ANALYSIS

# Actor Profile: Boogaloo Boys

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The 'Boogaloo movement' is an important fixture of armed right-wing politics in the United States. Its impact on the perception of protests, the relative lethality of its adherents, and its focus on fomenting civil war are all dynamics that grew out of years of online organizing, and they are unlikely to dissipate soon.

The potential for new gun restrictions and the Boogaloo movement's ability to grab media attention through violence, as well as its armed presence and participation in demonstrations, has ensured its momentum post-election, albeit at a smaller scale. A reliance on social media organizing, which initially bolstered the movement, has now clipped the wings of its cells, as Boogaloo actors struggle to gain an immediate organizational foothold online in the aftermath of a deplatforming effort since June 2020. Though the threat of direct violence from Boogaloo adherents has waned, it remains imperative to monitor the movement for signs of a return to violent street activism.

## IDEOLOGY, MEMBERSHIP, AND STRUCTURE

### *Ideology*

Boogaloo adherents (often termed "Boogaloo Boys" or self-described as "Boogaloo Bois") follow a diverse set of neo-dadaist aesthetics connected to the intention of setting off a second American Civil War, which they often regard as inevitable. The ideology behind Boogaloo is decidedly right-wing, though public commitment to right-wing ideals varies between adherents and cells, with some cells claiming to take a pseudo-left-wing position publicly (Bellingcat, 27 May 2020). The aesthetic and ideological tendencies of the loosely aligned movement is one of absurdity and disregard for one's safety or life, combining a frustration with the current state of affairs with the notion of online culture.

The earliest reference to the "Boogaloo" as a term for civil war or race war was in 2012 on 4chan's board for firearms, /k/. However, the movement gained steam in 2019 motivated by "anti-government anxiety," when the term was frequently used on far-right racist channels on Telegram (WIRED, 18 June 2020; Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 26 June 2020). The term has since gathered greater appeal among armed absurdist libertarian activists. In early usage of the term, the "Boogaloo" was explicitly in reference to a race war, though this etymology is one that some media-savvy Boogaloo actors regard as unimportant or untrue (Southern Poverty Law Center, 5 June 2020; Al-Jazeera, 16 April 2021).

Adherents to the Boogaloo movement are sometimes misconstrued as "leftist" or "progressive" by some self-described progressives and media primarily due to cases of individual Boogaloo cells forming unity coalitions with anti-authoritarian leftist actors (Daily Beast, 9 March 2021; Salon, 27 February 2021). This is a notion bolstered by the movement's general anti-statist beliefs and violent disagreements with police forces, pro-Trump activists, and traditional US-based militia groups. Akin to how right-wing figure Ammon Bundy has publicly stated that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement against police violence is justified, Boogaloo adherents seek alliances or coalition support with anti-police and anti-state actors and movements on the left as well (Jamestown Foundation, 15 January 2021; Al Jazeera, 16 April 2021). However, former President Donald Trump's "LIBERATE" tweets in April 2020 — a reference to alleged government tyranny amid increased COVID-19 restrictions — were also seen as encouraging to some Boogaloo Facebook users, showcasing their willingness to ally with disparate anti-government forces (Bloomberg, 12 May 2020; ABC News, 17 April 2020; Southern Poverty Law Center, 15 May 2020).

In some cases, Boogaloo adherents may earnestly believe in the progressive causes they link themselves to (for example, demonstrations associated with the BLM movement against police brutality), but many of these alliances are likely opportunistic. The Boogaloo movement's central ideological goal is to accelerate civil war — which adherents see as inevitable and desirable. Out of the desire to hasten the onset of this war, Boogaloo actors have sought to push tense political moments towards open combat. Many Boogaloo actors therefore saw the BLM movement following the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020 as an

opportunity to escalate tensions with law enforcement and state authorities, with the intent of fomenting the collapse of the government. Reporters and researchers have documented several prominent Boogaloo figures and cells as publicly aligning with left-wing activism but privately expressing far-right or otherwise racist views (Bellingcat, 27 May 2020; Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 30 September 2020; Twitter @Twilight-ZoneAFA, 26 August 2020; Twitter @Arbitrarymagi, 5 June 2021; Medium @LoneGunmanAFA, 3 June 2021).

*Firearms*

The belief in absolute and unfettered access to firearms is an inherent and unifying aspect of the Boogaloo movement. Since their inception on 4chan's /k/, Boogaloo adherents have been deeply connected to online gun culture and offline pro-gun activism. In some cases this has meant an absurdist approach to online posting about guns. In other cases, this commitment has led to high-profile arrests related to Boogaloo adherents and their contacts breaking federal and state gun laws.

The specific position of the Boogaloo movement at the nexus of online trolling culture and offline pro-Second Amendment activism has led to relationships with the 3-D printing community. A West Virginia man who ran a site for illegal, 3-D printed parts that could convert a semi-automatic AR-15-style rifle into a fully automatic weapon was arrested in November 2020, in part due to his site's association with the Boogaloo movement (WDTV 5 News, 18 November 2020). One of his customers was Steven Carrillo, a man who went on a shooting spree against police in the San Francisco Bay Area (Mercury News, 3 November 2020). The Justice Department claims the West Virginia man sold these 3-D printed parts — auto-sears marketed as keyring hooks — to hundreds of other Boogaloo adherents (Wired, 4 November 2020; Department of Justice, 17 November 2020). In the man's guilty plea, he agreed to forfeit all 3-D printers (Department of Justice, 16 March 2021; Associated Press, 16 March 2021).

