Understanding and responding to Right-wing extremism: current challenges and trends

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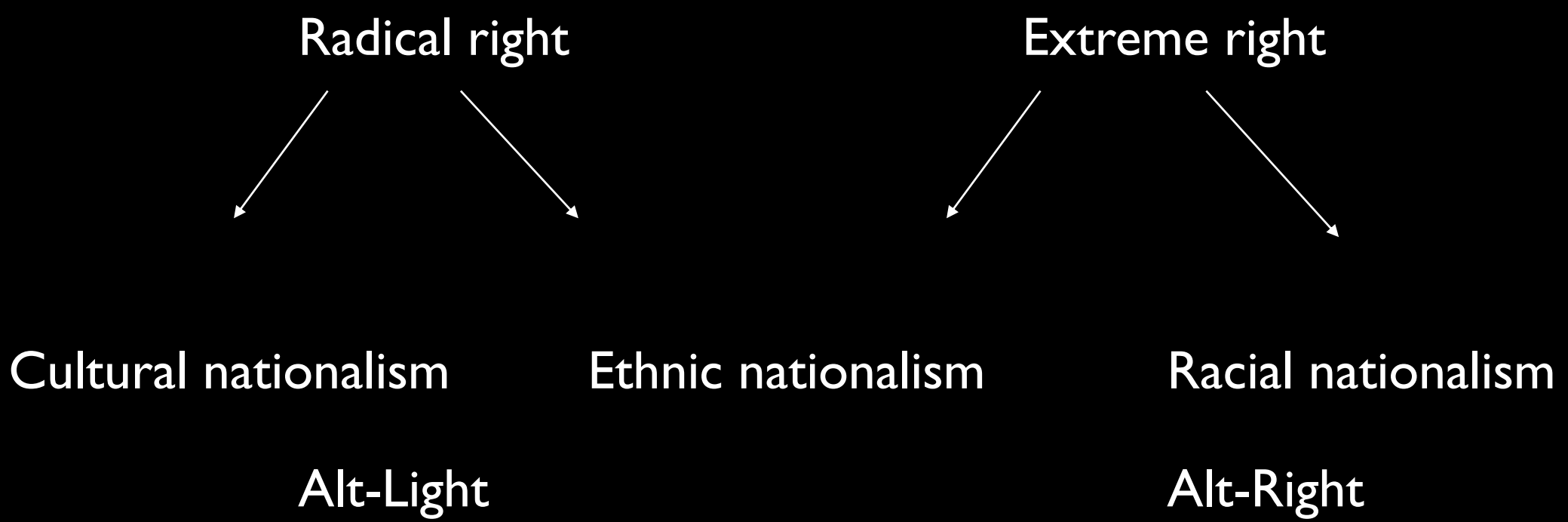
Goal of the presentation

- International perspectives of the violent right-wing extremist scene.
- A story of change.
- Examples of practices – online perspectives?

The Far Right



Elements of the ideology:

Anti Semitism – modern theory: ZOG (Zionist Occupational Government)

Racial ideology

Sexuality and gender

"birthrates, birthrates, birthrates"

