Futures Study

Potential Effects of Authoritarian Creep on a Blue Suburb

CONTEXT

The residents of Montclair, NJ under a gradual, national shift to an authoratarian government over the next six to ten years.

Montclair, NJ

- google maps
- wikipedia
- municiple website

SIGNAL SCANNING

- spreadsheet

DRIVERS OF CHANGE ANALYSIS

Social

Technological

Economic

Ecological

Political

DAY IN THE LIFE

Person 1 Person 2

ASSET MAPPING

SPECULATIVE ARTIFACT

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT DESIGN

Persona One

Generated by claude.ai, Claude Sonnet 4

Prompt:
_Create demographic data about a fictional, upper-middle class resident of Montclair, nj. Someth

Sarah Chen-Martinez

Basic Demographics

Age: 42
Gender: Female
Ethnicity: Mixed Asian-American (Chinese) and Hispanic (Mexican-American)
Marital Status: Married
Children: 2 (ages 12 and 9)
Household Size: 4
Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual
Religious Affiliation: Non-practicing Buddhist/Catholic (culturally mixed)

Economic Profile

Individual Income: $145,000 annually
Household Income: $275,000 annually
Occupation: Senior Marketing Director at pharmaceutical company (NYC)
Spouse Occupation: Software Engineering Manager at fintech startup (remote)
Employment Status: Full-time, hybrid (3 days NYC office, 2 days remote)
Home Ownership: Yes (purchased 2018 for $850,000, current value ~$1.1M)
Mortgage: $485,000 remaining on 30-year fixed at 3.2%
Property Taxes: $28,500 annually
Investment Portfolio: $340,000 (401k, IRAs, index funds)
Savings: $65,000 emergency fund
Monthly Discretionary Income: ~$3,200 after all expenses

Education

Highest Degree: MBA from NYU Stern (2008)
Undergraduate: BA Economics, Columbia University (2004)
Children's Education: Public school (Montclair school district)
Continuing Education: Executive leadership programs, marketing conferences

Geographic & Housing

Neighborhood: Upper Montclair (near schools and parks)
Home Type: 4-bedroom colonial built in 1925, renovated 2019
Commute: NJ Transit train to NYC (45 minutes door-to-door)
Transportation: 2 cars (2022 Tesla Model Y, 2020 Honda Pilot)
Years in Montclair: 7 years
Previous Residence: Brooklyn, NY (Park Slope)

Political Profile

Party Affiliation: Democratic
Political Engagement: High (votes in all elections, volunteers for campaigns)
Key Issues: Education funding, climate change, healthcare, immigration
Voting History: Consistent Democratic voter since 2004
Civic Involvement: PTA member, school board meeting attendee, town hall participant
Donations: $2,500 annually to political candidates and causes

Consumer Behavior

Shopping Patterns:
- Grocery: Whole Foods (60%), local farmers market (25%), ShopRite (15%)
- Retail: Target, online shopping (Amazon, direct-to-consumer brands)
- Dining: 3-4 restaurant meals per week (mix of casual and upscale)

Technology Usage:
- Devices: iPhone 14 Pro, MacBook Pro, iPad, Apple Watch
- Streaming: Netflix, Disney+, Hulu, HBO Max, Apple TV+
- Social Media: LinkedIn (professional), Instagram (personal), Facebook (minimal)
- News Sources: New York Times, Washington Post, NPR, local news apps

Spending Priorities:
- Children's education/activities: $1,800/month
- Travel: $12,000 annually (2 family vacations + weekend trips)
- Health/wellness: $400/month (gym, yoga, organic food premium)
- Home improvement: $8,000 annually

Lifestyle & Values

Core Values: Diversity, education, environmental sustainability, social justice
Health Consciousness: High (organic food, regular exercise, wellness apps)
Environmental Awareness: Drives electric vehicle, solar panels, composts
Cultural Activities: Museums, theater, music concerts, local arts events
Physical Activity: Yoga 3x/week, hiking, cycling, tennis
Travel Preferences: Cultural destinations, eco-friendly accommodations, educational trips

Social Network

Friend Groups: Other parents, work colleagues, college alumni, neighborhood friends
Community Involvement:
- Montclair Film Festival volunteer
- Environmental action committee member
- Youth sports league parent volunteer
- Book club participant

