INTRODUCTION

Blackbird.AI’s Intelligence Report responds to ongoing requests for insights into disinformation activity and threats around recent events across digital media. These insights are generated by Blackbird.AI’s AI-driven disinformation analysis platform. This analyzed 119,069,559 social media posts between MAY 2 - MAY 20, 2020 with over 32,148,780 posts surfaced as manipulated with a Blackbird Manipulation Index (BBMI) of 27%.

In a time of widespread uncertainty, panic, economic pressures and geopolitical tensions, the value of information clarity and integrity has never been greater. 2020 has been a pressure cooker of consecutive changes with countries declaring state of emergencies and implementing sudden lockdown measures that have resulted in uncharted levels of isolation among the public.

These changes have forced global communities to adapt and deal with a newfound fear and paranoia against the virus, our governments and even our livelihoods. Overshadowed by the new reality of isolation we now pay more time and closer attention to the digital world than ever before for signs of hope or cause for concern.

In the current digital media landscape we are seeing a never ending sea of controversy, violence, often due to messaging that targets polarized communities and enables fear mongering with propaganda that will inevitably influence and inflame communities.

In Blackbird.AI’s COVID-19 Disinformation Report Volume 3.0, we highlight key narratives that pressured the ‘REOPEN movement’ in the USA and outline the manner in which the state of information in the current COVID-19 era primed behaviours to create a frenzyed public outcry to demand that businesses and society reopen with the pandemic still growing and against all medical and scientific reason. These narratives also directly connect to our upcoming Disinformation Intelligence Report analyzing ‘Racial Unrest & Riots’ following Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests over the death of George Floyd.
TOP LINE MANIPULATED NARRATIVES

DEEP DIVES

NARRATIVE 1 - REOPEN - SAVE THE ECONOMY
BBMI: 44.73% (HIGH)
Summary:
Blackbird.AI identified synthetically amplified narratives around the call to REOPEN America from COVID-19 shutdowns. Manipulation campaigns helped shape discussions surrounding the rapid return to normal and created an identity movement among a variety of cohorts calling for ‘REOPEN’ which resulted in heavily manipulated share of voice and led to public outcries, protests and violence.

NARRATIVE 2 - MILITIAS & THE ‘BOOGALOO’ MOVEMENT
BBMI: 58.04% (HIGH)
Summary:
Blackbird.AI identified narratives promoting the ideologies of militias acting on conspiracy driven agendas to violently overthrow the U.S government. These narratives showed very clear intention from multiple entities to recruit target audiences to their cause. Between a network of popular influencers, and very high volume bot-like accounts, these amplified campaigns have been extremely effective at building momentum around ‘The Great Awakening’ and other ‘revolution’ narratives.

NARRATIVE 3 - GENERAL & MEDICAL CONSPIRACIES
BBMI: 49.48% (HIGH)
Summary:
Blackbird.AI identified a variety of conspiracy fuelled narratives that were highly effective at compounding fear across many distinct cohorts. The execution of these campaigns were one of the catalysts that convinced many people to ignore medical advice around COVID-19 and have fragmented safety policies in the USA from state to state.

NEW: COHORT ANALYSIS
A cohort indicates the disposition and “tribe” that a particular account falls under based on historical behaviors and content of the account. Cohort analysis allows an understanding of the intentions and motives of an account or group of accounts pushing manipulated content within one or more narratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COHORTS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conspiracy Theorists</td>
<td>Communities that believe in what they deem broad societal conspiracies including UFOs, Flat Earth, moon landing hoaxes and other pseudoscience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Populists</td>
<td>Left/right wing economic nationalists critical of market liberalism, neoliberalism, and globalization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Vaxxers</td>
<td>A subtype of conspiracy theorist, having appeal across the left-right political spectrum. Generally believe that vaccinations are more harmful to health than what they are meant to inoculate against. Belief range from the notion that vaccines cause autism to global conspiracies for depopulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Trolls</td>
<td>Dark corners of the internet like 4chan and 8chan, typically men united by inside jokes, massive social events which involve tricking media, misogyny, racism, and broad disaffection with contemporary society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt-Right</td>
<td>Also go by ‘the new right’, united by core beliefs that white identity is under attack by global multiracial forces who utilize “political correctness” and “social justice”, among other things, to undermine “white culture” and a strict notion of “Western civilization” and often overlap with white supremacist cohorts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-Lean</td>
<td>Focused on anti-MAGA and anti-conservative content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAnon</td>
<td>A far-right conspiracy theory that has mutated into an ideology that unites other disaffected cohort. Believes in a secret plan by the alleged “deep state”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Power</td>
<td>Encompasses a number of complementary movements and groups, from White supremacists, nationalists, Klansmen and Neo-Nazis and generally seek to establish a white ethnostate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BLACKBIRD.AI

