The Organizational Dynamics of Far-Right Hate Groups in the United States: Comparing Violent to Non-Violent Organizations

Final Report to Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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About This Report

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Executive Summary

There is empirical and anecdotal evidence that far-right hate groups pose a significant threat to public safety. Far-right extremists commit many violent attacks, and some scholars conclude that far-right extremists, especially groups motivated by religious ideology, are strong candidates to commit future acts using weapons of mass destruction (Gurr & Cole, 2002; Tucker, 2001). Research analyzing data from the Extremist Crime Database has shown that active members of far-right extremist groups have been involved in over 330 homicide incidents in the last 20 years (Freilich, Chermak, Belli, Grunewald & Parkin; Gruenewald, 2011). Similarly, a national survey of State law enforcement agencies concluded that there was significant concern about the activities of far-right extremist groups, and that more states reported the presence of far-right militia groups (92%), neo-Nazis (89%), and racist skinheads (89%) in their jurisdictions than Jihadi extremist groups (65%) (Freilich, Chermak & Simone, 2009). Despite these important concerns, few projects have empirically studied far-right hate groups in the United States. This study aims to address this research gap by exploring the factors that distinguish violent far-right hate groups from non-violent far-right hate groups.

We used the Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) annual Intelligence Report and Klan Watch publications to produce a list of hate groups in the United States. We identified over 6,000 hate groups, and, from that baseline focused analysis on groups that were in existence for at least three consecutive years. We sampled over 50% (N = 275) of these organizations and then studied them in-depth. Each organization was systematically researched to uncover all publically available information on it. We then categorized each group as violent or non-violent: Groups whose members had committed at least one ideologically motivated violent crime were categorized as violent, and groups whose members had not were coded as non-violent. Our research revealed that 21% of the 275 far-right hate groups included in the study had members who had committed at least one violent criminal act. In addition, if a group's members had committed six or more violent crimes, we categorized the group as having committed extreme violence. We categorized these organizations as violent groups.

We tested findings from previous research on factors that differentiate violent and non-violent hate groups. We studied a number of factors, clustered into four categories: (1) Organizational capacity, (2) Organizational constituency, (3) Strategic connectivity, and (4) Structural arrangements. We also examined a number of additional characteristics of these groups.

Based on findings from a number of statistical models, several indicators appear to be related to a group's propensity for violence even when controlling for other significant predictors. First, of the organizational capacity variables, **age** and **size** were related to a group's propensity for extreme violence and age was related to group violence. That is, as groups increased in the number of years in existence or in the number of their members, the likelihood of them being involved in violence increased. This result makes sense as groups have an opportunity to learn over time. The significance of group size may be that simply having more members increases the odds at least one individual will be linked to a violent act. Larger organizations also have a more diverse body of members who bring different skills and expertise and this diversity may allow them to evade capture for a period of time and thus provide the opportunity to commit more violent crimes.

Second, most of the organizational constituencies variables were not related to the two measures of violence studied here. But groups that **published ideological literature**, such as newsletters or pamphlets, were significantly *less likely* to be involved in violence. Such literature is used to attract potential members to the organization. Perhaps these groups calculate that publishing their rhetoric will also garner them increased attention and thus decreases the likelihood of these organizations being involved in violence.

Third, groups that were linked to others in various ways did not increase the propensity for violence or extreme violence. However, groups that had a **specific conflict** with another far-right hate group were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence.

Fourth, two structural factors were related to a group's propensity for violence. Groups that had **charismatic leaders,** or **advocated for leaderless resistance tactics** or used **leaderless resistance tactics** were significantly more likely to be involved in violence. We defined leaderless resistance as a "'lone wolf operation in which an individual, or a very small, highly cohesive group, engages in acts of anti-state violence independent of any movement, leader, or network of support" (Kaplan, 1997: p. 80). The use of leaderless resistance tactics by white supremacist organizations appears to have become more common since far-right extremist leaders like Louis Beam began publicly calling for the adoption of these tactics. It might be that the open discussion of such tactics was merely rhetoric—an empty threat, that groups endorsed this tactic to appear stronger and more threatening than they actually were in practice. The reality, however, was that groups that organized as a leaderless resistance cell or encouraged those under their umbrella to organize in this manner were significantly more likely to be involved in violence.

Fifth, **region** was consistently related to a group's propensity to be involved in violence. Groups in the West and Northeast were significantly more likely to be involved in violence

In conclusion, past research lacked sufficient comparison groups and thus told us little about how violent far-right hate groups differed from non-violent hate groups. This study uncovered several factors that distinguished violent from non-violent groups and, in so doing, expands the scientific knowledge that can inform decisions and practices to counter violent extremism and assist in the early identification of violent far-right hate groups in the United States.

Introduction

This report systematically investigates which factors distinguish violent far-right hate groups from non-violent ones in the United States. Few studies have empirically studied far-right hate groups in the United States. Indeed, no study has created a "complete universe" of both violent and nonviolent groups to make comparisons. This project used the Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) annual Intelligence Report and Klan Watch publications to identify all known far-right hate groups that existed for at least three years in a row from 1990 to 2008 in the United States and then sampled over 50% (N = 275) of these organizations to study them in more depth. Each organization was then systematically researched to uncover all relevant publically available information. Groups whose members committed at least one ideologically motivated violent crime were categorized as *violent*. Organizations whose members were not linked to any ideologically motivated violent crime were coded as *non-violent*. Findings from previous research were used to generate models to identify factors that differentiated the two types of groups. Several organizational attributes were found to be associated with violent groups. First, a**ge** and **size** were related to a group's propensity for extreme violence and age was related to group violence.[1] That is, as groups increased in the number of years in existence or in the number of their members, the likelihood of them being involved in violence increased. Second, groups that **published ideological literature**, such as newsletters or pamphlets, were significantly *less likely* to be involved in violence. Third, groups that had an articulated conflict with other groups were significantly likely to be involved in extreme group violence. Fourth, groups that had **charismatic leaders** or **advocated for leaderless resistance tactics** or used **leaderless resistance tactics** were significantly more likely to be involved in violence. Fifth, r**egion** also impacted violence. Groups in the West and Northeast were significantly more likely to be involved in violence.

It is important to study far-right hate groups because they pose a deadly threat to the United States.[2] The United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) has documented over 335 homicide events, claiming over 560 lives, committed by domestic far-right extremists between 1990 and 2010. More than 100 formal organizations were connected to these incidents. More than one hundred thirty of these incidents were ideologically motivated and took the lives of over 315

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[1] Any group whose members committed six or more violent crimes was considered to have engaged in "extreme" group violence.

[2] We define domestic far-right extremists as being composed of individuals or groups that subscribe to aspects of the following ideals: They are fiercely nationalistic (as opposed to universal and international in orientation), anti-global, suspicious of centralized federal authority, reverent of individual liberty (especially their right to own guns, be free of taxes), believe in conspiracy theories that involve a grave threat to national sovereignty and/or personal liberty and a belief that one's personal and/or national "way of life" is under attack and is either already lost or that the threat is imminent (sometimes such beliefs are amorphous and vague, but for some the threat is from a specific ethnic, racial, or religious group), and a belief in the need to be prepared for an attack either by participating in paramilitary preparations and training and survivalism. The mainstream conservative movement and the mainstream Christian right are not included. We operationalize groups as "an identifiable organization (e.g., has name) comprised of two or more individuals that adheres to a far-right extremist ideology and seeks political objectives to further the ideology. The organization also has at least some command and control apparatus that no matter how loose or flexible provides an overall organizational framework and general strategic direction." This description of group draws from Jones & Libicki's (2008) RAND report (that focused on why terrorist groups end) as well as comments from the MAROB study.

persons (Freilich, Chermak, Belli, Gruenewald & Parkin, 2011). More than half of these fatal events were committed by white supremacists. Far-right extremists have also been linked to sixty planned and/or attempted terrorist plots between 1995 and 2005 (Blejwas, Griggs, & Potok, 2005).