Professional Networks:
- Marketing executives group
- Industry conference regular
- NYU alumni association
- Women in business networking groups

Media Consumption

News Consumption: 45 minutes daily (morning podcasts, evening reading)
Entertainment: 2 hours daily (streaming, podcasts, reading)
Social Media: 30 minutes daily (primarily LinkedIn and Instagram)
Podcast Preferences: News (NPR, NYT The Daily), business, parenting, wellness
Reading: 2 books per month (mix of fiction, business, social issues)

Decision-Making Influences

Purchase Decisions: Research-heavy, reviews, recommendations from friends
Political Decisions: Multiple news sources, candidate forums, endorsements
Brand Loyalty: Moderate to high for trusted brands, willing to pay premium for quality
Information Sources: Trusted news outlets, peer recommendations, expert opinions
Risk Tolerance: Moderate conservative (financial), progressive (social issues)

Psychographic Profile

Personality Type: Analytical, socially conscious, achievement-oriented
Motivations: Family success, career advancement, community improvement
Concerns: Children's future, climate change, political polarization, economic inequality
Aspirations: Leadership roles, positive community impact, financial security
Stress Factors: Work-life balance, commute, political climate, housing costs

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Day in the Life: Sarah Chen-Martinez

5:45 AM - Morning Routine

Sarah's Apple Watch gently vibrates her awake. She immediately checks her phone for overnigh

6:15 AM - Coffee and Planning

In the kitchen, she starts her Nespresso machine and checks the family calendar on her iPad. To

6:45 AM - Family Time

Sarah wakes up her 12-year-old daughter Emma and 9-year-old son Diego for school. While they

7:30 AM - Commute Preparation

Sarah drives her Tesla Model Y to the Montclair train station, listening to NPR's Morning Edition.

8:05 AM - Train Commute

On the train, Sarah opens her laptop and reviews presentation materials for today's 10 AM meeti

9:00 AM - Office Arrival

At her Midtown Manhattan office, Sarah grabs a coffee from the lobby café and heads to her floo

12:30 PM - Lunch and Networking

Sarah meets with a fellow Columbia alumna who works in digital marketing at a competitor. They

2:00 PM - Executive Meeting

The afternoon's key meeting focuses on the company's response to new healthcare legislation.

4:30 PM - Collaborative Work

Sarah spends the late afternoon in a collaborative workspace with her team, reviewing creative

5:45 PM - Commute Home

On the train back to Montclair, Sarah catches up on personal emails and texts. She confirms dinn

6:45 PM - Evening Routine

At home, Sarah changes into yoga clothes and helps Diego with his math homework while Emma

7:30 PM - Community Engagement

Sarah attends the monthly school board meeting at Montclair High School. She voices concerns