Blackbird.AI uses machine learning, network analysis and propagation patterns to identify and combat disinformation.

Our proprietary AI-Driven SaaS platform provides a sophisticated understanding of both manipulation and harmful digital media. The Blackbird Platform surfaces synthetic amplification from bots and bot-nets, delegitimiztion campaigns, and meme-driven propaganda.

METHOD

Blackbird.AI employs our proprietary AI toolsets to screen large volumes of social and news media. Blackbird.AI’s system is based on man-machine cooperative intelligence with Blackbird.AI’s expert analyst team.

Blackbird.AI’s system monitors digital media algorithmically to look for subtle patterns in the data that suggest deliberate manipulation. Our methods find:

- Suspicious patterns of propagation and sharing
- Manipulated messaging around specific content including hashtags, URLs, and images
- Specific users and communities that are engaged in manipulation
- Evidence of falsification that was introduced via technical means
- Traffic that is “inorganically” generated via bots or coordinated user campaigns

Blackbird.AI’s platform automatically surfaces content with high disinformation threat risks so that human intelligence can be brought to bear selectively and on the items that appear most relevant for interpretation. This capability complements and greatly enhances both the efficiency and effectiveness of analyst-driven search and exploration as they understand emerging situations in the data.

The understanding of disinformation factors is critical to ensuring the integrity of the data upon which decisions of consequence are based and protects against the rising vulnerability to manipulation that exists in traditional business and social media insight methodology.
Blackbird.AI’s system also has tools to discover non-manipulated critical narratives. Not all potentially harmful narratives show high manipulation during early emergent stages and many influence campaigns intentionally use low influence accounts to amplify messaging while riding another narrative’s momentum. To accommodate for this, some factors that are considered by our platform include:

**High Volume Harmful Narratives**
High value special case: identify mutations or twists on long running topics that were initially classified as low threat, but suddenly increase in danger.

**Trending Harmful Narratives**
Fast growing conversations, more including spikes and inflection points.

**Early Warning**
Early stage harmful narratives and emergent dangerous conversations.

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**BLACKBIRD MANIPULATION INDEX**

The **Blackbird Manipulation Index (BBMI)** is a proprietary system designed to measure the degree to which the content of a social media post exhibits traits of being **manipulated**, or a user appears to be engaged in manipulation.

The assessment is based on features we use to score content which blends together attributes extracted from the data such as toxicity of language, communication patterns, network analysis and bot-like activity.
NARRATIVE 1: REOPEN - SAVE THE ECONOMY

CORE STATISTICS

Date Range: May 2nd - May 20th, 2020
Total Twitter Posts: 2,773,030
Languages: 57 - EN (73%), PT (20%), Others (7%)
Cross-Platform Reach: Viral
Cross-Platform Sentiment: Polarised

CRITICAL MANIPULATED ENTITIES

Top Manipulated Hashtags: FREEDOM, msm, VoterID, Coup, FACTSMATTER, Patriot, Democrat, Pelosi, USA, WeAreTheNewsNow
Top Manipulators: @yajudenz, @LotusOak2, @MILTONESPINOZAF, @AmericaDuped

ABSTRACT

OVERVIEW
Blackbird AI’s system uncovered high levels of manipulation within influence campaigns aimed at ‘reopening society’ following state mandated quarantines and the widespread closure of nonessential businesses. From the total 2,773,030 tweets analyzed, 1,240,376 tweets were flagged as manipulated with a BBMI of 44.73%.

Blackbird AI surfaced campaigns aimed to create polarization across a vast number of Americans through pressures driven by undertones of corporate, economic and political motives which resulted in public outcry and even political tension between states.

