream medical scholarship claims adrenochrome's chemical properties are unremarkable (National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2021). And QAnon's collective vision of violent extraction from less powerful members of society reassembles itself across individual theories.

Richard Hofstadter claims the United States has a uniquely fantastical, paranoid style of politics that has persisted, in forms of suspicious discontent like the anti-Masonic movement and McCarthyism, since the country's formation. Hofstadter says this recurrent public

phenomenon is significant because ordinary people partake in shared paranoia (Hofstadter, 1964). Michael Glennon suggests there is in fact a “double government,” with hidden bureaucrats working behind the scenes to influence public policies those elected implement—such secret actors weaken the United States’ national security under the illusion of democracy (1964/2016). If these invisible, unchecked networks of people do exist—and their existence is impossible to prove or disprove beyond a reasonable doubt—the act of identifying and removing them would be difficult. QAnon may therefore be identifying structural issues within American institutions through metaphors of witchcraft and time travel that more lucidly speak to the system’s unseen dynamics.

Interlude: Defining a Digital Ethnography

Decades ago, Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges published a short story titled “The Ethnographer,” which follows an American college student named Fred. At his professor’s direction, Fred goes to live with a Native American tribe for two years as a participant-observer, with a mission to learn their secret doctrine through immersion and retell it in his research; but when he returns to his city, he pledges not to spill the secret, saying it would be difficult to communicate in words regardless. Fred tells his professor, “I learned something out there that I can’t express . . . science, our science, seems mere frivolity to me now” (Borges, 1969/973). QAnon does involve secret entanglements, and people who identify with them find it difficult to systemically translate its meaning and structure to outsiders within the frameworks of “science” they are familiar with. I began to face a similar challenge to Fred as a student ethnographer and QAnon outsider, as I find the conspiracy phenomenon difficult to represent with the words I know. I also question whether its “secrets” are mine to share. At the same time, as I acquainted myself with its community in meaningful, even intimate conversations, I drew connections between QAnon and more enduring ways of thinking about United States politics. I believe these should be shared. My semi-structured interviews allowed me to frame discussions around my research interests while allowing for adaptations based on participant responses and our evolving understanding of one another.

Case Study: Clark, Capitalism, and Conspiracy Checks

Clark is a middle-aged man who lives in a major coastal metropolitan city and describes himself as a “proud conspiracy theorist” and Twitter

influencer. I found his Twitter profile after reading his response to an account that aggregates right-leaning alternative news on United States politics and, upon noticing how active he appeared to be in the QAnon community, approached him with a description of my study. Clark replied that he was interested in my research, but had to do his “due diligence” beforehand since “most people reaching out about this sorta thing do Not [*sic*] have good intentions.” A few minutes later, Clark added that he believes I am honest—he said my involvement with a non-partisan political magazine confirmed I would respect different opinions—and was excited to provide me with “the perspective of deplorable conspiracy theorists that the mainstream media is obsessed with.” We met over a Zoom call the following Tuesday morning for an interview. After I went over the verbal consent script confirming risks should his identity be compromised, Clark, who wore a plain red t-shirt half-illuminated by a warm overhead lamp, leaned back in his desk and said, “I’m not really afraid of any possible repercussions, just because I don’t feel like I’m doing anything wrong, just exercising free speech. Yeah. You know the laws should be on the people’s side. So it’s kind of getting scary about this day and age . . . it feels like our rights are being eroded.” As I jotted down notes to supplement my audio transcript, I noticed that Clark was exceedingly thorough in his answers and measured in his articulation of them—he would often backtrack, see my pen at work, and ask if I had questions before continuing.

Clark told me that he has always identified as anti-establishment. He added that although he voted for President Barack Obama twice and was a registered Democrat, he would describe himself as apolitical until the 2016 election season. “I don’t know if it was just coincidental timing in my life but, like, something caught my eye about Trump,” Clark said. “He shocked everyone, and I was kind of digging it. I was like, I know he was from *The Apprentice*, whatever, but this guy just really shoots from the hip, says what he means, and now has brought to light what I feel are a lot of problems and issues that people are uncomfortable talking about.” Clark became involved with Pizzagate on Twitter when it first emerged, and commuted by train to attend a protest in Washington D.C. in early 2017, which he described as the first time he was truly passionate about something. He explained his QAnon involvement as a natural transition from the ideas he explored with Pizzagate, and that he has been closely integrated with its community since the week of Q’s first drop.