Boogaloo adherents have occasionally detailed their move from more traditional armed 'Patriot' militia groups towards Boogaloo cells, indicating the possibility for personnel transfer among younger adherents to armed activism. This does not mean that Boogaloo adherents are always friendly with other armed movements, including the 'Patriot' movement, as the Boogaloo is often adversarial to law enforcement. While a pro-gun stance can be unifying across movement lines, other political barriers can bar greater coalition-building.

*Membership & Recruitment*

To be part of the Boogaloo movement, one simply has to believe in the accelerationist, anti-statist ideology. Boogaloo adherents hold a wide variety of beliefs and political identities, ranging from neo-Nazi to anarcho-leftist, with the vast majority holding libertarian beliefs. Notably, numerous active-duty military members have been members of Boogaloo groups and have expressed support for the movement (VICE News, 24 June 2020).

Boogaloo adherents have long used social media, particularly Facebook, to communicate, conduct recruitment, and plan actions. Boogaloo-related ads on Facebook and subsidiary platforms flourished until Facebook took action against the group in June 2020 (Buzzfeed News, 30 June 2020). In addition to its creation on 4chan's /k/, Boogaloo content was also prevalent on Reddit until bans toward the end of that same month (New York Times, 30 June 2020). Following these bans, Boogaloo adherents appear to have moved to less managed platforms, such as Parler, Telegram, and home-server hosted chat rooms (PBS, 9 January 2021; Intercept, 12 January 2021). Most of these bans were incomplete or too late, as Boogaloo organizing was well underway prior to the deplatforming effort, and continued despite it (Al Jazeera, 30 June 2020).

Following the social media bans, Boogaloo adherents began to use different variations of words that result in a similar phonetic pattern to "Boogaloo" to avoid detection online and continue to communicate and conduct recruitment efforts. Such terms include the "Big Luau," "Big Igloo," and the "Bungalow," and are often reused and recycled by different cells, with some adopting the terms for cell names while others use them online only. The use of such phonetic facsimiles helped allow groups of Boogaloo adherents to remain connected and foster the creation of a community through a shared and unique lexicon.

Boogaloo adherents also rely on live-streamers and independent media to get their messages to a broader audience. In some cases, it appears that they are in communication with some of these media actors ahead of time, allowing media crews to arrive alongside Boogaloo activists to film an action. This also means that a demonstration by Boogaloo adherents can be planned without posting publicly, as public advertising of Boogaloo events has led to counter-mobilization by anti-Boogaloo actors.

Post-ban membership within the Boogaloo movement is highly devolved but still networked via chat rooms and group chats. Arrests of prominent members (due to gun law breaches, sexual enticement of minors, overstaying green cards, or attempting to sell firearms to an informant posing as a member of Hamas, for example) have led to further charges as law enforcement expands their search using contacts on arrestees' phones and through their social media (Fox 9 KMSP, 15 July 2021; Mercury News, 2 December 2020; Daily Beast, 2 March 2021; ABC5 KSTP, 4 May 2021; Raw Story, 8 June 2021).

### *Structure*

Boogaloo structure is devolved and multipolar, as adherents have formed cells or acted in small cadres; the inset vignette illustrates this point through a case study of the Wolverine Watchmen militia. These re-lationships are often highly personal and related to short-distance social networking in many cases. In other cases, such as with the Citizens Liberty Organization or Redacted Republic, Boogaloo adherents have attempted to create a national brand through a centralized platform on Discord or Facebook (Left Coast Right Watch, 16 January 2021). These larger organizations often served as propaganda outlets that have brought in new recruits to the incohesive political ideology of the Boogaloo movement. The recruits have then sought out local cells or regional organizations to join for action. The Boogaloo movement is currently more disorganized compared to militias with membership lists, with only one or two major national orga-nizations persisting into late 2021 and no standardized membership.

***The Wolverine Watchmen Militia: An Example of Cell Formation and Structure***

The Wolverine Watchmen militia in Michigan, a close affiliate of the Michigan Liberty Militia that is perhaps best known for their plan to kidnap the governor of their state, is a Boogaloo-associated militia cell that exemplifies Boogaloo cell structure (WWMT News Channel 3, 8 October 2020; Bridge Michigan, 9 October 2020). The group was largely active online, but members also attended a variety of anti-lockdown demonstrations and demonstrations associated with the BLM movement, where they attempted to conduct recruitment (Washington Post, 1 November 2020). The Wolverine Watchmen Facebook page limited membership to "Boojahideen only" — a portmanteau of Boogaloo and mujahideen — exemplifying the individual-led recruitment process of becoming familiar with the ideology before finding a local Boogaloo cell (Countering Terrorism Center, July/August 2021). The group, which included a number of people with disparate ideologies, then used Facebook and other communications platforms to communicate, organize, and schedule training exercises.

Many Boogaloo cells tend to organize politically at the state level. These cells occasionally seek to build coalitions with other militant groups. In other cases, the actors may create organizational superstructures and 'media wings.' However, the public identification of members or leadership often leads to demobilization. The inset vignette illustrates this point through a review of the dynamics of four Texas Boogaloo groups, most of which are demobilized, defunct, or have otherwise rebranded since a summer surge in 2020.

