

# Accelerationism

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An overview of extremist narratives about the need for societal collapse to preserve the white race

## What is the purpose of this document?

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This document provides an overview of **white supremacist accelerationism** and is one in a series of extremism briefing notes produced by the [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#) (ISD) out of a long-running partnership with Microsoft\*. The purpose of these documents is to provide **entry-level context and background** about various extremist and conspiratorial narratives and movements. These are not intended as comprehensive deep-dives. Rather, they present key concepts, (conspiracy) theories, terminology and imagery deployed by the given movements or narratives. Further reading recommendations are provided at the end of each document, should readers want to learn more.

*\*Microsoft makes no statement as to the accuracy of the contents of this document. The contents herein are a product of ISD and are provided for informational purposes only.*

**CONTENT WARNING:** this document contains material that may be harmful, triggering or traumatizing to some readers.

## FAQ

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### How are these briefing notes produced?

They are informed by both literature review and digital research using **publicly accessible** websites, social media pages, channels and forums. This briefing note was published in May 2021 and is based on research conducted from March to April 2021.

### What topics do they cover?

Topics span the ideological spectrum, covering prevalent extremist theories and narratives, as well as specific extremist movements. The scope ranges, with some briefing notes covering specific conspiracy theories like the great replacement, and others looking at broader, overarching issues like extreme misogyny online.

### Can I share these and/or refer to them in my work?

You may share them with other colleagues if you deem this is relevant to their work. **Please do not share them outside of your immediate organization or with the general public.** You may refer to them in your work, bearing in mind that these are entry-level only and that the contents may prove triggering for those not familiar with the topic. Should you want additional resources on this or other topics related to disinformation, hate and/or extremism, please email ISD via the contact details provided below.

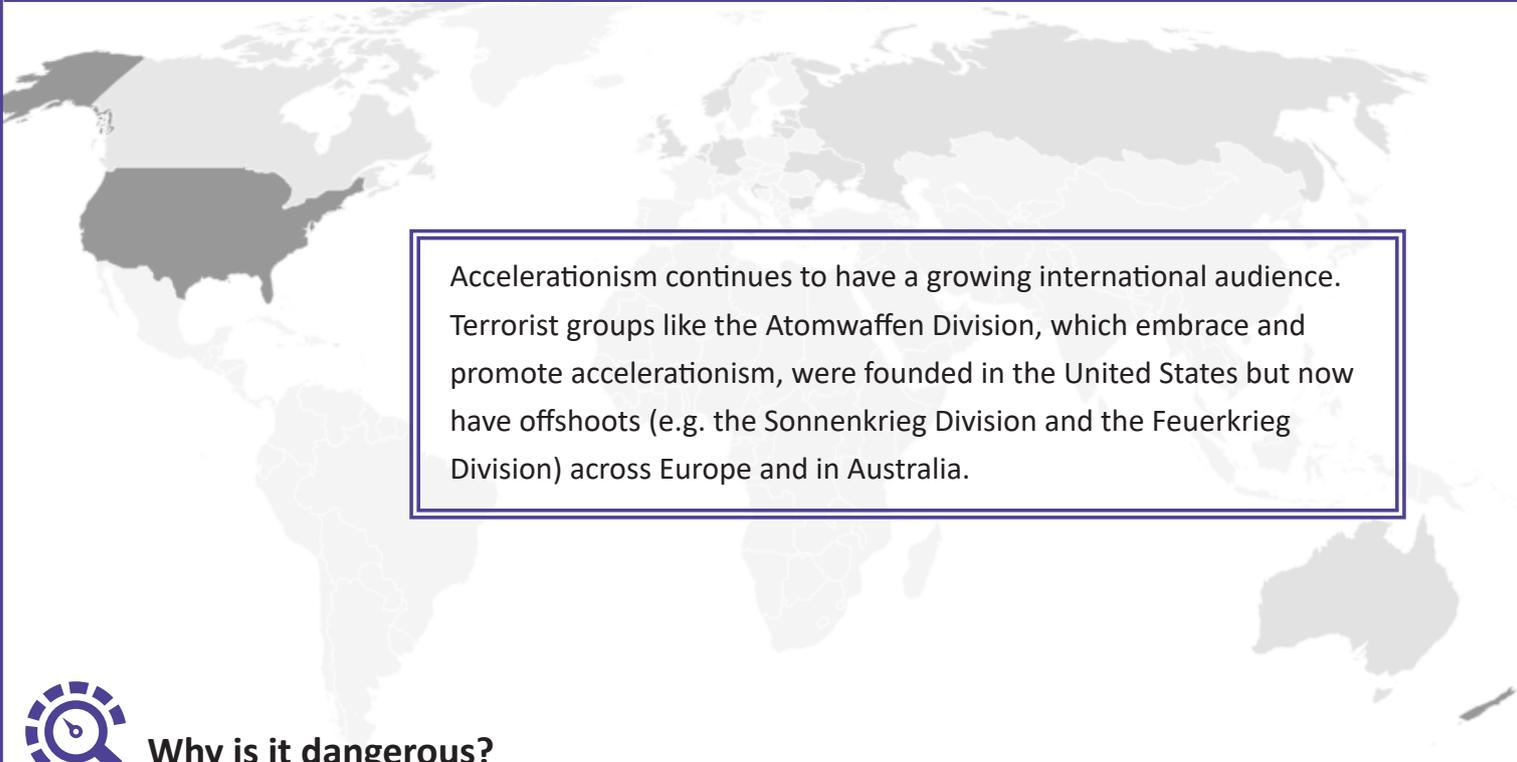
## Additional questions?

