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The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA: Economic grievance, societal change and political resentment

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Abstract
This study tests three categories of motivations for domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA: economic grievances, particularly those produced by economic restructuring; societal changes that challenge notions of white male privilege; and political and public policy elements that stoke resentments. Executing a series of negative binomial regression estimations on state-level data in the USA for the period 1970–2011, I find that measures of societal factors—specifically increase in abortion rates and growing female participation in the labor force—and political indicators such as Democratic Party control of the White House, precipitate right-wing terrorist attacks. Factors associated with economic hardships—such as poverty, the decline of manufacturing employment and the "Farm Crisis"—as well as growth of the non-white population, control of state government by the Democratic Party and growth of average Federal Income Tax rates—are not found to be significant predictors of right-wing terrorism.

Keywords
Extremism, political violence right-wing, terrorism, USA

Domestic, right-wing terrorism[1] in the United States—terrorist activity perpetrated by groups and individuals motivated by various extremist right-wing political ideologies including extreme nationalism, racism and white supremacy, Christian religious radicalism and radical anti-government beliefs—represents a significant threat, but with some notable exceptions is curiously understudied by scholars of terrorism.[2] Since 1970, domestic right-wing terrorists have committed more than 500 attacks in the USA.[3] Although this comprises only about a quarter of all terrorist attacks on US soil—and is only half the number committed by domestic left-wing terrorists—right-wing terrorism has resulted in more deaths than any other type of domestic terrorist activity. Over the period 1970–2011, out of 471 people killed in domestic terrorist attacks in the USA[4], 244 were killed by right-wing

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terrorists. Right-wing terrorism, on average, yielded 0.67 deaths per attack as opposed to 0.21 deaths for all terrorist events in the USA, making it a particularly costly type of terrorism in terms of human life. Moreover, other researchers have noted an increase in the number of right-wing patriot and militia organizations that have been linked to violent attacks since 2008, suggesting that right-wing terrorism is a growing threat as well (Potok, 2010).

Despite the hazard that right-wing terrorism poses, empirical scholarship on its determinants is scant (Simi, 2010). A large number of descriptive, qualitative works exist but most of these are historical case-studies of specific movements, profiles of individual terrorists or theoretical works discussing some potential root causes of violent right-wing extremism. Another significant chunk of work on right-wing extremism has been conducted by journalists and advocacy groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center. These too have been qualitative, focused on specific US states or regions of the country or have been snapshots of extremist activity that combines hate crimes with terrorism (Freilich and Pridemore, 2005b: 529). Rigorous empirical studies leveraging social science methods and using quality data on right-wing terrorist attacks are nearly nonexistent (see Chermak et al., 2013 on this point), although important quantitative work has been written on far-right mobilization in the USA more generally (McVeigh and Cunningham, 2012; McVeigh, 2009). The small handful of studies that do employ data analysis suffer from significant design limitations. Some rely upon examination of descriptive statistics to test hypotheses or conduct simple bivariate analyses (Nice, 1988; Perliger, 2012). Others try to draw conclusions from data on the geographic location of terrorist events without using covariates (Webb and Cutter, 2009). The small number of studies that execute more comprehensive multivariate analyses evaluate predictors of the location of extremist right-wing organizations across US states rather than testing predictors of actual terrorist violence[5] (Durso and Jacobs, 2013; Freilich and Pridemore, 2005a; O'Brien and Haider-Markel, 1998; Van Dyke and Soule, 2002). Such studies also confine themselves to either a snapshot of one year or a sharply limited number of years rather than using a longitudinally robust time series[6] (Freilich and Pridemore, 2007; Nice, 1988; Van Dyke and Soule, 2002). Finally, all empirical studies to date confine themselves to one particular type of right-wing terrorism only, such as attacks on abortion clinics, rather than on the wider and often overlapping phenomenon of right-wing terrorism as a whole (Durso and Jacobs, 2013; Freilich and Pridemore, 2007; Nice, 1988; Van Dyke and Soule, 2002).[7]