***State-Level Organization in Texas***

The **Texas Guerrilla Militia (TGM)**, a Texas-based Boogaloo chapter, is now largely defunct. One of their leaders spoke at the funeral of a slain pro-BLM activist, an armed white man, earning himself some level of fame among Boogaloo adherents on TikTok (Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 30 September 2020). He participated in several high-profile photo opportunities published in national media alongside BLM organizers before being identified as having a fascination with far-right myths around Rhodesia (Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 30 September 2020; Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 30 September 2020). These myths mostly have to do with the historical territory's existence as a white ethnostate, subjugating Black Africans by force (New York Times Magazine, 10 April 2018; Medium 'War is Boring', 19 June 2015; University of Warwick, 27 March 2021; Christian Science monitor, 18 June 2015). The TGM also maintained a well-documented friendship with other militia groups, including local Three Percenters and associated movements in Texas. One alliance that the TGM successfully established was with the United States Boogalier Corps (USBC), which often shared propaganda and membership with the TGM (Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 31 October 2020; Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 8 November 2020).

The **United States Boogalier Corps (USBC)**, a once-important Texas-based Boogaloo organization, demobilized following the publication of identifying information of several high-profile members and subsequent arrest threats. After the group's leader was identified, panic swept through the organization. Originally, the USBC operated a public relations wing known as the Hibiscus Society (or Hibiscus Society News), which has remained active and has started its own political programming after a brief period of silence. The group also notably attempted to insert themselves into BLM protests, which a leader indicated was motivated by his "counterinsurgency training" (Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 23 September 2020).

This **Hibiscus Society**, a brand of Boogaloo newsmakers and actors that drew heavily from other Texas Boogaloo groups and was once the direct propaganda arm of the USBC (Twitter @TwilightZoneAFA, 23 September 2020; YouTube @Hibiscus Society, 23 July 2020), has lost much f its audience and many of its most active members have rebranded as the Redacted Caucus. The Redacted Caucus, according to its key organizers, one of whom was a crucial leader of the USBC, is seeking to establish itself as a part of the Libertarian Party's political organization in Texas (YouTube @News2Share, 5 May 2021; YouTube @News2Share, 18 January 2021). The Libertarian Party of Texas' gubernatorial candidate, Dan Behrmen, has organized campaign events alongside Boogaloo adherents and has expressed his support for the organization alongside USBC and other Boogaloo members (YouTube @News2Share, 5 May 2021; YouTube @Taxation Is Theft, 3 September 2020).

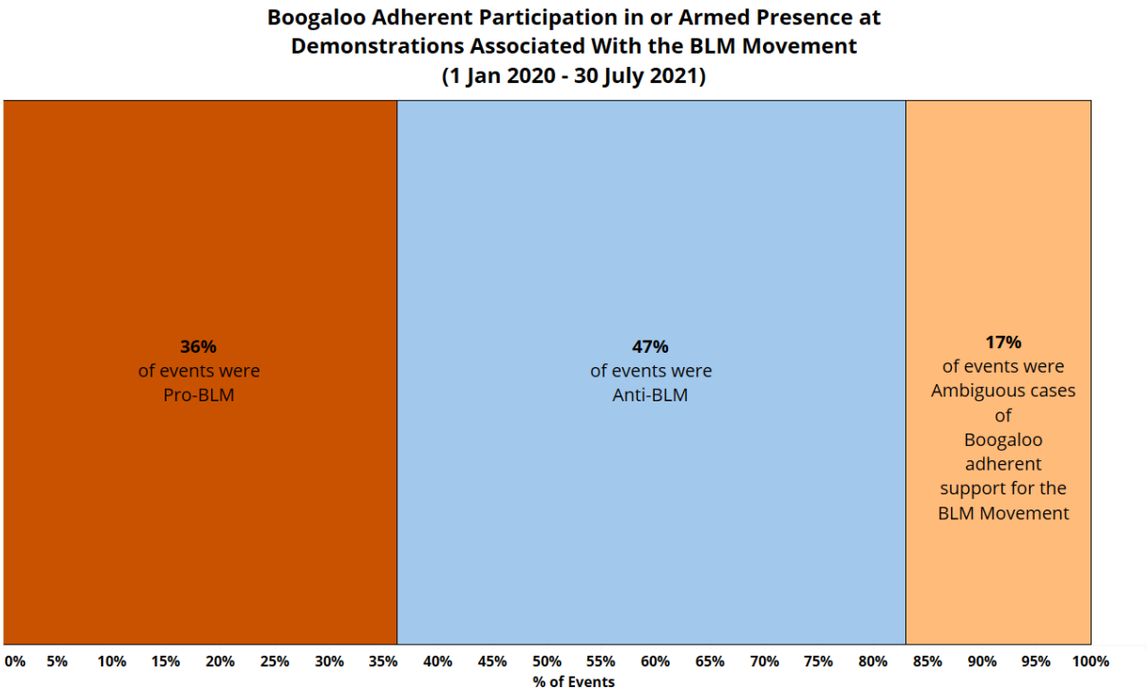
The leader of the **South Texas Boogaloo Bois** unit, which is now largely defunct, was charged with participating in a riot in late 2020 for allegedly firing 13 rounds from an AK-47 into the Minneapolis police department's building (DoJ, 23 October 2020; StarTribune, 24 October 2020). The leader wore a skull mask often associated with neo-Nazi groups as he shot into the building (Southern Poverty Law Center, 20 June 2017; Daily Beast, 3 February 2021). The shooter then messaged Bay Area shooter Steven Carillo two hours later, encouraging him to attack police buildings (Refinery29, 23 October 2020). The actions of this South Texas Boogaloo Bois leader thereby shows three things: the movement of Boogaloo actors across state lines, the movement's flirtation with overtly fascist politics, and the interconnectedness of Boogaloo cells prone to violence.