Inspirations

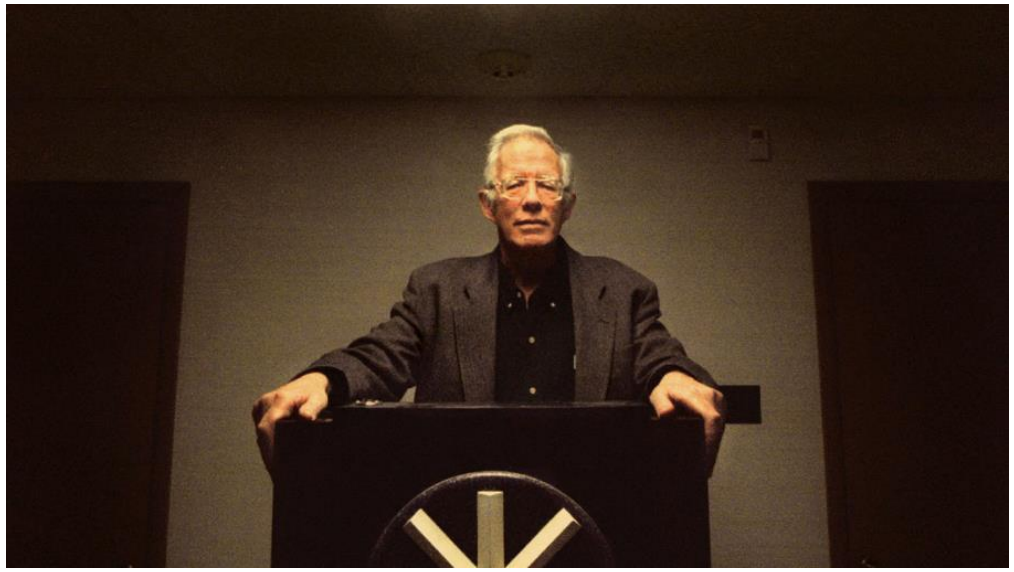
Third Reich

William Pierce / Andrew Macdonald:
the Turner Diaries & the Hunter
(Cell formation & Lone Actor)

American group: **The Order**

James Mason - **The Siege** (Book)

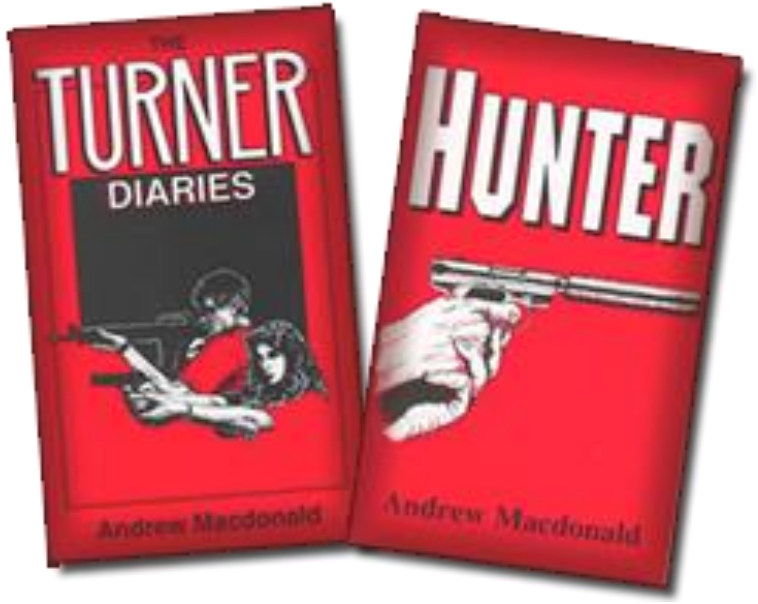
Wiliam L. Pierce pseudonym Andrew McDonalds



The Hunter, and The Turner Diaries

- Inspired attacks, groups, and other writers.

- The Hunter – tells the story of lone-wolf shooter Oskar Yeager (Germ. Hunter), kills inter-racial couples in sniper attacks. Inspired by Joseph Paul Franklin, killed 22 people.
- The Turner Diaries – 2099, looks back at the revolution. The inspiration for small cell warfare.



International perspectives on violent right-wing extremism

Trends and developments - diversification:

- Approaching mainstream politics
- Escalating to accelerationism – the role of the pandemic
- Liaison with anti-vaxx / anti-lockdown / anti-establishment groups
- New forums
- The war in Ukraine – dividing the scene

Trends and developments

- "According to a **social identity theory of extremism**, extremist ideologies are at heart **rooted in a crisis-solution construct** – a crisis narrative presents an imminent threat to one's identity, requiring decisive action. For extremists, this necessitates **radical, supremacist and often violent solutions to protect against an existential crisis facing the 'in-group'**.

