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Jesse Austin

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Revisiting the Far Right Violent Extremist Threat: *Violent Extremist Plot Success From 1948 Through 2017*

Author: Jesse Austin, B.A. Honors Political Science
Advisor: Andrew Macpherson, UNH Assistant Professor of Security Studies
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Abstract

Far Right violent extremists have successfully executed over 150 violent plots in the United States in just the past decade. This exploratory study analyzed Far Right violent extremist plot success with the plot success of Islamist violent extremists, Far Left violent extremists, and Single Issue violent extremists based on publicly available data from the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) for the period of 1948 through 2017. By evaluating existing literature on Far Right violent extremism and analyzing the available PIRUS data, it was discovered that while Far Right violent extremists executed more successful violent plots than the other violent ideological extremist groups, Far Left violent extremists proportionally had more successful violent plots. A sample from the PIRUS database was explored, and the analysis demonstrates that the variables of Far Left radicalization, violence against persons and property, and plot preparation are significantly correlated with violent plot success.

Key Words: Far Right Violent Extremists, Violent Plot Success, United States, Logistical Regression, Ideological Extremism.

Introduction

In light of recent violent plots executed by Far Right extremists in the United States, from the car-ramming attack at the 2017 Charlottesville Unite the Right rally to the synagogue shootings in Pittsburg and Poway in 2018 and 2019 respectively, the threat of Far Right violent extremists has started to permeate the discussions by the media, policymakers, law enforcement, and academics. These incidents of ideological violence merit much more than just concern, but also more research into the trends and into the conditions that could be contributing to these trends in violent ideological extremism. In this exploratory study, violent ideological extremist plot success and the predictive value of ideology in predicting plot success was analyzed in the effort to identify possible correlations, build upon previous research and current discourse, and contribute an analytical approach that may be used in future research.

Definitions

The following terms used in this exploratory study will be defined the same way that they are defined by Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS), a quantitative dataset developed by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

- **Radicalized**: the psychological, emotional, and behavioral processes by which an individual adopts an ideology that promotes the use of violence for the attainment of political, economic, religious, or social goals. Indicators of radicalization within the scope of the PIRUS dataset consist of arrests, indictments, and/or convictions for engaging in, or planning to engage in, ideologically motivated unlawful behavior, or membership in a designated terrorist organization or a violent extremist group (START, 2018).
- **Far Right Violent Extremists (FRVEs)**: radicalized individuals who are ideologically motivated to seek an idealized future favoring a particular group through violent means, whether this group identity is racial, pseudo-national, or characterized by individualistic traits (START, 2018).
- **Islamist Violent Extremists (IVEs)**: radicalized individuals ideologically motivated by the religio-political methodology practiced by Sunni Islamist-Salafists who seek the immediate overthrow of incumbent regimes and the non-Muslim geopolitical forces which support them in order to pave the way for an Islamist society which would be developed through martial power (START, 2018).
- **Far Left Violent Extremists (FLVEs)**: radicalized individuals who are ideologically motivated use violence in order to overthrow the capitalist system and seek to replace it with a new, anti-imperialist economic order that empowers members of the "working class" (START, 2018).
- **Single Issue Violent Extremists (SIVEs)**: individuals who radicalized and resorted to violence due to a single issue rather than a broad ideology (START, 2018).

Literature Review

This section discusses recent research that has examined Far Right violent extremists (FRVEs) in the United States, as well as the factors that contribute to this growing security challenge. Scholars have used a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to identify the different factors contributing to extremism from the Far Right and other ideological groups. The most common factors of Far Right violent extremism that have been identified by existing literature include (1) target selection, (2) target demographics, (3) fatalities, (4) political and social factors, (5) profiles and background demographics, (6) group organization and affiliation, and (7) the internet. The existing literature on all of these factors of Far Right violent extremism will serve as a basis for this study's research, though the factors of target demographics, profiles and background demographics, and group organization and affiliation in particular will be important to answering the research questions.

Target Selection
To help understand the determinants of FRVE plot success, it would be worthwhile to examine what existing literature has discovered regarding how FRVEs select their targets. While there are several academic studies that have explored the subject of Far Right violent extremist target selection, each have different interpretations of what constitutes as a "random" target. Consequently, academic discourse continues on whether the majority of targets of violent Far Right extremism are in fact selected at random. At the very least, the studies featured in this section collectively suggest that not all FRVE victims in the United States were targeted at random. If there is intentionality and patterns behind FRVE target selection in many cases, then there is merit in researching the factors or indicators of extremist plot success.

One of the most comprehensive reports on FRVE target selection comes from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The report examined ideological victimization committed by FRVEs in the United States from 1990 to 2014, excluding the 168 victims from the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing. Through their open source United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), START identified and analyzed the 245 victims killed by Far Right extremists in 177 ideologically motivated incidents. One of the study's most important contributions to the field of ideological extremism research was distinguishing between purposeful, representative, and random targets. According to the report, 43.3 percent of the victims were targeted purposefully, meaning that the offenders knew of the victims and decided to kill them for ideological reasons. The report goes on to indicate its finding that approximately 38 percent of the victims were targeted because they represented something that was antithetical to their ideology, and the remaining 18.8 percent of victims were targeted randomly or for unknown reasons. Additionally, the START report identified that 60.4 percent of victims included in the report were the sole fatality in ideologically motivated incidents. These findings are used to support their conclusion that fatal FRVE victimization is not solely dependent on the proverbial wrong place at the wrong time, but instead that a victim's routine activities and lifestyle play a larger role in their victimization (Parkin, Cherkmak, Freilich, & Gruenewald, 2016).

The ECDB was also used in a study that specifically examined Far Right lone wolf homicide targets during the time period of 1990-2008. The study identified 96 Far Right lone wolf

homicide incidents, and it decided to only include the primary victims for homicide incidents involving multiple victims. According to the findings of the study, about 74 percent of individuals in each lone wolf subcategory targeted "unknown or stranger" victims (Gruenewald, Cherkmak, & Freilich, 2013). Besides the obvious differences in year range and data size, this study has likely reached a different conclusion on FRVE target selection than START due to grouping unknown and "representative" targets together in with the random target category. Five years after this study was published, the researchers contributed to another study featured in *Perspectives on Terrorism* examining overall patterns of Far Right extremist homicides. Although they did not specify when they reexamined the ECDB data, the authors acknowledge that "fewer extreme-right homicides target strangers . . . though this is likely due to an inclusion of non-primary offenders in the analysis" (Freilich, Cherkmak, Gruenewald, Parkin, & Klein, 2018). The same researchers have defended their findings on FRVE victim-offender relationships in other academic studies, including in a study that compares samples of FRVE honor killings data to FRVE homicide data reported in the ECDB (Hayes, Mills, Freilich, & Cherkmak, 2018). This collection of studies is valuable to the field of ideological extremism research, especially for its breakdown of FRVEs into subcategories, which has identified a potential correlation between FRVE lone wolves and random targeting of victims.

Another noteworthy approach that has been taken to understand the target selection of FRVEs was though life history interviews of 89 self-identified former white supremacists. The study appeared in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, and its ultimate finding on the subject of target selection was that 61 percent of the 37 participants reported that they chose their victims because they perceived their targets to be vulnerable and situationally defenseless (Windisch, Simi, Blee, & DeMichele, 2018). Although the small sample size and voluntary responses impact the study's representativeness of the FRVE population, the study does make a noteworthy case that psychological factors and representative targeting could have an influence on FRVE target selection.

Target Demographics
An exploration into the demographics of FRVE target demographics can also help reveal patterns of, or factors that contribute to, extremist plot success. Overall, there is consensus between reports and academic studies regarding the typical demographics of targets selected by FRVEs, but when these target demographics are examined within FRVE subgroups, it is evident that there are discrepancies. The studies featured in this section collectively suggest that white civilians represent the majority of FRVE targets, though civilians from ethnic minorities and members of law enforcement are also major targets of FRVEs.

Based on the aforementioned START report on ideological homicide victimization, 53.1 percent of FRVE victims were targeted for their race or ethnicity, followed by other civilian targets with approximately 28.1 percent and government targets—including law enforcement—with approximately 13.1 percent (Parkin et al., 2016). A report by the Counterterrorism Center (CTC) presents a different conclusion, identifying that approximately 42 percent of FRVE targets in 4420 FRVE incidents between 1990 and 2012 were specifically human rather than property or infrastructure. The CTC study also identified that 55 percent of human targets were of a minority ethnic groups (Perliger, 2012). A study published by the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) used data from the START's Global Terrorism Database and found that 31

percent of FRVE attacks targeted religious figures and religious institutions in the period of 2007-2017, followed closely by private citizens and private property with 29 percent and government with 14 percent in the same timeframe (Jones, 2018). It is evident that civilians are a major target of FRVEs, though it is also apparent that studies do not use the same subgroups when discussing civilian targets. To further the point, a study featured in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* used similar target categories as the START report, though the study specifically analyzed 84 lone wolf terrorist attacks occurring in the United States between 1948 and 2012. The study found that the majority of lone wolves across different ideologies targeted civilians, specifically in 60.71 percent of all attacks. Approximately 32.14 percent of all lone wolf attacks had government targets according to the findings of this study (Becker, 2014). In contrast, the study on Far Right lone wolf homicides featured several target categories and found that Far Right loners who acted entirely alone were the only ones with Muslim and other religious minority targets, and that 20.5 percent of loner homicide victims were government officials (Gruenewald et al., 2013).