## TRENDS IN ACLED DATA

The Boogaloo movement is well-represented in the ACLED dataset, with either Boogaloo Boys or one of their cells coded as an actor in over 100 events, including protests, riots, armed clashes, and strategic developments. As many Boogaloo cells are inactive or defunct, they are not coded as active in ACLED data. In cases where the specific cell involved is not known, inactive, or defunct, Boogaloo Boys is coded. Boogaloo cells in the ACLED dataset include the Big Igloo, Central Valley Militia, Last Sons of Liberty, United Pharaoh's Guard, Virginia Kekoas, and the Wolverine Watchmen.

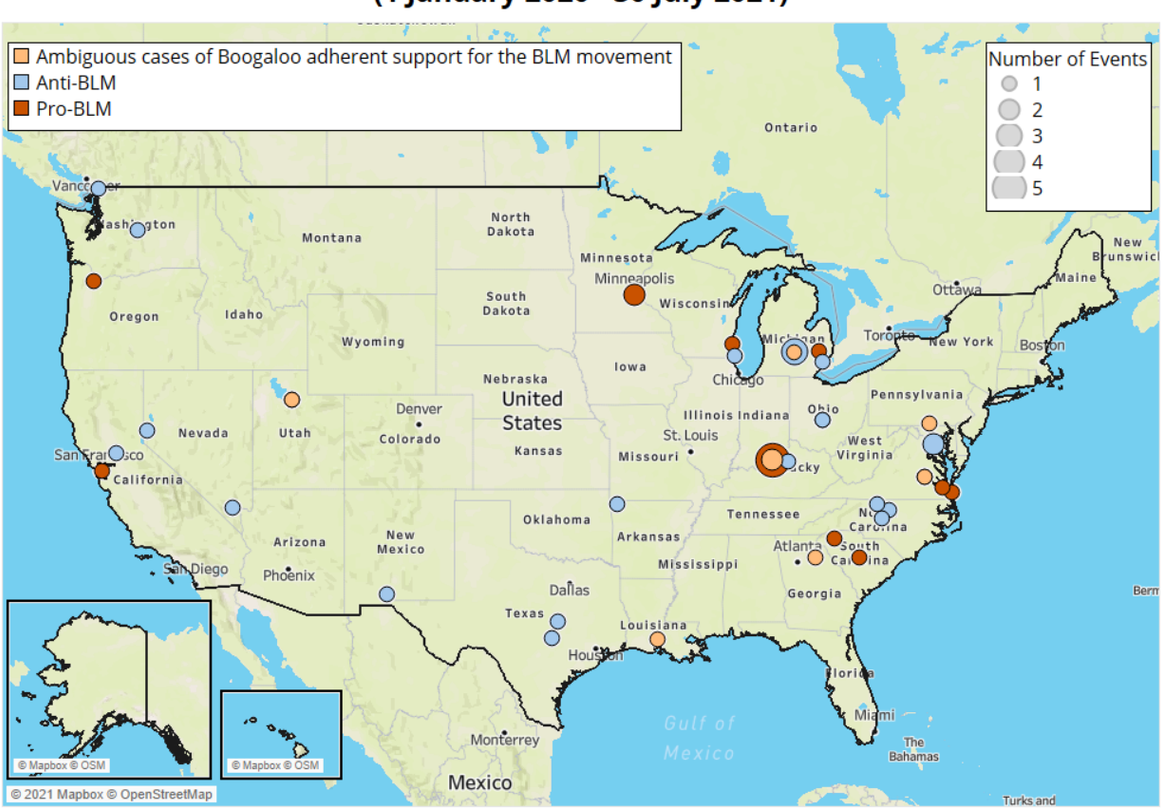
### *Black Lives Matter (BLM)*

Nearly half of all events involving Boogaloo adherents tracked by ACLED occurred in conjunction with demonstrations associated with the BLM movement, making the response to BLM the single largest driver of Boogaloo activity since the start of 2020. However, support or opposition to the BLM movement is inconsistent among Boogaloo adherents and cells (see figure below). For instance, many Boogaloo adherents publicly support the BLM movement as they perceive it as congruent with the general anti-government and anti-police themes ingrained within the Boogaloo movement (Anti-Defamation League, 2021). Some Boogaloo adherents appear to genuinely back the antiracist motivations behind the BLM movement (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 30 June 2021). However, a significant number of Boogaloo adherents are diametrically opposed to BLM, often alleging Marxist infiltration of the movement (The Atlantic, 15 January 2021). Some Boogaloo activity related to the BLM movement is ambiguous in its support or opposition to BLM. The varying degrees of instrumentalization, support, rejection, and opposition to the BLM movement reflect the loose and decentralized nature of the Boogaloo movement.




Several Boogaloo chapters are well-known for their pro-BLM stance. Demonstrations associated with the BLM movement have been attended by pro-BLM Boogaloo adherents at least 18 times between January 2020 and July 2021. These demonstrations have occurred within 13 cities across 10 states (see map below). Among the most active pro-BLM Boogaloo groups is the United Pharaoh's Guard (UPG) in Louisville, Kentucky. The group is in a tenuous state as it became inactive following the arrests of two leaders in February 2021, but individual adherents linked to the group returned to Twitter and Instagram in late August 2021.

