

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE EXTREME FAR-RIGHT, IDEOLOGY,
AND VIOLENCE:
AN EXPLORATION INTO THE ROLE OF
MULTIPLE IDEOLOGICAL AFFILIATION
ON VIOLENT MOBILIZATION

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Justice

Despite anecdotal instances of far-right extremists exhibiting multiple ideological affiliations, the relationship between extremists who adhere to multiple sub-ideologies and their propensity for violence is unknown. The present study contributes to the understanding of how multiple sub-ideologies impact the likelihood of violence by using differential association theory to test the hypothesis that far-right extremists in the US who adhere to multiple sub-ideologies have a greater propensity for extremist violence than single sub-ideology peers. Using data from 922 individuals who radicalized in the US, logistic regression tests the hypothesis that extremists with multiple ideological affiliations will have a greater propensity for violence and finds no significant positive relationship. Differences in the amount of differential associations may not affect violent outcomes. Moving forward, researchers should expand on and refine these findings to address an emerging issue in extremism and contribute to novel research.

THE EXTREME FAR-RIGHT, IDEOLOGY, AND VIOLENCE:
AN EXPLORATION INTO THE ROLE OF MULTIPLE IDEOLOGICAL
AFFILIATION ON VIOLENT MOBILIZATION

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2020

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Dedication

To my family; with me through it all.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Gary LaFree, for his guidance throughout this process. I would also like to thank my committee, Dr. Laura Dugan and Dr. Jean McGloin, for their thoughtful and insightful feedback. Finally, I would like to thank my peers and colleagues who have served as a source of support and a sounding board for the entirety of this experience.

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List of Abbreviations

Differential Association Theory ----- DAT

Multiple imputation through chain equations ----- MICE

Chapter 1: Introduction

Far-right domestic extremism has a long history of violence in the United States, tracing back over a century (Chermak et al., 2011; Mudde, 2018; Simi & Bubolz, 2017). Research on far-right actors is more critical now than ever as violent attacks in recent years draw renewed attention to the changing landscape of domestic extremism (Pitcavage, 2019). Although the field of extremism research is evolving, the bulk of recent research has focused on Islamist extremism (Doering et al., 2020; Silke, 2008). Research on far-right extremism has predominantly focused on the broad concepts of far-right ideology, as if all strands of ideology are the same (see Chermak et al., 2009; Durham, 2003; Freilich et al., 2015; Mudde, 1995; Simi et al., 2013), or on individual ideological sub-categories under the far-right concept, such as white supremacy (see also Barkun, 1989; Kerodal et al., 2016; Piazza, 2017). No existing research of which I am aware has compared far-right extremists who adhere to a single ideology and those who profess multiple ideologies in terms of their differential propensity for violence. This presents a dearth of literature on the impact multiple ideological affiliation has on far-right extremist violence.

My research examines far-right extremists in the United States with multiple ideological affiliations and their propensity for violence. Extremist ideologies provide adherents with beliefs and attitudes regarding the world, perceived enemies, and justified behaviors that are shared among members of the ideological movement (Leader Maynard, 2014). Stated another way, ideology provides extremists with approved motives, targets, and methods for violence. In this research I ask whether

far-right domestic extremists in the United States with multiple ideological affiliations have a greater propensity for extremist violence than their single ideology peers. I define multiple ideologies as when extremists are associated with more than one extremist ideology, either concurrently or moving from one ideology to another. Single ideology peers are only associated with one ideology.

Far-right extremism in the United States is characterized by individuals who are ideologically motivated by social and political right-leaning issues including extreme racism, nationalism, religious radicalism, and anti-government sentiments (ADL “Extreme Right”; Piazza, 2017). The far-right sub-ideologies included in my research are white supremacy, anti-immigrant, anti-government, militia, Christian Identity, and male supremacist, which fall under the broad far-right categorization. These sub-ideologies are distinct from one another in their beliefs and norms regarding motives, justifications, and targets of extremist violence. I provide a summary of each sub-ideology in my literature review to highlight the differences between the far-right ideologies.

Sutherland’s (1939; 1947) differential association theory states that an excess of definitions in favor of violence over those unfavorable to violence is associated with an increased propensity for violence. My research seeks to understand if multiple sub-ideological affiliations provide far-right extremists with more definitions favorable to violence, when compared to peers with only one source of violent definitions, resulting in an increased propensity for violence.

Extant research on far-right extremist ideology has acknowledged the existence of multiple ideologies in passing (see Balleck, 2018; Doering et al., 2020;

Holt et al., 2020; Kaplan, 1995; Pitcavage, 2019). The phenomenon of extremists with multiple ideologies is garnering more attention in recent years by organizations that monitor trends in United States extremism (ADL “Hybrid Hate”; Alcoke, Nov. 2019). However, to date no other known research has attempted to assess at the individual-level whether differences in violent outcomes are influenced by whether extremists adhere to multiple sub-ideologies or adhere to only one. My research uses differential association theory to explore whether far-right extremists with multiple sub-ideologies have a greater propensity for violence when compared to peers with a single sub-ideology. There is a shortage of extant research examining individuals with multiple ideologies, let alone their relationship to violence and extremism. This presents a substantive gap in criminological and terrorism studies background literature on the topic. Past research on social movement organizations, which includes extremist groups, with multiple ideological affiliations found mixed results (for example Heaney & Rojas, 2014; Jung et al., 2014; Olzak, 2016). While Heaney and Rojas (2014) and Jung and colleagues (2014) found organizations that incorporated multiple ideologies were able to appeal to a larger base of adherents and thrive, Olzak (2016) found that singular ideological focus in extremist organizations was associated with increased group longevity and violence. My research takes the first step to determine if a meaningful relationship exists between extremist violence and multiple sub-ideologies among a sample of supporters of the far-right.

Through my research, I lay out the framework for studying what impact multiple sub-ideologies have on a far-right extremist’s propensity for violence. In this chapter, I provide an overview of domestic extremism and ideology. Preliminary data

on known far-right extremists who adhered to multiple sub-ideologies provides initial evidence of the phenomenon and the risk of violence presented by the far-right. I begin Chapter 2 by reviewing the theoretical literature on differential association theory and its application to understand pro-violent attitudes. I argue that differential association is useful for understanding how pro-violent intimate peer groups teach violent justifications and support to extremists, affecting their propensity for violent engagement. I then explore the existing literature on radicalization, the far-right, and notable incidences of far-right extremists with multiple sub-ideologies. In the third chapter, I describe my methodology, measures, and analytical strategy. My research uses the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) dataset collected by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), to study the relationship between multiple ideologies and violence. In the final part of Chapter 3, I discuss the data's limitations and benefits. In Chapter 4, I conduct analysis through bivariate correlations and multivariate regression. Finally, I summarize my research, findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research in Chapter 5.

Extremism and Ideology

The FBI defines domestic terrorism as acts “perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature” (Terrorism, FBI www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism). I use the terms terrorist and extremist interchangeably in this thesis. There is no federal statute for prosecuting domestic terrorism in the United States. The activities and speech of extremists are

protected under the First Amendment until a law is broken. The line between domestic extremism and the lawful exercise of hateful activity is thin and determined only by whether the ideologically motivated act consists of a crime. This makes the study of domestic extremism in the United States difficult because incidents are hard to track and may not be publically recognized as extremism.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), extreme or far-right movements are social, political, and religious right-wing activities that are more radical, and therefore outside mainstream conservative movements (ADL “Extreme Right”). The ADL identifies the two major branches of the far-right sub-ideology as white supremacy and anti-government movements, but also includes ideologies focused on narrow beliefs and grievances such as anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim sentiments.

The ADL’s definition of the far-right and its major ideological distinctions is just one of many attempts to categorize the far-right (see also Keordal et al., 2016; Freilich et al., 2015; Simi et al., 2013). Ideological differences within the broad far-right movement make up the distinct sub-movements of far-right ideologies. In extremism research (Jensen et al., 2016; Onat & Gul, 2018; Piazza, 2009), broad ideology umbrella terms are used to categorize different extremist ideologies. The most common of these umbrella ideologies are far-right, far-left, single issue, and Islamist extremism. Far-left extremism typically consists of ideologies that are class-oriented and contain Marxist-Leninist beliefs (George & Wilcox, 1996). Far-left ideologies support the overthrow of capitalism, which frequently includes the United States government (Smith, 1994). Single issue extremist ideologies are built around a

single core belief that transcends far-right or far-left social-political leanings (Monaghan, 2000). Single issue movements, such as anti-abortion, are more extreme interpretations of mainstream political movements that focus on a single point of concern and may transcend political categorizations (ADL “Extreme Right”; Monaghan, 2000). Radical Islamist extremism ideology advocates for the imposition of shari’a law, the creation of an Islamist state, and rectification of grievances affecting Muslims (Hoffman, 2017). Under the broad ideological umbrella terms are sub-ideologies, such as white supremacist, sovereign citizen, or militia extremism under the far-right umbrella. My research focuses on the effect of multiple sub-ideologies on a far-right extremist’s propensity for violence.