  The EU's counter-terrorism coordinator Gilles de Kerchove warns that history shows "**terrorists and violent extremists, aiming to change societies and governmental systems through violence, seek to exploit major crises to achieve their objectives**"."

Milles Comerford, ISD.
Vision of humanity

Trends and developments

- “The risk is that if the movement radicalises further, there may also be a risk of more coordinated violence, including terrorism”

  - Peter Neumann

  The Independent 19/1-22

Examples of violent attacks:

- Michael Kretschmer, Saxony
  - foiled assassination plot
  December 2021

- Sigrid Kaag, Netherlands
  - attacked by anti-vaxxers
  January 2022

- Antonella Viola, Italy
  - immunology expert
  January 2022

Key challenges

- VFEE use the **online space** to:

  - spread their ideology

  - reach vulnerable individuals

  - recruit online

  - spread of attacks, ideas, materials, etc.

  By forming new relations individuals feels seen, heard and important.

  Feeling of community.

Key challenges

- VFEE ideology:
    - Fragmentation of ideas
    - Loosening of structures, lone actors
    - Diversification of groups, methods and modus operandi

Key challenges - recruitment

- Us-Them mentality
- Discrete – Covert – Not always open with their intentions or ideological orientation
- Funny memes – slowly shifting messages to more explicit propaganda and recruitment
- Exploiting isolation, powerlessness, uncertainty.

Key challenges – Online work

- Online is not in a vacuum
- Reach – credibility
- Needs: technical skills, training in online approaches, funding, mandate – cooperation both with other online services and offline services

White Power

Neo-Nazism

Racial occult groups

Eco-Fascism

White Jihad

Islamophobia

Christian racial theologies

White supremacy

Esoteric-Fascism

Identarian

Anti-Semitism

Alt-Right

Accelerationism

- **Accelerationism: "the insistence that the only radical political response to capitalism is not to protest, disrupt, or critique, nor to await its demise at the hands of its own contradictions, but to accelerate its uprooting, alienating, decoding, abstractive tendencies."**
  - R. MacKay & A. Avanessian.

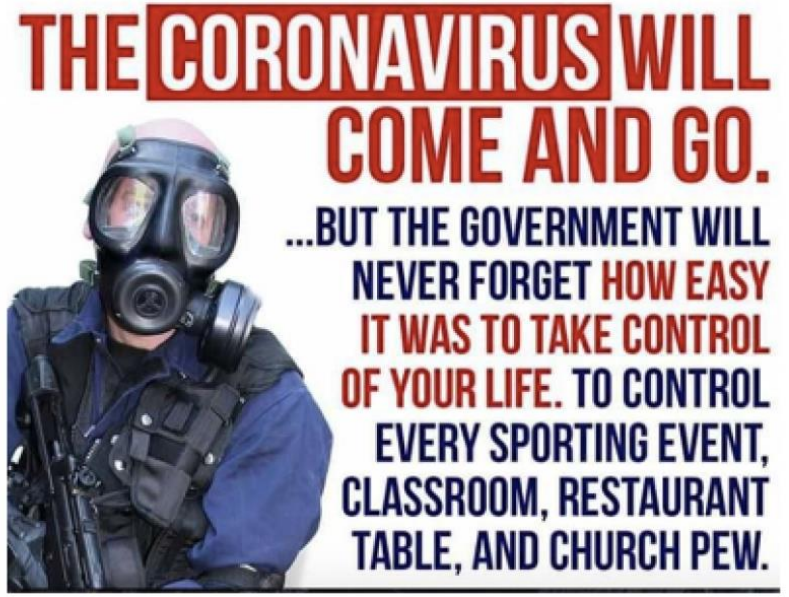
  Left-wing roots.