Get in touch with ISD's Charlotte Moeyens at [crlm@isdglobal.org](mailto:crlm@isdglobal.org)



## Accelerationism and white supremacy - bringing about societal collapse to preserve the white race

Accelerationism is a term used by white supremacist and other extremist groups to refer to “their desire to hasten the collapse of society as we know it”. Generally, accelerationism is used in the context of white genocide conspiracy theorism, which believes white people are under threat and are being systematically targeted through immigration, multiculturalism and other means. A collapse of modern societal structures and political systems is seen as the only means through which to stop these perceived injustices against white people. Indeed, many accelerationist groups desire this collapse and call for replacing modern society and governance with one founded on ethnonationalism.



Accelerationism continues to have a growing international audience. Terrorist groups like the Atomwaffen Division, which embrace and promote accelerationism, were founded in the United States but now have offshoots (e.g. the Sonnenkrieg Division and the Feuerkrieg Division) across Europe and in Australia.



### Why is it dangerous?

Accelerationism is at its core an encouragement of civil discord that employs an “ends justify the means” approach towards violence. Most white supremacist accelerationists view violence as a necessary means for catalyzing societal collapse and implementing new power structures that prioritize the “needs” of white people. **There have already been notable instances of violence affiliated with accelerationist ideology.** For example, Brenton Tarrant, who perpetrated the terror attack against the Muslim community of Christchurch in 2019, dedicated an entire section of his “manifesto” to accelerationism. The perpetrator of the Poway synagogue shooting in 2019 similarly expressed accelerationist beliefs, saying he “used a gun for the same reason that Brenton Tarrant used a gun... the goal is for the US government to start confiscating guns. People will defend their rights to own a firearm - **civil war has just started**”. Accelerationism is therefore not just dangerous because of its potential to encourage violence, but in the fact that **violence is seen as *the primary means to bring about the desired goal of societal collapse***.