“Reopen America” quickly became a meme agent allowing a wide variety of REOPEN related narratives to reach a wide audience. Memes became the ultimate vessel in spreading disinformation rapidly in this environment, turning what was once a humorous part of internet culture into a dangerous weapon resulting in ‘share & repeat’ behaviour that greatly increased viral reach.

SPOTLIGHT 1

ASTROTURFED
Astroturfing is the practice of masking the sponsors of a message or organization (e.g., political, advertising, religious or public relations) to make it appear as though it originates from and is supported by grassroots participants. Blackbird discovered a number of privately owned media organizations pushing talking points across a vast backlinking architecture of websites, outwardly appearing as disconnected publication ventures. Their websites astroturfed the core ideas that came to constitute the foundation of the movement to ‘Reopen America,’ setting the stage for false viral stories.

These organizations utilized social media for targeted messaging to groups and individuals who were often aligned politically and socially, allowing content to continuously serve and fuel pre-existing echo chambers. These methods made it impossible for audiences to realize that many of the different media outlets they were consuming were operating under the umbrella of singular interest groups.
COORDINATION OF LOW INFLUENCE ACCOUNTS WITH SMALL AUDIENCES WORKED IN CONCERT TO SPREAD REOPEN THEMED MESSAGES.

EXAMPLES

- @tcot [Traditional Catholic Twitter] and @QuanFinancier spreading REOPEN themed messages. (Fig 1.1)
- Radio host Rick Dees - @rickdees YouTube Channel (Fig 1.2) contained short videos sloganeering plans to 'Re-open' America, tied to manipulated hashtags (#ReopeningPlan) as they began to trend, driving traffic back to his YouTube Channel (Fig 1.3).
- QAnon account @Plmyers spreading similar reopening slogans, including #itstime, a declarative linguistic unit used across a variety of sites such as MRC, a Salem Media venture (Fig 1.4), casting a wide reach of influence.

INVOLVED ENTITIES: Salem Media Group, Media Research Centre, Heritage Foundation, Rick Dees

HASHTAGS: #itstime #ReopeningPlan #backtowork #getbacktowork #launchamerica #hotair #MarshaBlackburn, #SenBlackburn #smallbusinesses #itstime #TexasAG #defy #defies #factory #plant #states

SPOTLIGHT 2

RE-OPEN AGITATORS AMPLIFICATION

Widely shared stories of Americans suffering from business shutdowns included memes and hashtags that further fueled the intense drive to REOPEN. These stories, while initially organic and of public interest were co-opted and spread by influencers and manipulation campaigns focused personas including "A Dallas Salon owner," "a Michigan barber," and "a New York tailor" which presented as faux-viral stories pushed and instatiated in a manner that drove several authentic communities to become synthetically galvanized under the slogan "Reopen America!". Examples include a UK far-right commentator @LATiffani amplifying Shelley Luther. We also observed #Blexit associated bot-like behaviour (Fig 1.5) when #Blexit personality @JLPtalk deemed Shelley Luther a "modern day Rosa Parks" (Fig 1.6 Tweet) and The Celler Report’s article (Fig 1.7) going against 'Democrat authoritarians'.
Involved Entities: Shelley Luther, Dallas salon, PJ Media, Michigan barber, NYC tailor, Michigan government “Militia”

Hashtags: #ShelleyLuther, #salon, #barber, #hairdressers, #barbershop, #Blexit, #Demexit, #michigan, #whitmer, #business, #restarts

USER COHORT ANALYSIS - HIGH VOLUME AMPLIFICATION ACCOUNTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USER NAME</th>
<th>COHORT</th>
<th># TWEETS</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@yojudenz</td>
<td>Populist</td>
<td>883600</td>
<td>Bot-like Account pushing NRA, MAGA, LiberateGenFlynn and anti-Democratic party content. Similar numbers of following/followers, over 80K tweets and mostly retweets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@LotusOak2</td>
<td>Anti-Vaxxers</td>
<td>79600</td>
<td>Content pushing antivax and conspiracy content. Almost 80K tweets, very close number of following/followers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@MILTONESPINOZAF</td>
<td>QAnon</td>
<td>862700</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing Qanon related conspiracy content. Similar number of following/followers. Mostly retweets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@AmericDuped</td>
<td>Conspiracy Theorist</td>
<td>475500</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing MAGA themed content, including “TeRust” comes. Similar number of following/followers. Mostly retweets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY

While the desire to REOPEN for economic causes certainly had a grassroots component based on genuine beliefs held by individuals that the ‘problem is far better than the cure’, these perceptions did not all form organically. Blackbird.AI found evidence of many synthetically amplified narratives calling for REOPEN. Manipulation campaigns promulgated by special interest groups helped shape the discussions and created a deeper movement identity among many different groups calling for the REOPEN and heavily manipulating share of voice.
NARRATIVE 2: MILITIAS & THE 'BOOGALOO' MOVEMENT

CORE STATISTICS
Date Range: May 2nd - May 20th, 2020
Total Twitter Posts: 610,406
Languages: 43 - EN (95%), Others (5%)
Cross-Platform Reach: Viral
Cross-Platform Sentiment: Negative

CRITICAL MANIPULATED ENTITIES
Top Manipulators: @FairTax4America1, @otiose94, @mbees39, @GoldStuart

ABSTRACT

OVERVIEW
On May 1st, 2020, an armed militia held an angry protest in the Michigan statehouse. The “American Patriot Rally” started on the statehouse steps, where members of the Michigan Liberty Militia stood guard with weapons and tactical gear. Soon after, they made their way inside the Capitol along with a large number of protesters, who demanded to be let into the House floor. Others went to the Senate gallery where senators had quickly been suited with bulletproof vests. In the lead-up to these protests and others like it across many other states around the country, there was significant online inflammation of what was characterized as the government’s unusual and overbearing reach into private lives in the form of closing down cities and businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One group in particular, dubbed the Boogaloo movement, saw the polarization around REOPEN narratives as an opportunity to expand their cause and visibility which they had done primarily around 2nd Amendment Rights and Open Carry.

Blackbird AI’s system uncovered high levels of manipulation within influence campaigns aimed at building momentum and a following behind the Boogaloo movement. From the 610,406 tweets analyzed, over 302,406 tweets resulted in a BBMI of 58.04%
SPOTLIGHT 1
REVOLT AGAINST AUTHORITY

Strained regional policy and resource allocation during COVID-19 were used as a smokescreen for "revolution." Boogaloo related accounts driving influence campaigns encouraged white nationalist rebellion with manipulative calls to action towards people of color to take up arms and battle police with additional subtle manipulation of anti-police sentiment across the general population.

The Boogaloo movement in particular speaks regularly of violence to law enforcement and government authority. "Boogaloo" is a coded signal, and often "dog whistles" to those who subscribe to ideas adjacent to white supremacy, nationalism, and genocidal race wars upon which establishing a hypothetical white ethnostate hinges. Boogaloo are comprised of a right-wing group of extremists who believe the United States is nearing a second civil war and maintain belief systems that align with white supremacists, militia members, and Qanon (far-right conspiracy theory detailing a secret plot by an alleged 'deep state').

EXAMPLES
• @JohnTitor55261 utilized ‘boogaloo’ to spread messages of inevitable civil war (Fig 2.1 & 2.2).
• Propaganda account, @NOTDumPhuk, hyped the potential for riots and a "blockbuster" revolution (Fig 2.3).
• @Cooh2, Spanish-language account followed by bot-like account @LaCronologia and @blackamericanconservative influenced anti-healthcare workers using a boogaloo decoy meme #conservativememes (Fig 2.4) while hijacking #Blexit tags.

Involved Entities: Big Igloo Bois, boogaloo bois, bigluau, Electric Boogaloo, black gun owners, black business; "being libertarian" and "conservative memes" facebook groups
Hashtags: #boogaloo, #bigigloo, #igloo, #bigluau, #bigaloo, #bigalaw, #pholosopher, #ancap, #bigaloo, #bois, #electricboogaloo, #blockbustour, #rememberryouroath, #taxes, #libertarian, #civilwar2, #civilians, #CoronakApocalypse, #thinblueline, #taxationistheft, #2a, #deterrence, #policestate2020, #america1st, #af, #walkaway, #blackconservatives, #conservativememes
**SPOTLIGHT 2**

**BUILDING HYKE ON PLATFORMS**

Influencers within Facebook groups tapped into paranoia around the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to "awaken to the new possibilities and revolution that was soon on the way." These messages piggybacked Q-Anon phrases such as "we the people". (Qanon proponents often co-opt typical patriotic discourse as a call towards armed warfare against the federal government).