Breaking down the civilian and racial targets in particular, the START report on ideological homicide victimization found that the age of FRVE victims were normally distributed, with the peak being 22 percent for victims around the age of 40 to 49 years old. Males were overwhelmingly the target of FRVE as opposed to females according to the report, making up approximately 81.6 percent of victims. As for race, the report found that 48.2 percent of FRVE victims were white and 32.7 percent of victims were black. The latter finding is particularly noteworthy when compared to START's observations on ideological homicide victims of al-Qa'ida and affiliated movements, whose black victims made up 24.2 percent of their total victims in the same 1990-2014 timeframe, suggesting that ethnicity does play a factor in FRVE target selection (Parkin et al., 2016). The study on Far Right lone wolf homicides makes similar findings by identifying that male victims consist of at least 80 percent of total victims in each lone wolf subcategory, and the mean age of victims across all lone wolf subcategories is 38 years old. Concerning the most represented race of Far Right lone wolf victims according to the study, approximately 46.4 percent of loner homicide victims were white, in contrast to the 55 percent and 55.2 percent of black victims of lone wolf and lone wolf pack homicides respectively (Gruenewald et al., 2013).

Although much of the existing literature focuses on civilian victims, the number of FRVEs who targeted government figures and officials should not be overlooked. A START report on Far Right violence in the United States for the period of 1990-2013 specifically examined the threat it poses to law enforcement. The report identified that fifty federal, state, and local law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty by FRVEs in thirty-three separate incidents. More than two-thirds of the officers were killed during ideologically motivated attacks, while the remaining officers were killed in confrontations that were non-ideologically motivated. The report also found that 19 percent of officers killed by Far Right extremists happened during traffic stops, and another 19 percent were killed while responding to disturbance calls (START, 2014). An Anti-Defamation League (ADL) report on extremist murders in the United States reported that 59 officers have been killed in the line of duty by Far Right extremists during the period of 1965-2018 (Center on Extremism, 2019).

Fatalities

Counting the fatalities caused by FRVEs is one of the most heavily researched subjects regarding FRVEs, and thus the subject can provide considerable insights into the conditions and factors that will influence an extremist's successful execution of his or her violent plot. Although there is general consistency between studies on this subject, it is important to understand that studies do not use the same methods of counting fatalities, which is likely a part of the reason why the exact numbers and their significance are still debated. The studies featured in this section collectively suggest that FRVEs have committed more attacks than other ideological extremists, yet have claimed fewer victims per attack. In fact, there are more FRVE attacks that result in one fatality or casualty rather than FRVE attacks that result in multiple fatalities or casualties. In addition, the studies featured in this section collectively suggest that a variety of weapons are used by FRVEs to execute their attacks, with the most notable weapon of choice being firearms.

The START report on ideological homicide victimization identifies 245 individual victims of Far Right extremist homicides between 1990 and 2014, excluding the 168 victims from the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing. This is far more victims than the ideological homicide victims of al-Qa'ida and affiliated movements that were included in the report, totaling approximately 62 victims in the same time period. However, the START report also provides an important caveat for those who might jump to the conclusion that FRVE attacks have caused more fatalities than Islamic extremist attacks. In fact, when the number of victims is divided by the number of incidents, al-Qa'ida and affiliated movements have a higher victims per incident average than FRVEs, specifically a 1.6 average in comparison to the 1.4 average for FRVEs (Parkin et al., 2016). Several other studies reach similar conclusions regarding average victims of FRVEs. A study by the CTC observes that the average number of victims per event on a yearly basis between 1996 and 2014 has been a very steady average of one injury per year and an average of less than one fatality per year (Perliger, 2012). Similarly, a study using ECDB data to empirically challenge misconceptions on terrorism in the United States identified that 57.4 percent of the 387 violent extremist incidents post-9/11 resulted in zero deaths, and in 29.2 percent of violent extremist incidents there was one death. Regarding injuries, the study identifies that 76.2 percent of violent extremist incidents resulted in zero injuries and 12.4 percent resulted in one injury (Silva, Duran, Freilich, & Cherkmak, 2019).

A notable example of a study that does not follow these observations comes from the Conflict Management and Peace Science (CMPS), which compiled data from START's Global Terrorism Database and identified that 244 of the 471 people killed in domestic terrorist attacks in the United States between 1970 and 2011 were killed by right-wing terrorists. The author of the article goes on to explain that these findings demonstrated that "right-wing terrorism has resulted in more deaths than any other type of domestic terrorist activity," but also that the over 500 domestic rightwing terrorist attacks "comprise only about a quarter of all terrorist attacks on US soil" (Piazza, 2017, pg. 52) The author also introduces the claim that the average number of victims per right-wing terrorist attack was also higher than other terrorist groups (Piazza, 2017). Although the findings are not incorrectly calculated, the author does not articulate the research parameters very well for his readers, and thus the findings can be deceiving when only taken at face value. It should also be noted that the START Global Terrorism Database not only provides different definitions for "terrorism" as part of its advanced search criteria, but it also defines

"attacks" to include unsuccessful attacks and attacks against property and infrastructure where many do not result in civilian fatalities or injuries.

Another notable exception can be found in an ADL report on white supremist and other FRVEs murders in the United States during the 2008-2017 period. The report identified that 71 percent of the 387 total victims of domestic-extremist attacks were killed by FRVEs, as well as 59 percent of the 34 total deaths in 2017 alone. Nonetheless, the report also acknowledges that an Islamic extremist committed the single deadliest incident in 2017, which killed eight people (Center on Extremism, 2018). It should be mentioned that ADL reports only include extremists that have "positive evidence connecting [them] to an extremist group or movement" (Center on Extremism, 2019, pg. 14). Additionally, the ADL appears to put equal weight on extremists where their ideology played a primary or secondary role in the homicide, and on extremists where the ideological motivation for the homicide was unclear or likely committed for non-ideological reasons. The report acknowledges this directly in a 2018 report on extremist murderers in the United States, which observed that "ideological motives appear to have played a primary or secondary role in 19 of the 50 extremist murders (38 percent) in 2018" (Center on Extremism, 2019, pg. 19).

Another factor of FRVE fatalities is the weapon used in the attack. The START report on ideological homicide victimization identifies that approximately 62.9 percent of the 245 included FRVE victims were killed by a firearm, followed by 13.9 percent who were killed with a knife, and another 13.9 percent killed with a bodily or blunt weapon (Parkin et al., 2016). Firearms are consistently the choice of weapon for the majority of domestic extremist murderers regardless of ideology, according to most academic studies on the subject (Center on Extremism, 2019; Jones, 2018; Becker, 2014). One notable exception comes from the study on Far Right lone wolf homicides, which identifies that the majorities of FRVE lone wolves and FRVE lone wolf packs did not use firearms to kill their victim. Instead, the study indicates that FRVE lone wolves and FRVE lone wolf packs use a more diverse array of weapons, especially knives and blunt objects (Gruenewald et al., 2013). Another exception comes from a study by the CTC, which identifies that of the 4420 FRVE incidents between 1990 and 2012 included in the study, 44 percent were committed through beatings. Blades and firearms were only used in about 15 percent of FRVE incidents each according to this study (Perliger, 2012).

Political and Social Factors
Identifying patterns and correlations between social conditions and extremist activity could help reveal factors that contribute to the success of extremist plots. The role of social and societal factors and how they influence an extremist's decision to commit violence has been explored in various academic studies, but their differences in inclusion methods presents a challenge for establishing clear or definitive conclusions on the matter. Nonetheless, the studies featured in this section collectively suggest that there are some correlations between FRVE activity and partisan control in the federal government. As for social factors, the studies featured in this section collectively suggest that economy and employment may not be reliable indicators of FRVE activity.

The correlation between the White House and extremist activities is one such area of research where consensus has proven difficult to build, especially in the past decade. One of the studies

examining this phenomenon was featured in *Perspectives on Terrorism* and was on the subject of fatal extreme-right crime patterns in the United States. The study observed that extreme-right homicides during President Trump's first year in office in 2016 increased 100 percent from 2015, and then observed that the same percent increase also occurred during President Obama's first term in office in 2008 (Freilich et al., 2018). Upon closer inspection at the study's sources, one will observe that the FRVE homicides included in the analysis exclude FRVEs homicides that lacked evidence that the offender committed the homicide based on an ideological motivation. The study is also unclear how it obtained data on FRVE activities beyond 2013, considering that its cited sources only include data prior to 2013. Nonetheless, other studies such as the CTC study also do not see a statistically significant correlation between the US Presidency and the level of extremist violence (Perliger, 2012). However, the CTC study does suggest a correlation between extremist violence and the partisan demographics of Congress. A statistical analysis featured in the study indicates that there is a negative correlation between the number of FRVE attacks per year and the number of Democrats in Congress, and that there is a positive correlation between the number of FRVE attacks per year and the number of Republicans in Congress, particularly in the House of Representatives. It is important to acknowledge that these observations do not imply causality, but, according to the authors, they rather reflect that violence is greater in certain environments or conditions. In fact, the author suggests that the increased levels of Far Right violence could be the result of the Republican majority of Congress not meeting the high expectations of Far Right activists, who would not have the same high expectations for a Congress with a Democratic majority (Perliger, 2012).

A study from the CSIS on the rise of Far Right extremism in the United States during the 1970-2011 period takes a different approach to analyzing the correlation between the White House and extremist activities. The study observed that "the first notable increase in right-wing terrorist attacks over the past decade occurred in 2012", and therefore President Trump's election on its own is not a sufficient means for explaining the increase in FRVE activities (Jones, 2018, pg. 4). Although most studies would concur with this study's conclusion, they do not all agree on when the spikes occurred due to differences in included data. This CSIS study, for instance, defines a FRVE attack to include more than just homicides, but also attacks on property and infrastructure (Jones, 2018). The CMPS study on the determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the United states utilizes a similar approach, but instead of primarily focusing on which political party occupies the White House, the study also examines the phenomenon from the lens of state government and federal economic policies. The CMPS study observes that partisan control of the government on the national level is a significant determinant of right-wing terrorism, yet the same could not be said for partisan control of the government on the state level nor for public policy decisions made by politicians. Based on these observations, the study concludes that highly visible and symbolic factors, such as the US President, are significant motivating factors for FRVEs (Piazza, 2017).