## Background

Accelerationism comes from an amalgamation of:

- **Neoreaction**, or NRx - a doctrine developed by Nick Land and Curtis Yarvin, which [claims democracy doesn't work nor does it allow for good governance](#). Neoreaction instead embraces autocracy or authoritarian rule, where a single individual is given full power to lead. Neoreactionaries often liken what they perceive to be valid and effective national leadership to that of corporate governance, where a national ruler should lead a country similarly to how a chief executive officer would their company.
- **White supremacist beliefs** that [“white identity’ is under attack by multicultural forces using ‘political correctness’ and ‘social justice’ to undermine white people and ‘their’ civilization.”](#) As opposed to neoreactionary belief, which posits democracy as the biggest obstacle to a better future, white supremacists tend to scapegoat Jewish people and other religious and ethnic minorities as the greatest barrier to a future that upholds white dominion.
- **Siege culture** - a violent subculture of white supremacy inspired by [James Mason](#) and his neo-Nazi essays, *SIEGE*. Mason argues that “only the full collapse of American democracy and society will bring conditions sufficient to bring order through Nazism”, and calls for violence to expedite this collapse. More on *SIEGE* can be found on the next page.

Accelerationism derives from [cross-pollination](#) of these ideologies, combining anti-democratic neoreactionary beliefs with white supremacist siege culture to manifest a belief that the [“future of the white race is bleak”](#), and that a better future can be secured through an escalation of violence and disorder, which will facilitate the collapse and replacement of existing political and societal structures (referred to by accelerationists as [“the System”](#)).

### Accelerationism Visualized

1. Civil and social disorder or violence takes place\*, in some cases unrelated to extremism and in others inspired by past white supremacist violence like the Christchurch terror attacks.

5. Violence increases until outright civil war breaks out, facilitating collapse of the current “System”.

2. Reticent or quietist white supremacists are motivated to contribute to civil disorder, either through exploiting current events or past violence, or through committing violence themselves.

3. Increased restrictions and/or crackdown by “the System” in attempt to quell this increase in civil disorder.

4. More people “realise” the failures and impositions of the current “System”, and start to actively oppose it.

\*Accelerationists view most phenomena that spur public anxiety and/or disorder, including things like [COVID-19](#), as potential catalysts for recruitment and eventual societal collapse.

## Related Narratives and Terminology\*

### White Genocide

White supremacist accelerationists believe white people are experiencing an ongoing **genocide** caused by multiculturalism, immigration and deliberate attacks on white people both 1) culturally, through politically correct establishment, and 2) individually, through violence committed by minorities. A collapse of modern political and social institutions is seen as the only way to counter this threat and to reimplement structures that prioritize white people. Similar conspiracies like the “great replacement”\*\*, which argues white Europeans and Americans are being [“deliberately replaced at an ethnic and cultural level through migration and the growth of minority communities”](#), are also prominent in accelerationist circles.

### Race War and Racist Tropes

The societal collapse desired by accelerationists is often framed in the context of a “race war” that would bring about the end of democracy and enable the implementation of a white nationalist system of governance.

To this end, white supremacist accelerationists propagate racist tropes that treat non-white communities as inferior - physically, emotionally and intellectually - to white people. Further, “race-mixing”, non-white immigration and multiculturalism are all seen as part and parcel of efforts to decimate the white race. Most accelerationists therefore desire racial segregation through the implementation of a **white ethnostate**.

### SIEGE and Siege Culture

*SIEGE* by James Mason is a compilation of neo-Nazi essays. The book graphically incites violence against Jewish and Black communities across the US, claiming “civil war, a total revolution” would give these communities the “death they so richly deserve”. The book is so influential in white supremacist circles that it has inspired what is now dubbed [“siege culture”](#), referring to violent accelerationist groups and their forums online.

### The Turner Diaries

*The Turner Diaries* is a foundational text of contemporary white supremacist movements in the US. Written by [William Pierce](#), leader of the neo-Nazi National Alliance until his death in 2002, the fiction novel tells the story of Eric Turner, who, as part of a white supremacist revolutionary army, helps overthrow the US government and implement an Aryan republic.

The novel is rife with antisemitism, giving a platform to antisemitic tropes that claim Jewish people are deceitful and that they are “Satan’s spawn.” Further, violence is a key part of the story, presented as a necessary means through which to achieve white domination not just in the US, but globally.