White supremacists and other far-right hate groups are seen as representing a significant threat. When surveyed about terrorist group presence within their state, 85% of state law enforcement agencies indicated right-wing extremist group presence, and 82% indicated the presence of race/ethnicity/hate-related groups (Riley, Treverton, Wilson & Davis, 2005). A more recent survey of state police agencies (74% response rate) found that 92%, 89%, 72% and 70% of respondents respectively indicated that neo-Nazis, racist skinheads, Klu Klux Klan, and Christian Identity groups were operating in their jurisdiction (Freilich, Chermak & Simone, 2009; see also Carlson, 1995). Simi's research demonstrates that it is important to focus on the entire universe of far-right hate groups, including both violent and non-violent organizations. Simi has found that far-right terrorists were usually involved in the larger movement before becoming terrorists. He concludes that their decision to turn to violence is the culmination of an "extremist career." Importantly, Simi (2009: 29) argues that this finding indicates that, "efforts to monitor extremist groups are important…."

This empirical study of extremist hate groups helps extend the literature in four ways. First, until recently, terrorism research was not empirical and studies rarely produced policy-oriented prevention initiatives (Hamm, 2007; Lum, Kennedy, & Sherley, 2006; Merari, 1991; Silke, 2001). Terrorism research has been subjected to many critiques that highlight methodological concerns (LaFree & Dugan, 2004; Leiken & Brooke, 2006; Ross, 1993; Sageman, 2004; Silke, 2001). Lum, Kennedy & Sherley's (2006) systematic review of over 14,000 terrorism articles published between 1971 and 2003 found that only 3% were empirical (see also Silke, 2001). Most of this research used secondary data – such as the mass media, books, journals, and other published documents – in a non-systematic manner (Silke, 2001). Policy suggestions generated from anecdotal evidence are unlikely to be taken seriously by policy makers (Hamm, 2007; Merari, 1991).

Second, our focus on groups is an important contribution. Most of the small (but growing) number of empirical studies examine terrorist incidents or terrorist suspects and usually ignore the group level (but see Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; Freilich, 2003; Horgan & Bjorgo, 2009; LaFree & Miller, 2008). There has been an important and growing body of research examining various aspects of terrorism, including issues such as the spatial distribution of terrorist acts (LaFree & Dugan, 2000), the prosecution and punishment of international and domestic terrorists (Smith & Damphouse, 1996, 1998; Smith, Damphousse, Jackson, & Sellers, 2002; Smith & Orvis, 1993), and the radicalization of jihadists (Bakker, 2006; Sageman, 2004; Silber & Bhatt, 2006). However, there have been fewer systematic studies of terrorist groups. In fact, Asal & Rethemeyer conclude that, "organizational level of analysis has not been a major area of investigation" (2008: 447; see also Borum, 2004; Hudson, 1999; Lai, 2004).

Third, this study innovatively compares violent and non-violent far-right hate groups to uncover where they systematically differ. Our review indicates that this is the first study to conduct such a comparison for a specific universe of extremist

organizations in the United States. The few studies that focus on terrorist or extremist criminal organizations usually use a case study approach and qualitative methods to study a single group or small number of organizations (Barkun, 1989; 1994; Blazak, 2001; Brannan, 1999; Crenshaw, 1991; Cronin, 2006; Durham, 2003; Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009; Kaplan, 1993; Michael, 2004; Smith & Damphousse, 2009). A handful of studies have used quantitative methods to study a larger number of mostly overseas organizations (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; LaFree & Miller, 2008; Blomberg, Engel & Sawyer, 2010; Horowitz, 2010; Jones & Libicki, 2008; LaFree, Yang, & Crenshaw, 2009; Miller, 2011). But, whether qualitative or quantitative and similar to research on terrorist incidents and suspects, these studies generally ignore non-terrorists: Non-violent, non-terrorist hate groups (and non-terrorist incidents and non-terrorist suspects) are excluded. This is a significant omission because it hinders our ability to compare violent and non-violent organizations to identify key differences that could be used for prevention purposes (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; Victoroff, 2005). The few studies that have examined state-level or county-level variation in the number of far-right paramilitary or hate groups in the country (see Freilich, 2003; Freilich & Pridemore, 2005; McVeigh, 2004; O'Brien & Haider-Markel, 1998; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002) do not distinguish between violent and non-violent organizations. Instead both types are collapsed together as extremist groups.

Finally, this study's focus on homegrown American organizations is a positive addition to research that does not usually study such groups. Terrorism researchers mostly investigate international terrorism and foreign terrorist campaigns (e.g., LaFree, Dugan & Korte, 2009; LaFree, Dugan, Xie & Singh, in press), and recently most of the focus has been on Al Qaeda and related groups (Freilich, Chermak & Simone, 2009; Lum, Kennedy & Sherley, 2006). Conversely, domestic terrorism and extremist criminal organizations in the United States have been less studied (Chermak, Freilich & Caspi, 2009; Freilich & Chermak, 2009; Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009; Simi, 2009). Below we first review the literature on terrorist groups and highlight a series of hypotheses about which factors could be associated with whether or not a far-right hate group is violent. Second, we discuss the data and the statistical methods used to analyze these data. Next we set forth our results and discuss their implications. We conclude with a discussion of future research projects that could extend the findings.

Literature Review

This section reviews the literature on terrorist groups, paying close attention to works that examine the lethality of terrorist groups or the diffusion of their violent tactics to other entities. Prior studies find that hate groups, like white supremacist organizations, face similar challenges as other political organizations. These obstacles include garnering sufficient funding to maintain the group, recruit members, and overcome competition (Oots, 1989: 139). Groups that effectively manage these challenges are more likely to survive, grow, and perhaps be more linked to violence. Prior research finds that a number of factors may be associated with violent groups.

We categorize these factors into four categories: (1) Organizational capacity, (2) Organizational constituency, (3) Strategic connectivity, and (4) Structural arrangement. We also discuss a number of other variables.

1. Organizational Capacity

It is difficult for terrorist or extremist groups to survive and maintain their activities or grow. The overwhelming majority of terrorist groups, in fact, last less than a year (LaFree & Dugan, 2009; Rapoport, 1992). Most extremist far-right hate groups as we demonstrate below also last less than one year. Recruitment, funding, and adaptability are mechanisms that could enhance organizational capacity. Horowitz (2010: 38) states that terrorist groups have "resource constraints that influence their planning processes, from how often they attack -- the operational tempo -- to whom they plan to attack and how they plan to conduct attacks."   It is thus important for organizations or movements to mobilize sufficient resources to survive and then thrive (Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997; Freilich, 2003; Freilich & Pridemore, 2005; Hamm, 1993; 2002; Horgan, 2004; Horgan & Taylor, 1999; McCammon et al., 2001; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Stern, 2003; Zald & McCarthy, 1987).

> Recruitment. Maintaining group membership and adding new members are critical to organizational survival. New members may provide new skills/expertise and have intelligence about potential areas or issues of concern. These new members could also contribute innovative strategies to achieve organizational success, including greater effectiveness in committing violent acts (Hamm, 2007). Original group members may be energized when others commit to the cause they believe in. Similarly, additional members could result in connections to other individuals, groups, and social institutions that both increase the pool of potential violent actors and ensure that more successful violent strategies are diffused to this wider segment (Horowitz, 2010).

> Hate groups, like other organizations, must develop multiple strategies to recruit effectively, as new members are likely to join in different ways (Simi, 2007). Most mainstream white individuals are either initially wary or hostile to white supremacist groups due to their racist message and the stigma associated with such groups (Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997; Futrell & Simi, 2004; Simi & Futrell, 2009). In addition, the movement is factionalized, and several hate groups may compete for the same pool of potential members (Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009). Potential recruits may sample various groups for reasons ranging from location to ideological match.