  Christchurch perpetrator:
  Embrace accelerationism means, above all, and advocacy of social and political breakdown as both necessary and desirable. Stability and comfort constitute major obstacles to the fascist revolution, which can only arise from `the great crucible of crisis´. Fascists `must destabilize and discomfort society where ever possible`

Accelerationism

Accelerationists (who want to instigate a race war to bring down liberal democracies), saw the COVID-19 pandemic, the different health related measures and restrictions, and the surrounding fear, confusion and criticism as an opportunity to benefit from the resulting societal polarisation.

Fortunately, their apocalyptic narratives seem to have found little to no relevant support beyond already affected RWE milieus.



- Alexander Ritzmann, CEP

A story of change

Offline approaches

- Bounce resilience training program
- Family support
- Exit programs (DDRR)

Online

- Challenges:
  - Escalation of material and recruitment
  - Increased attention to gaming platforms and forums
- Opportunities:
  - Positive aspects of gaming: community and connections
  - Build trust with vulnerable individuals: outreach, connections and shared interests
- Examples:

Emerging practices – online approaches

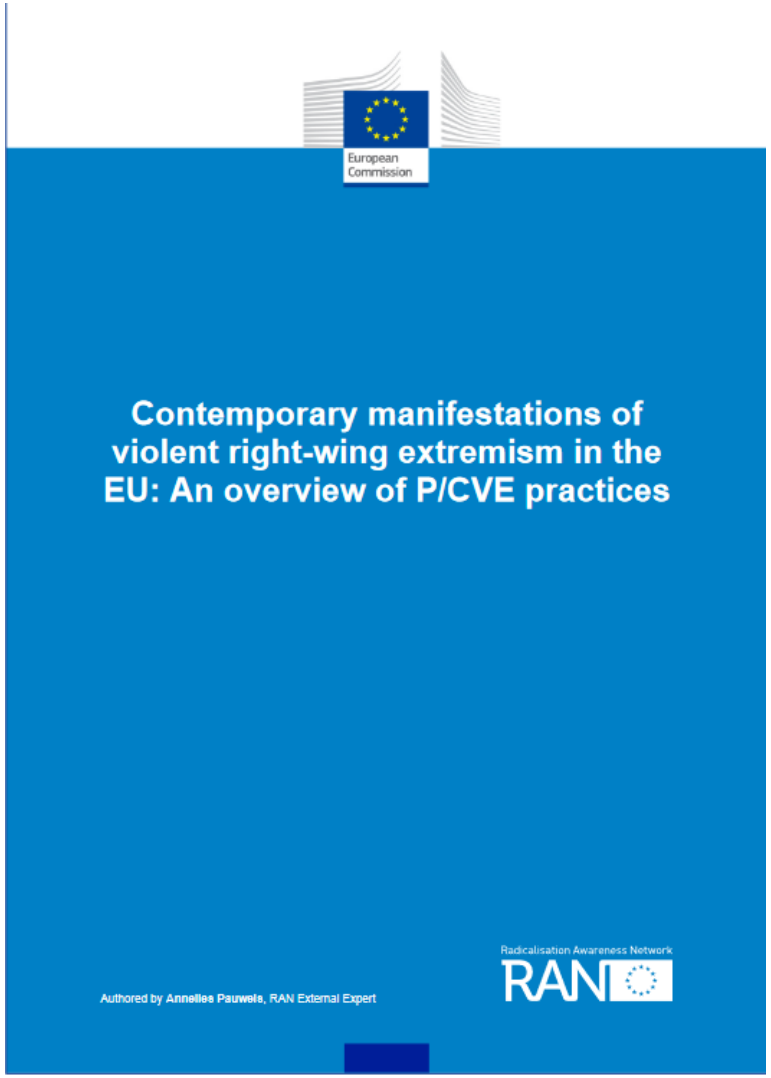
P/CVE work online?

- Who does it? What is being done? How can we advance the work?