The CMPS study also examined other social and societal factors that motivate an extremist to commit acts of violence. The study identified that joblessness, income inequalities, poverty and the decline of agricultural and manufacturing employment were not significant indicators of higher right-wing terrorist activities. Additionally, the study observes that right-wing terrorist activities are significantly more frequent in states where women are or are becoming more

empowered to make personal choices and participate in economic and professional life (Piazza, 2017).

Profiles and Background Demographics

One should always exercise caution when attempting to develop the profile of an extremist, yet having an understanding of the background demographics of extremists can lend valuable insights into the factors or conditions that can contribute to extremist plot success. The studies featured in this section collectively suggest that FRVEs are overwhelmingly comprised of white males younger than 40 and adopt the white supremacist ideology. As for other FRVE profiles and demographics, the studies featured in this section collectively suggest that commonalties are easier to find among subgroups of FRVEs than from the entire FRVE population as a whole.

The study on Far Right lone wolf homicides in the United States for the period of 1990-2008 identified that of the 96 individual FRVE lone wolves studied, approximately 100 percent of them were white and male, with only one exception being that 97.4 percent of loners where white (Gruenewald et al., 2013). The median ages for all three lone wolf types studied were between 21 and 37 years old. A study by the CTC made similar observations about the ages of FRVEs, identifying that 40 percent of perpetrators of Far Right violence included in their study were in their 20s, followed by 35 percent of preparators being younger than 20 years old (Perliger, 2012). The study on Far Right lone wolf homicides also identified that more than half of offenders in each lone wolf category had prior arrests, but less than half of offenders in each category had a mental illness or were abusing drugs and/or alcohol (Gruenewald et al., 2013). The *Perspectives on Terrorism* study on the 89 life history interviews of self-identified former white supremacists made the same findings regarding prior arrests and incarceration (Windisch et al., 2018). A study on the patterns of fatal extreme-right crime in the United States examined several variables as it compared unaffiliated violent Far Right loners to other extreme-right homicide offenders, and it found that unaffiliated violent Far Right loners were older, significantly more likely to be single, more likely to have a prior military background, more suicidal, more likely to target multiple victims, and generally less involved in broader extreme-right movements (Freilich et al., 2018).

As for primary ideology, the study on Far Right lone wolf homicides identified that offenders in all three lone wolf categories possessed a wide array of primary ideologies, but anti-race/ethnicity was the only ideological category that half or more of the offenders fell into (Gruenewald et al., 2013). This study's finding on primary ideology is generally consistent across other academic studies on the subject. For example, the ADL identified in a report that of the 313 total deaths caused by FRVEs in the United States during the period of 2009-2018, 76 percent were attributed to white supremacists, followed by anti-government extremists with 19 percent. The same ADL report also examined the fifty domestic extremist-related homicides in 2018 and found very similar results: 78 percent were committed by white supremacists and 16 percent were committed by anti-government extremists (Center on Extremism, 2019).

A study on the spontaneous nature of Far Right violence in the United States in the period of 1990-2012 found that "spontaneous perpetrators seem to come from a lower socio-economic background as they are usually younger, less educated, and more prone to be unemployed than perpetrators of planned attacks" (Sweeney & Perliger, 2018, pg. 64). The study also found that

spontaneous actors are statistically "less likely to be married, but more likely to have children than their planning counterparts" (Sweeney et al., 2018, pg. 64). The dataset used for this study included 1,686 incidents, in which 1,193 cases occurred spontaneously and the other 493 cases were planned by the perpetrators (Sweeney et al., 2018).

Another notable report on the subject of FRVE profiles and backgrounds came from a START study for the National Institute of Justice on domestic radicalization that utilized PIRUS data for the period of 1945-2013. The report concluded that it did not find that psychological, emotional, material, and group-based factors logically combine to produce pathways to violence or to violent extremism. However, the report identified that cognitive frame alignment that biases individuals' perceptions of self and others as well as a sense of being a member of a community that has been collectively victimized are near necessary conditions to establish an environment for radicalization to violent extremism based on the 20 cases analyzed. Lastly, the report observed that material factors were rarely the main drivers of radicalization to violence, and that a combination of psychological and emotional vulnerabilities with perceptions of community victimization was observed in 17 of the 20 pathways to radical violence analyzed in the report (Jensen et al, 2016).

Group Organization and Affiliation
The role of group organization and affiliation in FRVEs activity is another area of academic research where consensus has proven difficult to build, for there are various studies that focus specific subjections of FRVEs and others that focus on broader FRVE group dynamics. Based on the studies featured in this section, there is empirical evidence to suggest that the majority of FRVEs have radical support networks to some degree, yet the majority will execute their attacks alone. Additionally, there appears to be a correlation between the dynamics of organized FRVE groups and FRVE activity. By examining the role of group organization and affiliations Far Right extremist violence, new insights can be made about the conditions and factors of extremist plot success.

Regarding the number of FRVEs involved in attacks, the CTC study compiled 4,420 FRVE incidents across various datasets for the period of 1990-2012 and identified that 54 percent of attacks were committed by a single perpetrator, while 26 percent were committed by a group and 20 percent were committed by two perpetrators (Perliger, 2012). The START study on Far Right violence in the United States provides another valuable insight on FRVEs attacks through its observation that close to half of Far Right homicides committed with the use of a firearm between 1990 and 2013 were perpetrated by more than one suspect (START, 2014).

A study using ECDB data to empirically challenge misconceptions on terrorism in the United States identified that 69.2 percent of 338 post-9/11 terrorists—including FRVEs—were lone wolves, and the remaining 30.8 percent belonged to an organized group (Silva et al., 2019). In a different study on lone wolves across different ideologies, it suggests that an individual extremist's lack of group organization and affiliation constrains the range of targets and tactics available to him or her (Becker, 2014). In contrast, the *Perspectives on Terrorism* study on the 89 life history interviews of self-identified former white supremacists observed that all 61 survey participants responded that they had participated in a supportive group (Windisch et al., 2018). Although these two studies utilize very different methods of analysis, the question remains on

how isolated lone wolves truly are. The START report for the National Institute of Justice on domestic radicalization that utilized PIRUS data for the period of 1945-2013 identified that "despite the increase in lone actor behavior in the US, radicalization remains a distinctly social process." This helps explain the finding that group and clique membership rates remain high across different ideologies and that clique membership is linked to an increase in violent behaviors (Jensen & LaFree, 2016).

Other studies were dedicated to examining the dynamics of organized FRVE groups. One such study on the organizational dynamics of Far Right hate groups in the United States makes an array of observations based on hate groups' operations. The study found that hate groups were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence if they recruited at protests, were specifically targeting youth, had more members, and were established longer. In contrast, the study observed that hate groups were significantly less likely to be involved in extreme violence if they had legal funding strategies, published extremist literature, and/or focused on local issues (Chermak, Freilich, & Suttmoeller, 2013). A similar study examined the organizational-level characteristics in right wing extremist groups in the United States. That study randomly sampled half of the 550 domestic Far Right extremist organizations that had existed for at least 3 consecutive years. The results of the study indicated that hate groups would be more prone to violence if they were previously involved in violence, had multiple alliances, had a larger membership, advocated inherent racial or ethnic superiority, and/or had weak or decentralized leadership (Asal, Chermak, Fitzgerald, & Freilich, 2016). It is also worth noting that the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has developed a Hate Map that tracks the number of active hate groups each year between 1999 and 2017. The map indicates that a gradual increase in active hate groups from 457 in 1999 to 1018 in 2011. The map also indicates that the number of active hate groups decreased to 784 by 2014, but then continued to rise up to 1020 in 2018 (SPLC, 2019). These findings would suggest that membership into hate groups is increasing, and with it the number of affiliated FRVEs.

Another notable study examined violent extremists who left extreme right-wing groups. The study observed that several exits were triggered by the individuals disillusionment related to the role and nature of violence, specifically their shock over the consequences of acts of violence or that the violence had gone too far (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2013). Other respondents had expressed their disappointment in their right-wing extremist group when they realized "the extent of internal bickering, self-seeking behavior, mutual suspicion, competition, and backstabbing in the group" (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2013, pg. 104). On the subject of leadership, exiters of right-wing extremist groups expressed disappointment that their leaders did not live up to their standards and ideals of physical strength, courage, and intelligence. The study also observed that a number of exiters of right-wing extremist groups had their moment of reckoning while serving out their prison terms. Individuals with children or a significant other appeared to feel more guilt and was a factor that prompted their exit from the right-wing extremist group (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2013).

The Internet
One of the new and growing areas of research in the field of ideological extremism is the role of the internet in FRVE activities. This research raises the question of whether the internet and other advancements in communication help provide the conditions of FRVE plot success. Academic studies consistently show that FRVEs are increasingly using the internet and social

media, particularly for the purposes of communicating, recruiting, and fundraising. However, there are discrepancies about the significance that either the internet or social media have in determining a Far Right extremist's propensity for violence or the extent that they play in a FRVE's plot preparation. Ultimately, the studies featured in this section collectively suggest that there is still more research that needs to be done on the role of the internet in FRVE activities.