The novel is affiliated with notable instances of violence, including Timothy McVeigh’s terror attack in Oklahoma City in 1995, which killed 168 and injured over 600. The white supremacist terrorist group, The Order, was founded by an affiliate of Pierce and, inspired by *The Turner Diaries*, committed assassinations and other crimes in an attempt to incite white revolution.



\*Narratives and terminology provided are a sample and should not be taken as exhaustive.

\*\* For ISD’s briefing note about the “great replacement” conspiracy, please contact ISD at [crlm@isdglobal.org](mailto:crlm@isdglobal.org).

## Related Narratives and Terminology\*

### Antisemitism

Tying in with conspiracies about white genocide are antisemitic beliefs that blame Jewish people for the perceived threats against white people, building on antisemitic tropes that claim Jews control major financial and media institutions around the world. The Anti-Defamation League [reports](#), for example, an anonymous 8Chan post that reads “‘acceleration’ means... making things worse... [Brenton Tarrant] understood that ZOG would double down on censorship, gun grabbing, free speech, etc.,” where ZOG stands for “Zionist Occupied Government”, a conspiracy that claims the US government is controlled by Jewish people. Here, the user clearly alludes to the accelerationist domino effect, in which the Christchurch terror attack is seen as a catalyst for increased government imposition and censorship, which would inspire those “on the fence” to choose anti-state groups and/or to contribute to civil disorder through violence or otherwise.

### Tying in Contemporary Events

Accelerationists leverage contemporary events to recruit and further their agenda to take down “the System.” Among others, accelerationist discourse in the past year has addressed:

- **the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests**, especially those where there was confrontation with law enforcement. These were viewed by some accelerationists as potential catalysts for civil war. White supremacists have also “infiltrated” these protests, [vandalizing properties to provoke disorder](#).
- **COVID-19** - where public confusion spurred by inconsistent government messaging has been exploited by accelerationists to “prove” that [existing political structures are incapable of managing crises](#). **COVID-19 conspiracism** is also prevalent in accelerationist discourse, where [the virus is claimed to be a weapon](#) used by the New World Order\*\*, the Chinese government and others to decimate the white race.
- **the Second Amendment** - accelerationists rely on increased gun control legislation to catalyse disorder and violence. They hope stricter gun ownership legislation will inspire (violent) backlash and encourage more individuals to take on the accelerationist agenda of societal collapse.
- **January 6th storming of the Capitol** - the insurrection at the US Capitol Building on January 6th 2021 was celebrated by many accelerationists as a [key catalyst for their desired civil war](#).

These are but a few examples that demonstrate how accelerationists rely on public disorder and violence to further their narratives - accelerationists believe that the more chaos ensues, the more people are likely to abandon moderate views or political stances for the extreme.



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*\*\* For ISD’s briefing note about the New World Order conspiracy, please contact ISD at [crlm@isdglobal.org](mailto:crlm@isdglobal.org).*

## Affiliated Movements and Forums

<p><u>Atomwaffen Division (AWD) and its offshoots</u></p>		<p>AWD is a white supremacist group that <a href="#">“encourages violence to intimidate minority populations in pursuit of its goal of destabilizing society to instigate a race war.”</a> Similar movements are dotted across Europe and Australia, the biggest of which are the Sonnenkrieg Division, Feuerkrieg Division and Antipodean Resistance.</p>
<p><u>The Base</u></p>		<p>The Base, founded in 2018, is a militant neo-Nazi group that claims a race war is a necessary and desirable means to catalyze societal collapse and implement a white ethnostate. The group recruits online and offline, with related propaganda sighted throughout the US and Canada. The group has also been tied with a number of arrests, with charges ranging from drug possession to conspiracy to commit murder.</p>
<p><u>The Order</u></p>		<p>The Order was a terrorist group active in the 1980s and founded by Robert Jay Matthews, a known affiliate of William Pierce, author of the racist and violent text, “The Turner Diaries”. The Order is responsible for multiple felonies, including assassinations, committed to incite a white supremacist revolution. Although the group is no longer active, their members are still <a href="#">celebrated as heroes and martyrs</a> amongst contemporary white supremacists.</p>
<p><u>Siege-Culture Fascist Forge Iron March</u></p>		<p>Accelerationists have a significant digital presence, using existing platforms like Telegram, Parler, Discord and others to network. They have also created their own forums, which have served as hotbeds for planning and inciting violence and as directories for extremist propaganda, including Mason’s <i>SIEGE</i>. Iron March, for example, is a now defunct neo-Nazi forum that is <a href="#">“considered to have been key to the formation of [AWD]”</a>, which has been linked to white supremacist violence offline. Fascist Forge is considered a successor to Iron March and similarly emphasizes violence as a means to expedite societal collapse.</p>