> It is possible that individuals most prone to violence may experiment with different groups before finding one whose ideology and goals are consistent with their interests (Ezekiel, 1995). The few terrorism studies that examine recruitment find groups use multiple strategies to identify potential members. Horgan (2003) finds that becoming a terrorist is a process and potential members must learn about how to join a group (see also Simi, 2009). Many individuals are recruited through friends and family networks (Chermak, 2002; Sageman, 2004; Simi, 2009; Weinburg & Eubank, 1987).   Weinburg & Eubank's (1987) examination of left and right-wing groups in Italy found that 13% of members joined because of family or friends. Similarly, Sageman's study (2004) of global jihadists found that many joined in clusters due to preexisting relationships with current members. Others stress

that distributing propaganda through publications, the Internet, and the media (Hoffman, 2006), recruiting at protests or events, and conducting activities to target specific groups of people (e.g., prisoners, youth) (Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009; Ibrahim, 1980; 1982; Sageman, 2004; Simi, 2009) are critical for successful recruitment.

It is hypothesized that groups that recruit most aggressively and (successfully) will be more likely to be involved in violent crimes. Importantly, groups that target specific types of members may be more likely to be involved in violence. Groups that recruit at protests and/or concerts and specifically target youths are likely to be attracting members that are more prone to participate in violence.

Funding. Terrorist and extremist groups need funding to succeed. Although it may be inexpensive to commit specific terrorist acts, it is more costly to create and sustain an organized ongoing attack capacity. Often the targets selected for planned attacks and the method of attack are constrained by the organization's financial level (Canadian Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, 2006: 5). Financial resources are also required to maintain internal security, mount operations, maintain communications and safe-houses, provide training, produce documents, conduct intelligence, and obtain weapons (Chermak, Freilich, Bringuel & Shearer, 2011; Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009; Horowitz, 2010). Similarly, resource mobilization theorists from the social movement literature argue that for groups and movements to succeed they must have sufficient resources such as money (McAdam, 1982; McCarthy & Zald, 1987; Morris, 1984; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002). While initially this framework was applied to left-wing movements, it has also been applied to far-right organizations and movements (Aho, 1990; Diamond, 1995; Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997; Freilich, 2003; Hamm, 1993).

Stern (2003) found that finances are important for successful terrorist groups: "where there is money for Islamist causes but not communist ones, Islamist terrorist groups will rise and communist ones will fail" (2003: 142). It could be that groups with more funding sources have increased capabilities that result in a more efficient and cohesive organization. In turn, these groups may be more violent. Indeed, O'Neil (2007) finds that an organization's ability to conduct lethal attacks may be linked to their effectiveness as fundraisers (see also Sanderson, 2004; Treverton et al., 2009).

Although we believe that funding is positively related to violent attacks for some types of terrorist organizations, we hypothesize that it will have no effect on violence by far-right hate groups. The crimes that these groups commit are ideologically motivated but are generally not designed to overthrow the government. Instead, the goal is usually to harm individuals from racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds that they loathe. These attacks -- while violent -- are inexpensive to mount. Thus, while funding levels may matter in terms of sustaining an organization, they may have little impact on whether the group's members commit a violent hate act. This is especially true for violent acts not committed under group orders as part of an ongoing campaign but rather committed spontaneously by group members acting on their own volition (though the acts are still done to further the group's goals).

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Age of Organization.   Organizational age is another way to operationalize group capacity (Horowitz, 2010). New organizations face challenges, including developing structures and routines to maximize workflow, establishing connectivity in the organizational field, and overcoming start-up setbacks. Although there is debate about the effects of organizational age (see Ranger-Moore, 1997), some argue that older organizations are better able to overcome these hurdles and survive. Horowitz (2010: 45; see also Blomberg, Engel & Sawyer, 2010) explains that, "as groups build an operational history, they develop institutionalized command and control structures focused on the types of operations the group conducts." Older organizations can draw upon their experience to learn and adapt the best practices -- including the most efficient ways to commit violence -- they have observed from other groups (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008).

Chermak (2002) noted this when observing changes within the militia movement following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. The militia organizations that survived and maintained operations after the bombing were able to deal with the intense public scrutiny. Interestingly, many of the groups that survived and were involved in criminal activity also adapted by either going underground or morphing into other types of extremist groups to avoid law enforcement infiltration. Importantly, Caspi's (2010) study of a sample of 13 far-right hate groups whose members committed at least one ideologically motivated race-based homicide found that the age of the organization was positively and significantly related to the number of ideologically motivated homicide events.

Based upon these studies, it is hypothesized that that older groups are more likely to be violent. Over time, these groups learn from past successes and failures and acquire knowledge that could aid their successful commission of criminal acts. It is important to note, however, that other research finds that group age has no effect or a negative effect on violence. Asal & Rethemeyer (2008) found that organizational age did not affect group lethality. Further, group age had a negative effect on the adoption of suicide tactics by other terrorist organizations (Horowitz, 2010; see also Jones & Libicki, 2008).

Size of Organization. Size is another variable that may increase the likelihood that a group is involved in violence. Jones & Libicki's (2008) analysis of 648 terrorist groups using the RAND-MIPT Terrorism database found that size of the organization was related to group survival. Larger groups tended to last longer. Asal & Rethemeyer (2008) conclude that larger organizations benefit from the collective expertise of members, and ultimately larger organizations are more lethal terrorist organizations.

Horowitz (2010) states that larger groups should be better able to implement novel strategies to improve their operations. He argues that size is often associated with lethality among terrorist groups. Caspi (2010) found that organizational size was positively and significantly related to the number of ideologically motivated events in which a hate group engaged. He also found that group size was related to group age and the number of links a group had to other organizations. Caspi concludes that it is possible that size and age may be correlated and that

large groups may just have more connections. Other scholars argue though that being large is detrimental because the organization must struggle with maintaining basic operations. Thus small organizations may be more deadly (Oots, 1989). We think however that being larger will increase an organization's likelihood of being involved in violence. In one way, size might impact violence as a simple reflection of the law of averages. That is, there are simply more opportunities for organizations with large memberships to be connected to violent actions. In addition, larger organizations might be more likely to be linked to violence because of the diversity and strength of their membership. Large organizations are more likely to have resources to finance members and allow them to focus on criminal matters. These organizations may also be more likely to have individual members with various skills and backgrounds. These skills might be useful in planning, executing, or encouraging criminal activities, and in providing intelligence to identify susceptible targets (see Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; Horowitz, 2010).

<u>Former Military Members</u>. There have been several reports, although relying primarily on anecdotal or case studies, that document that far-right extremists groups have aggressively attempted to recruit military personnel into their organizations (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008; Department of Homeland Security, 2009). These reports imply that compared to other extremist groups, far-right extremist groups are more interested in recruiting military veterans into their organizations. For example, an analysis of data from the American Terrorism Study concludes that far-right extremist groups are significantly more likely to have members with military experience (Smith, Bringuel, Chermak & Freilich, 2011). Having members with military backgrounds may increase a group's propensity towards violence in several ways. First, former members of the military may have particular technical and leadership skills that can be used by the group to commit violence (Smith, Bringuel, Chermak & Freilich, 2011). This skill set includes extensive training in the use of weapons, explosives, and combat strategies. Second, military veterans turned activist may have specific grievances directed at the government. Thus, we hypothesize that groups that have members with previous military training will be more likely to be involved in violence.

2. Organizational Constituency

Groups use various strategies to increase their visibility with their organizational constituencies, i.e., others that matter to them. Asal & Rethemeyer (2008: 437; see also Dugan, Huang, LaFree & McCauley, 2008) explain that terrorist organizations are often focused on their audience -- "groups or deities that the organization is trying to impress." Although some hate groups may shun publicity, most far-right hate groups attempt to engage outside constituencies using strategies such as running for political office, organizing conferences, appearing in the media, and participating in community programming. Such strategies result in the group engaging public and mainstream organizations (Blee, 2002; Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997; Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009; McVeigh, 2008).

Groups might also adopt strategies to engage other extremists. Strategies such as publishing racist propaganda, passing out leaflets, and conducting training exercises demonstrates to others that the group will take steps to achieve their

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objectives (Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009). While a group may choose these strategies for a variety of reasons, one explanation is to gain legitimacy and spread its message.