9:00 PM - Personal Time

Back home, Sarah reviews her calendar for the rest of the week and confirms her Thursday ever
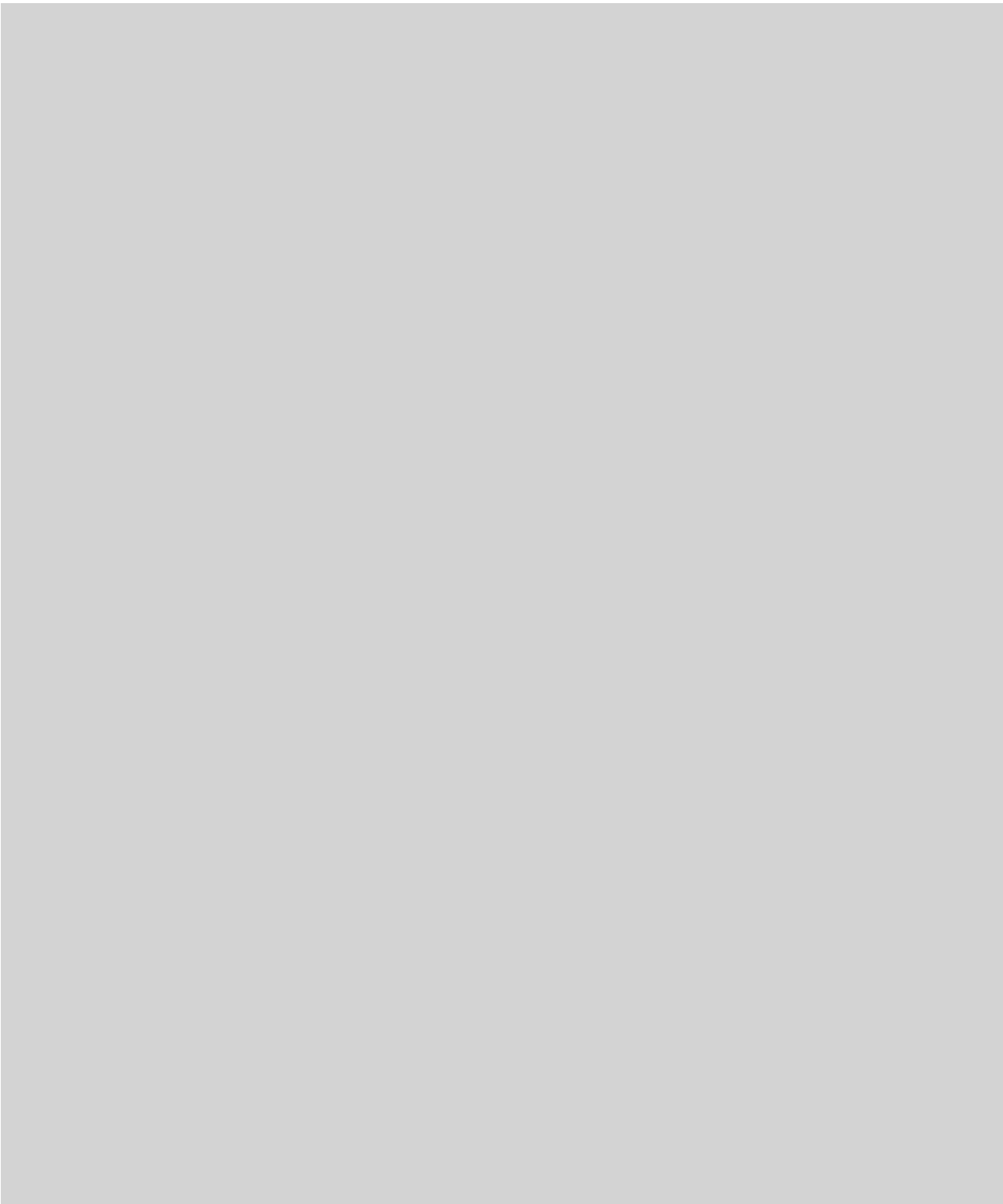
9:45 PM - Evening Wind-Down

Sarah does a quick review of her investment portfolio and sets up an automatic transfer to her ch

10:00 PM - Sleep

Sarah reviews her gratitude journal, writing about her productive day and the positive school boa

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This profile and day-in-the-life scenario represents a typical upper-middle-class Montclair reside

Persona Two

Generated by claude.ai, Claude Sonnet 4

Prompt:
_Create demographic data about a fictional, upper-middle class resident of Montclair, nj. Someth

MICHAEL "MIKE" O'SULLIVAN

Basic Demographics

Age: 38
Gender: Male
Ethnicity: White (Irish, Italian, German, Polish ancestry)
Marital Status: Married
Children: 2 (ages 8 and 5)
Household Size: 4
Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual
Religious Affiliation: Catholic (moderately practicing)

Economic Profile

Individual Income: $52,000 annually
Household Income: $78,000 annually
Occupation: Union electrician (IBEW Local 102)
Spouse Occupation: Part-time administrative assistant at medical office
Employment Status: Full-time, various job sites in North Jersey/NYC area
Home Ownership: Yes (purchased 2019 for $465,000, current value ~$580,000)
Mortgage: $398,000 remaining on 30-year fixed at 4.1%
Property Taxes: $18,200 annually
Investment Portfolio: $28,000 (401k, small IRA)
Savings: $8,500 emergency fund
Monthly Discretionary Income: ~$450 after all expenses