A study on the Far Right virtual community "Stormfront" observed that actions and activities promoted on the board are "predominantly nonviolent in nature" due to the board rules that ban the explicit promotion or incitation of violence (Bowman-Grieve, 2009, pg. 1003). The author concludes that members abide by this rule in order to avoid having the website shut down and the community dissolved by Internet watchdogs or Internet Service Providers (Bowman-Grieve, 2009). A different study on "Stormfront" observed that fewer than 1,800 registered members log onto the website, and that less than half of the site's visitors reside in the United States (Beirich, 2014). Even so, the study also acknowledged a finding made in a two-year study by the SPLC that indicated that "registered Stormfront users have been disproportionately responsible for some of the most lethal hate crimes and mass killings since the site was put up in 1995" (Beirich, 2014, pg. 2). The SPLC also identified in a report that in the past five years "Stormfront" members murdered close to 100 people (Beirich, 2014). Moreover, the SPLC report describes that the homicide rate by "Stormfront" members "began to accelerate rapidly in early 2009," and suggests that it was connected to the election of Barack Obama, the United States' first black president (Reitman, 2018). A *New York Times* article echoes these findings, pointing out that "Stormfront" had added 32,000 new users within the first three months after Obama's inauguration (Beirich, 2014, pg. 2). The SPLC report also cites several homicides committed by "Stormfront" users, each with different lengths of membership and levels of engagement with the website, though it is unclear the extent that the website played in pushing these individuals to violence beyond reaffirming their ideological beliefs. One last notable finding made by the report is that the website receives substantial donations each year, as noted by the increase in donations from $6,545 in August 2012 to $10,032 in October 2012 (Beirich, 2014).

Existing Literature and Extremist Plot Success

The START report for the National Institute of Justice is the only report identified in the literature review that uses similar means of research and analysis as this exploratory study to approach the subject of ideological extremism. The report sought to use logistic regression techniques to determine factors—such as weak bonds with family and competition with rival groups—that contribute to an ideological extremist's propensity for violence (Jensen & LaFree, 2016). PIRUS data was also used in this report, which at the time of the report's publication contained data on ideological extremists between 1948-2013. By examining violent ideological extremists regardless of whether they executed their violent plot successfully, the report identified that economic deprivation and low educational attainment were not reliable indicators of radicalization and violence, while factors such as pre-radicalization criminal activity and post-radicalization clique membership were stronger predictors of violence from radicalized individuals (Jensen & LaFree, 2016). Though an important contribution to ideological extremism research, the report is not designed to analyze factors of violent ideological extremist plot success.

Although much of the existing literature in the field of ideological extremism research utilizes different methods for inclusion and does not directly analyze the factors and conditions for extremist plot success, the existing literature does provide a foundation for such analysis. It can be inferred from the literature on FRVE target selection and target demographics that civilians are a common target for FRVE attacks, especially if they represent something antithetical to the extremist's ideology. When these observations are combined with the literature on extremist fatalities, it appears that many FRVEs are intentionally targeting individuals, and that having such a singular focus could be one of the factors or conditions for an extremist's plot being executed successfully. Existing literature on political and social factors in extremist violence, on the other hand, does not appear to indicate conditions for extremist plot success, nor does it appear to positively indicate conditions for FRVE activity. In contrast, existing literature on FRVE profiles and background demographics appear to indicate patterns between FRVEs that could be influencing plot success, most notably identity (i.e. white young males) and a lack of an established lifestyle (i.e. family, employment). Similarly, patterns identified by the existing literature on extremist group affiliations—such as being part of a clique or decentralization within an organized extremist group—appear to indicate more factors and conditions that could be influencing extremist plot success. Lastly, the role of the internet in FRVE activity is a fascinating subject, but the limited amount of literature in this area of extremist research makes it difficult to infer potential correlations between the internet and FRVE activity, and by continuation the internet and extremist plot success.

Research Questions

This section serves as an overview of the research questions that will be addressed in this study, as well as the hypotheses that will be tested to help answer these research questions. This study was created in response to two important developments in the field of extremism research: the recognition of gaps in the existing literature and the growing recognition of FRVE activity in the United States by the media and public officials. With these developments in mind, it was evident that the research questions and corresponding hypotheses in this study needed to address the threat of FRVEs to the United Sates compared to other violent extremists throughout its history as far as existing data can reflect.

Research Question 1: Are FRVEs more successful in executing their plots than other violent extremists from 1948-2017?

- **H1**: FRVE plot success was greater than IVE plot success from 1948-2017.
- **H2**: FRVE plot success was greater than FLVE plot success from 1948-2017.
- **H3**: FRVE plot success was greater than SIVE plot success from 1948-2017.

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between ideology and plot success. Does ideology predict plot success?

- **H4**: FRVE from 1948-2017 is positively correlated with plot success.
- **H5**: FLVE from 1948-2017 is positively correlated with plot success.
- **H6**: IVE from 1948-2017 is positively correlated with plot success.
- **H7**: SIVE from 1948-2017is positively correlated with plot success.

Research Design and Methodology

This section provides a detailed explanation of the research design and the analytical approaches that were used to explore this study's research questions and test their corresponding hypotheses.

Data - Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS)

As observed in the Literature Review section of this study, many academic studies and reports have analyzed trends in domestic FRVE prior to 2012 or have analyzed trends within the parameters of one year. Consequently, there are a limited number of studies and reports that examine domestic FRVE through 2017. In order to better understand the trends in domestic FRVE into the 21st Century, it was determined that the PIRUS Database would be the primary data source used to conduct analysis and test the research hypothesis. PIRUS is a quantitative dataset developed by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. It contains 144 different variables regarding the backgrounds, attributes, and radicalization processes of each of the 2,148 individual violent and non-violent extremists adhering to Far Right, Far Left, Islamist, or Single Issue ideologies in the United States covering the period of 1948-2017.

The PIRUS data were collected and coded using public sources of information, and the database is the largest of its kind that is available to researchers and the public. PIRUS is not a comprehensive sample of radicalization in the United States due to resource limitations, yet by utilizing various sampling techniques to gather the PIRUS data, START asserts that "every effort was made to maximize the representativeness of the data" (START, 2019). The dataset is coded so that generally all observations are represented with a number specific to the categorical variable, which is a variable with non-numeric value that is one of several possible categories. For example, the categorical variable "Gender" is coded so that 1=Female and 2=Male.

In order for an individual to be eligible for inclusion into PIRUS, he or she must meet at least one of the follow criteria:

1. The individual was arrested or indicted for committing an ideologically-motivated crime (START, 2018).
2. The individual was killed as a result of his/her ideological activities (START, 2018).
3. The individual is or was a member of a Designated Terrorist Organization (DTO) by the United States Department of State, or if he or she claimed to be a member of a DTO (START, 2018).
4. The individual is or was associated and actively involved with an extremist organization whose leader(s) or founder(s) has/have been indicted for an ideologically motivated violent offense (START, 2018).

Additionally, an individual must meet each of the following criteria to be eligible for inclusion into PIRUS:

1. The individual was radicalized in the United States (START, 2018).
2. The individual had espoused or currently espouses ideological motives (START, 2018).
3. The individual's behaviors are/were linked to the ideological motives he or she espoused/espouses (START, 2018).

Statistical Software - The R Project (R)

The statistical software package R was chosen to organize the PIRUS data for analysis. R is a language and environment for statistical computing and graphics designed by the Statistics Department of the University of Auckland. As the R Foundation explains, "R provides a wide variety of statistical (linear and nonlinear modelling, classical statistical tests, time-series analysis, classification, clustering …) and graphical techniques" (The R Foundation, 2019). R is available as free software that can be used by the public.

PIRUS – Missing Data

All of the available data from the PIRUS database as of January 2019 (PIRUS v3.2_public download.xlsx) was imported into R for preliminary analysis. Exploratory data analysis was conducted and it was discovered that one of the primary issues with the PIRUS dataset was the amount of missing data. An analysis of the entire dataset was conducted using the R package "naniar," which is an R package specifically designed for exploring missing data structures.

PIRUS – Sample for Violent Extremists

The PIRUS database contains information about both violent and non-violent radicalized ideological extremists, and in order to answer the research questions on violent extremist plot success, non-violent extremists would have to be excluded from the analysis. This process was achieved by making substitutions in the Plot_Target variable, which categorizes the target of an individual's violent extremist activity. The categories under the Plot_Target variable are coded as follows:

Value	Plot_Target Category	Value	Plot_Target Category
1	Business	12	Non-Governmental Organization
2	Government (General)	13	Other (e.g., ambulances, firefighters)
3	Police	14	Private Citizens & Property
4	Military	15	Religious Figures/Institutions
5	Abortion Related	16	Telecommunications
6	Airports & Aircraft	17	Terrorists/Non-State Actors
7	Government (Diplomatic)	18	Tourists
8	Educational Institution	19	Transportation
9	Food and Water Supply	20	Utilities
10	Journalists & Media	-99	Unknown
11	Maritime (includes ports and maritime facilities)	-88	Not Applicable (i.e. no plot)

Excluding non-violent plots simply required substituting -99 and -88 with N/A. These substitutions decreased the number of observations contained in the sample, specifically from 2,148 observations to 1,091 observations. These 1,091 observations were used to generate the descriptive statistics and for testing H1, H2, and H3.

Determining the Outcome Variable

Considering that the goal of the study was to predict violent extremist plot success, it was determined that the outcome variable for this logistic regression would be plot success. In the

PIRUS dataset, the variable "successful execution of plot" is coded to be represented by the number "5," which is one of seven categories under the variable category "Extent_Plot." In order to turn this categorical variable into a binary variable (Faliure = 0, Success = 1), a new variable was created. The new variable was called Plot_Success, and it was created by substituting the number "5" in the "Extent_Plot" variable category with the number "1" and substituting the other non-success variables in the same variable category with the value "0".

The Logistic Regression Model
Testing H4, H5, H6, and H7 would require a logistic regression model. As explained in *Applied Logistic Regression Second Edition*, the goal of the logistic regression model is "to find the best fitting and most parsimonious, yet biologically reasonable, model to describe the relationship between an outcome (dependent or explanatory) variable and a set of predictor (independent or explanatory) variables" (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000). A logistic regression approach was selected because it is designed to work with binary outcome variables, such as the new variable Plot_Success.