These arguments are consistent with resource mobilization theory from the social movement literature. Research has found that extremist racist organizations attempt to leverage other extremist groups (Berlet & Lyons, 2000; Diamond, 1995; Freilich, 2003; Freilich & Pridemore, 2005; O'Brien & Haider-Markel, 1998). Oberschall (1993) claims that successful social movements exploit previous movements and recruit already mobilized individuals. Pitcavage (2001) concludes that the far-right militia movement of the 1990s recruited from the similarly extremist Posse Comitatus movement active in the 1980s.

In sum, research indicates that many groups attempt to conduct a variety of activities to spread their message. We hypothesize that far-right hate groups that more actively spread their messages -- and are thus reaching a wider audience -- are more likely to be violent. These activities could encourage individuals to act on their own to further the group's ideology (Green & Rich, 1998; see also Horowitz, 2010). A group's increased engagement might also produce a greater number of links with other entities that members could exploit to commit ideologically motivated violent crimes (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; see also Green & Rich, 1998). (This point is discussed further below).

3. Strategic Connectivity

Many terrorist and extremist hate groups are increasingly attempting to connect to various networks (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; Burris, Smith & Strahm, 2000; Enders & Jindapon, 2010; Gustavson & Sherkat, 2004; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; U.S. Army Training and Doctrine, 2007). Having more links provide groups benefits such as better intelligence, the quick sharing of new information, new members, training, expertise, donations, weapons, safe houses, transportation networks, and propaganda and other types of encouragement (Enders & Jindapon, 2010; Ross, 1993).

Asal & Rethemeyer (2008: 440; see also Enders & Jindapon, 2010) discuss how "through relationships terrorist organizations spread out the mobilization tasks, diversify the risks inherent in mobilizing resources (of detection in particular), and even build the basis for a division of labor between organizations." Similarly, Simi & Futrell (2004: 20) discuss that the White Power Movement (WPM) "persists largely because of the intense commitment, rich and variegated culture and strong activist networks that members cultivate in the movement's free spaces."

Recent research demonstrates that studying links between and among terrorist organizations is important. Enders & Jindapon (2010) state that networks that are more connected are more sophisticated. These entities are more capable logistically which should translate into the ability to be more violent. Asal & Rethemeyer (2008: 447) were the first to examine if greater numbers of linkages were associated with more lethal terrorist organizations. They "leverage[d MIPT] data on the network of terrorist organizations worldwide to explore the importance of organizational connections to the behavior and lethality of those organizations." Importantly, they found that more alliance ties increased lethality in all of the

models produced. Asal & Rethmeyer (2008) argue that groups with more ties are more likely to acquire knowledge that could be useful to mounting violent acts.

Horowitz (2010) also used MIPT data (1968-2006) to study the diffusion of suicide tactics among terrorist groups. He (2010: 42) argues that cooperation and communication among terrorist groups played an important role in the spread of the suicide bombing terrorist tactic. Horowitz (2010: 61) states that more ties provide more opportunities for groups to learn from one another successful tactics and possible targets, etc. Finally, Caspi (2010) used data from the Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) and identified 36 ideologically race-based homicide incidents that were committed by formal members of 24 far-right hate groups. Caspi found that groups with more direct ties with other hate groups were associated with more homicides. Based on these findings, we hypothesize that groups with more links to other far-right hate groups are significantly more likely to be violent.

> Conflicts with Far-Right Hate Groups. Groups with greater numbers of linkages may be better positioned to obtain resources, expertise, and commitment from other groups. But, it is also possible that some groups could have conflicts with other organizations that could hamper their ability to operate and succeed. Oots (1989: 147) explains that "competition is not unusual among terrorist organizations" and that "the more successful a group is at attracting members, the more likely it is to face competition" (Oots, 1989: 148). It is therefore not surprising that some far-right hate groups, in addition to their hatred of minority groups and the government, are also in conflict with other hate groups. Hate groups disagree, vehemently at times, on methods, strategies, and ideologies (Chermak, Freilich & Shemtob, 2009). Conflicts may arise for a variety of reasons including personality differences, competitions over potential recruits, and disagreements over ideological beliefs or whether or not violence should be employed (Dobratz & Shanke-Meile, 1997; Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009). Many groups contrast their methods and motives with other groups to enhance their own standing. For example, after the Oklahoma City bombing, Chermak (2002) highlighted how groups like the Militia of Montana and specific individuals including John Trochmann, Bo Gritz, and Norm Olsen significantly influenced public understanding of the militia movement by being the sources of choice for news reporters. Other groups and individuals aggressively combated these images by attempting to access the media to explain that these groups or individuals were not representing their beliefs.

> These conflicts may force groups to compete in various ways, including increasing the likelihood that a group either advocates for or actually commits violent crimes. Groups in conflict may try to outdo their competition -- hostility acts as pressure to prove that the group is serious about accomplishing its goals. The violent act can thus signal to others the group's commitment to its cause (Ezekiel, 1995; Hamm, 1993; Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009). Importantly, the violent act will also probably lead to publicity about the group, and the media may be more likely to cover the event, especially if it involves serious violence. For these reasons we hypothesize that groups that are in conflict with other far-right hate groups are more likely to be violent.

4. Structural Arrangements

Groups can be organized in different ways. Some organizations use a paramilitary-style structure, with top-down leadership. Other organizations may consist of small groups of individuals brought together to achieve a goal without a formal leadership structure. Groups may be above ground -- actively engaged with mainstream society and attempting to influence it through legitimate structures -- or disengaged and/or underground. Most hate groups tend to be small and independent, but there are exceptions. Some groups, such as the National Socialist Movement, have many chapters in different states.

Three structural variables may be particularly important to the question of whether a group engages in violence: charismatic leadership, whether the group endorses leaderless resistance tactics, and whether the group operates within prison.

Charismatic Leader.   Leadership is critical to the formation of terrorist groups (Oots, 1989; Richardson, 2006; Stern, 2003) and to the success of social movements generally, and far-right extremist ones particularly (Aho, 1990; Diamond, 1995; Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997; Lo, 1982). Effective leaders motivate individuals to join, rally individuals around a particular identity, and increase the group's cohesiveness. Strong leaders also sustain an organization's strength by encouraging people to fully commit to the ideas and motives of the group.

Freilich, Chermak & Caspi's (2009) analysis of the life histories of several white-supremacist groups concludes that effective leadership is critical for a group's success. They found that the Aryan Nation's successes were due to the abilities and strengths of Richard Butler, that the National Alliance only thrived once William Pierce became its leader, and that Public Enemy One (PEN1) became a force because of its leader. This study also documents that ineffective leadership or the death of a strong leader can lead to the demise of a group. Hamm (1993) concludes that the large growth in number of far-right racist -- and often violent -- skinheads in the United States in the 1980s was due to the leadership of Tom Metzger. Some of the most "successful" violent far-right extremist groups in the United States were formed and led by charismatic strong leaders, including the "Order" which murdered five individuals and committed spectacular robberies that netted close to $10,000,000 in the 1980s, and the Aryan Republican Army, which committed more than 20 robberies in the 1990s (Flynn & Gerhardt, 1995; Hamm, 2002; Martinez & Gunither, 1999). Similarly, resource mobilization theorists argue that successful groups and movements have more resources, such as effective leadership abilities, to employ. Akins' (1998) study of the militia movement in Florida found that strong leadership played an important role in its rise (Gallaher, 2004).

Being an effective leader, however, is a major challenge. Significant variation may be expected in the ability of individuals to bring people together to commit not only to being an active member of a group, but also to training for and participating in violent actions. We hypothesize then that groups that are led by a skilled leader -- one that is charismatic and entrepreneurial -- are significantly more likely to be involved in violent activities.