Ideology, according to Kruglanski and colleagues (2014), contains an element of grievance on behalf of the group, a culprit responsible, and a morally warranted and effective method, often violence, to rectify the grievance. It is a belief that justifies extremism to right a perceived wrong. Leader Maynard defines extreme ideology as “a distinctive system of normative, semantic, and/or reputedly factual ideas, typically shared by members of groups or societies, which underpins their understandings of their political world and shapes their political behavior” (2014, p. 824). Succinctly put by Drake, ideology “provides a motive and framework for action” (1998, p. 55). These definitions of ideology are explicit regarding how extremist ideologies provide adherents with pro-violent definitions, justifications, and behavioral scripts for violence against perceived enemies. My research examines whether far-right extremists with multiple sub-ideologies have an increased

propensity for violence when compared to single sub-ideology peers as a result of excess differential associations in favor of extremist violence.

Violence and the Far-Right

Anecdotally, far-right extremists have previously displayed multiple ideological affiliations. For example, Eric Rudolph was responsible for a series of bombings between 1996 and 1998 in the southern United States. Rudolph was a staunch anti-abortion, anti-LGBT extremist affiliated with the Army of God who was also associated with the white supremacist militia Christian Identity movement. Rudolph's ideologies all fall under the far-right ideological umbrella, but represent different sub-ideologies within the far-right. More recently, Brenton Tarrant, who attacked a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019, espoused racist, anti-immigrant, and environmental beliefs, which are typically far-left ideologies, in his manifesto. I provide additional cases of multiple ideologies in my literature review below. The FBI has observed many younger extremists exhibiting multiple ideologies that justify their desire for violence, suggesting these extremists are seeking reasons to be violent (Alcoke, Nov. 2019).

Prominent examples in the media of extremist violence by far-right actors with multiple sub-ideologies suggests a concerning emergent trend (ADL "Hybrid Hate"), but empirical research is necessary to determine if a significant relationship exists. Simi and Bubolz (2017) concluded their overview of the far-right by calling for research that explores not only the movement of extremists from one group to another, but the study of far-right adherents who hold multiple ideological memberships. We need to understand emerging trends in the far-right to identify and

mitigate threats; the first step to accomplishing this as researchers is to determine if a phenomenon exists and if it impacts an extremist's propensity for violence in a theoretically expected manner. For that reason, an empirical examination of whether adhering to multiple extreme ideologies has an effect on a far-right extremist's propensity for violence is warranted and necessary to better understand the role of sub-ideology in extremist violence. Findings that contradict expectations also provide value; they highlight gaps in existing theoretical applications of criminology to extremism and give insight into extremist ideological behavior. If far-right extremists with a single ideological affiliation have a greater propensity for violence than peers with multiple ideologies, it may be the result of singular ideological clarity and commitment (Olzak, 2016).

Far-right extremists are a subset of the larger domestic terrorism problem, which includes far-left extremism and single issue extremism, but represent a significant portion of extremist violence in the United States (Pitcavage, 2019). Piazza (2017) found that far-right extremism in the United States was responsible for more deaths than any other form of domestic terrorism between 1970-2011. The ADL report on United States domestic extremist violence in 2018 found the majority of extremist violence incidents were perpetrated by far-right actors (Pitcavage, 2019). Furthermore, the ADL reported every extremist murder in 2018 was connected to far-right ideology (Pitcavage, 2019). According to the ADL, 2018 was the fourth deadliest year since 1970 for deaths resulting from domestic terrorism with 50 people killed. The years 2015 and 2016 also ranked within the top three deadliest years, highlighting a startling increase in domestic extremism in the United States. In 2018,

every United States domestic extremist who committed a murder had ties to far-right radical ideology, even if the primary ideology they acted in furtherance of was not far-right (Pitcavage, 2019). By focusing solely on far-right individuals, my research highlights potential factors related to propensity for violence among an ideological group that is now the most violent of any ideological group active in the United States. Directly related to this proposed research, one domestic extremist captured by the ADL report was a far-right extremist who adopted radical Islamist ideology before carrying out his fatal attack. This additional anecdotal evidence supports the need for empirical research into what impact multiple ideological affiliations have on propensity for violence in domestic extremists. Focusing on far-right extremists is a direct response to the increased need for research on domestic terrorism and recent publications identifying far-right domestic terrorism as a top terrorism threat to the nation (see Barrett, 2019; Bergen & Sterman, 2018; Lowery et al., 2018; Parkin et al., 2017).

While past research on individual ideology has used group membership as a means of identifying and operationalizing ideology, (Drake, 1998; see Mumford et al., 2008 for additional discussion) this measure may no longer be adequate. With radicalization occurring increasingly online today and group organizations giving way to isolated actors, an individualized approach to ideology is emerging among extremists (Doering et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2019; Pitcavage, 2015; Bowman-Grieve, 2009). As such, research must examine how individual or competing ideologies affect extremist violence. Far-right research often does not differentiate between distinct ideologies. Instead extant research has focused on the

broad far-right ideology, studied only a single distinct far-right sub-ideology, or examined the primary sub-ideology when two were present (to include Barkun, 1989; Chermak et al., 2009; Durham, 2003; Freilich et al., 2015; Kerodal et al., 2016; Mudde, 1995; Piazza, 2017; Simi et al., 2013). My research builds on prior research by acknowledging the presence of multiple ideological affiliations and examining if, compared to individuals with single ideologies, individuals with multiple ideological affiliations have an increased propensity for violence.

Ideology provides standards of behavior for how extremists conduct themselves to achieve their goals. I argue that far-right extremists in the United States with multiple ideological affiliations will have a greater propensity for violence than single ideology peers. The PIRUS data used in this analysis are cross-sectional and cannot isolate when in time an extremist adopted more than one set of ideological beliefs. The data do not differentiate between individuals with simultaneously held ideologies and individuals who experience ideological shift where they move out of one ideology to another. Given this limitation, I include both multiple sub-ideologies and shifts from one sub-ideology to another as multiple ideology.

The PIRUS dataset contains 922 far-right individuals and is used to understand the relationship between those who adhere to either single or multiple extremist ideologies and violence. In Chapter 2, I present the extant research on differential association theory and far-right extremism to explain why far-right domestic extremists in the United States with multiple ideological affiliations may have a greater propensity for violence than their single sub-ideology peers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Theoretical Background

My research uses Sutherland's differential association theory (DAT) as the theoretical lens through which we can understand how individuals can become enmeshed in values and norms supporting the use of violence. While my research does not attempt to fully test DAT, it is a useful perspective for understanding how participation in multiple ideological movements may increase the likelihood of violence. Following Sutherland (1939; 1947), I argue that violence is the result of an excess of definitions that approve its use as learned within the individual's peer groups. I consider members of ideological communities who adhere to the same ideology to be an extremist's peer group. Therefore, extremists who are affiliated with multiple ideologies will be exposed to multiple extremist peer groups.

Definitions favorable to violence teach individuals the values, attitudes, and behaviors supporting the use of violence (Warr & Stafford, 1991). These definitions are transmitted through peer groups, and individuals with an excess of violent definitions are more likely to use violence than peers who receive more definitions unfavorable to the use of violence (Warr & Stafford, 1991). Individuals with an excess of definitions favorable to violence are expected to use violence more than other forms of deviance as a result of specific attitudes that encourage violence (Sutherland, 1947; Thomas, 2018). I argue that extremists with multiple sub-ideologies may be more exposed to an excess of definitions in favor of extremist violence, and therefore more likely to engage in violence than single sub-ideology peers. I first provide an overview of DAT, then I explore the hypothetical explanation

for the relationship between multiple sub-ideology and single sub-ideology extremists' likelihood of violence.

Edwin Sutherland's (1939; 1947) differential association theory is a general theory of offending where criminal behavior is learned just like any other behavior. According to differential association theory, learning criminal behavior is best facilitated through intimate peer groups (Sutherland, 1947). Sutherland (1939; 1947) posited that offending is a result of attitudes favorable to breaking the law; those attitudes are acquired through close interaction with peers who transmit norms supportive of criminal behavior. Criminality is learned through interactions and communication with people who define the legal code as something to be followed or to be violated (Cressey, 1960; Sutherland, 1939; 1947). Therefore, individuals become deviant when they have an excess of definitions encouraging violation of the law over definitions discouraging violation of the law (Cressey, 1960; Sutherland, 1939; 1947).

Differential association is the process of receiving conflicting definitions, with one type in excess of the other. Definitions in favor of deviance are acquired through interaction with individuals who pass the attitudes and motives in favor of deviance through attitude transference (Warr & Stafford, 1991). Criminality results when an individual has greater exposure to criminal behavior patterns and is removed from non-criminal behavior patterns. This over-exposure to symbolic elements in favor of criminality is associated with criminal involvement (McCarthy, 1996; Warr & Stafford, 1991). The symbolic elements include the attitudes, motives, and drives that support criminal behavior (McCarthy, 1996; Warr & Stafford, 1991). Both the skills

needed for criminal action and the symbolic elements are the intervening factors between deviant associations and crime, and are key to the differential association process (McCarthy, 1996; Sutherland, 1947; Warr & Stafford, 1991). Exposure to criminal behavior patterns can vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity (Sutherland, 1939; 1947).