**Boogaloo Adherent Participation in or Armed Presence at Demonstrations Associated With the BLM Movement (1 January 2020 - 30 July 2021)**




Over a quarter of demonstration events associated with the BLM movement attended by pro-BLM Boogaloo adherents have occurred in Louisville, Kentucky; 80% of those included members of UPG. Other chapters, such as the Virginia Kekoas, established in late May 2021, have led demonstrations associated with the BLM movement in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Black Lives Matter 757 (BLM757) often demonstrates alongside Boogaloo adherents, including the Virginia Kekoas. BLM757 is a non-affiliated armed group that demonstrates in support of racial justice and arming Black people, but is often rejected by many pro-BLM activists due to BLM757's association with right-wing groups and conflicts with other BLM affiliates (Daily Beast, 30 July 2020; Twitter@DMVBlackLives, 20 November 2017).

Anti-BLM Boogaloo adherents and chapters are also present at demonstrations associated with the BLM movement. Anti-BLM Boogaloo adherents have been active in 10 cities across eight states and Washington, DC (see map above). Nearly a quarter of all such demonstrations occurred in Lansing, Michigan.

Boogaloo adherents have often attempted to attack demonstrators associated with the BLM movement to accelerate the "Boogaloo." For instance, law enforcement agencies have arrested several Boogaloo adherents for inciting riots during demonstrations associated with the BLM movement, and have repeatedly alleged that Boogaloo adherents were agents provocateurs. For example, on 30 May 2020, three Boogaloo adherents were arrested with homemade Molotov cocktails at a demonstration associated with the BLM movement in Las Vegas, Nevada. The men intended to foment the "Boogaloo" by inciting a riot after igniting the makeshift explosives with the intent to kill and injure demonstrators associated with the BLM movement (NBC News, 4 June 2020). Likewise, a Boogaloo adherent was arrested on 4 June 2020 in Sacramento, California with a gun bag and ammunition outside Governor Gavin Newsom's residence during a demonstration associated with the BLM movement in the area (Sacramento Bee, 7 June 2020).

In other cases, support or opposition to the BLM movement among Boogaloo adherents is ambiguous. In many ambiguous cases, the goal of Boogaloo adherents appears to be to decrease trust in public institutions, such as law enforcement, and to foment state collapse via the "Boogaloo." For instance, Boogaloo adherents infiltrated multiple demonstrations associated with the BLM movement in late May 2020, days after the killing of George Floyd, and incited violence. On 27 May 2020, Boogaloo adherents broke the windows of several businesses, leading to wide-scale rioting and looting. On 28 May 2020, a Boogaloo adherent fired rounds at the Minneapolis police headquarters. On 29 May 2020, two Boogaloo adherents shot and killed federal law enforcement officers in Oakland, California while using a nearby demonstration associated with the BLM movement as a distraction. Likewise, a Boogaloo adherent was charged with inciting a riot during a demonstration associated with the BLM movement in Columbia, South Carolina on 30 May 2020, alongside charges for breaking into a motor vehicle, looting, larceny, and aggravated breach of peace. Another adherent was arrested for throwing Molotov cocktails at police during a demonstration associated with the BLM movement in Portland, Oregon on 4 November 2020.

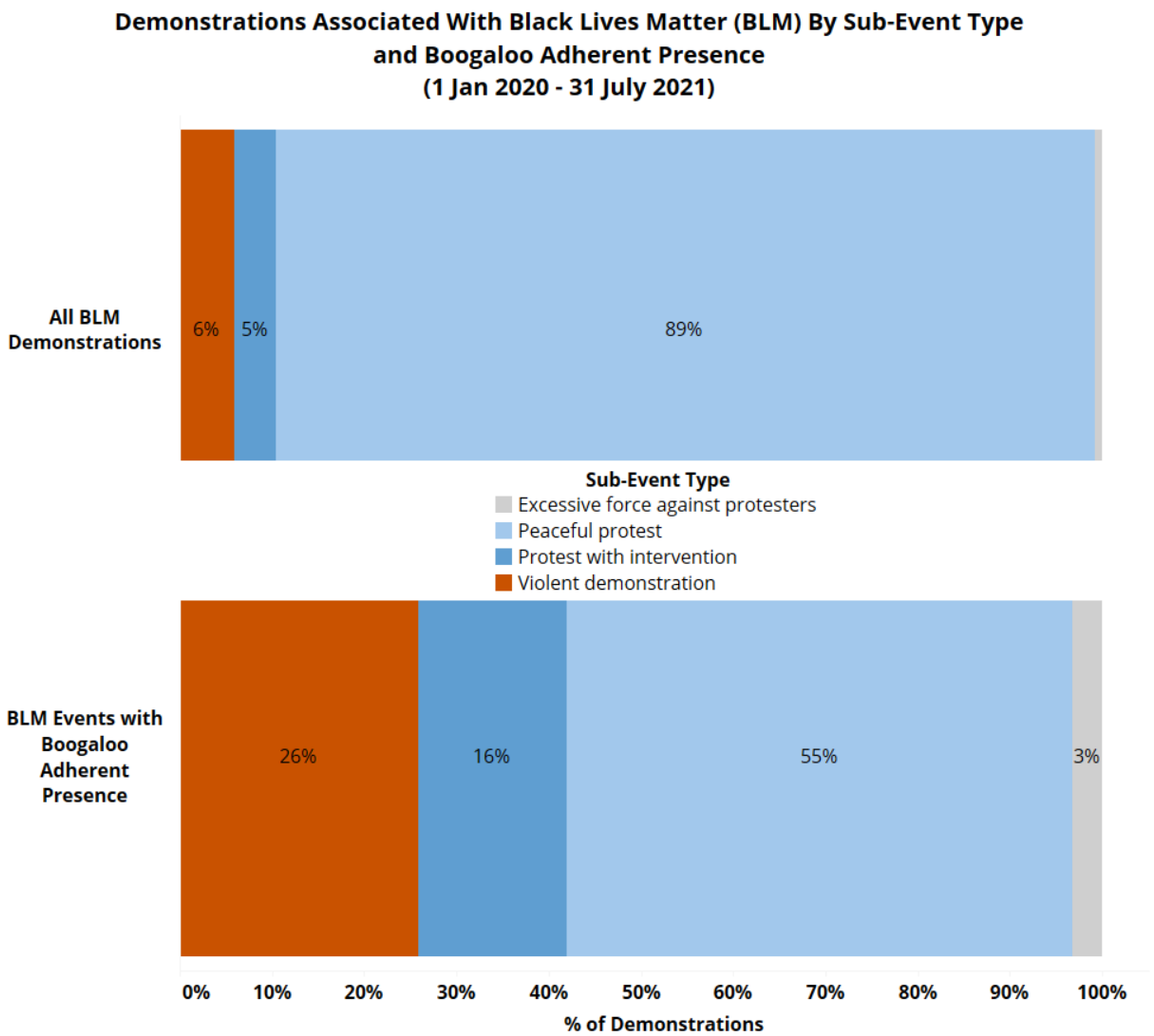
These actions are not limited to sole adherents of the Boogaloo movement, but also ostensibly pro-BLM Boogaloo chapters such as the UPG. On 25 December 2020, armed members of the UPG brandished weapons at police officers in Louisville, Kentucky with the intent to intimidate. The same members of the UPG were later arrested on 11 February 2021 for inciting a riot at a demonstration associated with the BLM movement in Louisville on 6 January 2021, after they fired rounds at vehicles that posed no threat to demonstrators.