<u>Leaderless Resistance.</u> Violent extremist movements have long practiced leaderless resistance. Far-right extremists in particular have supported this tactic for decades and recently several high profile white supremacist leaders have again endorsed its use (Chermak, Freilich & Simone, 2010; Damphousse & Smith, 2004; Kaplan, 1997; Simi, Bringuel, Chermak, Freilich; LaFree & Maskel, 2011). Kaplan (1997: 80) defines leaderless resistance as a "'lone wolf operation in which an individual, or a very small, highly cohesive group, engages in acts of anti-state violence independent of any movement, leader, or network of support." This tactic makes it more difficult for law enforcement to detect potential threats because the small number of individuals involved and their isolation from organized entities allow them to "fly under the radar." Damphousse & Smith (2004) find that far-right extremists' use of leaderless resistance has resulted in far-right extremist groups becoming smaller, having fewer members. Arquilla, Ronfeldt & Zanini (1999) and Enders & Jindapon (2010) explain that more recently formed terrorist groups are less likely to be completely top-down organizations and are more likely to be "flatter" to guard against infiltration (Sageman, 2008). Flatter organizations allow more openings for down-up organizing that is consistent with leaderless resistance.

Groups that advocate leaderless resistance tactics may be more likely to engage in violence. After all, these organizations are urging their members to use violent tactics. Further, these groups are warning their members and supporters to be fearful of law enforcement infiltration, and to conduct their planning and violent acts secretly and in isolation. We hypothesize that organizations that endorse leaderless resistance are linked to specific violent acts that their members -- as well as nonmember supporters and others -- commit on their own initiative due to the group's encouragement of violence, as opposed to crimes that are committed due to direct orders from the group's leadership. This project's operationalization of violent groups is well positioned to investigate the effect of a group's espousal of leaderless resistance on the use of violence by its membership. We categorize as violent both organizations whose members committed violent crimes under group orders, as well as, importantly, acts done by group members on their own (so long as the crime was ideologically motivated).

<u>Operating in Prison</u>. Groups that function within prisons might also have increased tendency towards violence (Caspi, 2010). There has been frequent discussion about how white-supremacist gangs are particularly problematic for prison administrators as they are frequently involved in violence. Indeed, the SPLC estimates that nearly 20 percent of the murders that occur within prisons are linked to white supremacist groups (Holthouse, 2005). In addition, some scholars argue that prisons are critical to radicalizing individuals towards violence (Hamm, 2009). Groups that operate in prison have access to individuals with a criminal history, and we hypothesize that this might translate into using violence to further the group's ideology.

5. Other Group Characteristics.

Besides investigating variables that prior research has indicated may impact the propensity for violence among groups, we examine additional variables related to general characteristics of the groups. It is important to examine indicators of place. Two variables may be related to a group's propensity for violence: type of area (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) and

region. An analysis that examined the geography of terrorism using the MIPT terrorism database concluded that terrorism incidents tended to cluster in urban areas (Nunn, 2007: 106; Ross, 1993). Urban areas offer advantages for terrorists including proximity to targets and high impact targets (e.g., those that are highly populated), access to individuals who could support an operation, availability of material, greater likelihood to be invisible, and quicker access to the media (Ross, 1993).   Other research has indicated that the motives and targets of terrorists may vary regionally (Clarke & Newman, 2006; Nunn, 2007; Smith, Damphousse & Roberts, 2006).

Research Design

This section discusses the sampling design, variables used in the study, and analysis plan.

Sampling Design

There were a number of methodological obstacles that had to be addressed to provide a quantitative assessment of differences between violent and non-violent far-right hate groups in the United States.

First, a sample had to be selected. There are few sources that systematically and regularly maintain listings of individual far-right hate groups. An exception is the SPLC Intelligence Report, which arguably provides the best listing of both violent and non-violent hate groups in the United States. There were several advantages to using the Intelligence Report to identify groups for analysis. First, the report has been published continuously for a large number of years. Second, one issue every year includes a state-by-state listing of all known hate groups in the United States. Third, although scholars have noted problems with SPLC procedures for identifying hate incidents or groups (Chermak, 2002; Freilich and Pridemore, 2006), the SPLC has used the same set of strategies to identify hate organizations over time, relying on "hate group publications and websites, citizen and law enforcement reports, field sources and news reports" (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2011). Fourth, unlike law enforcement agencies and others that compile intelligence information only on criminally active groups, the SPLC tracks violent and non-violent groups that "have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics." Significantly, the SPLC specifically excludes websites that are the work of a lone person not affiliated with a group (SPLC, 2011). Thus, the sample includes groups that are identifiable, are comprised of two or more individuals, and seek to further an extremist ideology.

We compiled a listing of all far-right hate groups existing in the United States between 1990 and 2008 that were identified in the SPLC's annual reports. As discussed below, data about each organization were compiled using open sources. We were concerned that information about groups prior to 1990 would be more difficult to collect. In addition, it was important to make data collection and coding manageable. We used 2008 as the back-end cutoff so that there would be a period of time for adequate identification and collection of violence-related information.

We identified over 6,000 hate groups and noted every year that each group was listed in one of the SPLC's annual reports. We eliminated any group that did not exist for at least three consecutive years. This three-year rule is consistent

with other research that has studied organizational violence (see Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2008). This decision was primarily based on our interest in examining groups that demonstrated some survival capacity, as most terrorist organizations do not have very long life spans. It would be interesting to study why so many of the groups that are listed in these reports do not last very long. But, it is evident that it takes commitment to sustain an extremist organization for at least three years and these groups may be particularly threatening. Importantly, focusing on these groups also increases the likelihood that some information will be available about them through open sources.

In addition, we focused on the activities of the umbrella organization when a group had a national agenda with multiple chapters (e.g., National Alliance, World Church of the Creator). For example, the SPLC intelligence report noted 24 different chapters of the World Church of the Creator, but we only included the umbrella organization in the compiled list.

From the list of organizations that met these criteria, we randomly selected approximately half for analysis. Data were collected on 275 hate groups. The vast majority were single-chapter organizations (93.5 percent).

A second obstacle we faced was gathering reliable information about each of the 275 groups. Although there may be rich intelligence data about some of the violent groups in our sample, getting access to this information would be difficult or impossible. Hate monitoring organizations like the SPLC and the Anti-Defamation League collect extensive information about some of the groups in the study, but their coverage is not complete. In addition, only some of what they have available is made public in various documents and reports.

We decided that the best approach to collect organizational-level data about each group was to design an open-source study to access all available documents, reports, court cases, media reports, and blogs written about each group. Open-source information has become increasingly valued (Noble, 2004) and these data are being used more frequently in terrorism research (LaFree & Dugan, 2004). Thus, groups were searched using a protocol used to create the Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) (see Freilich & Chermak, 2009). This protocol includes accessing the information available through 26 search engines, including Google, News Library, Infotrac, Lexis-Nexis, and All the Web to uncover all public source materials on that group, including court documents such as indictments and appellate decisions when individuals were involved in criminal cases. The name of the group was used as the initial search term. But as individuals and locations were identified in the initial search materials, follow-up searches were conducted to collect additional information. Finally, targeted searches were conducted when specific information was lacking using existing search materials. The information about each group was inputted into an ACCESS file using a group-level codebook.

Variables

Table 1 includes the descriptive characteristics of the dependent and independent variables used in this study. Our primary interest is examining whether specific organizational factors increase the likelihood that a group commits ideological violence, controlling for other variables.

Table 1. Description of Variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Dependent Variables		
1. Group Violence	.21	.411
2. Extreme Violence	.09	.293
Independent Variables		
Organizational Capacity		
<u>Recruitment Tactics</u>		
Internet	.45	.498
Personal visits	.05	.213
Protests	.31	.463
Recruit Youths	.05	.228
Funding	.40	.491
Age of Organization	10.7	5.43
Size of Organization	.18	.386
Former Military Members	.07	.248
Organizational Constituencies		
Public Legitimacy	1.87	1.56
<u>Extremist Legitimacy</u>		
Ideological Literature	.51	.501
Leafletting	.27	.446
Training	.05	.228
Strategic Connectivity		
Linked to Domestic Far-Right Hate Groups	.57	.496
Linked to Domestic Far-Right Hate Figures	.26	.438
Conflict with Domestic Far-Right Hate Groups	.11	.308
Structural		
Charismatic Leader	.09	.288
Leaderless Resistance Tactics	.03	.158
Operate in Prison	.05	.220

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Other Variables		
Group Scope		
Local Scope	.69	.464
Group Area		
Urban	.57	.495
Suburban	.22	.416
Rural	.20	.403
Primary Ideological Concern		
Race	.79	.411
Religion	.11	.312
Government	.10	.308
Region		
South	.40	.491
West	.27	.445
Midwest	.20	.398
Northeast	.13	.338

Dependent Variables. We examine two dependent variables. The first dependent variable is *group violence.* This variable is coded as present (1) when there was any evidence that a member or members of a specific group were arrested for committing or planning to commit a violent crime. Twenty-one percent of the groups committed at least one violent act.