Definitions of crime are often measured as how right or wrong an act is perceived to be (Akers, 1994), or by the rationalizations and attitudes toward an act (Sutherland, 1947). Sykes and Matza's (1957) techniques of neutralization initially attempted to operationalize the definitions used by differential association. Neutralizations are beliefs and attitudes which are favorable to and justify crime. Akers (1994) in his learning theory further operationalized definitions as rationalizations and moral attitudes that evaluate the rightness or wrongness of an act. Definitions may be general to moral norms or specific to behaviors. Differential social organization describes the alternative learning processes that vary amongst groups wherein an individual learns either criminal or conventional methods of success (Cressey, 1960; Sutherland, 1939; 1947). Group differences in standards of conduct and learned behaviors for achieving success explain differential crime rates among groups.

Delinquency emerges from interactions with other individuals where a person can rationalize delinquency and apply the rationalizations within situational circumstances (Sutherland, 1973). Situational rationalizations are used to justify deviant behavior in specific circumstances (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Thomas, 2018). Warr and Stafford (1991) focused on attitudes in their test of Sutherland's differential

association theory. The authors posited that differential association theory was an attitude formation theory where the influence of attitude transference was the primary mechanism through which deviance and criminality were passed along (Warr & Stafford, 1991; McCarthy, 1996). Warr and Stafford (1991) found attitudes that affect deviance were influenced by the attitudes and behavior of peers. However, the effects of attitudes and deviant peers were independent of one another (Warr & Stafford, 1991; Jensen, 1972). Attitudes are formed around particular crime types and may be multi-dimensional, an example being attitudes regarding violence (Sutherland, 1947; Thomas, 2018). Therefore, specific attitudes may predict specific behavior such as violent attitudes predicting violence (Sutherland, 1947; Thomas, 2018). Jackson and colleagues (1986) evaluated whether the differential association process was general or specific to given crime types. An excess of definitions in favor of a particular crime may predict an increased likelihood of an individual committing that crime.

Perceived and actual peer group attitudes supporting violence influence the violent attitudes and resulting violent behavior of an individual (see Jackson et al., 1986; Kaczkowski et al., 2020; Mesch et al., 2003; Seddig, 2014; Swahn & Sterling, 2011). If peers are assessed to view positively and reward violence, an individual is more likely to have violent attitudes and be willing to engage in violence. Individuals' pro-violence attitudes are influenced by their peer group association and acceptance of pro-violence norms are a strong predictor of violence in adolescence (Boers et al., 2010; Reed & Rose, 1998; Seddig, 2014). Individuals' propensity for crime increases when they differentially associate with peer groups who engage in criminal behavior and espouse attitudes favorable to crime (Akers, 1998). Crime is defined by peers as

encouraged and justified within situational contexts. The more an individual's patterns of differential association are skewed toward deviant attitudes, the greater the likelihood of that individual engaging in deviance. I argue that among extremists already exposed to an excess of extremist definitions, extremists with definitions from multiple sub-ideological affiliations will be more likely to engage in extremist violence than extremist peers with a single sub-ideological affiliation.

Differential Association and Extremism

Differential association has been previously applied to extremism (Akins & Winfree, 2016; Armstrong & Matusitz, 2013; Freiburger & Crane, 2008; Hawdon, 2012; Pauwels & Schils 2016; Reinares et al., 2017). Armstrong and Matusitz (2013) in a conceptual, non-data driven, examination of Hezbollah argued that differential association could explain how violence is learned within extremist groups. Extremist ideologies are exclusionary and clearly delineate in and out groups to guide adherent behavior and indoctrination (Akerman et al., 2017). Sageman (2004) argues that extremist ideological movements are built around creating in-groups violently opposed to out-groups. Individuals in ideological communities are cloistered with those who share their ideology and are inundated with definitions in favor of extremist violence while cut off from definitions opposed to extremist violence (see Futrell & Simi, 2004; Hawdon, 2012; Sageman, 2004). Extremist attitudes supportive of violence are reinforced through exclusive interaction with peer groups that share violent attitudes. This validates attitudes regarding the necessity of violence and approval from the in-group when violence is used, leading to a higher likelihood of engagement in extremist violence (Kaczkowski et al., 2020; Sageman, 2004). I argue

that ideological movements constitute peer groups that share definitions supportive of violence; participation in more than one extreme ideological groups exposes an extremist to multiple sources of violent definitions.

The greater the number of definitions favorable to extremist violence, the greater the likelihood an individual will engage in violent extremism (Akers & Sellers, 2004). I argue that exposure to and reinforcement of extremist attitudes in favor of violence from multiple extremist sub-ideologies will be associated with a greater propensity for extremist violence than exposure to only one ideological source of extremist attitudes in favor of violence.

The role of attitudes favoring violence and violent behavior in extremism remains unclear as most extremists hold ideological attitudes in favor of violence yet refrain from engaging in violent behavior (Khalil et al., 2019; Kaczkowski et al., 2020). Kaczkowski and colleagues (2020) found that peers with attitudes supportive of violence increased an extremist's support for violence and willingness to engage in extremist violence. Even among lone actors, who may have weak or discontinuous social ties with ideological communities, exposure to ideological sources of encouragement and justification for violence was part of the process for overcoming moral objections to the use of extremist violence (Schuurman et al., 2018; Schuurman et al., 2019). Schuurman et al. (2018) argued that social ties critical to the development of motivations and behaviors are needed for engagement in extremist violence (see also Schuurman et al., 2019). I posit far-right extremists who interact with extremist communities from more than one sub-ideological affiliation may experience a greater amount of attitudes supportive of extremist violence than

individuals with a single sub-ideological affiliation. This may result in extremists with multiple sub-ideological affiliations having a greater propensity for violence than single sub-ideology extremists.

According to Bruinsma (1992), the more contact an individual had with deviant peer groups, the greater the effect their peers' deviancy had on the creation and communication of positive definitions of deviance. I apply these findings to my research and argue that extremists affiliated with multiple sub-ideologies may experience greater contact with deviant behavior, and therefore receive a greater amount of pro-violent attitudes, than extremists affiliated with one sub-ideology. Additionally, extremists with multiple ideological affiliations may identify strongly with multiple peer groups, resulting in a stronger peer effect than that of extremists who strongly identify with only one extremist peer group. Examinations of extremist social networks have found intimate peer groups with other extremists were related to increased propensity for extremist violence (see Doering et al., 2020; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014). I argue that extremists who adhere to multiple ideologies will have denser intimate peer social networks, will have more contact with pro-violent definitions, and therefore will be more likely to engage in extremist violence than single ideology extremists.

According to Sullivan and colleagues (2019), feelings of grievance or oppression can motivate extremists to connect with others who hold similar beliefs, indoctrinating the extremist further into their ideological beliefs and increasing their propensity for extremist violence. When extremists select multiple ideologies to affiliate themselves with, either by combining multiple ideologies or by moving from

one to another, they create a personalized ideological experience. Hawdon (2012) found that personalization of ideological influences limited both social networks and exposure to definitions that conflict with those in favor of extremist violence. Immersion in networks of likeminded extremists that reject any viewpoints counter to their own causes individuals to experience greater frequency, duration, and intensity of definitions favorable to extremist violence (Hawdon, 2012; Pauwels & Schils, 2016). According to Futrell & Simi (2004), far-right extremists often create isolated communities where they can communicate and reinforce their ideology and collective identity away from counter-narratives. This limits exposure to conflicting definitions that weaken the effect of differential association in favor of violence. I argue that far-right extremists who adhere to multiple ideologies will be exposed to multiple isolated ideological communities, further limiting their exposure to counter-definitions when compared to single ideology peers, and will therefore have a greater propensity for violence.

Diverse social networks moderate the effect of definitions in favor of violence; the more diverse social domains an extremist is a part of, the more protected they are from peer attitudes supporting violence (see Kaczkowski et al., 2020; Quintelier et al., 2012; Putnam, 2000). Diverse social networks present a wider array of differential associations, potentially those opposed to the use of extremist violence, than homogenous social networks. I argue that extremist ideological movements are not diverse in that adherents share extreme beliefs supporting violence and participation in multiple ideological movements result in homogenous social networks. Extremists with diverse social networks may feel less pressure to conform

to the violent attitudes of their ideological affiliation. Conversely, extremists with homogeneous social networks, especially those associated with multiple extremist ideological communities advocating for the use of violence, may be more susceptible to adopting those attitudes as their own and engaging in violence given the excess of definitions in favor of violent extremism.

I argue that individuals involved in extremist ideological movements interact with likeminded individuals, creating a feedback loop of definitions in favor of extremist violence. The communication within these ideological communities occurs verbally and non-verbally, with extremists instructing and learning from each other (Sutherland, 1947). Past acts of violence are celebrated and idealizations of violence are rewarded. Put together, extreme ideological movements foster environments where attitudes, rationalizations, techniques, and motives of violence are frequent, intense, and presented for long durations. I argue that if an extremist participates in more than one sub-ideological movement, they are exposed to a greater amount and variation of definitions in favor of violence, and therefore the extremist may be more likely to engage in extremist violence than an extremist peer who participates in only one sub-ideological movement.

I use differential association theory to demonstrate how ideology functions as a set of beliefs and attitudes that make violence permissible and necessary. From that perspective, differential association can answer the question of whether extremists who are exposed to multiple sets of excessive pro-violence definitions through participation in multiple ideologies are more likely to engage in extremist violence than single ideology extremist peers. Differences in the amount of definitions

favorable to extremist violence multiple and single ideology extremists are exposed to may explain differences in violent mobilization. I use PIRUS data to test my hypothesis that far-right extremists with more than one ideological affiliation will have a greater propensity for violence than peers with a single ideological affiliation.