**EXAMPLES**

- Rob Kroese’s tweet about the cruise industry collapse as a chance for anarcho-capitalist to live on the sea, with boogaloo meme ‘seasteading’ (Fig 2.5).
- User @StephenDillon15 tweeted prototypical "the clock is ticking" #Armday anticipation of "the boogalo" [violent civil war] (Fig 2.6).
- Bot-like user @CoastChan pushed blasts of "collapse" boogaloo material with "breaking news" sites that include Wuhan bioweapons theories.

**Involved Entities:** Rob Kroese, Stephen Dillon, Coast Chan

**Hashtags:** #balkanizedstates, #balkanization, #commander, #directorate, #cascaida, #rundaop, #seasteading, #boojahideen, #Armday, #CoronaApocalyps, #collapse, #coronachan, #femacamp, #collapsitarian
**SPOTLIGHT 3**  
**MULTICULTURAL ASTROTURFED DECOYS**

"Big igloo" sounds similar to "boogaloo" and has also morphed into a wearable meme to show others that you subscribe to this tribe and allows for identification. Both Hawaiian shirts and shirts with igloos on them have been observed at several recent right-wing protest events.

The Philosopher, an Asian-American woman and self-identified anarcho-capitalist who amplifies primarily boogaloo memes. She's been particularly effective at spreading the "Big Luau" and Hawaiian prints as coded boogaloo memes.

The Philosopher, is most active on her Facebook page (Fig 2.7), and has shared messaging "Is this the big igloo?!!!" #bigigloo #MAGA #Trump2020 Trump: Mobilizing military to 'rapidly' distribute coronavirus vaccine when it's ready (Fig 2.8 Article) referring to the start of civil war. This set the stage for other Twitter users like @TrollLevel11 to push a variety of low-engagement, high-BBMI posts (Fig 2.9) with hashtags invoking armed warfare with state governments, including this selection of tweets from several users engaged with various militia movements with which The Philosopher engages.

**Involved Entities:** The Philosopher  
**Hashtags:** #ancap, #bigigloo, #bigluau, #blackgunsmatter, #boogaloo, #boojahideen, #endthefed, #OathKeepers, #3 Percenters, #3%ers, #shallnotbeinfringed, #digitalsoldier

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SPOTLIGHT 4

MICHELLE MALKIN

Far right influencer Michelle Malkin, has recently gained notoriety for her activities with white national movements. The founder of Twitchy and Hot Air, now both owned by Salem Media Group, hosted #MalkinLive, a series called #ConversationsWithTheBanned, with a direct platform to white power personalities, anti-vax groups and associated influencers, including Dr. Judy Mikowitz from the conspiracy documentary "Plandemic". Michelle Malkin tweeted announcing her live conversation with Judy Mikowitz (Fig 2.9.1). These types of relationships utilize network effects between large media groups, online influencers and synthetically amplified documentaries like Plandemic for rapid exposure to a wide audience.

Involved Entities: Michelle Malkin, Judy Mikowitz
Hashtags: #malkinlive, #conversationswiththebanned, #thebanned, #WhoIsNext, #StillAThing, #FightTheCensors, #groyper, #af, #americafirst, #nickfuentes

USER COHORT ANALYSIS - High Volume Amplification Accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USER NAME</th>
<th>COHORT</th>
<th># TWEETS</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@FairTax4America</td>
<td>Populist</td>
<td>249,500</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing populist and 2nd Amendment content, as well as stock market information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@otiose94</td>
<td>Left Lean</td>
<td>484,900</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing left leaning political and news commentary. Very high tweet volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@mbees39</td>
<td>QAnon</td>
<td>171,600</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing Qanon and MAGA content. High tweet volume, high retweet percentage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@ColdStuart</td>
<td>QAnon</td>
<td>210,200</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing MAGA, KAG, and Qanon themed content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY

This narrative showed very clear intention from multiple influence campaigns and influencers that aimed to energize and radicalize their audiences into action. Statements are strong and bold, with strategy designed to clearly polarize and capture attention to pull closely like-minded individuals and build ‘hype’. Between a network of popular influencers, special interest groups, and very high BBMI bot-like accounts narratives related to Boogaloo have amplified campaigns and have been extremely effective at creating a tension and energizing revolution and pro-militia themes.
NARRATIVE 3: GENERAL & MEDICAL CONSPIRACIES

CORE STATISTICS

Date Range: May 2nd - May 20th, 2020
Total Twitter Posts: 7,403,979
Languages: 63 - EN (82%), PT (9%), Others (9%)
Cross-Platform Reach: Viral
Cross-Platform Sentiment: Negative

CRITICAL MANIPULATED ENTITIES

Top Manipulated Hashtags: ThanQ, Favipiravir, 国家破壊分子 (National Destruction Molecule), 武漢 (Wuhan), VivianDsena, animated, T705, Avigan, arm, DS

Top Manipulators: @Skowtura_Ini, @TornadoNewsLink, @liltigerllll, @bbi58

ABSTRACT

OVERVIEW
Blackbird.AI’s system uncovered high levels of manipulation within influence campaigns amplifying and spreading conspiracies during the COVID-19 pandemic. From the 7,403,979 tweets analyzed, over 3,666,488 tweets resulted in a BBMI of 49.48%.

SPOTLIGHT 1
ANTI-EVERYTHING: PLANDEMIC

A 26-minute video called “Plandemic”, claimed a nefarious cabal of elite were using COVID-19 and the eventual vaccine to profit and gain power. The video featured a discredited scientist, Judy Mikovits, who claimed her research around coronaviruses had been buried. “Plandemic” went online on May 4 and rapidly gained traction on Facebook pages frequented by conspiracy theorists and anti-vaxxers who shared the Plandemic YouTube line, at which time, the video went mainstream.
Within a week, this highly conspiratorial video had been viewed eight million times and had tens of thousands of posts discussing it. Pandemic combined Anti-Vax, Anti-Mask, Anti-5G, Anti-WHO, Anti-Lockdown, Anti-Abortion, Anti-Censorship and Anti-NWO together into a synthetically amplified event. Plandemic was the most cohesive and highly manipulated piece of media to date during the COVID-19 pandemic. By platforming Judy Mikovitz under the guise of “fighting censorship,” Pandemic created a shared discourse between conspiracy theorists, white power activists, Qanon and anti-vaxxers where their ideologies intersected. The following tweets illustrate this point as well as the broader strokes of the Pandemic moment, from the various users listed utilizing #plandemic (Fig 3.1 to 3.3), and #scamdemic, often followed with #pandemic. Further examples showing “Fauci’s pandemic is A #scamdemic” (Fig 3.4 to 3.6).

Involved Entities: Mikki Willis, Judy Mikowitz, London Real, David Icke, Michelle Malkin, John F. Kennedy Jr., Unz Review, Zerohedge, Salem-owned Hot Air

Hashtags: #plandemic, commissionscam, #xmrv, #scamdemic #vaccines, #thecureisworse, #nih, #ppe, #masks, #HIV, #AIDS, #makingyoussick, #billgatesisevil, #policestate, #martiallaw, #billgates, #researcher, #suicide, #herdimmunity, #swedensright, #AmericaHeldHostage, #FreedomOverFear, #WakeupAmerica, #endthelockdown, #endtheshutdown, #thecureisworse, #theconservativetreehouse

SPOTLIGHT 2

ANTI-MASK MEMES

Anti-mask narratives were very prevalent and spread in the photo format of printable faked legal documents (Fig 3.7 to 3.9) exempting people from mandatory face coverings within private businesses. Many people did successfully print these documents and excused themselves from wearing masks in public.
Though different permutations of anti-mask and its ‘document set’ circulated, most of the memes urged Americans that being forced to wear a mask was an infringement on their freedoms and urged the public to use these anti-mask documents to be “exempt from the Governor’s regulation Mandating Face Mask usage in Public” due to medical reasons. The standard rationale provided in these documents urged Americans to invoke the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The idea was amplified on Twitter in usual fashion Accounts such as @SheepNoMore retweeted instances of user stories on Twitter where users relayed “successful” utilizations of this hack of public health. These instances were then circulated on Facebook in Reopen-themed groups as well as COVID conspiracy pages.