Because of these trends, Boogaloo participation in demonstrations associated with the BLM movement has been rejected or thwarted by BLM supporters in several instances. In Athens, Georgia, armed Boogaloo adherents attempted to participate in a 31 May 2020 demonstration associated with the BLM movement but were asked to leave by demonstrators. They later shadowed demonstrators as they marched. Likewise, on 3 April 2021, BLM-affiliated demonstrators refused to allow Boogaloo adherents to march alongside them in Lansing, Michigan. Again, armed Boogaloo adherents shadowed demonstrators from across the street. In other cases, such as in Richmond, Virginia, on 29 July 2020, demonstrators heckled and prevented Boogaloo adherents from protesting against police for Boogaloo-specific reasons near demonstrations associated with the BLM movement.

While the majority of Boogaloo activity related to the BLM movement consists of active participation in demonstrations, a significant portion of BLM-related activity, roughly one-third, includes armed patrols by Boogaloo adherents at demonstrations associated with BLM. During such events, Boogaloo adherents do not participate in demonstrations as supporters or opponents, but instead maintain a visible armed presence without directly interacting with demonstrators. The majority of such patrols have been conducted in opposition to the BLM movement, while some have been ambiguous. Many of the patrols have included Boogaloo adherents alongside Proud Boys, Three Percenters, and other militia groups and militant social movements, with members claiming to protect private property, businesses, and protesters.

In addition to their claims regarding armed patrols, Boogaloo adherents regularly claim that their armed presence and participation in demonstrations associated with the BLM movement "protects" demonstrators from police and/or helps to ensure that protests remain peaceful (Bellingcat, 27 May 2020; Twitter @NeilYungLean, 31 May 2020; Twitter @ksl_alexcabrero, 30 May 2020). However, ACLED data show that the presence of Boogaloo patrols or participants at demonstrations associated with the BLM movement is linked to significantly greater rates of violent or destructive activity, as well as police intervention (see figure below, in brown). Demonstrations associated with the BLM movement in which Boogaloo adherents

participate or patrol (lower graph) are more than four times as likely to involve violence and more than four times as likely to face police intervention than demonstrations associated with the BLM movement that do not have a Boogaloo presence.




These rates hold up across the spectrum of Boogaloo involvement in demonstrations associated with the BLM movement. The participation of pro-BLM Boogaloo adherents in demonstrations associated with the BLM movement increases the risk of violence or destructive activity nearly fivefold, while the presence of anti-BLM Boogaloo adherents increases the risk of violence or destructive activity over threefold. Armed patrols increase the risk of violence or destructive activity fourfold at demonstrations associated with the BLM movement as well. Furthermore, deadly violence is more likely at demonstrations associated with the BLM movement in which Boogaloo adherents are present (regardless of whether they support or oppose the movement). In 28 demonstration events, a total of at least four fatalities and multiple serious injuries have been reported. In comparison, a total of one fatality has been reported in the 120 demonstration events in which Antifa has been coded. In other words, Boogaloo patrols and participation at demonstrations associated with the BLM movement make demonstrators more vulnerable to deadly violence and police intervention relative to those without Boogaloo participation or armed presence.

## OTHER DRIVERS

As the Boogaloo movement is a decentralized, anti-government movement, its drivers to action are diverse, and sometimes contradictory. Boogaloo activity divorced from the BLM movement is primarily driven by eight forces, each to significantly differing degrees. Over 40% of the remaining events in which Boogaloo adherents have been present are linked to opposition to gun control, particularly in opposition to 'red-flag' laws that allow governments to confiscate firearms from people deemed to be a threat to public safety. Anti-government or anti-police motifs were the second most common driver for Boogaloo adherents, and one of the deadliest. Such events account for 20% of the remaining non-BLM events, and resulted in the killing of two law enforcement officers. Pro-Trump, broadly defined libertarian principles, and opposition to government-mandated COVID-19 restrictions round out drivers for Boogaloo activity, and account for at least 10% of non-BLM events. The remaining drivers — support for police, opposition to abortion, and white pride or neo-Confederate ideals — account for under 15% of the remaining non-BLM events combined. Many of these causes are not mutually exclusive, with the overlap due to the diversity of the Boogaloo movement's stated goals and interests.