Predictor Variables
There are 144 variables in the PIRUS dataset. A list was created that included the variables that warranted inclusion as possible predictor variables in the logistic regression. A variable's inclusion on the list was determined by the its relevance to existing academic literature, area expertise, and if there were observable trends. A total of 54 variables were included on this list.

The following steps were used to evaluate the PIRUS variables for inclusion in the logistic regression model. A univariate analysis of each of the 54 variables was conducted with the outcome variable as recommended by *Applied Logistic Regression Second Edition*. For nominal and ordinal variables, the Pearson Chi-Square Test was used as it is "asymptotically equivalent to the likelihood ratio chi-square test" (Hosmer et al., pg. 92). Continuous variables, or variables with a numerical value (i.e. Age, Length_Group, Time_US_Months), were evaluated using a t-Test. Variables with a p-value of < 0.25 were considered for inclusion into the multivariate model. As noted in *Applied Logistic Regression Second Edition,* the 0.25 p-value was used, for the "more traditional level (such as 0.05) often fails to identify variables known to be important" (Hosmer et al., pg. 95).

The 48 variables that met the indicator of significance were then checked for missing data. A missing data cutoff of 25% was used to further reduce the variables under consideration for the logistic regression, which narrowed down the list of predictor variables down to 15. The 15 predictor variables included the following: Anticp_Fatals_Targ, Attack_Preparation, Radical_Beliefs, Broad_Ethnicity, Role_Group, Residency_Status, Plot_Target1, Radical_Behaviors, Age, Criminal_Severity, Group_Membership, Radicalization_Islamist, Radicalization_Far_Right, Radicalization_Far_Left, and Radicalization_Single_Issue. The missing PIRUS data is reflected in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Predictor Variables Missing and Present Data
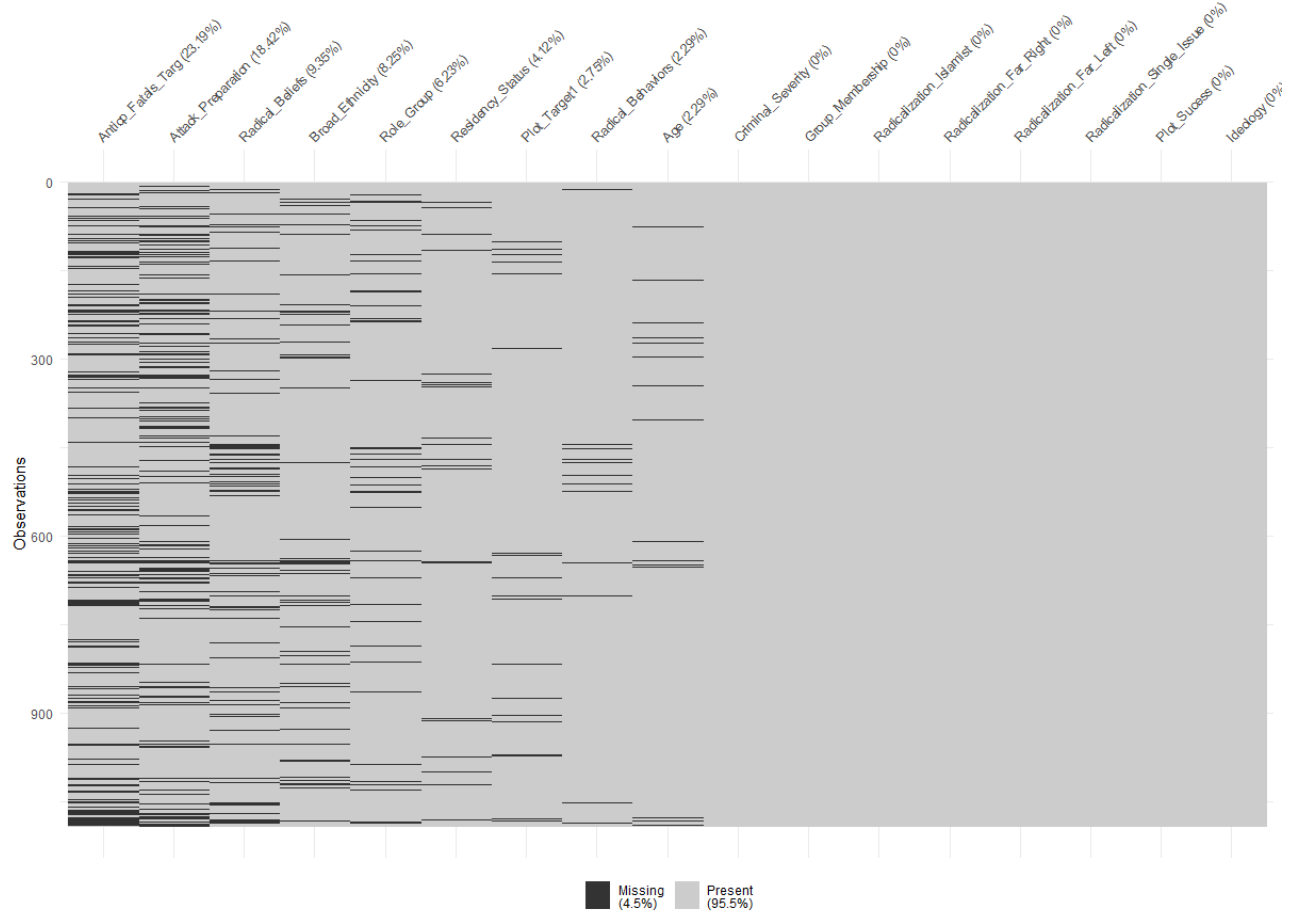
A restriction for regression analysis is that the data must be complete, and thus each row of data (observation) must have data for all variables for the regression analysis in order to function. Using R, all observations (rows) within the original 1,091 sample with incomplete data were removed from the sample that would be used for the logistic regression model. The completed cases sample included 570 observations.

Stepwise Variable Selection
A stepwise method of variable selection was employed to select the final predictor variables, as recommended by *Applied Logistic Regression Second Edition* (Hosmer et al., pg. 96). A stepwise model adds or subtracts variables form a model and then compares them with the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC). The AIC is a measure of the relative quality of a statistical model, the model's AIC was analyzed both backwards and forwards through R. The best performing model included the variables: Broad_Ethnicity, Age, Radicalization_Far_Right, Plot_Target1, Attack_Preparation, Radicalization_Far_Left, and Criminal_Severity. The preliminary main effect model included these variables.

Variable Collinearity - Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was checked for each of the 7 variables in the preliminary main effect model in order to determine if there was collinearity between the variables. Collinearity means that two predictor variables have a very strong or exact relationship with each other. The closer that the VIF number is to 1, the least amount of correlation is present. In contrast, if the VIF number is more than or equal to 2.5, then there is high correlation between predictor variables. Having two or more similar predictor variables in the logistic regression model would provide little predictive value. Of the 7 variables, 2 variables—Plot_Target1 and Broad_Ethnicity— had a VIF number greater than 2.5, and thus were removed from the logistic regression model. The remaining 5 variables Attack_Preparation, Age, Criminal_Severity, Radicalization_Far_Right, and Radicalization_Far_Left were included in the main effect model.

### *Creating Training Data and Optimal Cutoff*

When the proportion of events is much smaller than the proportion of non-events, a condition known as class bias occurs. Resolving this condition requires creating training data, or in other words a sample of observations where the events and non-events are in approximately equal proportions. The training data then becomes the development sample while the rest of the data not included for training becomes the validation sample.

Running the optimal cutoff function in R was important for improving the prediction of events (1) and non-events (0) while also reducing the misclassification error. The misclassification error percentage mismatch of the predicted versus the actuals. The resulting optimal cutoff was 0.6124539 and the resulting misclassification error was 0.2638.

Model Diagnostics - Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) Curve

No model would be complete without a test of its quality. A ROC Curve traces the percentage of true positives that are accurately predicted by a given logistical regression model as the prediction probability cutoff is lowered from 1 to 0. In a good model, a ROC Curve should mark more of the actual 1's as positives and lesser of actual 0's as 1's as the cutoff is lowered (Prabhakaran, 2019). Visually, a good model will have a ROC Curve that rises steeply and has a greater area under the curve. The ROC Curve for this model is illustrated in Figure 2. According to *Applied Logistic Regression Second Edition*, it is a general rule that if the area under the ROC Curve is greater than 0.7 and less than 0.8 that the model is considered acceptable discrimination, or is acceptable at choosing right outcomes (Hosmer et al., pg. 162). As indicated by the ROC Curve in Figure 2, the area under the ROC Curve for this model is 0.7753, meaning that the model has acceptable discrimination.