Categories of motivators of right-wing terrorism

This paucity of empirical scholarship is problematic not only because right-wing terrorism is a non-negligible security threat whose causes are not well understood, but also because, as Simi (2010) argues, scholarly neglect of right-wing terrorism is an impediment to the study of terrorism more generally. This study seeks to remedy the gap in the empirical literature on the precipitants of right-wing terrorism by conducting a cross-sectional (50 US states), time series analysis on the impact of a broad set of social, political, economic and demographic indicators on counts of terrorist attacks perpetrated by individuals and groups identified with and motivated by right-wing extremist beliefs for the period 1970–2011. Because the study is very much a first-generation exploration of the predictors of domestic right-wing terrorism over a long period of time, it adopts an exploratory approach. The study considers three different categories of motivators for domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA gleaned from

case studies, historical works, theoretical treatments and other empirical studies detailed in the next section: economic hardships and grievances, produced by sectoral changes in the US economy—such as decline in manufacturing employment and crisis in the agricultural sector during the 1980s (known popularly as the "Farm Crisis")—that drive resentments and support for terrorism, particularly among the white working class; societal changes that have led to greater inclusion and empowerment of women and racial minorities thereby producing a perceived challenge to traditional society and white male privilege or dominance, producing support for extremism and terrorism; and resentment toward the US political system and government, which is depicted in right-wing rhetoric as corrupt, tyrannical, unresponsive and unaccountable, prompting political violence as resistance against "big government" overreach and/or the exercise of political control by liberal-left government figures.

All three of these categories of motivators[8] contribute to conditions under which aggrieved individuals see political violence as a legitimate means to express their dissidence, communicate their opposition to the status quo, influence a wider audience or policy discussion, draw attention to their grievances, draw recruits and supporters and, ultimately if possible, cause a serious enough disruption to force the state into making concessions. I discuss these categories of motivators of right-wing terrorism in more detail, along with how they are informed by the literature and how they are used to construct the hypotheses tested in the study.

The organization of the paper is as follows. In the next sections I discuss the three categories of motivators of right-wing terrorism suggested by the existing literature. For each of these categories I derive hypotheses which I then test using sets of negative binomial regression estimations. After discussing the results and their substantive impact, I outline the scholarly and policy implications of the findings.

Economic grievance as a motivator of right-wing terrorism

The basic argument underlying the notion that economic grievances motivate right-wing terrorist activity in the USA is that experience of economic hardship, particularly by modest-income, working-class whites living in rural areas dependent on agriculture or employed in blue-collar manufacturing industries, produces conditions of fear, anger and hopelessness that are easily manipulated by right-wing extremist movements. In his book on the far-right militia phenomenon, Dyer (1997) makes use of Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation concept to illustrate the impact of economic hardship on the popularity of the anti-government, anti-status quo critique articulated by the extreme right. She argues that whites from communities affected by poverty and structural changes in the US economy come to find compelling right-wing propaganda blaming "big government" policies, foreign conspiracies, minorities, liberals and women for the destruction of traditional employment and sources of prosperity. Pridemore and Freilich (2006) note that right-wing hate crimes, a related form of political violence, are more frequent in economically depressed communities because right-wing extremists seek to exact "revenge" against racial and ideological enemies that they hold responsible for their economic difficulties. Right-wing extremists use the insecurity accompanying economic grievances to popularize their agendas, to normalize their violent strategies, to recruit members and to generate networks of supporters. Perliger (2012) and Michael and Herbeck (2002) further explain that "personal financial crises" work to alienate people from mainstream society, thereby assisting in the right-wing radicalization process. Support for

right-wing movements, therefore, is primed by economic grievances. The end result is higher levels of right-wing terrorist activity, as right-wing movements become more potent while economic conditions worsen.

The argument that economic grievances help to drive violent right-wing extremism in the USA has deep roots in the scholarly literature. Early work by Raper (1933) found statistically significant correlations between the market price of an acre of cotton and the number of anti-black lynchings in the American South from 1882 to 1930—although these findings were disputed in later empirical work on real per-capita GNP growth and lynchings by Green et al. (1998). Studies by Wilkinson (2011) and Quarles (1999) linked the rekindling of the American Ku Klux Klan in Northern and Midwestern states in the 1920s and 1930s with structural changes in the American economy, specifically the rapid transformation of employment from agricultural to industrial sectors and the accompanying black migration to the North. These studies are joined by other research providing evidence that perpetrators of right-wing violence have been found to have lower levels of formal education than the general population and to have lower-status, poorer-paying jobs (Ezekiel, 1995; Hamm, 1993; Handler, 1990; Hewitt, 2003; Smith, 1994).