Extremism Empirical Literature

The adoption of ideology is a cognitive function of, and a key element in, radicalization, yet how ideology relates to violence remains murky (see discussion by Kruglanski et al., 2009; 2014). Radicalization is an individualized process wherein internal and external factors inform the individual's pathway into extremism (Kruglanski et al., 2014). Kruglanski and colleagues' (2019) "3N" approach of need, narrative, and network factors posit that radicalization ensues when one need exceeds all others to the point of single-minded action. Narratives provide an ideological roadmap of action to obtaining the need and the network is the social reference group to justify and provide the desired need to extremists who mobilize to action. The following literature review provides an overview of the far-right, major far-right ideologies, and existing literature and discussion on multiple extremist ideologies.

Far-Right Ideology

The far-right in the United States exists as a network of groups and ideologies that often combine nationalistic, racist, anti-government, and xenophobic beliefs (Balleck, 2018; George & Wilcox, 1996; LaFree & Dugan, 2007; Simi & Bubolz, 2017). Freilich and colleagues (2009) characterize the far-right as being comprised of formal and informal movements. Organized groups within the United States include

the Ku Klux Klan, Atomwaffen Division, Oath Keepers, and Christian Identity. Informal United States movements include racist skinheads, neo-fascists, and anti-government militias. The far-right is known to use both legitimate and illegitimate methods to obtain the goals of each movement. Legitimate, non-violent means of influence include political organization, legal protest, and publishing extremist literature. Illegitimate actions include assault or murder of perceived enemy groups, vandalism, bombings, and tax evasion (Simi & Bubolz, 2017). Noted previously (Abanes, 1996; George & Wilcox, 1996; Kerodal et al., 2016; Simi & Bubolz, 2017), there are frequent overlaps in the ideologies of far-right extremist groups. However, not all far-right extremists belong to groups, nor do they always stay in groups. The umbrella term far-right is used to encompass the many sub-ideologies within the far-right. The importance of ideology, or lack thereof, is yet to be fully examined and could shed additional light on the underlying factors that make far-right extremism as serious as it is in the United States.

The modern conception of far-right groups and ideologies in the United States rose to prominence following the advent of the civil rights movement with historical roots tracing back nearly a century (see discussion by Chermak et al., 2011; Mudde, 2018; Simi & Bubolz, 2017). Nationalistic, racist, and anti-government sentiments were a response to perceived government overreach. Historically, categorizations of far-right ideology have varied with disagreement whether to classify based on group, belief system, or behavior (Barkun, 1989; Durham, 2003; Kaplan, 1995). A literature review of over 300 articles by Gruenewald and colleagues (2009) that discussed the far-right identified the major beliefs of extremists. The core ideological tenants of the

far-right were comprised of conspiracy theories and xenophobic, anti-government, anti-tax, survivalist, and anti-gun control beliefs. Chermak et al. (2013) describe the United States far-right as extremists who justify the use of violence to achieve an idealized future for their exclusive group-based identity. These group identities are often formed along racial, nationalistic, or niche interests and have a deep skepticism for federal and liberal governments (Chermak et al., 2013). Balleck (2018) asserts far-right extremists desire a return to an idealized past when privileged identities held undisputed power in society. A factor analysis by Kerodal et al. (2016) to determine a reliable typology for far-right extremists identified four distinct categories of ideology: conspiracy theorist, survivalist, movement participant, and proud far-rightist.

Despite the disagreements on where the broad categorical divides occur in the far-right, my research treats each sub-ideology as its own distinct ideology with unique customs, norms, and pro-violent values (Kruglanski et al., 2014; Leader Maynard, 2014; PIRUS, 2017). Those ideologies are white supremacy, anti-immigrant, anti-government, militia, Christian Identity, and male supremacist. Anti-abortion, anti-LGBT, and anti-Muslim ideologies are classified as single issue ideologies (ADL “Extreme Right”), but overlap with far-right ideologies. Under the umbrella ideology of the far-right, each unique ideology can be viewed as a sub-ideology (Ulusoy & Firat, 2018). Far-right extremist ideologies are not mutually exclusive in what they believe or who they hate (see Abanes, 1996; Balleck, 2018; George & Wilcox, 1996; Kerodal et al., 2016; Simi & Bubolz, 2017). Instead, what makes each ideology distinct is the unique blend of beliefs, goals, and approved

methods for achieving the ideology's desired political or social outcomes. Stated differently, the ideologies of the far-right are differentiated by their primary objectives, primary perceived oppressor, and the approved methods of opposition. In the following section, I describe the major ideological sub-categories of the far-right.

Ideological Sub-Categories of the Far-Right

White Supremacy

White supremacy is a broad extremist ideology that contains multiple sub-ideologies that vary in their particular values, goals, and justifications for violence. Various sects of white supremacist ideology include the neo-Nazi, racist skinhead, KKK, and neo-Confederate sub-movements. However, central to all the movements is the core belief that white identity and culture is superior to other races and ethnicities, and should be preserved at all costs (SPLC “White Nationalist”; ADL “White Supremacy”). Frequently, the key to achieving this goal is through the creation of a white ethnostate following a racial civil war or the destruction of non-whites and Jews (Balleck, 2018). Adherents may believe that the white race is on the verge of extinction, justifying the use of violence to “save” the white race (ADL “White Supremacy”). Furthermore, anti-Semitic conspiracies and rhetoric feature in nearly every white supremacist sub-movement (Balleck, 2018). White supremacist ideological material, such as the manifestos of other extremists or books like *Siege* and *The Turner Diaries*, provide pathways and justifications for extremist violence (ADL, 16 April 2019; Balleck, 2018; McAlear, 2009). These materials are shared among adherents to celebrate past extremist violence, provide a blueprint for how to

use violence against perceived enemies, and explicitly convey that violence must be used against non-whites and Jews.

Anti-Immigrant

Xenophobic, or anti-immigrant, extremist ideology adherents oppose immigration from non-white nations, making them closely related to white supremacist extremists (Balleck, 2018). Anti-immigrant extremists' main focus is preventing immigration from countries that would jeopardize the white Christian majority of the United States (Balleck, 2018; SPLC "Anti-Immigrant", "Anti-Muslim"). This takes the form of bigotry and racism against Hispanics and Muslims in particular. Despite the racist roots of anti-immigrant ideology, these extremists characterize themselves as not necessarily wanting to destroy other races, but wanting to keep them out of the United States and are willing to use violence to do so (Balleck, 2018). A fine line of distinction, but one that makes anti-immigrant extremist ideologies different from white supremacist ideologies is their goals and perceived oppressors. Anti-immigrant extremists want to prevent immigration from non-white countries and target immigrant minorities, while white supremacists target non-white and Jewish people regardless of national origin. Anti-immigrant extremists may use pseudo-political organizations and movements, such as the Center for Immigration Studies and VDARE, to legitimize their beliefs, but some adherents have mobilized to extremist violence (Balleck, 2018).

Anti-Government

The broad anti-government movement is characterized by two main ideological divides; anti-government “common-law” groups and militias (Balleck, 2018; SPLC “Antigovernment”). Broadly, both types of anti-government extremist ideologies claim that government violence is imminent and citizens should prepare for revolution. Conspiracy theories, which are often racist and anti-Semitic, and pro-Second Amendment attitudes are rife in extremist anti-government ideologies (Balleck, 2018). These attitudes feed into beliefs that adherents must be well armed and trained in paramilitary tactics to protect citizens from the government. Anti-government conspiracy theories create a sense of urgency that can motivate extremists to crime, including violence (Sullivan et al., 2019; Freilich & Pridemore, 2005). The difference between militias and general anti-government ideologies are their organization and granular beliefs.

Examples of common-law anti-government ideological movements are anti-tax extremists and the emerging boogaloo adherents. Anti-tax extremists use alternate conceptions of the United States Constitution and tax law as justification for not following the law (Sullivan et al., 2019). Anti-tax extremists believe they are oppressed by the government, which is illegitimate and illegally imposing taxes on citizens (Balleck, 2018; Sullivan et al., 2019). Sovereign citizens comprise a sub-ideology of the anti-government anti-tax ideology who believe they are exempt from obeying the law and paying taxes. These extremists believe they are a sovereign person free from government control or belong to a fictitious state (Sullivan et al., 2019). Sovereigns typically use paper terrorism, such as legal filings, to overwhelm

courts, but have engaged in extremist violence when confronted by government entities (Sullivan et al., 2019; SPLC “Sovereign Citizens”). Boogaloo refers to an impending civil war that will lead to governmental collapse, a future that anti-government boogaloo adherents actively encourage (ADL “Boogaloo”). Boogaloo extremists tout a range of beliefs including anti-gun control, survivalist, anarcho-capitalist, and white supremacist (ADL, 26 Nov. 2019). Boogaloo is used to encompass a range of beliefs that explicitly support violence against the government, particularly law enforcement (Newhouse & Gunesch, 2020). While some militia or white supremacist extremists may endorse boogaloo beliefs, the majority of boogaloo adherents are primarily opposed to authority and want to bring about the end of government.