Figure 2. Main Effects Model Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) Curve
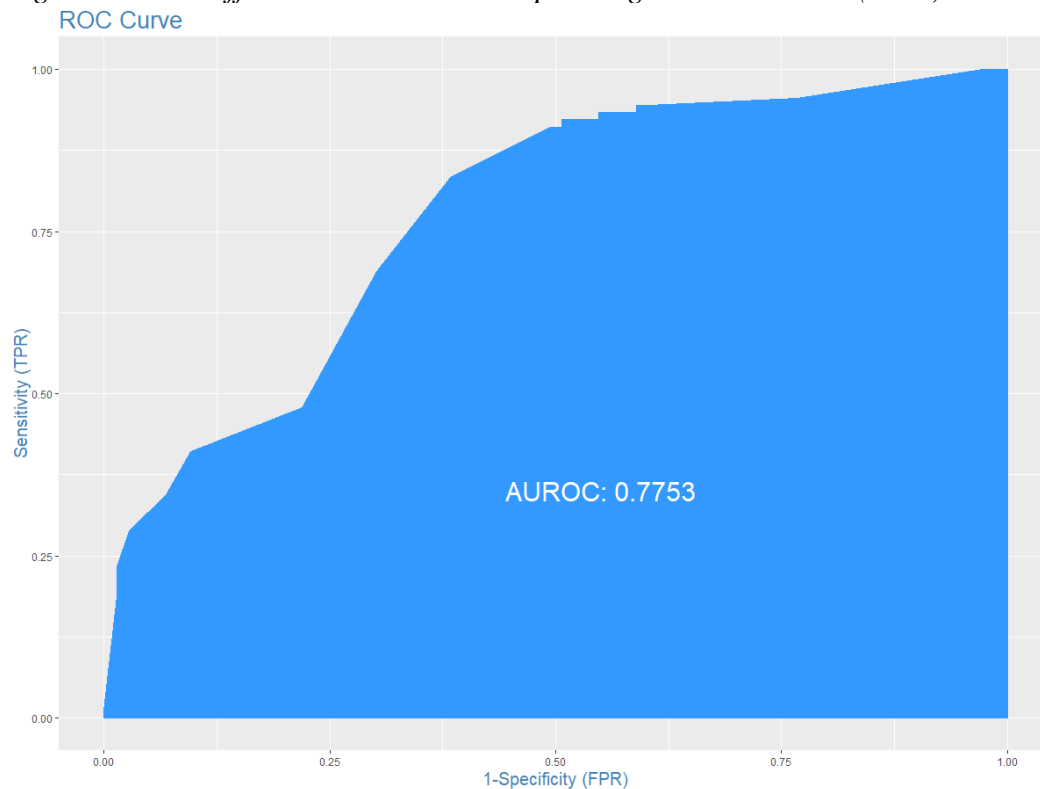
Model Diagnostics – Concordance, Sensitivity, and Specificity

The last step to determining the quality of the model was to test its concordance, sensitivity, and specificity. Essentially, concordance is the percentage of pairs whose scores of actual positive's (represented by 1s) are greater than the scores of actual negative's (represented by 0s). The closer the model's concordance is to 100 percent, the better the model. The concordance for this model was 74.74886 percent. Sensitivity is the percentage of 1s that are correctly predicted by the model, while specificity is the percentage of 0's correctly predicted by the model. The sensitivity of this model is 83.33333 percent and the specificity of this model is 61.64384 percent.

Analysis

This section provides an overview of the descriptive statistics used to test H1, H2, and H3, as well as the results of the logistic regression model used to answer H4, H5, and H7.

Descriptive Statistics

The 1,091 observations containing the violent extremists recorded in PIRUS were used to generate the descriptive statistics that would test H1, H2, and H3. The number of successful plots for each ideological extremist group over time is illustrated in Figures 3-6. The total number of violent plots for each ideology recorded in the PIRUS database is featured in Figure 7. The breakdown of violent plot successes and failures for each ideological extremist group can be found in Table 1.

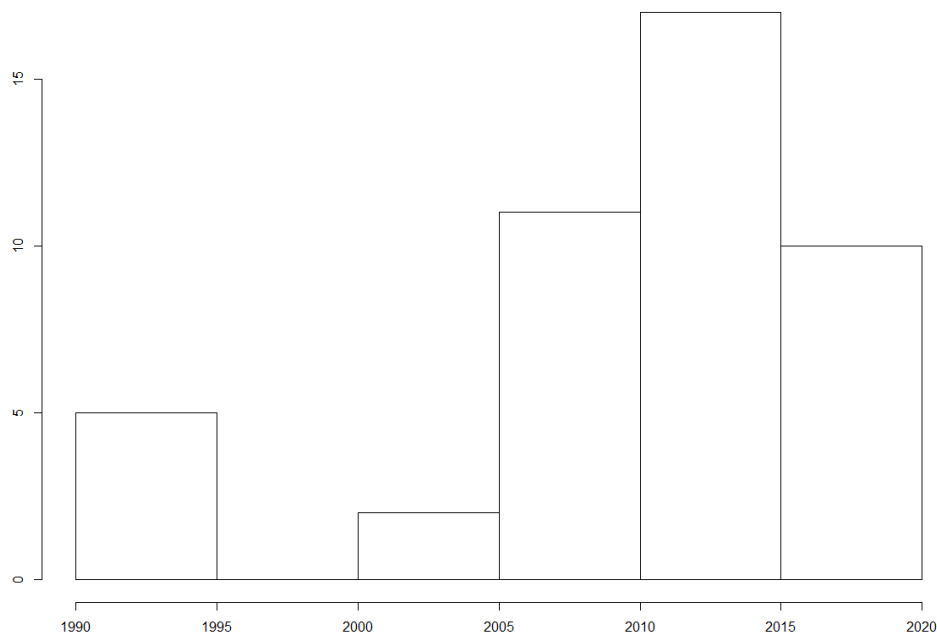*Figure 3. Histogram of IVE Successful Plots (1948-2017)*

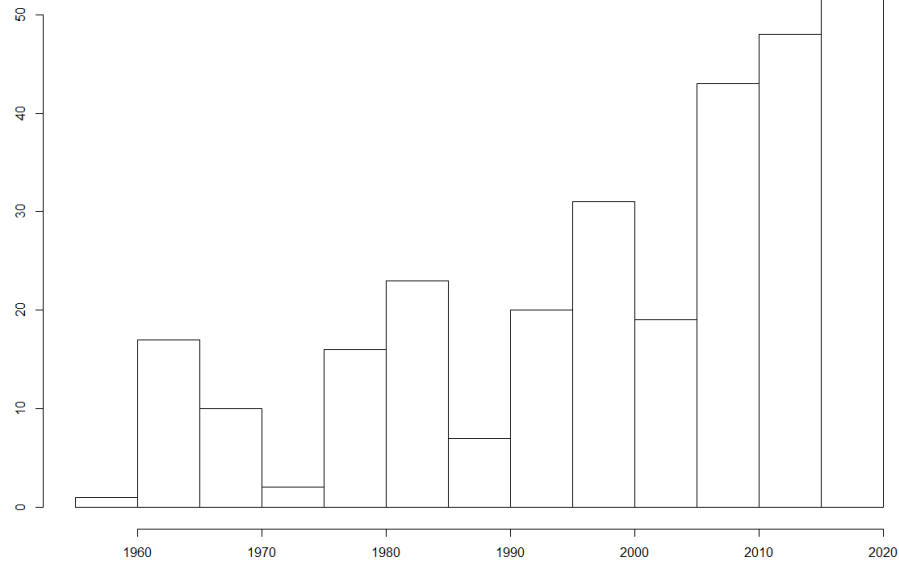*Figure 4. Histogram of FRVE Successful Plots (1948-2017)*

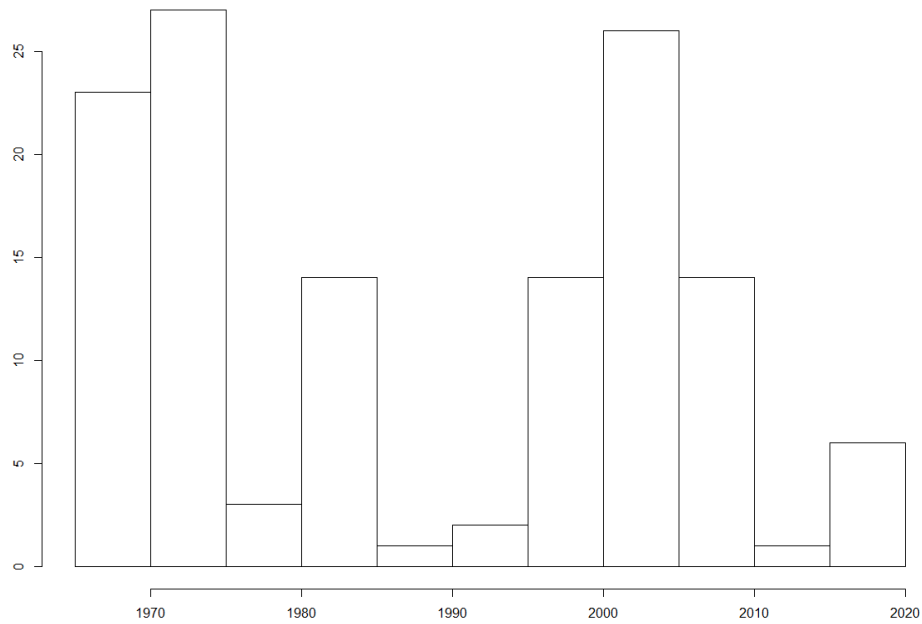*Figure 5. Histogram of FLVE Successful Plots (1948-2017)*

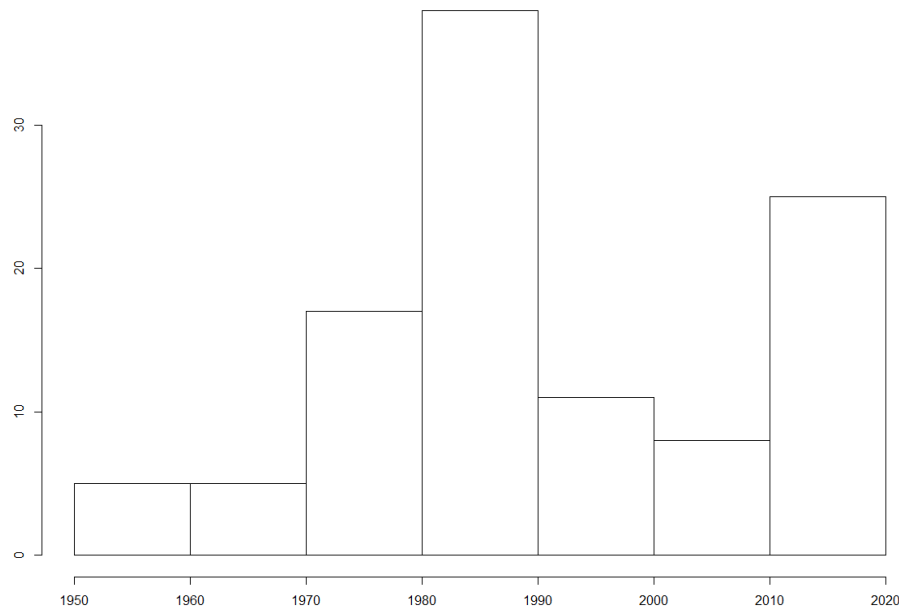*Figure 6. Histogram of SIVE Successful Plots (1948-2017)*