Education

Highest Degree: High School Diploma, Trade School Certificate (Electrical)
Trade School: Lincoln Technical Institute (2006)
Apprenticeship: 4-year IBEW electrical apprenticeship program
Children's Education: Public school (Montclair school district)
Continuing Education: Electrical code updates, safety certifications

Geographic & Housing

Neighborhood: Lower Montclair (near train station and commercial areas)
Home Type: 3-bedroom ranch built in 1955, needs updates
Commute: Union van pool or personal truck to various job sites (30-75 minutes)
Transportation: 2 vehicles (2018 Ford F-150, 2016 Honda Civic)
Years in Montclair: 5 years
Previous Residence: Bloomfield, NJ (childhood home area)

Political Profile

Party Affiliation: Independent/Unaffiliated
Political Engagement: Moderate (votes in presidential elections, some local)
Key Issues: Jobs, healthcare costs, education funding, infrastructure
Voting History: Mixed - traditionally Democratic, some Republican votes
Civic Involvement: Occasional town events, youth sports volunteer
Donations: $200 annually to local charities and church

Consumer Behavior

Shopping Patterns: - Grocery: ShopRite (70%), Costco (20%), local deli (10%) - Retail: Target, Home Depot, Amazon for basics - Dining: 1-2 restaurant meals per week (casual dining, pizza)

Technology Usage: - Devices: iPhone 11, older Dell laptop, basic tablet - Streaming: Netflix, YouTube, ESPN+, local cable - Social Media: Facebook (primary), Instagram (limited), no Twitter - News Sources: Local news, ESPN, some cable news, Facebook feeds

Spending Priorities: - Children's activities: $300/month (youth sports, music lessons) - Home maintenance: $3,000 annually (DIY when possible) - Union dues and work

equipment: $1,200 annually - Family outings: $2,500 annually (beach trips, local attractions)

Lifestyle & Values

Core Values: Hard work, family first, community loyalty, fair treatment
Health Consciousness: Moderate (tries to stay active, concerned about costs)
Environmental Awareness: Practical (energy efficiency for cost savings)
Cultural Activities: Local festivals, high school sports, church events
Physical Activity: Softball league, coaching kids' sports, weekend yard work
Travel Preferences: Regional trips, beach vacations, visiting family

Social Network

Friend Groups: Work colleagues, neighborhood parents, childhood friends
Community Involvement: - Youth baseball league coach - Parish volunteer for fundraising events - Neighborhood block party organizer - Union local meeting attendee

Professional Networks: - IBEW Local 102 members - Trade contractor relationships - Former apprenticeship colleagues - Local business connections

Media Consumption

News Consumption: 20 minutes daily (morning radio, evening local news)
Entertainment: 2.5 hours daily (sports, Netflix, YouTube)
Social Media: 45 minutes daily (primarily Facebook)
Podcast Preferences: Sports talk, true crime, some political commentary
Reading: Local newspaper, trade magazines, minimal book reading

Decision-Making Influences

Purchase Decisions: Price-conscious, brand loyalty to proven products
Political Decisions: Economic impact on family, candidate character
Brand Loyalty: High for tools/work equipment, moderate for household items
Information Sources: Friends, family, coworkers, local community
Risk Tolerance: Conservative (financial), moderate (career/social issues)

Psychographic Profile

Personality Type: Practical, community-oriented, family-focused
Motivations: Family stability, fair wages, respect for hard work
Concerns: Job security, healthcare costs, children's future opportunities
Aspirations: Home ownership stability, children's college education, retirement security
Stress Factors: Economic uncertainty, work-life balance, rising costs

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Day in the Life: Michael "Mike" O'Sullivan

5:30 AM - Early Start

Mike's phone alarm goes off in his Lower Montclair ranch home. He immediately checks his work phone for any messages from his foreman about today's job site location. Today he's working on a commercial electrical installation in Newark. He quietly gets ready, trying not to wake his wife Jennifer or the kids.

6:00 AM - Morning Routine

In the kitchen, Mike starts his Mr. Coffee machine and makes two cups - one for now, one for his thermos. He checks Facebook on his phone while the coffee brews, scrolling through updates from high school friends and union colleagues. He sees a post from his Local 102 about upcoming contract negotiations that he'll need to discuss with the guys today.