Militia

Extremists who adhere to anti-government ideology and participate in militias are more focused on paramilitary organization and firearms in order to prepare for governmental collapse or overreach (ADL “Militia Movement”; Balleck, 2018). Modern paramilitary militias and patriot groups emerged in the mid-1990s following fatal federal law enforcement encounters in Waco and Ruby Ridge and in response to gun rights legislation (Freilich & Pridemore, 2005; Hamm, 1997). Militias tend to be more formally organized than peers who adhere to a more general anti-government ideology. Past research has defined militia extremism as a group that uses paramilitary tactics, charismatic leaders, and social networks to encourage adherents to oppose the federal government, multinational organizations, and international treaties (see Freilich & Pridemore, 2005; Freilich et al., & 2001; Haider-Markel &

O'Brien, 1997; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002). Militia extremists believe they are exempt from government control, which is often viewed as illegitimate, and must oppose the government when it becomes tyrannical (ADL "Militia Movement"; Balleck, 2018). Adherents oppose centralized government, federal bureaucracy and overreach, land use regulations, and taxes (Freilich & Pridemore, 2005). Many of the anti-government sentiments held by militia extremists are fueled by fears of the government enacting gun control and taking away the right to bear arms. Militia ideology encourages adherents to stockpile weapons, train, and fight back against governmental oppression. Despite overlap with racist and other extreme ideologies, anti-government militias are predominantly focused on opposing the government and conspiracy theories (ADL "Militia Movement"). An example of militia violent engagement is when militia groups will mobilize to protect "victims" from government overreach, implicitly and explicitly threatening violence. Two notable anti-government militia movements are the Three Percenters and Oath Keepers (ADL "Oath Keepers").

Christian Identity

Christian Identity extremism is an ideological blend of anti-government militia and white supremacist beliefs, which makes it unique from both parent ideologies (ADL "Christian Identity;" SPLC "Christian Identity"). Adherents of Christian Identity believe whites are the "lost tribes of Israel," and Jews and non-white people are less than human. The ideology is deeply anti-Semitic and racist with conspiratorial anti-government sentiments couched in religious absolutism. Christian Identity extremists believe the apocalypse is currently or about to occur and will be a

racial battle. During the apocalypse, global institutions will be destroyed and thus adherents distrust the government, believing it to be run by Jews, and hold themselves accountable to “God’s laws.” Some Christian Identity adherents will retreat from society to create secluded communities where they can become enmeshed in their ideology away from counter-narratives (Balleck, 2018). There is notable crossover of white supremacist and militia extremists who adopted the Christian Identity faith, but often these converts remain primarily white supremacists or militia extremists (ADL “Christian Identity”).

Male Supremacist

Male supremacist extremists, commonly referred to as involuntary celibates, or incels, represent a far-right extremist ideology that has emerged over the past decade (Hoffman et al., 2020). Incels, who are generally young men, believe they are socially disadvantaged due to genetic determinism and as a result, are denied female sexual attention. The incel ideology connects disenfranchised adherents in loose networks, predominantly online, where grievances against society and females can be aired in an ideological echo chamber. Key to incel extremism is the open support for violence against and revenge on females and other perceived societal oppressors (Baele et al., 2019; Beauchamp, 2019; Hoffman et al., 2020). Extremists who adhere to incel ideology blame neo-liberalism, feminism, and immigration as the source of their grievances, tying incels close to peers in other far-right ideologies (ADL, 2018; Gilmore, 2019; Hoffman et al., 2020). Incel extremist violence has targeted women, who are blamed for being sexually selective, and men who are perceived as more likely to receive female sexual attention (Hoffman et al., 2020). The broader male

supremacist extremist ideology propagates the belief that females are inferior to males and should be violently subjugated (SPLC “Male Supremacy”).

Anti-Abortion & Anti-LGBT

Anti-abortion and anti-LGBT extremist ideologies skirt the territory between being categorized as far-right sub-ideologies and single issue ideologies (ADL, 2015; Balleck, 2018). I consider these ideologies to be single-issue in my research because they are focused on a single topic and do not align with the characteristics of far-right ideologies, which are broadly racist and skeptical of government. Anti-abortion and anti-LGBT extremist ideologies are both considered religious ideologies as adherents use radical Christianity to justify their beliefs and violence (Balleck, 2018). Anti-abortion extremist ideology is based in the religious or moral belief that violence is justified to stop abortions and abortion providers to save the lives of unborn children (ADL, 2015; ADL, 2012). Extremists who adhere to anti-LGBT ideologies believe that members of the LGBT community are dangerous and that there is a conspiratorial “homosexual agenda” that will destroy Christianity and society (SPLC “Anti-LGBTQ”). Adherents of anti-LGBT extremist ideologies typically engage in public defamation of the LGBT community, but support and advocate for anti-LGBT hate crimes and violent attacks (Balleck, 2018).

The Far-Right and Multiple Ideologies

A difficult aspect when studying terrorism, particularly domestic, is how rapidly the field changes. With the advent of social media and the Internet as a radicalizing platform, domestic terrorist groups have increasingly moved online and

the rate of radicalization has increased (Alcoke, Nov. 2019; Jensen et al., 2018b). This changing landscape makes current and rigorous research vital to researchers and policy makers. Work examining often overlooked population subsets, such as domestic terrorism and ideological adherence dynamics, push the bounds of terrorism research further. Past research has overlooked the often confusing phenomenon of multiple or customized ideologies when studying terrorism.

At the time of my research, only a handful of articles acknowledged multiple sub-ideologies among far-right extremists, however in these examinations, the ideology was either classified under the primary belief set or as “other” (see Strang & Sun, 2017; Ellis et al., 2016; Kerodal et al., 2016; Kaplan, 1995). Balleck (2018) acknowledges the interconnectedness of far-right sub-ideologies, remarking that adherents rarely fit into a single ideological box and may hold multiple sub-ideologies at once or multiple points in time. Kaplan (1995) acknowledged a trend in far-right ideologies of serial or simultaneous membership in more than one belief system, but focused on group differences in violence. In creating a factor analysis of commitment to far-right extremism, Kerodal et al. (2016) attempted to capture multiple ideological beliefs as a sign of increased commitment to far right ideologies, but did not push their analysis further.

Anecdotal evidence pulled from the headlines corroborates the existence of extremist participation in multiple ideologies. What is yet unknown is if these instances represent a new trend in far-right violence. In 2018, a Washington DC Metro Transit Police officer was convicted of terrorist financing charges after sending money to informants he thought were members of ISIS. In addition to aligning

himself to ISIS, the officer adhered to white supremacy ideology through participation in Nazi officer reenactments, Nazi tattoos, and neo-Nazi literature (Weiner, 23 Feb. 2018). The Atlanta Centennial Olympic Park bomber, Eric Rudolph, allegedly held both anti-abortion and anti-government white supremacist beliefs as evidenced through his affiliation with the Army of God and multiple white supremacist groups including Christian Identity and Aryan Nation (The Washington Post, 12 Dec. 1998). Rudolph was labeled a lone wolf domestic extremist who crafted his ideology to fit his own idiosyncratic worldview, pulling heavily from far-right beliefs such as anti-government and xenophobia (Mockaitis, 2019).

In early 2017, a member of the Atomwaffen Division, a notoriously violent neo-Nazi terrorist group, committed a double murder after converting to Islam and pledging support to ISIS (Thompson, Nov. 2018). The Atomwaffen Division ideology incorporates tenants of accelerationism, which calls for the destruction of modern society by any means including supporting diametrically opposed beliefs to sow chaos and destruction (Beauchamp, Nov. 2019). Accelerationism has gained traction as a far-right tactic, where extremists work toward the complete destruction of modern society, and frequently incorporate elements from other ideologies, such as anti-government beliefs, to further the likelihood of chaos (ADL, 16 April 2019).

Brenton Tarrant, the Christchurch, New Zealand mosque shooter, described himself in his manifesto as an eco-fascist who used the ongoing existential threat of climate change to justify racist, nationalistic beliefs (Kaufman, Aug. 2019). The traditional stance of the political right and far-right on climate change has been denial, but the emergence of eco-fascism indicates this may be changing on the fringe

with authoritarian, fascist responses to the crisis (Forchter, 2019). These prominent examples of violence perpetrated by far-right extremists with multiple ideologies demand empirical research that quantitatively examines the existence of the anecdotal relationship and its impact on extremist violence.

Chapter 3: Methods

Data

Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) is an open source and publicly available dataset compiled by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) that currently houses cross-sectional, individual-level data on over 2,100 extremists. The data collection scope ranges from 1948 through 2017. Individuals within the dataset have engaged in violent or non-violent criminal activity on behalf of their ideology, categorized broadly as Far Right, Far Left, Islamist, or Single Issue. PIRUS data were extracted from public sources and include information on extremist background, demographics, and group affiliation (PIRUS; Jensen et al., 2017). Researchers collected the initial data in three waves between early 2013 and mid-2014 and pulled from sources such as court documents, online news sites, news archives, government and nongovernment open-source reports, and extant terrorism datasets (LaFree et al., 2018). From these sources, nearly 3,700 extremists were identified and assessed against the inclusion criteria, for a total of 1,473 individuals included in the dataset. Since the initial data collection, by 2017 over 700 additional extremists have been added to PIRUS.