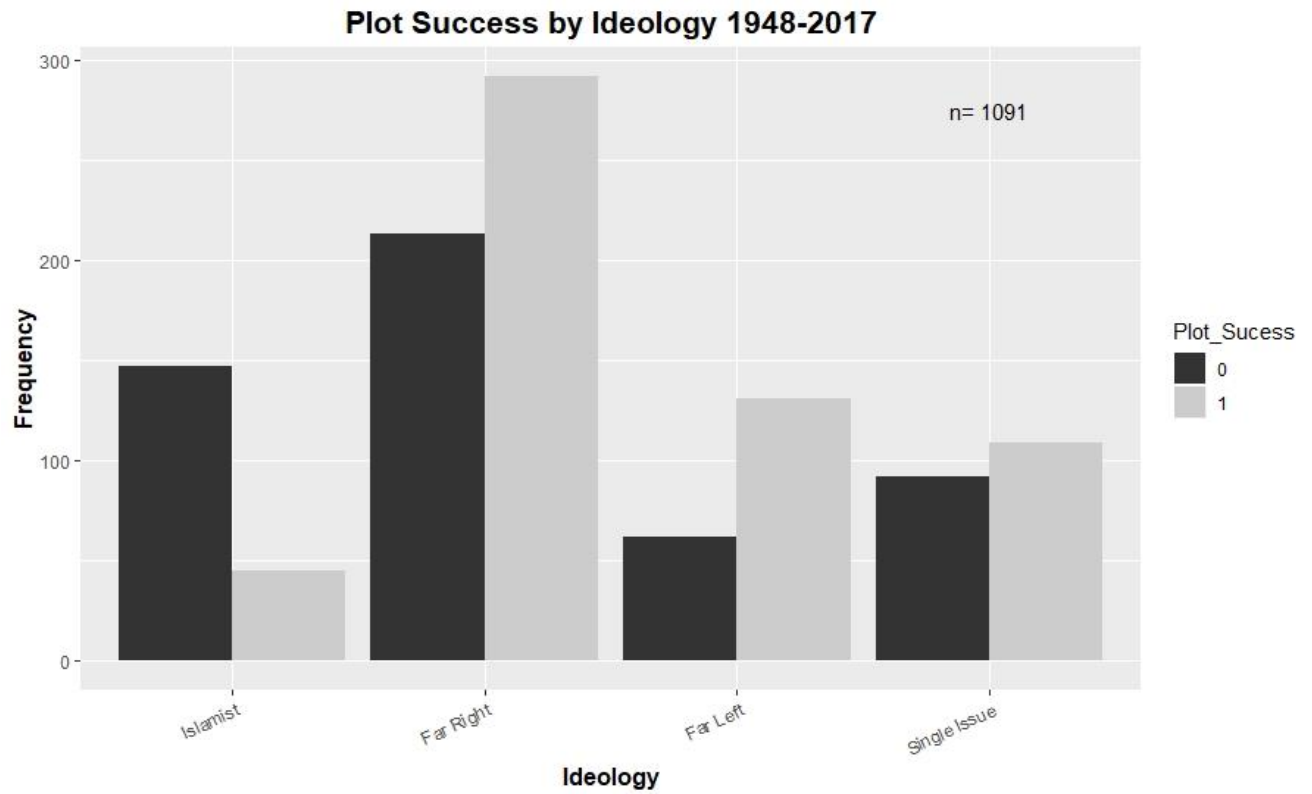*Figure 7. Plot Success by Ideology (1948-2017)*

Table 1. Successful Violent Plots

	Far Right	**Islamist**	**Far Left**	**Single Issue**
Failures (0)	213	147	62	92
Successes (1)	292	45	131	109
Total	505	192	193	201

With the total number of violent plot successes and failures calculated, the next step is to calculate the proportion of violent plot successes and failures, as well as determine if the results are significant. Calculating the proportions entails dividing an ideological group's total number of plots by the total number of their violent plot successes or failures. The results of these calculations can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Successful Violent Plots (Proportions)

	Far Right	**Islamist**	**Far Left**	**Single Issue**
Failures (0)	0.4217822	0.7656250	0.3212435	0.457714
Successes (1)	0.5782178	0.2343750	0.6787565	0.5422886

As for determining whether the differences in the results between two ideological groups are significant, one must examine the p-values from a two proportions Z-test. As with other tests in this explorative study, the level of significance for p-values will be 0.05. The 0.05 alpha refers to the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is actually true, and therefore there is a 5% risk that the differences in the proportion are not actually significant. When the proportion of FRVE plot success was compared to the proportion of FRVE plot success in the Z-test, the resulting P-value was 4.854e-16. The Z-test was also conducted on the proportion of FRVE plot success against the proportion of FLVE plot success and then against the proportion of SIVE plot success, resulting in the P-values 0.00952 and 0.2161 respectively.

Hypotheses 1-3
According to the observations, the histograms, and the Z-Test on the Descriptive Statistics, the following conclusions can be made about H1, H2, and H3:

H1: The evidence supports the hypothesis that FRVE plot success was greater than IVE plot success from 1948-2017. FRVEs executed more successful plots than IVEs between 1948-2017. The percentage of total FRVE plot success (58%) was greater than total IVE plot success (23%). The results of the two proportions Z-test also support the hypothesis. The very small p-value of 4.854e-16 is less than alpha = 0.05, which rejects the null hypothesis and further supports the hypothesis that FRVE plot success was greater than IVE plot success from 1948-2017.

H2: The evidence does not support the hypothesis that FRVE plot success was greater than FLVE plot success from 1948-2017. FRVEs executed more successful plots than FLVEs between 1948-2017, but the percentage of total FRVE plot success (58%) was less than total FLVE plot success (68%). The results of the two proportions Z-test also does not support the hypothesis. The small p-value of 0.00952 is less than alpha = 0.05 and indicated that FRVE plot success was significantly less than FLVE plot success, which supports the null hypothesis while rejecting the original hypothesis that FRVE plot success was greater than FLVE plot success from 1948-2017.

H3: The evidence does not support the hypothesis that FRVE plot success was greater than SIVE plot success from 1948-2017. FRVEs executed more successful plots than SIVEs between 1948-2017, and even had proportionally more success than SIVEs in executing successful plots, with the percentage of total FRVE plot success being 58% and SIVE plot success being 54%. However, the results of the two proportions Z-test also does not support the hypothesis. The p-value of 0.2161 is more than alpha = 0.05 and indicated that FRVE plot success was significantly greater than FLVE plot success, which supports the null hypothesis while rejecting the original hypothesis that FRVE plot success was greater than SIVE plot success from 1948-2017.

Main Effects Model
A sample of 570 complete observations were used to test the Main Effects Model that are used to evaluate H4, H5, H6, and H7. During the stepwise regression analysis, Radicalization_Islamist and Radicalization_Single_Issue were indicated as not significant predictors of Plot_Sucess, and thus they were not included in the Main Effects Model.

In a logistical regression model, the estimate represents the change in the odds log of the outcome for a one unit increase in the predictor variable, making it the "best estimate" of an unknown population parameter. The greater an odds log is, the greater the ratio of the probability of success over the probability of failure. Odds logs can also be interpreted through odds ratios, which entails exponentiating the odds logs (UCLA, 2019).

The standard error is used for testing whether the parameter is significantly different from 0, and the larger the standard error of the coefficient estimate the less precise is the measurement of the coefficient. The z-value is the regression coefficient divided by its standard error. The p-value determines whether or not there is a relationship between two variables, and thus the smaller the p-value the more confidence there is in the existence of relationship between the two variables (Prabhakaran, 2019). The regression coefficients, or the estimates of the unknown population parameters describing the relationship between an independent variable and the predictor variable, are in Table 3.

P-values are useful for determining the best approximation of true value, but it is through confidence intervals that the probability that a true value is within a given range can be determined more exactly. Moreover, confidence intervals can indicate the direction of the effect being studied. For most studies, a confidence level of 95% is selected, which means that the confidence interval will cover the true value in 95 out of 100 studies performed (Du Prel, Hommel, Röhrig, & Blettner, 2009).The confidence intervals for the Main Effects Model can be found in Table 4.