We also wanted to look more deeply into the nature of the violence committed by these groups. That is, there may be qualitative differences in the violence committed by these groups. Blomberg, Engel & Sawyer (2010) found, for instance, that violent terrorist groups could be categorized as either one-hit wonders or recidivists. Our second dependent variable therefore distinguishes groups that were rarely or sporadically involved in violence from those heavily involved. We created a variable called *extreme violence* that only applies to groups that committed multiple homicides and serious violent assaults. These groups were linked to at least six violent crimes, and, on average, they were linked to approximately twenty violent crimes. Nine percent of all groups were defined as having committed extreme violence.

Independent Variables. We examine several measures of organizational capacity, organizational constituencies, strategic connectivity, and structural arrangement. We also examine several other variables, including region,

scope, area, and the primary ideological orientation of the group. The operationalization of these variables is discussed below.

The organizational capacity variables are *recruitment*, *funding*, *age*, *size* and *former military members*. Several dichotomous variables were created to document whether the group attempted to recruit using different types of tactics identified as being potentially important in past research. Specifically, we examine whether a group used the internet to recruit, targeted people to be involved through personal visits, recruited generally at protests, or specifically instituted recruitment strategies to target youth. Forty-five percent of the groups recruited using the Internet, 31 percent recruited at protests, 5 percent recruited using personal visits, and 5 percent specifically targeted youths.

Funding strategy is a dichotomous variable. It was coded as present (1) if a group attempted to raise funds through any legal means, such as charities, donations, membership dues, or businesses. This measure excludes sources of illegal funding. Few groups attempted to generate funds using multiple strategies, but approximately 42 percent of the organizations generated funds using at least one of these strategies.

Age of the organization is measured as the number of consecutive years the group was noted in the SPLC reports. On average, groups existed for 10.7 years.   It was a challenge to collect information about the size of an organization. Our coding scheme attempted to capture various size categories to represent small, medium-sized, and large organizations. Unfortunately, the specific size of the organization was rarely noted in open-source materials. We assumed, however, that if an organization was large (at least 200 members), then it was likely to have been noted in the open-source materials. Thus, we created a variable comparing these organizations to all other organizations in the sample. Eighteen percent of the organizations were categorized as large. The final organizational capacity variable is a dichotomous indicator of whether the group included former members of the military. Approximately seven percent of the groups had members with military experience.

Organizational constituencies were accounted for by creating variables to capture whether groups sought legitimacy among the broader public and/or other extremists. The measure we call *public legitimacy* is an eight-item scale that combines items measuring whether the group was active politically, had a website, had community or educational programming, had public member meetings, organized conferences, or specifically appeared in the media to promote the group. Over 80 percent of the groups attempted to engage the public using at least one of these strategies. More than 51 percent used one or two, 29 percent used between 3 and 5, and more than six percent used more than five strategies to promote the group.

We collected several items related to *extremist legitimacy*, such as whether the group published extremist literature, leafleted, or conducted training exercises. Fifty-one percent published extremist literature, 27 percent distributed hate leaflets, and 5 percent conducted training exercises.

The variables we use to operationalize strategic connectivity relate to specific linkages and/or conflicts with others groups. The first variable is *linkages* to domestic far-right hate groups.[3] This variable is measured dichotomously and coded as present (1) when we could establish that a group participated in specific activities with other groups, had friendships with other groups, were an off-shoot group, or received public support from other far-right hate organizations. Over 57 percent of the groups had established links with other far-right hate groups. Similarly, we created a variable that measures *linkages to high-profile* far-right hate figures. Twenty-six percent of the groups were linked to such figures. We also wanted to capture whether the group noted any conflicts or were *in competition* with other far-right hate groups. This variable is measured as a dichotomous indicator. Approximately 11 percent of the groups had conflicts with other far-right hate organizations.

Finally, we attempted to capture characteristics related to the structure of the group using three variables. The first coded whether the group was led by a *charismatic leader*. We primarily allowed the commentary about leaders found in open sources to define who was charismatic. We coded the group as having a charismatic leader when some individual specifically discussed the activities of the leader and defined him as charismatic. Nine percent of the organizations had a charismatic leader. The second variable is whether the group practiced and/or publicly advocated the use of *leaderless resistance tactics*. Only three percent of the groups used such tactics. Finally, whether the group *operates in prison* was coded as a dichotomous variable. Five percent of the groups operated in prison.

Other Group Characteristics. We also included other general characteristics of the groups. These variables include scope of activities, type of area and region of location, and primary ideological orientation. Each variable is dummy-coded. *Scope* refers to the focus of the agenda of the group. Sixty-nine percent of the groups focused on local activities, and 31 percent focused on international, national or multi-state issues. The latter category of groups serves as the reference category. The *type of area* variable captures the general location of the group -- urban, suburban, or rural. Over 57 percent of the groups were in urban areas, 22 percent in suburban, and 20 percent in rural. Rural serves as the reference category. We used the United States Census to create the *region* variable. Forty percent of the groups were in the South, 27 percent were in the West, 20 percent were in the Midwest, and 13 percent were in the Northeast. These regions were dummy-coded, and the South serves as the reference category. The final variable is *primary ideological concern*. Not surprisingly, nearly 80 percent of the groups were primarily concerned with racial issues. Eleven percent were primarily concerned with a religious issue, and ten percent were primarily concerned with anti-government issues. These variables were dummy-coded, and the anti-government group serves as the reference category.

Analysis

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[3] We attempted to capture linkages to other domestic extremists, including linkages to far-left or jihadi organizations but we did not discover any evidence of such linkages among the groups in this study.

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The dependent variables studied here are dichotomous (violent/not violent; extreme violence/no extreme violence). Logistic regression is the appropriate technique for dichotomous dependent variables. We tested for multicollinearity and did not find any concerns.

Below we present the results for the following: (1) group violence; (2) extreme violence; and (3) group violence examining urban, suburban, and rural groups.

In presenting the results for the two main dependent variables (group violence; extreme violence) in the tables, we present multiple models. We first present independent models that include each category of the independent variables (organizational capacity, organizational constituencies, strategic connectivity, structural, and other) separately. We then present a final model that includes only those variables that were significantly related to the dependent variable in the independent models.

Findings

Group Violence

Table 2 presents the six models for the Group violence variable. Groups that recruited at protests, were large, and were older were significantly more likely to be involved in violence; using other recruitment tactics and legal funding strategies, and having members in the military were not related to violence (Model 1). In Model 2, groups that leafleted were significantly more likely to be involved in violence, as were groups involved in multiple public legitimacy strategies. As the number of strategies increased, so did the likelihood of being involved in violence. However, groups that produced ideological literature were significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Training had no relationship to a group being involved in violence. In Model 3, two of the three strategic connectivity variables were significant: Groups that were linked to other far-right hate groups and groups in conflict with other far-right hate groups were significantly more likely to be involved in violence, but groups linked to specific far-right hate figures were not. All three structural variables in Model 4 were related to violence. Groups that had a charismatic leader, organized or advocated leaderless resistance, or operated in prison were more likely to be involved in violence. Finally, two of the other variables in Model 5 were significant. Groups that focused on local issues were significantly less likely to be involved in violence compared to groups that had a broader, national agenda. In addition, groups headquartered in the West and the Northeast were significantly more likely to be involved in violence compared to groups in the South.

Model 6 includes only the significant variables discussed above. Four of these indicators remained significant in this model. Groups that advocated or participated in leaderless resistance tactics were more likely to be involved in violence. Groups that distributed ideological literature were significantly less likely to be involved in violence. In addition, two of the

region variables were significant. Groups in the West and Northeast were significantly more likely to be involved in violence compared to groups in the South.