Clark said that although the Federal Reserve was established over a hundred years ago and people are made to think it is a component of the U.S. Government, it actually is a “private banking institution with unilateral power. . . . it’s a weapon of control, and that’s why I’m on the Q bandwagon.” He explained that the elites who run the world are specifically a small group of powerful international bankers in the shadow war, who enslave the population through debt, especially interest rates. The Federal Reserve is a mechanism for that enslavement. In their analysis of postcolonial South Africa, the Comaroffs describe an occult economy that operates beneath the surface. They write that “Capitalism has an effervescent new spirit—a magical, neo-Protestant zeitgeist—welling up close to its core” in which current conditions disrupt “grand narratives of progress and development,” conspicuously diverting the flow of production toward elites’ selfish needs (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999). Essentially, the Comaroffs argue claims of witchcraft are new, rather than traditional, forms of consciousness that work to express discontent with modernity. Clark’s interpretation of powerful actors amassing fortune through invisible means—debt enslavement under the Federal Reserve’s guide—alludes to a similar sense of discontent with modernity and deformities that the Comaroffs describe. He also speaks to this spirit’s influence on the core of the United States economy, which was never necessarily fair, but is now more pertinent and mediated by questionable institutions like the Federal Reserve.

At the same time, I wonder if deploying “discontent” in this context captures or detracts from Clark’s feelings about economic institutions if, prior to 2016, he was fairly apolitical. Perhaps that election period’s national unrest and tension actually revitalized grander, even re-enchanted narratives for progressing American politics for the public—and for Clark, as he found a self-described passion that frustrates yet also adds additional dimension to his life. “I’ve always liked thrillers and mysteries, and this is almost like a real life thriller-mystery thing. . . . it was fun. I had a full time job . . . and I definitely was on Twitter too much, like at work. Definitely obsessive, obsessive, obsessiveness for a little bit,” he said. I imagine that in his form of “thriller-mystery,” Clark could play the superhero detective, protecting Americans from the cabal and investigating their crimes alongside the QAnon White Hat government insiders. If 2016 launched arguably unprecedented rhetoric from a presidential campaign, from Trump’s “Grab ’em by the pussy” to Clinton’s

“Basket of deplorables,” to vastly divergent economic plans informed by right-wing populism or inclusive capitalism to Bernie Sanders’ supposed socialism, to threats of ill-intentioned interference from Clinton’s email handling investigation and foreign hackers on the tail end of Obama’s two terms in office, an overarching story to tie all of those seemingly disparate events concerning powerful people into a single all-encompassing, grand meaning would form a reasonable societal response. This story would certainly be concerned with money and power.

On America’s economy, Clark said, “Everything’s a rich man’s trick. It’s a very cynical way of looking at things, but it’s all just an illusion, and we could be so much happier. I don’t think we’ve really reached our potential, like, as a human race.” Clark clarified that rich does not necessarily mean elite. He cited Elon Musk’s promotion of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin as a good-willed attempt to draw Americans away from the government’s corrupted financial institutions. Clark himself is uninterested in the stock market, calling it an “old, outdated, manipulated system” and he saw the recent rise in GameStop’s stock as proof that the elites can be subverted with collective effort. Clark then quickly backtracked, saying, “I’m not an economic expert, for sure, even though [I was] an accounting major.” Yet Clark’s theories are well developed within QAnon’s canonical rejection of the Federal Reserve. I found it interesting how he de-emphasized his position of knowledge creation within the conspiracy, juxtaposing his clear influencer status with his expressed lack of confidence in the exact claims he makes.

As he expanded on the conspiracy’s consequences, his voice softened and he glanced above the camera. “We have too much faith in our financial system, too much faith in our media, like we don’t really ask enough questions. How come?” he asked. “So many people in the world are starving, you know? How come 1 percent of the population owns, like, 90 percent of the wealth in the world? People just kind of dismiss it as this crazy conspiracy. . . . I have to get that idea out there in the public consciousness that actually there is, you know, a shadow war.” Clark’s emphasis on disseminating the truth with the options he has, from his Twitter following to his conversation with me—in which he spent nearly two hours describing his journey with QAnon for fair representation in my writing, and then kindly asked me to send any follow-up questions—reflects a compelling search for legitimacy. He wants to be heard by people outside of QAnon’s community who are

willing to listen, including me, urgently, before the window to fight the cabal narrows. “The ultimate goal is full disclosure of the truth, not the artificial matrix reality,” summarized Clark.

What about the “I’s” in Institutions?

Hofstadter might say that the existing economic institutions are permissible, or at least not guilty of massive conspiracy, and that Clark’s theories are a new reiteration of “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” which is largely concerned with dispossession (Hofstadter, 1964). I find that Clark’s dialogue reflected feelings of dispossession. In other words, bad actors were controlling America to deprive him of the wealth and happiness he deserved. While he attributed this takeover to the cabal, he never claimed other parties were innocent—and his references to Trump’s and QAnon’s anti-intellectual and anti-establishment underpinnings, in accordance with Hofstadter’s reasoning of capitalism and real American virtues being undermined by cosmopolitans and communistic schemes, suggest that the latter motivated him and ignited his interest in politics. Yet I argue that QAnon theories like the ones Clark described are not a symptom of baseless paranoia but rather a recognition of inequality that does exist in the United States, which has ample resources to provide food and shelter for each resident but does not. Clark’s articulation of dispossession suggests that ordinary Americans never had much in the first place and that fairly distributing resources is important not just for him but for other peoples’ wellbeing, too.