*Opposition to Gun Control*

Actual or perceived legislation to control or restrict gun rights strongly correlates with Boogaloo activism. Boogaloo adherents demonstrated against local anti-gun ordinances in Newport News and Richmond, Virginia and against plans to introduce gun control legislation in Kentucky. Perceived threats to gun ownership under a Biden administration led to a call-to-action from the Tree of Liberty Boogaloo movement, a reference to a Thomas Jefferson quote calling for the "blood of patriots and tyrants" to feed the "tree of Liberty" (Monticello, 2021). The call to action was answered by Boogaloo adherents outside capitol buildings in Georgia, Florida, Oregon, New Hampshire, Michigan, Texas, and Arizona, illustrating the importance of gun rights to Boogaloo activity across the country.

*Anti-Police and Anti-Government*

Lesser drivers of Boogaloo activity take on a more ambiguous and localized effect, often contradicting actions by Boogaloo adherents elsewhere. Boogaloo adherents across the country have staged anti-police and anti-government demonstrations. Adherents also engaged local and federal law enforcement agents in deadly armed clashes in Ben Lomond and Oakland, California, respectively.

*Pro-Trump and Pro-Police*

While many Boogaloo adherents considered former President Trump to be a tyrant (Countering Terrorism Center, July/August 2021), Boogaloo adherents in 10 states and Washington, DC have held pro-Trump demonstrations. Pro-Trump demonstrations account for three-quarters of Boogaloo demonstrations in Arizona. Likewise, Boogaloo adherents in Bellingham, Washington and Columbus, Ohio held pro-police demonstrations.

The contradictions in drivers of Boogaloo activity elucidate the movement's decentralized and broad ideology that places emphasis on gun rights and hastening a potential civil war over other cultural or political ideals.

## DEADLY VIOLENCE BY BOOGALOO ADHERENTS

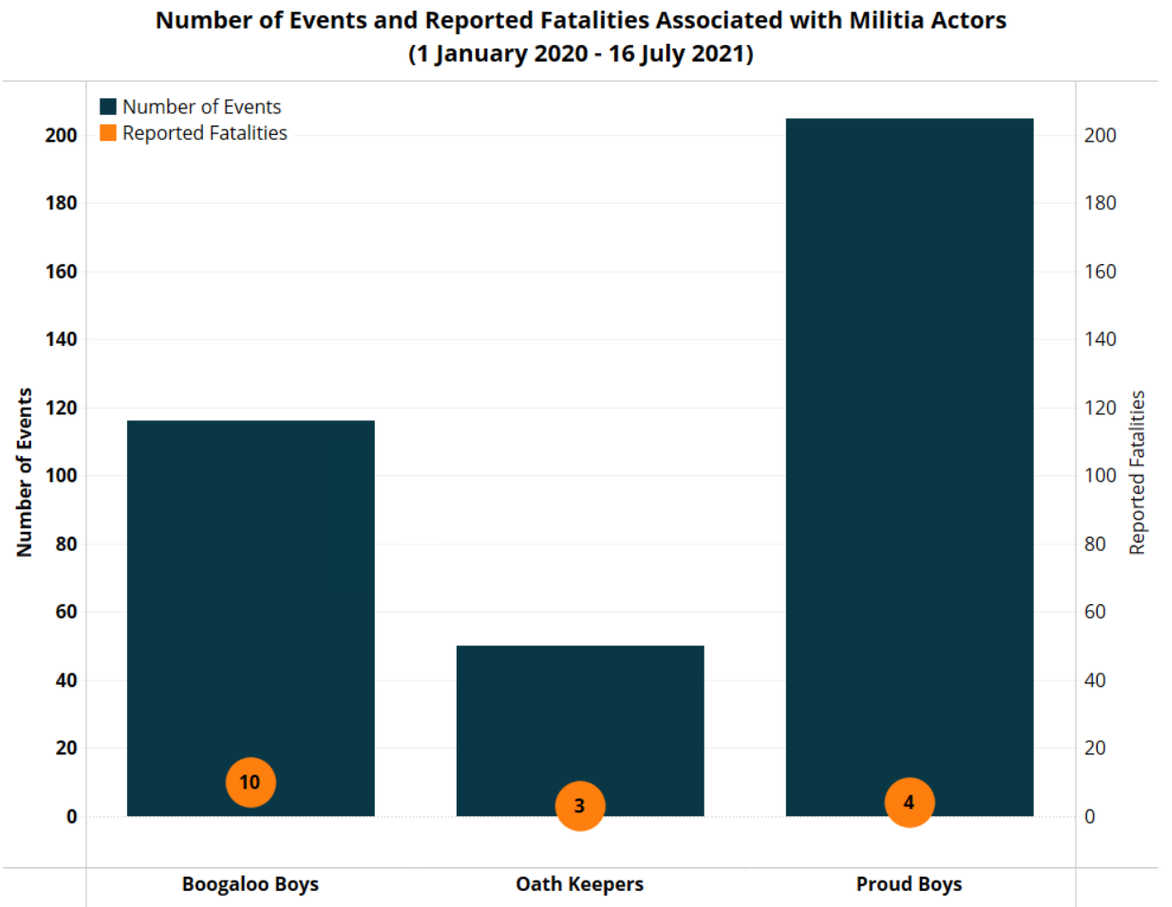
Boogaloo adherents have been involved in deadly events at a greater frequency than any other actor in the ACLED dataset. Boogaloo adherents are often armed, carrying firearms in at least 70% of the events in which they participate, leading to a disproportionate number of fatalities associated with Boogaloo-involved events. Across 105 events involving Boogaloo actors, at least 10 fatalities were reported, more than any other militia actor. The fatal events include violent demonstrations, armed clashes, and lethal police raids of booby-trapped Boogaloo adherent homes.