Table 2. Independent Measures on Any Group Violence[4]

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Capacity						
Internet	-.619					
Personal Visits	1.52					
Protests	.909**					.314
Recruit Youths	1.61					
Funding	-.603					
Age	.09***					.078**
Size	.963**					.51
Former Military Members	-.194					
Constituencies						
Public Legitimacy		.370***				-.004
Ideological Literature		-.854**				-1.279**
Leafletting		.876**				.678
Training		.321				
Strategic Connectivity						
Links to Far-Right Hate Groups			1.069**			.279
Links to Far-Right Hate Figures			.042			
Far-Right Hate Conflicts			.862**			.784
Structural						
Charismatic Leader				1.733****		1.48**
Leaderless Resistance				2.207***		2.37**
Operate in Prison				2.097***		1.19
Other Variables						
Local Scope					-1.52****	-.682
Urban[5]					-.074	

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[4] ****P<.001; ***P<.01; **P<.05
[5] Rural is the reference category

Suburban					-.367	
West[6]					.990**	1.087**
Midwest					.184	.511
Northeast					1.142**	1.547***
Primary Racial[7]					-.565	
Primary Religion					-1.152	
Constant	-2.556****	-1.939****	-2.140****	-1.731****	-.217****	-2.934****
Chi Square	44.070****	22.895****	17.642***	32.640****	26.133***	56.135****
-2 Log	215.85	263.059	265.220	253.314	233.629	197.142
Cox and Snell R Square	.163	.08	.06	.112	.096	.196
Naglekerke R Square	.251	.124	.10	.173	.152	.313

Extreme Violence

There may be significant differences between groups that are involved in a couple of assaults compared to those that commit multiple murders and other violent offenses. Table 3 presents these results. In general, the variables that were related groups' involvement in any violence were also related to involvement in extreme violence. In Model 1, age and size of the organization were significant. Groups that were older or large were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence, and groups with legal funding strategies were significantly less likely to be involved in extreme violence. In Model 2, groups that used multiple public legitimacy strategies were more likely to be involved in extreme violence but those that published extremist literature were significantly less likely to be involved in extreme violence. In Model 3, groups that were linked to other far-right hate groups and those that articulated specific conflicts with other hate groups were more likely to be involved in extreme violence. Groups that advocated leaderless resistance and operated in prison were also more likely to be involved in extreme violence (Model 4). Finally, several of the other variables were significant (Model 5). Groups with a local/state agenda were significantly less likely to commit extreme violence compared to those with a national or international agenda. Groups that were headquartered in the Northeast were significantly more likely to commit violence compared to groups from the South.

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[6] South is the reference category
[7] Anti-Government is the reference category

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Table 3. Independent Measures on Extreme Violence[8]

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Capacity						
Internet	.065					
Personal Visits	.795					
Protests	.701					
Recruit Youths	-.681					
Funding	-1.226					
Age	.126**					.155**
Size	1.572***					1.940**
Former Military Members	.600					
Constituencies						
Public Legitimacy		.587****				.389
Ideological Literature		-1.396**				-1.973***
Leafletting		.129				
Training		.635				
Strategic Connectivity						
Links to Far-Right Hate Groups			1.41**			.701
Links to Far-Right Hate Figures			-.128			
Far-Right Hate Conflicts			1.328***			1.792***
Structural						
Charismatic Leader				.772		
Leaderless Resistance				2.445***		4.294****
Operate in Prison				2.075***		1.78
Other Variables						
Local Scope					-.974**	.760
Urban[9]					.082	
Suburban					.130	
West[10]					1.179	1.889**
Midwest					.580	1.67

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[8] ****P<.001; ***P<.01; **P<.05
[9] Rural is the reference category
[10] South is the reference category

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Northeast					1.878**	3.968****
Primary Racial[11]					.128	
Primary Religion					-.845	
Constant	-4.291****	-2.990****	-3.448***	-2.692****	-2.594***	-8.297****
Chi Square	27.171***	18.475***	16.31***	20.356****	13.262	68.389****
-2 Log	121.402	153.637	155.002	151.755	146.523	91.292
Cox and Snell R Square	.104	.005	.058	.071	.05	.23
Naglekerke R Square	.230	.140	.124	.153	.109	.51

Each of the variables that were significant in Models 1 through 5 was included in the final model presented in Table 3. Seven variables remained significant in Model 6. First, groups that were older or large were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence. Second, groups that produced ideological literature were significantly less likely to be involved in extreme violence. Third, groups that had conflicts with other far-right hate groups were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence. Fourth, groups that practiced and/or advocated for leaderless resistance tactics were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence. Finally, the region variable was also significant. Groups in the Northeast and West were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence compared to groups from the South.

Additional Analysis

Before moving to the discussion of these results, we present an additional analysis that might also inform policy and scholarly issues. This analysis examines whether the relationship between organizational factors and engaging in violence is different for urban, suburban and rural groups.

Table 4 presents the results for the full models for groups located in urban, suburban, and rural areas. To generate these models, we used the same process discussed earlier where we ran independent models for each category of independent variables, and then a final model that included those variables that were significant in the independent models. These results should be interpreted with caution because the number of groups is small for the suburban (N=61) and rural (N=56) categories.

Table 4. Any Group Violence for Urban, Suburban, and Rural Groups

Urban		Suburban		Rural	
Local Scope	-.258	Public Legitimacy	-.021	Local Scope	-1.904**
Primary Race	-2.041***	Charismatic Leader	2.546**	Large Group	.164

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[11] Anti-Government is the reference category

Primary Religion	-1.919	Operate in Prison	3.791***	Public Legitimacy	.467
Charismatic Leader	.670				
Operate in Prison	2.272**				
Leafleting	.144				
Recruits at Protest	2.286****				
Recruits via Internet	-1.586***				
Constant	.270		-2.630		-1.080
Chi Square	38.14		15.74***		15.600****
2 Log	128.467		41.830		42.59
Cox and Snell	.22		.227		.243
Naglekerke	.33		.372		.376

It is interesting that a different mix of variables was significant in the independent models for the urban, suburban, and rural groups. In the final model for groups headquartered in urban areas, four variables were significant. Urban groups that operated in prison and groups that recruited at protests were significantly more likely to be involved in violent criminal activities.   Groups that recruited on the Internet were significantly less likely to be involved in violence. Groups whose primary concern was race were significantly less likely to be involved in violence compared to anti-government groups.

Three variables were also significant when examining suburban groups. Large groups, groups with charismatic leaders, and groups that operated in prisons were significantly more likely to be involved in violence.

The only variable that was significant when examining the rural groups was scope. Rural groups with a local agenda were significantly less likely to be involved in violence compared to groups that focus on broader issues.

Discussion

According to the SPLC, there were at least 6,000 hate groups in the United States between 1990 and 2008. The vast majority of these groups actually did not survive more than a year. Further, as this study demonstrates, most of the groups that do demonstrate some longevity are not linked to violent crimes and even fewer commit multiple acts of violence. An important question then is: In what ways are groups that turn to violence different from groups that do not? The findings presented here provide a preliminary understanding of how different organizational characteristics are related to the likelihood of violence among far-right hate groups.

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A number of models were presented with somewhat different results. Importantly though, there were several variables that were consistently related to a group's propensity for violence even when controlling for other variables. First, of the organizational capacity variables, age and size were related to a group's propensity for extreme violence, and age was related to the group violence variable.   That is, more durable or older groups were more likely to be involved in violence. This might be consistent with expectations, as older groups have the opportunity to learn and expand their repertoire over time, and the significance of size may be linked to the fact that there are simply more members of a group, which increases the odds of a member engaging in violent acts. Larger organizations also have a more diverse body of members with different skills and expertise, and this diversity may translate into an ability to evade capture for a period of time and thus the opportunity to commit more violent crimes.