To be included in PIRUS an individual must have a known ideological motivation for extremist behavior and been radicalized in the United States. PIRUS inclusion criteria require evidence that the extremist behavior is linked to the ideology of the individual. This includes not only those arrested for, indicted, or killed as a result of extremism, but also individuals who joined designated terrorist organizations

and were affiliated with extremist groups where leaders were arrested for a violent ideological crime. Evidence of radicalization is defined in PIRUS as those who were arrested, indicted, or convicted of criminal ideological extremist behavior. This definition also includes those who were planning criminal extremist acts, but mandates there be a clear connection between the individual and the attempted act. The dataset focuses on domestic radicalization within the United States, therefore the origins and bulk of radicalization must occur inside the United States to be included. PIRUS does not include individuals traveling to the United States to commit extremism, but does include those who leave the United States to attend terrorist training camps as they are assumed to already be radicalized.

PIRUS researchers randomly sampled the initial individuals assessed to meet the inclusion criteria and coded them for the 147 variables within the dataset. Variables measured by PIRUS include individual background, ideological, and radicalization information, all of which precede the individual's mobilization to extremist activity. Following the initial sample coding, researchers conducted three waves of sampling and coding individuals who met the inclusion criteria. Reliability was ensured by double-coding approximately ten percent of included individuals and the use of Krippendorff's alpha procedure to test for inter-rater reliability. The data was assessed to be reliable at the 0.7 standard with each wave of data collection improving the coding practices (Jensen et al., 2016).

Ideology is broadly captured by PIRUS as four dichotomous and mutually exclusive measures: far-right, far-left, radical Islamist, or single-issue. These are the umbrella ideologies that individual extremist sub-ideologies fall under, of which an

extremist can have multiple. An extremist is included in PIRUS if there is evidence that their behavior was linked to the ideology with which they were associated. I restrict the scope of this study to individuals who became radicalized as far-right extremists. According to the PIRUS codebook, the far-right includes extremists who generally are ideologically opposed to the federal government and leftist politics. Often this is expressed through groups and individuals who are racially extreme, tax and government protestors, gun rights extremists, and survivalist or anti-government militias (PIRUS, 2017; Chermak et al., 2011). This is a broad categorization with a wide degree of variability in group structure and ideological precepts. Despite being distinct, these ideologies can experience ideological cross-over (George & Wilcox, 1996). PIRUS contains 922 individuals identified as far-right radical extremists.

Data were collected after a potential extremist was identified and open source research determined if they were eligible for inclusion in the dataset. Therefore, extremists who were never publicly identified were not captured within PIRUS. The open source nature of PIRUS data makes the amount and veracity of information available dependent on the validity of the print and electronic media examined. If a relevant variable was not explicitly mentioned in the source, the PIRUS team treated it as missing. The target population is all far-right domestic terrorists in the United States, however this is precluded by the nature of the PIRUS data. Instead, the sample consists of far-right extremists who were publicly identified as a result of their radical mobilization or public affiliation with known terrorists. The PIRUS data exclude far-right ideological adherents who were not identified as extremists or caught for their extreme acts. PIRUS data were collected to be representative of identified extremists

in the United States, but trends in open source reporting, such as greater coverage on violence (Chermak & Gruenewald, 2006) and ideologies that draw media attention (LaFree et al., 2018), may result in data that reflect those trends.

Measures

In Table 1, I list all variables included in the analysis and report the proportion of missing observations for each variable. I test the hypothesized relationship with the dependent variable, “Violent,” and the independent variable, “Multiple Ideology,” in addition to various control variables. The following section describes the variables and their importance.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of all variables

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Distribution/ Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>	<i>% Missing</i>
Violent	0 No	39.26%	922	0.489	0
	1 Yes	60.74%			
Multiple Ideology	0 No	81.76%	922	0.391	0
	1 Yes	18.76%			
Mental Health	0 No	86.98%	922	0.337	0
	1 Yes	13.02%			
Radical Friends	0 No	8.97%	435	0.286	52.82
	1 Yes	91.03%			
Previous Criminal Activity	0 No	46.81%	502	0.499	45.55
	1 Yes	53.19%			
Stable Employment	0 No	36.42%	313	0.482	66.05
	1 Yes	63.58%			
Male	0 No	5.64%	922	0.231	0
	1 Yes	94.36%			
White	0 No	4.63%	863	0.21	6.4
	1 Yes	95.37%			
Age	Numerical	37.562	819	14.478	3.36

The dependent variable, “Violent,” measures whether extremist violent behavior was perpetrated or attempted as measured through PIRUS. “Violent” is a dichotomous measure where violence includes behaviors that resulted in actual injuries or fatalities, the failed intent to cause injury or fatality, or being criminally charged with conspiracy to injure or cause fatalities, even if apprehended while plotting. This measure is the individual’s first reported, ideologically-motivated, activity that is recorded by authorities or the media. To be included in PIRUS, extremists had to be identified as extremists, either through their own actions or their associations. This makes inclusion dependent on an outcome measure, reversing the causal order of the data. Coders of PIRUS then work backwards in an extremist’s life history to identify information for PIRUS variables. My analysis examines violent and non-violent outcomes among a sample of extremists publically identified for their ideological behavior and affiliations. I do not attempt to make claims about extremists who engage in extremist activity and those who do no.

Examples of violent behaviors are murder, assault, kidnapping, bombings, and arson with intent to harm. A little over half of the sampled far-right extremists engaged in violence. Nonviolent outcomes include behaviors such as property destruction, illegal protest, incitement of violence, and tax fraud. This variable is based on the extremist’s earliest public exposure which resulted in their identification as a terrorist (LaFree et al., 2018).

The independent variable, “Multiple Ideology,” measures an extremist’s ideological sub-categories. My research pulls the sample of domestic extremists from the PIRUS measure of Far Right ideology, which is a mutually exclusive measure

with no possibility for individuals to be placed in more than one broad ideological category. Therefore, to examine multiple ideology, a dichotomous variable, “Multiple Ideology,” was generated from three mutually exclusive variables in PIRUS that capture extremist ideological sub-categories. Tables 2.1 through 2.3 list the distribution of sub-categories for the 922 far-right extremists included in the sample. In my sample, the single case of other ideology was anti-Muslim single issue extremism (Smith, 14 Oct. 2016). These sub-categories make distinct the major extremist ideologies in PIRUS. The majority of ideological combinations were of multiple far-right sub-ideologies or the single issue ideologies anti-LGBT and anti-abortion. Conceptually, an extremist classified as far-right in PIRUS could have one ideological subcategory of white supremacist with a second or third ideological subcategory of environmentalist or Islamist, however that does not occur in my sample.

Table 2.1. Ideological Sub-Categories for Single Ideology Extremists

<i>Single Ideology</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
White Supremacist	495	66.09
Anti-Immigrant	49	6.54
Anti-Government	173	23.1
Militia	27	3.6
Christian Identity	4	0.53
Male Supremacist	1	0.13
Total	749	100

Table 2.2. Ideological Combinations for Extremists with Two Ideologies

<i>Primary/Secondary</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
White Supremacist/Anti-Immigrant	17	11.56
White Supremacist/Anti-Government	26	17.69
White Supremacist/Christian Identity	24	16.33
White Supremacist/Anti-LGBT	8	5.44
Anti-Immigrant/White Supremacist	3	2.04
Anti-Immigrant/Anti-Government	4	2.72
Anti-Government/White Supremacist	2	1.36
Anti-Government/Anti-Immigrant	1	0.68
Anti-Government/Militia	11	7.48
Anti-Government/Christian Identity	6	4.08
Anti-Government/Anti-LGBT	1	0.68
Militia/White Supremacist	1	0.68
Militia/Anti-Immigrant	1	0.68
Militia/Anti-Government	33	22.45
Militia/Christian Identity	2	1.36
Militia/Cult	1	0.68
Christian Identity/White Supremacist	4	2.72
Christian Identity/Anti-Immigrant	1	0.68
Christian Identity/Anti-Government	1	0.68
Total	147	100

Table 2.3. Ideological Combinations for Extremists with Three Ideologies

<i>Primary/Secondary/Tertiary</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
White Supremacist/Militia/Christian Identity	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Immigrant/Anti-Government	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Immigrant/Christian Identity	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Immigrant/Anti-Abortion	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Immigrant/Anti-LGBT	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Government/Militia	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Government/Christian Identity	2	7.69
White Supremacist/Anti-Government/Anti-LGBT	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Christian Identity/Anti-LGBT	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Abortion/Christian Identity	1	3.85
White Supremacist/Anti-Abortion/Anti-LGBT	1	3.85
Anti-Immigrant/Anti-Government/Anti-Muslim	1	3.85
Anti-Government/Anti-Immigrant/Christian Identity	1	3.85
Militia/White Supremacist/Anti-Government	3	11.54
Militia/Anti-Immigrant/Anti-Government	1	3.85
Militia/Anti-Immigrant/Anti-LGBT	1	3.85
Militia/Anti-Government/White Supremacist	2	7.69
Militia/Christian Identity/Anti-Abortion	1	3.85
Militia/Anti-LGBT/Anti-Government	1	3.85
Christian Identity/Anti-Government/White Supremacist	1	3.85
Christian Identity/Anti-Abortion/Anti-LGBT	1	3.85
Christian Identity/Anti-LGBT/Anti-Abortion	1	3.85
Total	26	100

The 749 individuals who only have one ideological sub-category attributed to them are the reference group and are considered to be single ideology. Single ideology individuals adhere to one set of ideological beliefs from an established ideological milieu with values and norms supporting violence. “Multiple Ideology” captures if a far-right extremist is associated with more than one ideological sub-category. In PIRUS, an individual can have a maximum of three distinct ideological sub-categories attributed to them. Of the identified sample, 147 individuals had two ideologies and 26 individuals had three ideologies associated with them at the time of data collection. A total of 173 extremists within the sample have multiple ideological affiliations, comprising approximately 19 percent of the sample. The sub-category variables are categorical measures with up to 19 ideologies available.