## The Accelerationist “Brand” - Imagery and Slogans

White supremacist accelerationist movements generally use logos and imagery that present “grittiness” or “roughness” and militancy. This imagery often integrates neo-Nazi symbolism. This is supplemented with narratives that propagate racist and antisemitic tropes. Terminology found in white supremacist forums embodies the homogeneity with which perceived enemies of the white race are viewed (e.g. “the Jew”, intended as a catch-all phrase to refer to all Jewish people, or “the System”, referring to existing governance and mainstream institutions and media).



The “[SS bolts](#)” (pictured right) derive from the Schutzstaffel, a paramilitary organization operating under Hitler in Nazi Germany. Other symbols co-opted by Nazism and used by white supremacists today include the [Sonnenrad](#) and the [Wolfsangel](#).

## Further Reading

The following sources were used to inform the contents of this document and are recommended for further reading about accelerationism.

### **On accelerationism specifically:**

- [“Accelerationism in America: Threat Perceptions”](#) by the Global Network on Extremism & Technology (GNET)
- [“Accelerationism: the obscure idea inspiring white supremacist killers around the world”](#) by Zack Beauchamp at Vox News
- [“Neo-Nazi Accelerationists Celebrating Attack on Congress as Start of Civil War”](#) by Ben Makuch and Mack Lamoreux for VICE
- [“‘There is no political solution’: Accelerationism in the White Power Movement”](#) by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)
- [“Think Global, Act Local: Reconfiguring Siege Culture”](#) by Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST)
- [“White Supremacists Embrace ‘Accelerationism’”](#) by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

### **On related narratives and movements:**

- [Atomwaffen Division](#) by the SPLC
- [“Atomwaffen and the SIEGE parallax: how one neo-Nazi’s life’s work is fuelling a younger generation”](#) by the SPLC
- [“COVID-19 Disinformation Briefing - Far-Right Mobilisation”](#) by ISD
- [“From memes to race war: How extremists use popular culture to lure recruits”](#) by Marc Fisher for the Washington Post
- [“Popular Among Anti-government Extremists, ‘Second Amendment Sanctuary’ Resolutions Pose Risks”](#) by the SPLC
- [“Special Report: the Atomwaffen Division: the Evolution of the White Supremacy Threat”](#) by the Soufan Center
- [“The Alt-Right is Killing People”](#) by the SPLC
- [The Base](#) by the ADL
- [“The Great Replacement”](#) by ISD
- [“The Long Road to the Capitol”](#) three-part blog series by ISD
- [“Uniting for Total Collapse: The January 6th Boost to Accelerationism”](#) by Brian Hughes and Cynthia Miller-Idriss for the Combating Terrorism Center
- [“Visions of Chaos: Weighing the Violent Legacy of Iron March”](#) by SPLC
- [“White Supremacists and the Weaponization of the Coronavirus”](#) - intel brief by the Soufan Center
- [“White Supremacists Embrace ‘Race War’”](#) by the ADL

This document is part of a series of briefing notes ISD is producing about various extremist narratives and movements. For more information about this document or the series in general, please contact ISD’s Charlotte Moeyens at [crlm@isdglobal.org](mailto:crlm@isdglobal.org).

For more information about ISD, please visit [www.isdglobal.org](http://www.isdglobal.org).