Table 3. Main Effects Model

	Estimate (Odds Log)	Estimate (Odds Ratio)	Standard Error	Z-Value	P-Value
(Intercept)	-2.4184	0.0890631	1.0401	-2.325	0.020060 *
Radicalization_Far_Left	0.9888	2.6880126	0.3499	2.826	0.004713 **
Radicalization_Far_Right	0.2660	1.3047445	0.2343	1.135	0.256317
Criminal_Severity: Conspire to Kill/Injure	0.9004	2.4605139	1.1067	0.814	0.415883
Criminal_Severity: Threatening Felony	2.0915	8.0969688	1.1833	1.767	0.077147 .
Criminal_Severity: Violence Property/Arson	3.8188	45.5494395	1.1106	3.438	0.000585 ***
Criminal_Severity: Violence/Robbery/Assault Deadly Weapon	4.2255	68.4092725	1.0662	3.963	7.4e-05 ***
Attack_Preparation: Moderate	-1.3573	0.2573608	0.3694	-3.674	0.000239 ***
Attack_Preparation: Extensive	-1.3162	0.2681564	0.3806	-3.458	0.000543 ***
Signif. codes: 0 "***" , 0.001 "**" , 0.01 "*" . 0.05 "." . 0.1 " " 1					

Table 4. Confidence Intervals for Main Effects Model

	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval 2.5%	Confidence Interval 97.5%
(Intercept)	0.0890631	0.004889414	0.4500405
Radicalization_Far_Left	2.6880126	1.372959706	5.4342360
Radicalization_Far_Right	1.3047445	0.823250312	2.0660452
Criminal_Severity: Conspire to Kill/Injure	2.4605139	0.402505497	47.9407893
Criminal_Severity: Threatening Felony	8.0969688	1.056019338	170.6097920
Criminal_Severity: Violence Property/Arson	45.5494395	7.490895302	893.1458100
Criminal_Severity: Violence/Robbery/Assault Deadly Weapon	68.4092725	12.753338273	1281.1024864
Attack_Preparation: Moderate	0.2573608	0.120384217	0.5157296
Attack_Preparation: Extensive	0.2681564	0.123293920	0.5515305

Radicalizatoin_Far_Right, along with the variable Criminal_Severity: Conspire to Kill/Injure, were not significantly correlated with Plot_Success based on the results of the stepwise regression analysis. Radicalization_Far_Left, Criminal_Severity, along with the variables Violence Property/Arson and Criminal_Severity: Violence/Robbery/Assault Deadly Weapon, were positively correlated with Plot_Success according to the Main Effects Model. Additionally, the Main Effects Model indicated that Attack_Preparation: Moderate– minimal preparation, such as obtaining information on the target and rudimentary familiarity with planned tactics, but not more extensive preparation like casing the target or performing "dry runs" of the operation— and Attack_Preparation: Extensive– includes obtaining significant amounts of information on the target and familiarity with the planned tactics, such as through research, training and "dry runs" of the operation– were negatively correlated with plot success.

Hypotheses 4-7
According to the results of the Main Effects Model, the following observations can be made about H4, H5, H6, and H7:

H4: The evidence does not show a statistically significant correlation in FRVE plot success, and therefore the evidence does not support the hypothesis that FRVE from 1948-2017 is positively correlated with plot success.

H5: The evidence does show a statistically significant correlation in FLVE plot success, and therefore the evidence does support the hypothesis that FLVE from 1948-2017 is positively correlated with attack success. Furthermore, the Main Effects Model identified that the odds of a FLVE plot succeeding over the odds of the plot succeeding for the reference holding all other variables constant increases by a factor of 2.69.

H6: The evidence does not show a statistically significant correlation in IVE plot success, and therefore the evidence does not support the hypothesis that IVE from 1948-2017 is positively correlated with attack success.

H7: The evidence does not show a statistically significant correlation in SIVE plot success, and therefore the evidence does not support the hypothesis that SIVE from 1948-2017 is positively correlated with attack success.

Discussion

FRVE Plot Success
FRVEs executed more successful plots than the other ideological extremist groups that were sampled and examined in this study for the period of 1948-2017, but FRVE plot success was only proportionally greater than IVE plot success. Therefore, of the three hypotheses for Research Question #1 only H1 is supported by this study. At the very least, the findings from this exploratory study indicate the relevant threat that violent ideological extremism and radicalization poses in the United States beyond just IVEs that largely dominate the attention of the media and policymakers. Exploring the unique factors that contribute to the success of violent ideological plots will be helpful in the setting effective domestic security priorities and policies to combat against the threat of FRVEs, FLVEs, SIVEs, as well as IVEs.

These results complement many of the findings made in existing literature on ideological extremism. There is empirical evidence from other studies to suggest that most FRVE targets are selected purposefully or because they represent something antithetical to the FRVE's ideology, and there is empirical evidence indicating that many of the victims of FRVEs are the sole victim of a FRVE's violent plot. In contrast, existing literature has also observed that many IVEs demonstrate more representative or random targeting than FRVEs, as well as a higher ratio of victims per violent plot. By combining these findings with the findings of this exploratory study, potential patterns begin to emerge, such as that having a singular target appears to help FRVE's with their plot success. In addition, commonalities between many FRVEs—such as being single, young, white males and many of which execute their plots alone despite their network with at least one fellow extremist—merit consideration as potential correlations with plot success. Even so, exploring and supporting such correlations will also require comparisons to be made with other extreme ideological groups.

Another consideration should be made regarding the years in which successful violent extremists plots were made known to the public. Comparing the histogram of FRVE plot success and the histogram of FLVE plot success reveals that peak periods of violent plot success have occurred during different decades, with FRVEs in particular experiencing the highest levels of plot success in the past decade. This does not inherently mean that FRVEs are the only ideological extremist group that is a threat to the United States in the twenty-first century, yet their evident rise in violent plot success should serve as an indicator that more research and more action needs to be taken to address this growing security threat.

Ideology as a Predictor of Plot Success
The radical Far Left ideology was the only extremist ideological group that was positively correlated with plot success and had predictive value for predicting plot success, according to this exploratory study's logistical regression model. Therefore, H5 was the only one of the four hypotheses for Research Question #2 that is supported by this study. In the process of the logistical regression model, two non-ideology variables Criminal_Severity: Violence Property/Arson and Criminal_Severity: Violence/Robbery/Assault Deadly Weapon were indicated to have predictive value for predicting plot success. In addition, the two non-ideology variables Attack_Preparation: Moderate and Attack_Preparation: Extensive were indicated to have predictive value for predicting plot failure. Collectively, these findings suggest that there is

merit in exploring the factors contributing to violent extremist plot success while also demonstrating that there are factors that may not be significant in determining plot success.

Another key factor that influenced the inclusion and analysis of variables was the choice to examine violent ideological extremism across the entirety of its recorded existence in the United States. As observed in the histograms, violent ideological extremists experienced different periods of high plot success, with FRVEs and IVEs experiencing the majority of their plot success throughout the twenty-first century while FLVE and SIVEs experiencing the majority of their plot success in the twentieth-century. Looking at a specific period of time could have introduced more factors and variable into the analysis, but it would have shown more correlations for ideological extremist groups that were more active during that period and would be at the expense of finding commonalities with other ideological extremist groups. The timeframe that one chooses to examine extremist activity is very important for that reason.

As mentioned previously, the model indicated non-ideology variables that had predictive value. The predictive value of Criminal_Severity: Violence Property/Arson and Criminal_Severity: Violence/Robbery/Assault Deadly Weapon in plot success make a lot of sense considering that the sample was composed of violent plots and that violence against property and persons are naturally ways that such violent plots would manifest. This also aligns with the existing literature on FRVE plots, in which the majority of their targets are citizens, with private property also being a notable target of choice. Considering that these types of crimes are considered the most severe due to their violent nature, these findings should reinforce the fact that violent ideological extremism is a threat to domestic security and that it needs to be better understood to mitigate this domestic security threat.

Another noteworthy result of the Main Effects Model was that the variables Attack_Preparation: Moderate and Attack_Preparation: Extensive were indicated as negatively correlated with plot success. An inherent consequence of preparing an attack is that there are more opportunities for someone to notice or observe the preparation process. This period of preparation is a crucial time for a violent extremist to be caught and ultimately foil the plot before it can be executed. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that preparation increases the potential of a violent plot failing. Nonetheless, these findings also suggest that spontaneous plots or plots without preparation are not a significant predictor of violent plot failure. If the window of time between an ideological extremist's thought of committing a violent plot and his or her execution of that violent plot is shrinking, then there is greater need for understanding the factors contributing to an individual's radicalization process. Such understanding can come from a variety of approaches in addition to examining factors of plot success, including through an examination of a violent ideological extremist's background information and the role of technology and virtual communications in his or her radicalization.

Future Research
One of the most important elements of strong research is having complete data. By having more complete data, there is naturally more data to analyze and less of a need for imputation and abstraction methods that could unintentionally bias or disrupt the representativeness of the data. Using PIRUS as an example, there were several missing variables within certain observations, which meant that those observations had to be excluded from the final Main Effects Model.

Consequently, the sample shrunk significantly. Although the smaller sample was ultimately determined to be a good representative of the larger data sample, more complete data would have strengthened the model and provide more to analyze.

In addition to having more complete data, introducing new variables into PIRUS could also benefit the field of ideological extremism research. New variables could include the number of fatalities and casualties in each violent plot, were the targets of the violent plot selected purposefully or randomly, was the violent plot committed alone or in a group, etc. Further exploration into violent ideological extremist "Lone Wolves" in particular could also have important implications, especially considering the existing literature on FRVEs that has explored the role of radical cliques and organized violent extremist groups even when the FRVE executes his or her violent plot alone. The inclusion of data from violent ideological extremists in Europe could also provide insights on the global trends on radicalization and ideological extremist plot success.

Another approach for future research would be to examine violent ideological extremism within the twenty-first century and how is has changed in comparison to other periods of time. Focusing on the twenty-first century would help emphasize the relevance of violent ideological extremism while also bringing more attention to the factors of radicalization that are in need of more research, including the role of the internet and the advances made in communication. Based on what the research would discover, it is possible that factors like the internet and advances in communication would be deemed as a positive or negative indicator of plot success.

Future Value of the Logistical Regression Model
Although ideology was only a predictor of plot success for FLVE cases, the logistical regression model may have value for future research and when more complete data becomes available. In fact, through the logistical regression process two non-ideology variables were identified as significant predictors of plot success and two other non-ideology variables were identified as significant predictors of plot failure. The model also contributes to the growing body of ideological extremism research and to future analysis on the subject, both because the model meets acceptable standards as defined by both statisticians and academics, and because it is able to adapt to the inclusion of different and new data.

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