- Prevention
- Responding to ongoing involvement
- Disengagement & Exit initiatives

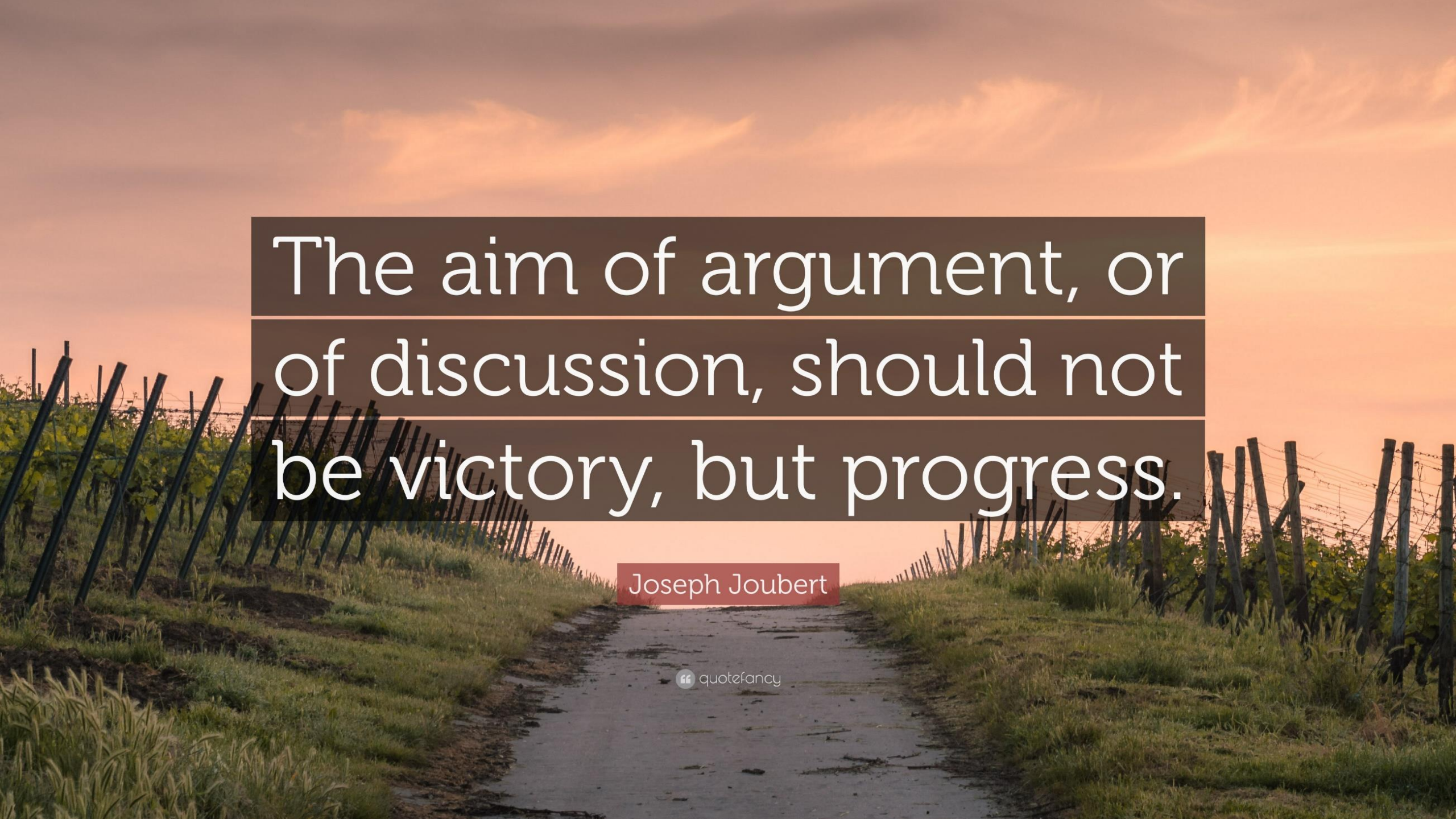
Online approaches

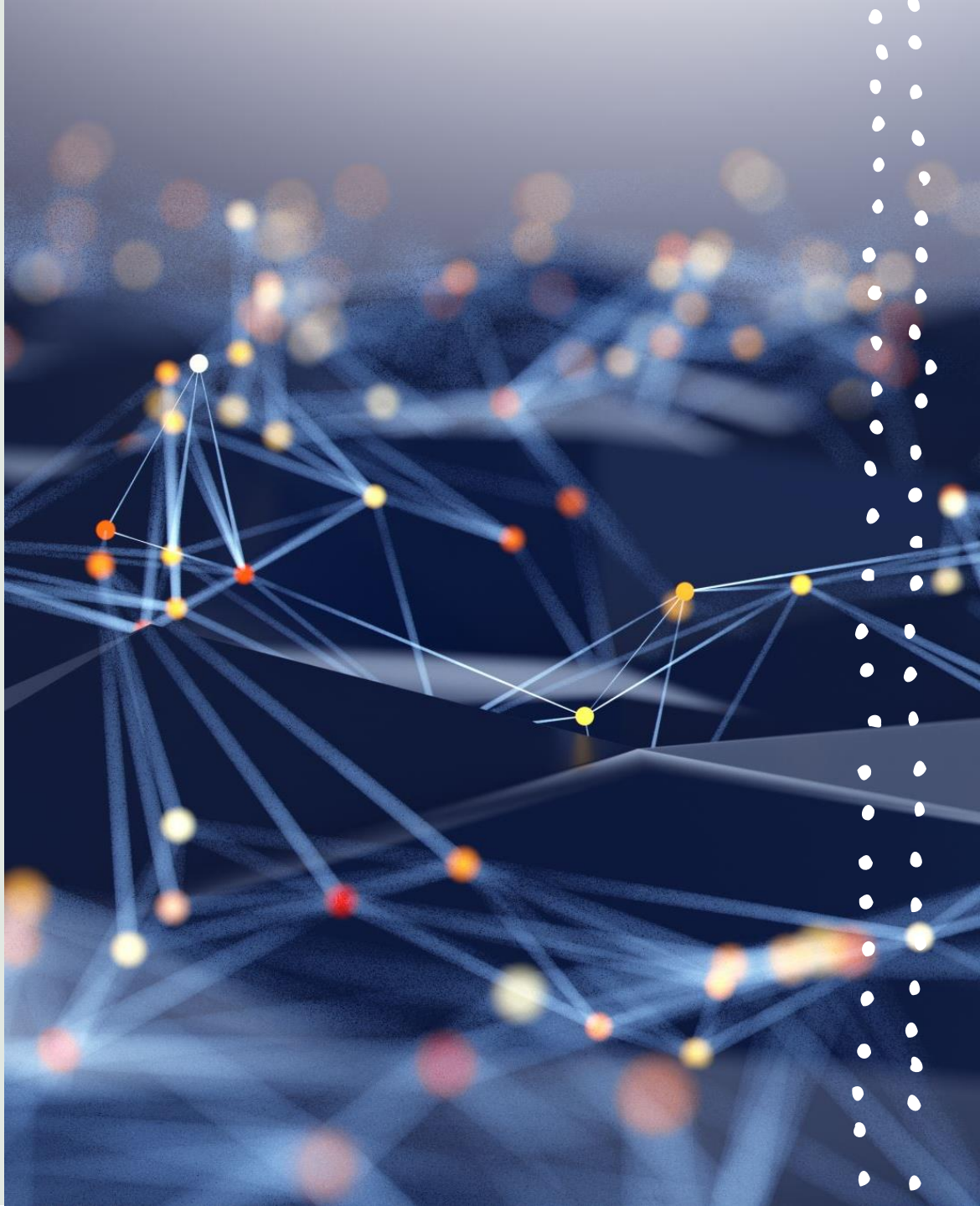
- Preventative youth work: Web Citizens (FR)
- Project based learning: **G.A.M.E.R.** project (NL)
- Online exit work



- RAN publication

  available on RAN website


The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress.
Joseph Joubert
quotefancy

Thank you for listening!

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