Control Variables

My model’s control measures, listed above in Table 1, include known correlates of violent extremism and demographic variables. I use the control variables peers, criminal history, stable employment, and mental health to examine potentially confounding elements that could impact the relationship between multiple ideologies and violence. The earlier study of PIRUS data by LaFree et al. (2018) found that employment, radical peers, criminal history, and a history of mental illness were significantly related to violent extremism. Jasko et al.’s (2017) peer affiliation research, also using PIRUS data, found that individuals with extremist peers have a higher propensity for terrorist violence. If a person has multiple sub-ideologies, it is likely they are exposed to more radical peers than single sub-ideology individuals

given their participation in multiple ideological communities. While peers are part of differential association theory, my research focuses on the impact of multiple sources of excess definitions favorable to violence from multiple sub-ideologies, not multiple sources of peers. Therefore, controlling for peers will allow for discernment of what the true relationship is between multiple ideological affiliations and violence.

Furthermore, Kerodal et al. (2016) suggest the possibility that social ties within the far-right may be stronger than ideological bonds. I measure peer affiliation with the dichotomous variable of radical friends, which asks if the individual had a close friend involved in radical activities or not.

In my research, previous criminal history is a dichotomous variable.

According to Table 1, roughly half of the sample had a previous criminal history. Individuals with criminal histories prior to radicalization were nearly twice as likely to commit violent acts of extremism than peers without and over half of sampled far-right extremists had a criminal history (Jensen et al., 2018).

Mental health is a dichotomous measure where an extremist either has no known previous history of mental health issues, or there is some evidence of past mental health. Past research by Gruenewald and colleagues (2013) on far-right extremists and mental health found that lone actors were more likely to have a history of mental illness compared to far-right extremists who did not act alone. While the relationship between mental illness and extremism is not fully known, criminological literature and research on correlates of violent extremism indicate mental illness is a risk factor for violent extremism (see LaFree et al., 2018; Link et al., 1992).

I measure stable employment dichotomously to capture whether an extremist had a consistent work history. Extremists with stable employment were regularly employed prior to extremist mobilization. Extremists who did not have stable employment were unemployed, underemployed, or moved between jobs. According to Table 1, more than half the far-right extremists in the sample have a stable work history. Employment instability has criminological support as a correlate of criminal activity (see Chiricos, 1987; Uggen, 2000). The relationship between employment stability and extremist violence has mixed support in extant literature as many extremists have conventional, stable jobs (Sageman, 2004; Hewitt, 2003).

Additional control variables are the demographic measures; age, race, and gender. Age is established in extant criminological research as related to offending (DeLisi & Vaughn, 2016; Farrington, 1986). Age is a continuous variable ranging from 10 to 88 in the study sample with a mean age of 38. Race is a dichotomous measure of whether the far-right extremist is white or not. In the sample of far-right extremists, 95% are white. Finally, gender is measured dichotomously and vast majority of extremists in the sample are male.

Analytical Strategy

PIRUS was selected for this research because it collects individual-level variables widely assumed to be related to radicalization and extremist behavior in the United States. Data collected on individuals, their background, and ideological activities expands the scope of what terrorism research can study by providing new information and measures to researchers, allowing for novel extremism research.

Despite limitations, these data are useful for understanding individual-level relationships between extremists and violence.

Missing data cannot be overlooked in this research. While the dependent and independent variables have no known missing data, several of the controls including age, race, and criminal history have large numbers of missing observations (see Table 1). To mitigate the limitations from missing data, I use multivariate imputation by chained equations (MICE). MICE has been used on PIRUS data previously (Jasko et al., 2017). MICE allows researchers to create multiple datasets from the analysis variables and auxiliary variables to estimate values for the missing observations (Rubin, 1976). Using those datasets, MICE conducts a series of regressions wherein the missing values for each measure are modeled on the known values. By repeating this process, a stable estimate is achieved when the estimates converge. Each point is the estimated average of the parameter estimate for the imputed datasets (Rubin, 1987). This means the parameter estimates will be unbiased and the standard errors will encompass the sampling and estimation variation (Graham et al., 2007). I use MICE through Stata statistical software (2019) to estimate 100 datasets to build the final dataset for analysis. Table 3 displays the correlation matrix for the imputed measures.

Table 3. Correlations with Imputed Data

	Violent	Multiple Ideology	Mental Health	Radical Friends	Criminal History	Stable Employment	Male	Age	White
Violent	1								
Multiple Ideology	-0.017	1							
Mental Health	0.054	0.037	1						
Radical Friends	0.074	0.028	-0.202	1					
Previous Criminal History	0.118	-0.078	0.109	0.032	1				
Stable Employment	-0.104	-0.011	-0.130	0.012	-0.138	1			
Male	0.044	0.033	0.039	0.002	0.129	-0.025	1		
Age	-0.094	0.098	-0.002	-0.084	0.017	0.095	-0.006	1	
White	0.016	0.091	-0.042	0.003	-0.033	0.003	-0.028	0.048	1

My analysis into the relationship between ideological affiliation and violence starts with bivariate correlations of the independent and dependent measures. Multivariate analysis is then conducted using binomial logistic regression (logit), with the variable “Violent” as a binary outcome. This test estimates the dichotomous outcome of violence or nonviolence based on the dichotomous independent variable of multiple sub-ideologies versus single sub-ideologies and the various control variables. Overall, this strategy will allow for an important step, no matter how small, in understanding if individual ideological affiliations have a relationship with violent extremist behavior.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, I examine the results of the bivariate and multivariate analysis. I first consider the bivariate relations between violence and multiple sub-ideologies and the control variables. I then discuss the results of the multivariate analysis.

Bivariate Results

The bivariate results, presented in Table 4, are not statistically significant, but weakly oppose my hypothesis at the bivariate level. Far-right extremists with multiple ideologies were less likely to engage in violence than single ideology extremist peers. Three control variables were significantly correlated with a higher propensity for violence. Far-right extremists with a previous criminal history were more likely to engage in violence than peers with no criminal history. Stable employment was negatively related to violence: far-right extremists lacking stable employment were more likely to use violence than peers with stable employment. Similarly, the younger far-right extremists were, the more likely they were to engage in violence.

Table 4. Bivariate Correlations Between Independent Variables and Dependent Variable (Violent)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>
Multiple Ideology	-0.018
<i>Controls</i>	
Mental Health	0.054
Radical Friends	0.079
Previous Criminal History	0.125**
Stable Employment	-0.118*
Male	0.044
Age	-0.093**
White	0.016

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

Multivariate Results

Table 5 presents the multivariate results from the logistic regression to test my hypothesis that multiple ideology far-right extremists will have a greater propensity for violence than single ideology peers. The model finds that there is not statistically significant relationship between participation in multiple ideologies and engagement in extremist violence. The measures that are significantly related to extremist violence in the model are radical peers, previous criminal history, and age. The presence of radical friends increases the odds of violence 1.2 times. Furthermore, the odds of violence are 1.5 times higher for far-right extremists with a criminal history. As the age of the far-right extremist increases, the odds of violence decreases by 1.2%.

Table 5. Logistic Regression with Dependent Variable (Violent)

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Robust SE</i>
Multiple Ideology	-0.054	0.947	0.181
<i>Controls</i>			
Mental Health	0.316	1.372	0.223
Radical Friends	0.166*	1.181	0.076
Previous Criminal History	0.414*	1.513	0.192
Stable Employment	-0.349	0.705	0.269
Male	0.243	1.275	0.297
Age	-0.012*	0.988	0.005
White	0.267	1.306	0.349

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 Note: SE is the abbreviation for standard error.

Summary of Results

Overall, I do not find support for my hypothesis. The findings are not statistically significant and contrary to my hypothesis according to differential association theory. Despite these null findings, my research represents an initial step

in understanding the importance of adhering to multiple ideologies on engaging in terrorist violence.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Preliminary analysis indicates that multiple ideological affiliations among far-right extremists are not significantly related to violence. The relationship to violence is primarily driven by extremist peers, previous criminal activity, and the age of the far-right extremist. I examine this phenomenon using quantitative data at the individual level using criminological theory, which has theoretical, practical, and policy contributions regardless of the findings. In the following sections I discuss the theoretical considerations of why the relationship was not statistically significant between multiple ideological affiliations and violence. I then detail the limitations of this study, summarize my research, and conclude by exploring future research that could further illuminate the emerging phenomenon of multiple ideological affiliations in extremism.