Two of the recruitment variables impacted the propensity of violence for groups headquartered in urban areas. Specifically, groups that recruit at protests were more likely, and groups that recruit via the Internet were less likely, to be involved in violence. The other recruitment strategies, such as recruiting by personal visits or specifically targeting youths, did not increase the likelihood that a group was involved in violence.

The only organizational constituency variable that was related to violence was publishing ideological literature. That is, groups that published ideological literature, such as newsletters or pamphlets, were significantly *less likely* to be involved in violence.   Such literature is used to attract potential members to the organization, and perhaps these groups realize that the publication of their rhetoric will bring increased attention to their group and thus decrease the likelihood of being involved in violence. Contrary to our expectations, most of the organizational constituencies variables had no relationship to the two measures of violence studied here.

Of the strategic connectivity variables, the conflict variable was related to extreme group violence. That is, groups that had some specific conflict with another hate group were significantly more likely to be involved in extreme violence. In contrast, groups that were positively linked to other far-right hate groups did not relate to violence or extreme violence. These results do indicate that these groups are not isolated from each other, and many cooperated with other groups in different ways and others were openly critical. It will be important for future research to look more closely at the type of information that is actually shared, the nature of the linkages, and what and how information is diffused across different organizations.

Of the structural variables, groups that had charismatic leaders were significantly more likely to be involved in violence but not extreme violence. In addition, groups with charismatic leaders in suburban areas were more likely to be involved in violence. Groups that advocated or used leaderless resistance tactics were significantly more likely to be involved in violence and extreme violence. These are not surprising findings perhaps considering previous literature, but they are important. For example, the use of leaderless resistance tactics by white supremacist organizations in particular appears to have increased since far-right extremist leaders like Louis Beam began publicly stressing the need for adoption of this tactics. Damphousse & Smith (2004) have found that -- consistent with leaderless resistance tactics -- the size of right-

wing extremist groups prosecuted federally has decreased.   One thought might be that the discussion of such tactics is merely rhetoric -- an empty threat. Perhaps groups endorse this tactic to appear stronger and more threatening than they actually are in practice. The reality, however, is that the advocacy and use of such tactics produced something more than rhetoric -- groups that organized in this way apparently were successful in encouraging their members to commit violence.

This finding is important for two reasons. First, in addition to far-right extremist organizations advocating the use of such tactics, there has also been discussion among far-left extremists about the need to use such tactics. Second, groups that are leaderless are more likely to be invisible -- only identified after being involved in violence. Many hate groups and hate group members are easily identifiable by their tattoos, dress, ceremonies, and other public declarations (e.g., protests, websites, etc.). But the invisibility of the groups using leaderless resistance tactics are a particular challenge for law enforcement agencies in developing strategies to identify, monitor, and prevent their involvement in violent acts. Charismatic leaders, on the other hand, are media savvy and thus perhaps more easy to monitor. One of the next steps in this research would be to examine how the rhetoric of charismatic leaders of violent groups is similar to and different from charismatic leaders whose groups do not commit violence.

Several other variables were tested. Interestingly, region consistently impacted a group's propensity to be involved in violence. Specifically, although more groups were found in the South, the groups that were headquartered in the West and Northeast were significantly more likely to be involved in violence compared to groups in the South. It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for why region appeared to matter, but it opens up avenues for future research. We discuss this further below.

Although this study illuminates differences between violent and non-violent far-right hate groups, it should be considered a first step in better understanding the impact of group characteristics on violence. There are several limitations to the study and related future research needs. First, it is important to remember that all of the groups in the study must have built some organizational capacity that resulted in them surviving for at least three consecutive years. The maturity of these organizations is, on the one hand, an advantage of the study because the groups had time to become functional entities. But, on the other hand, it is a disadvantage in that they are not representative of the "typical" hate group. Most hate groups only exist for a short length of time. There are many reasons why so many groups struggle initially and die young. It may be that one important reason for an early death is because their members commit and then are arrested for committing crimes. There is a need for additional research that looks at groups with short lives, comparing those that commit crimes and end to those that end for other reasons. Such a study would contribute to the growing body of scholarship that examines the life course of organizations as well as our understanding of the organizational factors related to group participation in violence.

Second, we were able to study a large number of variables and the consistency of the results, especially within the independent models, generally supports the conclusion that what we studied is quite relevant to understanding differences between violent and non-violent groups. There would be added value, however, if future research considered additional

variables and also more concisely captured some of the variables discussed here. For example, the focus of this study was primarily on the internal structures of these groups, although we also looked at linkages and conflicts. However, the results related to region highlight how it is important to examine whether other variables, such as political conflict, economic indicators, and demographic characteristics, affect an organization's propensity to commit violence. One of the next steps in developing this line of research would be to identify the county where these hate groups reside and investigate the relationship between county-level political, economic, and demographic variables and violence. In addition, the findings related to the linkages of far-right hate groups are surprising. There is a need to explore the nature of these linkages. Such an analysis would allow us to better understand these networks, and whether the nature of the linkages impact violence. Futtrell & Simi's (2004) powerful work on the "free spaces" [12] of the White Power Movement highlights some of the challenges of identifying types of "free spaces" and offers solutions for capturing some of the nuances related to the networks that sustain extremist cultures. Future research should attempt to operationalize these types of free spaces using quantitative data and look not only at how they relate to the strength of movements but also these movements' propensity for involvement in violence.

Finally, one of the challenges of studying terrorism and terrorist groups is in the availability of data, but scholars have responded by increasingly relying on open sources to create event-level databases on terrorism. Examples include the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) data set, Hewitt's (2003) book on domestic terrorism, and the Extremist Crime Database (ECDB). This study demonstrates that the use of open sources to study groups also has great potential. We were able to glean rich data about the characteristics of these groups from available documents. One of the challenges with accessing open sources is managing the variation in the amount of information available about groups. For example, some of the groups included in the study are well known, and have been discussed in the media, government documents, and scholarly articles and books. Thus, we had multiple sources of information for many of the variables in the database for these groups. At the same time, there was a limited amount of information available for many of the other groups, and for this reason we had to exclude certain indicators. There would be great value in a study that attempts to understand the strengths and weaknesses of various open-source databases and also triangulates open sources with other data, such as interviews with law enforcement, prosecutors, reporters, and extremists, and the collection of official documents not accessible online such as court documents. Research in both of these areas would enhance our understanding of group-level violence and the strengths and weaknesses of using open sources for terrorism research.

This study expands the understanding of the nature of terrorist group behaviors by specifically comparing the organizational characteristics of violent and non-violent far-right hate groups. Uncovering factors that distinguish violent and non-violent groups can assist law enforcement efforts to develop effective counter-terrorism strategies to respond to the true nature of the threat. Law enforcement agencies are constantly trying to manage resource limitations, and one strategy that is often initiated is simply prioritizing calls -- the most serious calls receive immediate attention. This

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[12] "Free spaces" are defined as places where participants can develop and strengthen identities that challenge the social order or cultural norms.

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resource problem is particularly problematic when considering intelligence-related investigations. Investigations of gangs, organized crime organizations, and terrorist organizations are long and often hit a dead-end before members can be charged. Thus, it is critically important for agencies to effectively select groups that are top priorities in terms of the potential harms they might cause. The results discussed here provide some guidance on establishing such priorities based on type of geographic areas.

Terrorism investigations can be grueling exercises that last years and require considerable resources in terms of human resources and money (Hamm, 2007). It is critical that real threats are identified. Intelligence analysts could use these findings to create or refine existing typologies. The F.B.I.'s Critical Incident Response Group in the 1990s, for example, created a typology of four types of militia groups that ranged from peaceful to underground violent groups (Duffy & Brantley, 1997). The authors suggested that law enforcement agencies should make proactive contact with local militia leaders from the first two, more peaceful, categories. The goal of these meetings was to allow militia leaders to voice their concerns, and help police agencies moderate their image among paramilitary groups. Such meetings will only be useful, however, if the extremist groups are correctly categorized. Both scholars and practitioners increasingly agree that more effective policies are based upon the best knowledge and practices available as demonstrated by empirical evidence (Chermak, Freilich & Shemtob, 2009) such as that provided by this study.

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