These rapidly spreading campaigns exploited not only public health, but also took aim at a corporate target. Costco, has found itself at the end of many boycott-themed attacks since the pandemic started. #boycottcostco became linked to a narrative around masks and anti-Costco rallying cry to Reopen America and Costcos infringement on civil liberties due to mask policies.

Examples from popular Qanon and 9/11 truther propaganda account @SheepKnowMore, showcased an example how to avoid wearing masks (Fig 3.9.1) and using ‘one of us’ language (Fig 3.9.2) to strengthen follower ties. Memetic attacks on big box store Costco continued with the persons of the ‘mask enforcer’ #costcokevin, and the popular alternative ‘No Mask Norman’ (Fig 3.9.3).

Involved Entities: SheepNoMore, Costco
Hashtags: #hipaa, #aca, #covid19,#costco, #boycottcostco, #covidiots, #CoronaHoax, #manufacturedcrisis, #FACTSMATTER
**SPOTLIGHT 3**

**BLACK PERCEPTION OF THE PANDEMIC**

Blackbird.AI analyzed the spread of a viral “whistleblowing” video from a nurse, that stated “Blue State healthcare workers do not care about black patients.” In another example, Black healthcare workers, particularly those who care for the elderly, were depicted in decontextualized video footage beating nursing home residents. The latter campaign received traction from notable politicians and was shared by Andy Ngo, editor at @TPostMillennial (Fig 3.9.4). Further, #Blexit / #Walkaway influencer Terrence Williams raised negative sentiment towards Dr. Fauci in several tweets (Fig 3.9.5) and Candace Owens tweeted 20+ times about the virus and related conspiracies with her audience often being Black supporters and/or potential #Blexit converts (Fig 3.9.6 to 3.9.8).

**Involved Entities:** Terrence Williams, Candace Owens, Donald Trump, Andy Ngo

**Hashtags:** #Blexit, #Demexit, #Blacklivesmatter, #notheroes, #minoritypatients, #nursinghomes, #nycnurse, #mustwatch, #ventilators, #Hydroxychloroquine, #nurses, #nursetwitter, #notheroes, #FilmYourHospital, #FilmYourHospitals, #emptyhospitals, #FakeNewsEpidemic, #HospitalsExposed

**USER COHORT ANALYSIS - High Volume Amplification Accounts**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@Skowtura_Ini</td>
<td>Conspiracy Theorists</td>
<td>304,600</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing conspiracy theories and sharing news links. Very high tweet volume and reuse of the same hashtags.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@TornadoNewsLink</td>
<td>Conspiracy Theorists</td>
<td>205,500</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing conspiracy theories. High tweet volume and similar following/Follower numbers. Amplification of similarly themed accounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@lililgerlil</td>
<td>Populist</td>
<td>242,800</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing conspiracy theories. High tweet volume and similar following/Follower numbers. Amplification of similarly themed accounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@bbl58</td>
<td>QAnon</td>
<td>354,600</td>
<td>Bot-like account pushing QAnon content. High tweet volume and similar following/Follower numbers. Amplification of similarly themed accounts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

These narratives were highly influential at compounding fear across communities, using past and present conspiracy narratives to put forth a compelling proposal that filled the cracks. The execution of these campaigns produced an inert momentum at having a strong pushback against government rule and state based recommendations.
CONCLUSION

Over the coming months we can expect to see an increased volume of disinformation campaigns as uncertainty rises around COVID-19 recovery. These influence campaigns will continue to broadly affect individuals, communities, industries, and governments.

How will impacted businesses and already struggling industries respond?
How will political systems reinvent themselves and adapt based on new demands?
How will citizens of societies treat one another in times of uncertainty?

While these questions swirl, it is clear that while not exhaustive, Blackbird.AI’s analysis can conclude that there is a shadow network of threat actors fomenting dissent and sowing discord between citizens of societies and their governments. The objective appears to be spreading distrust and even open violence towards authority and rule of law with calls to drive violent movements.

Blackbird will continue to use AI and human intelligence to monitor and analyze ongoing events and narrative manipulation activity that seeks to influence the public and further polarize society during the COVID-19 pandemic in our ongoing Blackbird.AI Intelligence Reports.

To read our prior COVID-19 Disinformation Intelligence Reports click here.