Theoretical Considerations

Based on differential association theory, I argued that affiliation with multiple extremist sub-ideologies would be related to a greater propensity for violence as a result of a greater amount of excess definitions and attitudes in favor of violence when compared to single sub-ideology peers. While my research is not a perfect test of differential association, the theory provides a useful framework for understanding how multiple sub-ideologies may provide extremists with excessive definitions in favor of violence. Intimate peer groups are an essential part of the differential association process (Sutherland, 1947). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the presence of radical friends is significantly and positively related to extremist violence. While

there has been some past discussion on the specificity of differential association to particular crime types (see Jackson et al., 1986; Sutherland, 1947; Thomas, 2018), it is possible that far-right extremist ideologies are not differentially related to violent and non-violent outcomes. Instead, the extremist definitions are related to engagement in extremism, regardless of behavior type. Furthermore, it could be that exposure to definitions favorable to violence from multiple ideological sources do not present significantly more differential associations than exposure to one ideology.

Past criminal activity is a known predictor for violent extremism (see Jensen et al., 2018; LaFree et al., 2018 for discussion). Those individuals with a criminal history may have a lower threshold for engagement in violence if they had past experience with violence or breaking the law. The relationship between age and criminal involvement has long been acknowledged in criminology (Farrington, 1986). Younger individuals are more likely to engage in crime than older individuals, which is consistent with the observed negative relationship in my findings (Delisis & Vaughn, 2016).

Ideological ambiguity and lack of commitment could also help explain the relationship, or lack thereof, between far-right extremists with multiple ideologies and violence. Asal and colleagues' (2015) examination of terrorist organizations found that groups with single ideologies had more ideological clarity than groups with multiple ideologies. Ideological clarity, which provides extremist adherents in terrorist organizations with focused ideological motivations for violence in a clear context (Chou, 2016), was associated with more extremist violence than extremist groups with ideological ambiguity, as expressed through multiple ideologies in an

extremist group (Olzak, 2016). The same relationship may be true for extremist individuals with multiple sub-ideologies. An internal lack of ideological clarity could contribute to unfocused motivations for violence and therefore a lower propensity to engage in violence than extremist peers with a singular ideological focus.

Limitations

The limitations of PIRUS, while not wholly unique to the dataset, present several challenges. As an open-source dataset, the sample of far-right extremists is not completely random; the extremists are included in PIRUS because they became known as a result of their radical activities or affiliations. Their ideological actions or affiliations had to be significant enough to draw the attention of the criminal justice system or news media. This limits the generalizability of the findings beyond any extremist who has been radicalized within the United States and identified as a result of their radicalization. Furthermore, there is likely a bias in the data toward violence because violent extremism draws more media attention than non-violent extremism (Chermak & Gruenewald, 2006). Because the PIRUS data are incomplete, there could be missing critical individual factors contributing to the relationship between far-right extremists, multiple sub-ideologies, and violent mobilization. Ideological sub-categorization is based on what was reported in open sources and thus is subject to validity errors. For instance, coding or reporting errors could lead to mistaken ideological categorization. Additionally, open sources may not report all ideological motivations resulting in missing instances of multiple ideologies which are instead categorized as single, biasing the results. This research is cross-sectional and

therefore does not account for ideological change over time. Finally, coding is retrospective, making temporal order difficult to establish.

The PIRUS data are collected from open sources and so information on specific topics may not appear if those topics were not part of the available information. For example, the measure for radical peers has approximately 40% missing values in the complete dataset (LaFree et al., 2018). To my research's benefit, the variable for violent outcome has no missing data. That being said, these limitations are inherent in most terrorism research, including case studies and interviews. Eliminating cases with missing data would result in a very small sample size that would preclude multivariate analysis. Past applications of MICE to PIRUS (Jasko et al., 2017) have eliminated measures with over 80% values missing, but because my research did not meet that threshold, I did not remove any measures from my model. Jasko et al. (2017) conducted additional analyses of their missing data to test the impact of MICE on their results and found the pattern and significance of their findings remained the same. There are methodological trade-offs in my research as there are in criminological research generally. The limits to open-source data have corresponding limitations in other methods such as surveys or qualitative case studies.

Despite the limitations of these data, of which nearly all terrorism research is prone to, PIRUS is a critically important dataset. Given the difficulties involved in collecting terrorism data, particularly domestic terrorism wherein the First Amendment protects privacy and liberty of extremists, these data are crucial to understanding terrorist behavior. Limitations of PIRUS do not preclude its usefulness in studying the proposed relationship as it is the most extensive dataset on individual-

level characteristics of extremists within the United States. PIRUS is groundbreaking in its inclusion of both violent and non-violent extremists as well as measuring a multitude of ideologies (Jensen et al., 2016). The wealth of data and measures contained within PIRUS make it an invaluable resource for studying relationships between individual-level measures and extremism, contributing to progress both in criminological research and policy.

Summary and Future Directions

My research seeks to clarify the complex relationship between terrorist violence and ideology by exploring how multiple ideological affiliations relate to violent outcomes for far-right extremists in the United States. Differential association theory is utilized to examine if multiple ideological affiliations are related to a greater propensity for violence than single ideology peers. I hypothesize that extremists with multiple sub-ideologies will exhibit a higher propensity for violence as they may be exposed to a greater amount of excess definitions in favor of violence than single sub-ideology peers. A foundational understanding of the relationship between ideological adherence and violence was accomplished through the use of the open source generated dataset, PIRUS. Bivariate logistic regression of violent outcomes on multiple ideological sub-categories tested if the presence of more than one ideological belief system increased the likelihood of mobilization to violence. While the common problems that plague terrorism research are also present in this study, as well as problems unique to the PIRUS data, I address these limitations as completely as possible. While my research did not find support for my hypothesis, there is potential for future research to study the phenomenon of multiple ideologies more in depth. As

open source data sources become increasingly aware of the phenomenon of multiple extremist ideologies (ADL “Hybrid Hate”), the data collected by PIRUS will likely improve, warranting additional empirical study.

My research falls short of adequately exploring the true relationship between multiple ideological affiliations and violence among far-right extremists in the United States. The ultimate goal of my thesis was to be a preliminary foray into the phenomenon of multiple ideologies and to serve as a launching pad for additional quantitative research. Future research examining multiple sub-ideologies should consider a wider range of ideologies than those from the far-right, such as far-left, single issue, and Islamist. Researchers should also consider extremists outside the United States; other countries have reported incidents of extremist violence perpetrated by actors with multiple ideological affiliations as evidenced by the Christchurch, New Zealand shooter. Furthermore, researchers should delve deeper into the interactions between multiple ideological affiliations and other factors predicting extremist violence to determine if multiple sub-ideologies are a moderating factor. The relationship between multiple ideological affiliations and propensity for violence is likely more complex than my research accounts for, and future research should pay careful attention to interactive effects with other measures related to extremist violence.

Improving the quality and types of data used to examine the relationship between multiple sub-ideologies and propensity for violence is another suggestion for future research. As improved data on multiple ideological affiliations become available, constructs of multiple ideology may be able to capture the number of

ideologies an extremist is affiliated with and how invested they are in a particular ideology, which could illuminate if frequency or investment in ideology affects propensity for violence. Tying quantitative data with qualitative case studies to better understand how extremists move in and out of ideological affiliations would provide additional insight into what impact that may have on propensity for violence. Qualitative life course data would help show how extremists potentially move through ideological affiliations, particularly how they engage with multiple ideological communities and move between ideologies. Case data would also be helpful for identifying the different ideological definitions in favor of violence extremists received from ideological affiliations. The method adjustment of pairing quantitative and qualitative data will also allow researchers to identify whether extremists are holding multiple ideological affiliations concurrently or consecutively.

My research provides a few contributions to the study of far-right extremism and theoretical applications of differential association. The use of differential association to empirically study extremism contributes to a growing body of work that thus far has been largely conceptual. Furthermore, my research is a novel application of differential association theory to explore if multiple sources of definitions favorable to violence from different ideological affiliations impact propensity for violence. Quantitative tests of differential association for offense specific outcomes, violent extremism in the case of my research, contributes to the growing body of literature on the theory regarding specificity of definitions. Finally, my use of PIRUS data in novel extremism research pushes the empirical applications

of the data and contributes to the growing body of criminological literature that examines extremism.

Policy and practical contributions of my research include contributions to literature on risk factors of extremist violence. Organizations that investigate extremism and inform counter-extremism policy are more likely to be successful when using empirically validated information regarding extremist risk factors. My null findings contribute to that effort by providing preliminary results that multiple ideological affiliations do not impact propensity for violence in a statistically significant manner. Organizations such as the FBI (Alcoke, 2019) and ADL (“Hybrid Hate”) have acknowledged far-right extremists with multiple ideological affiliations engaging in violence, but have not been able to say whether that pattern is associated with a greater risk of violence.

To my knowledge, there is no other research that examines the role multiple ideological affiliations play in an extremist’s propensity for violence. As a relatively rare event, terrorism nonetheless presents a critical topic to be studied as a form of crime, an intersection of political science and sociology, and a public safety threat. This is an area that research has not yet fully explored, presenting an exciting challenge to researchers from all disciplines. Furthermore, the findings from such work can have a direct impact on practitioner ability to understand and respond to domestic extremist violence. Research serves as an essential tool in policymaker and practitioner toolboxes for understanding and proactively mitigating far-right extremism. The consequences of terrorism, big or small, can impact a community for years and understanding what impacts the severity of an attack can be used by law

enforcement in risk assessment and in policy making. We need to understand what the potential risk factors for violence are to design and implement effective policies to counter extremist violence in the United States.

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