His theory uses the Federal Reserve and other economic institutions to describe his feeling of powerlessness amid these greater structures, which, outside of his predicted Great Awakening, may have more complicated barriers to reform like necessitated, yet perhaps time-consuming, checks and balances between branches of the federal government, frequent transitions between political parties that change the branches’ priorities and stall legislation, and the United States’ long history of low minimum wages that may advance wealth inequality and poverty. Perhaps Clark’s narrative asks for the same outcome which all of these barriers’ removal could produce, but does so without drawing in the massive stakeholders and time that prevent rapid and effective United States policy changes. It would be near impossible, for example, to pass comprehensive policy that ameliorates hunger for each of the estimated 42 million Americans experiencing food security during the pandemic (Feeding America,

2021) and deploy its requisite infrastructure nationwide in days, if not months. Alternatively, Clark assumes that the stock market's hidden, elite buyers and sellers scheme to possess more than their fair share of capital at the expense of honest Americans. Yet, unless there was a unilateral, extreme reason that would convince the government or remaining public to abandon the stock market—like Satan-worshippers using it to profit from children—I would anticipate its dissolution, let alone reform, to be unlikely within Clark's lifetime.

During our conversation, Clark emphasized that, although he is certain Biden is a deep-state actor and Trump a hero, he dislikes both of their parties. He believes each includes cabal members. His main challenges with the Democratic Party are its interest in higher taxes, which he feels go to the elites' and the military, instead of meaningful programs to benefit regular citizens, and its associated governors, including Gavin Newsom and Andrew Cuomo, the latter of whom he expects to be investigated soon for intentionally raising COVID-19 numbers in New York nursing homes to kill the elderly. Clark said, "There's enough money and resources for everyone to live a comfortable life. . . . no one should have to suffer. . . . overpopulation is a myth." Although the Democrats' official 2020 platform relates a similar interest in "building a stronger, fairer economy" through reducing generational wage gaps and affirming housing as a human right (Democratic National Committee, 2020), these intentions seem irrelevant to Clark's interpretation of United States politics because he fundamentally does not think the current system is capable of meeting these expectations of equality.

Clark's comments suggest that if secret elites are manipulating the government from its inside, national policy priorities will serve little to no purpose until the Great Awakening removes their influence. Even if new legislation passes to control the stock market, for example, how could Americans trust the law's integrity? The access point to redistribute wealth for everyone to meet their basic needs, as I interpret his argument, must therefore come from forces outside of the traditional U.S. political system, like communities of digital QAnon soldiers that support White Hats' fight against the cabal. Clark's perspective on the U.S. government's checks and balances failing to perform their role and his distrust in the government's ability to maintain basic democracy mirrors Glennon's own theory in *National Security and Double Government*. Glennon writes that "If governmental assurances concerning everything from

vaccine and food safety to the fairness of stock-market regulation and IRS Investigations become widely suspect . . . daily life would become more difficult” (1964/2016). Clark experiences these difficulties with American institutions in his daily life. He suspects the government cannot ensure any semblance of fairness given its mediation by deep-state actors. He feels that these institutions are not only broken, but also highly malicious. “It’s America,” he told me. “You build it up from the inside, then you destroy it.”

Quashing Quackery?

I interviewed over twenty people on the record for this study—current and former Q followers, their family members, QAnon-beat journalists, and conspiracy focused professors. Before initiating these conversations in February, I hypothesized that the cabal’s metaphorical form could help Q followers draw upon more hidden feelings of frustration and being undermined by the government; this psychic unearthing facilitated by QAnon would provide relief in a psychological process, expelling frustration and remotivating themselves for political participation. I conclude that QAnon certainly does meaningful things for individuals who endorse its theories, but while that endorsement may flow from similar factors—I posit they include beliefs about American institutions being not only ineffective but also openly incongruent with people’s real priorities, in their distribution of wealth, two-party system of polarization, and mediation by the mainstream media’s interests—QAnon’s impact remains highly individual, from enabling cathartic political expression to building community in times of need. I use “impact” instead of “purpose” because I believe the phenomenon does not necessarily exist to serve a purpose within society, including reforming the political system, especially given its links to violence. Its commentary could be productive, but I argue government bodies and non-QAnon followers should consider its creative assembly instead: How do its events come together in uncanny patterns to produce hard-lined theories about the world’s invisible ontologies? I believe QAnon articulates individuals’ frustration with United States politics. This frustration was not previously hidden, and then resurfaced by QAnon—it was open, perhaps ignored, and its bearers are reimagining it with alternate words to seek legitimate acknowledgement of it, whether that arrives through anarchy or, as QAnon canon calls for, a military state. Perhaps it was

difficult to find a meaningful solution for it within the logistical confines of our political structures. I anticipate that efforts at de-radicalization and anti-conspiracy movements will prove ineffective unless greater policy changes are made to troubleshoot narratives of dispossession and uncertainty within the United States' greater history.

* Interviewees' names were changed for anonymity.

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