Boogaloo attacks on law enforcement have at times turned into deadly armed clashes. On 29 May 2020, in Oakland, California, two members of the Grizzly Scouts,[1] a Boogaloo affiliate, conducted a drive-by shooting of two federal agents during a BLM protest, killing one. A little over a week later, on 6 June 2020, the primary actor in the previous attack, Steven Carrillo, an active duty Sergeant in the US Air Force, opened fire on two police officers who came to his father's house in Ben Lomond, California, during their investigation of the previous incident. Over the course of the two shootings, two law enforcement officers were killed and two others were seriously wounded.

Armed Boogaloo members were also present in Kenosha, Wisconsin on 25 August 2020, when Kyle Rittenhouse killed two demonstrators at a demonstration associated with the BLM movement. A Boogaloo adherent claimed that as many as 32 other armed adherents were present in Kenosha that evening (Chicago Sun-Times, 31 August 2020). The same adherent is seen in pictures walking abreast Rittenhouse near demonstrators while both carry assault rifles (Southern Poverty Law Center, 15 September 2020).

This balance of lethal violence alongside Boogaloo activity sets the group apart from other actors in the ACLED dataset. Comparing Boogaloo actors with the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, the scale of violence comes into focus. The visualization below shows a comparison of the number of events in which each of these three actors have been involved, alongside the number of reported fatalities which have resulted from these events. This visual shows the major disparity between the number of events involving Boogaloo actors and the reported fatalities associated with these events.

1. The events carried out by members of the Grizzly Scouts are coded in ACLED data as Boogaloo Boys because these killings were the only offline activity by the members of the Grizzly Scouts, which became defunct immediately after Carrillo was arrested. ACLED generally does not code local chapters of groups if they are largely inactive.




While the Proud Boys have been involved in over twice as many events as Boogaloo adherents, Boogaloo adherents have been responsible for more than twice as many fatalities as the Proud Boys. The discrepancies in fatalities between Boogaloo adherents and other far-right actors are likely due to the Boogaloo adherents' objective to foment a violent revolution or race war — the "Boogaloo". Conversely, other militia groups and militant social movements, such as the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys (*for more, see ACLED's Actor Profiles on the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers*), use violence as a means to their ends, but violence itself is not an organizational objective of these groups.

## BOOGALOO IN THE NEAR FUTURE

The Boogaloo movement has experienced numerous arrests and a federal crackdown on their networks, which has had a major depressive effect on the group's activity. The movement is also reliant on a tense political environment to entice followers to action — an environment that was largely absent from the US media environment until the last decade. Street movements are often seasonal, but the summer of 2021 has been relatively light in protests and the energy of the moment compared to last year. It is unlikely that the Boogaloo movement will find a tense national environment like 2020 they can exploit to further escalate tensions.

It is important to note, however, that this does not mean that the Boogaloo movement is gone or will soon fade. Discussions of gun restrictions bills under Biden, spurred on by a recent directive against "domestic terror," have the chance to spark a small but potentially violent surge in Boogaloo activity (The White House, 15 June 2021; NBC News, 15 June 2021; Reuters, 2 April 2021).

Other Boogaloo actors, those who remain quite public and influential among a more broad set of Boogaloo and absolute gun rights activists, have been pushing for unity coalitions with left actors, though with little relative success (Newsweek, 25 January 2021; Daily Dot, 25 January 2021). Events organized by the Boogaloo core of this so-called coalition are planned for this fall, including an 11 September anti-war rally in Washington, DC (for which the specific rally locations have not yet been announced as of this writing).

As mentioned above, the Virginia Kekoas have a cordial relationship not only with an armed BLM-related actor, but also with the independent media outlet News2Share. These relationships allow them to claim a multi-racial armed coalition on one hand, while ensuring all of their actions are well-documented on another. Direct contact with media means that they have been able to limit counter-organizing against their groups, ensuring they can complete the spectacle of an action without the risk of militant public response.

The future of the Boogaloo movement, like other far-right armed movements, remains highly in flux. Their activity in the short-term is likely to be linked to several key factors that have driven previous actions by the group, namely policy discussions around gun restrictions and increased tensions in the political environment. Social media has been a crucial nexus for networking, community-building, and action organizing for the Boogaloo movement. The dispersion of these networks has led to a period of relative disorganization — though one that is not likely to continue forever.

The movement continues to see violence as an end in and of itself — violence in terms of a civil or race war that destroys the state and contemporary American society. While adherents lack a coherent position on what should replace the government following state destruction, this does not make the Boogaloo movement less dangerous, as the anti-statist underpinnings of Boogaloo ideology remain oriented around violent activity. Whether adherents are able to operationalize their most fantastic plans — such as the execution of a sitting governor — or are limited to drive-by shootings targeting law enforcement, they should be expected to attempt public forms of deadly violence in an effort to bring about the "Boogaloo."