6:15 AM - Work Preparation

Mike loads his tools into his Ford F-150, checking that he has everything needed for today's conduit installation. He grabs his hard hat, safety vest, and lunch Jennifer packed the night before. He starts the truck and listens to NJ 101.5 for traffic updates and local news while the engine warms up.

6:45 AM - Commute

The drive to Newark takes 35 minutes in morning traffic. Mike listens to the Dennis and Judi show on NJ 101.5, occasionally switching to ESPN Radio for sports updates.

He stops at a QuickChek for a breakfast sandwich and another coffee, chatting briefly with the familiar clerk about the weather and local construction projects.

7:30 AM - Job Site Arrival

At the commercial site, Mike meets with his crew of four other electricians. They review today's work plan and safety protocols. Mike takes pride in his reputation as a skilled tradesman and often mentors the younger apprentices. The morning is spent running electrical conduit through a new office building.

10:00 AM - Morning Break

During the 15-minute break, Mike checks his phone for messages from Jennifer about the kids' after-school activities. His 8-year-old son Danny has Little League practice tonight, and his 5-year-old daughter Emma has a dance recital this weekend. He responds to a text from his neighbor about organizing the annual block party.

12:00 PM - Lunch Break

Mike eats his sandwich (turkey and cheese on white bread) with his crew in the site trailer. The conversation covers the Yankees' recent performance, upcoming union contract negotiations, and concerns about healthcare premium increases. One colleague mentions a side job opportunity that Mike considers for weekend work.

2:30 PM - Afternoon Work

The afternoon involves installing electrical panels and connecting circuits. Mike enjoys the problem-solving aspects of electrical work and takes satisfaction in quality craftsmanship. He teaches an apprentice the proper technique for wire pulling, emphasizing safety and efficiency.

4:00 PM - End of Workday

Mike cleans up his tools and completes his timesheet. He discusses tomorrow's work plan with the foreman and confirms his availability for Saturday overtime. The extra money would help with Emma's dance class expenses and building up the family's emergency fund.

4:45 PM - Commute Home

On the drive home, Mike calls his father to check in and discuss plans for watching the Yankees game together this weekend. He stops at Home Depot to pick up materials for a weekend project - fixing the front steps that have been bothering Jennifer. He pays with cash to stay within his monthly budget.

5:30 PM - Family Time

At home, Mike changes out of his work clothes and helps Danny with his math homework while Jennifer finishes dinner. The family eats together, discussing the kids' school day and weekend plans. Mike suggests a trip to the beach if the weather holds up, calculating the gas and parking costs in his head.

7:00 PM - Community Engagement

Mike drives Danny to Little League practice at the local park. As an assistant coach, he helps with batting practice and encourages the kids. He chats with other parents about the upcoming season and volunteers to help with field maintenance this Saturday morning.

8:30 PM - Evening Routine

Back home, Mike helps with bedtime routines and reads a story to Emma. He then settles into his living room recliner to watch the Yankees game on YES Network. During commercial breaks, he scrolls through Facebook, liking photos from friends and sharing a post about supporting local businesses.

9:30 PM - Personal Time

Mike checks his bank account balance on his phone app and reviews this week's expenses. He looks at his 401k balance and considers increasing his contribution when the next raise comes through. He texts his brother about their weekend plans to work on his brother's deck repair project.

10:00 PM - Planning Ahead

Mike reviews tomorrow's weather forecast and prepares his work clothes for another day at the Newark site. He sets his phone charger by the bed and checks that his

work boots are ready. He briefly looks at his union's website for updates on contract negotiations and upcoming training opportunities.

10:15 PM - Wind Down

Mike watches the end of the Yankees game while Jennifer reads beside him. They discuss plans for Emma's dance recital this weekend and whether they can afford to take the family out to dinner afterward. He sets his phone alarm for 5:30 AM and prepares for another day of honest work.

This profile and day-in-the-life scenario represents a lower-middle-class white male resident of Montclair who balances skilled trade work with family responsibilities and community involvement, representing a different but equally important demographic segment of the community.

ASSET MAPPING

SPECULATIVE ARTIFACT

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT DESIGN