Structural changes in the US economy since 1970 and job losses in agriculture and manufacturing industries are also specifically noted by scholars as precipitants of right-wing extremist activity. The 1980s "Farm Crisis"—a period of small farm bankruptcies, foreclosures and heightened unemployment and poverty in rural areas triggered by changes in Federal Government agricultural policies, liberalization of foreign trade for agricultural products, loss of farmland to commercial development and the growth of large industrial-corporate agro-businesses—features prominently in descriptive and theoretical studies of right-wing extremism (see, e.g. Abanes, 1996; Dyer, 1997; Gay, 1997; Perliger, 2012; Van Dyke and Soule, 2002). Some empirical evidence supports the Farm Crisis as a potential precipitant of right-wing violence. Hewitt (2003) and Handler (1990) note that right-wing terrorists are more likely to have personal roots in rural areas and to be more active in rural areas of the USA. Freilich and Pridemore (2005a) and Van Dyke and Soule (2002) find that US states that sustained higher levels of farm job losses in the 1980s contained higher numbers of militia and patriot groups, although they did not find indicators of general economic hardship or unemployment rates in those states to be significant. Scholars have also linked the impact of deindustrialization and manufacturing job loss on right-wing extremism. Blazak (2001), in his qualitative field study of Oregon-based white supremacist groups, found that Skinhead movements engaged in recruiting efforts in distressed factories during recessions, blaming minorities and affirmative action for white job loss. Cross-sectional empirical studies by Durso and Jacobs (2013) and Van Dyke and Soule (2002) have also found that US states afflicted by industrial employment losses contained more patriot, militia and white supremacist groups.

While economic grievance is frequently cited as an important motivator for right-wing terrorism in the literature, several other empirical studies fail to find a significant correlation between various socioeconomic indicators and violent right-wing activity in the USA (Durso and Jacobs, 2013; Jefferson and Pryor, 1999; Nice, 1988; Perliger, 2012; Van Dyke and Soule, 2002). These null results are consistent with research finding no clear relationship between socioeconomic woes like unemployment or low educational achievement and the incidence of right-wing hate crimes in New York City (Green et al., 1998) or in Germany[9]

(Krueger and Pischke, 1997) and with cross-national research on incidents of terrorism outside of the USA (see e.g. Abadie, 2004; Berrebi, 2007; Krueger and Maleckova, 2003; Piazza, 2006).

Given the attention paid to economic grievance in the body of theoretical, historical, case-study and empirical research on right-wing terrorism—and the contradictory findings of some of the empirical work on hate crimes and right-wing extremism—this study tests a basic hypothesis linking general economic hardship in the US states to the incidence of right-wing attacks:

H1: US states with high levels of poverty are more likely to experience right-wing terrorism.

However, to also recognize the particular importance paid in the literature to structural changes in the economy that are theorized to stoke right-wing terrorism, such as the loss of manufacturing jobs or the Farm Crisis, the study also tests two more focused hypotheses:

H2: US states with declining industrial employment are more likely to experience right-wing terrorism.
H3: US states with declining numbers of individual farms are more likely to experience right-wing terrorism.

Societal changes and the "decline of white male privilege" as a motivator of right-wing terrorism

Another commonly ascribed motivation for violent right-wing extremism is societal changes that have led to greater inclusion and empowerment of women, ethnic, racial and religious minorities along with the general diversification of American society. Scholars argue that these transformations, while celebrated within some segments of American society, are frequently regarded as displacing the traditional dominance of white, Christian males, the demographic represented within right-wing extremist movements and right-wing terrorist organizations (Freilich, 2003; Handler, 1990; Hewitt, 2003; O'Brien and Haider-Markel, 1998; Smith, 1994). Scholars theorize that the loss of white male social, political and economic privilege has fueled a strong conservative backlash since the 1970s (Freilich and Pridemore, 2007; Lipset and Raab, 1977) that has been readily manipulated by right-wing extremists, some of whom are violent.[10]

The contention that white male resentment helps to build support for right-wing extremism is supported by the broader literature suggesting that political, social and economic competition for dominance by groups in the context of demographic and social change boosts the propensity of the majority group to engage in violent conflict. In this sense, political violence perpetrated by white males in the USA is motivated by a competitive backlash against the gains made by non-white segments of society (Blalock, 1967; McViegh and Sikkink, 2001; Tolnay and Beck, 1995; Van Dyke et al., 2001). Other scholars have used this "competition-fueled backlash" concept to link non-white immigration to the USA and the growing Latino population to right-wing extremist mobilization (Green et al., 1999; Simi, 2010). Simi (2010) more explicitly argues that the election of Barack Obama, the first black US President who though born in the United States has foreign family roots, helps to reinforce the right-wing extremist narrative of "white distress at the hands of multiculturalism"

(Simi, 2010: 265). A similar dynamic has been observed regarding women's empowerment (Blanchard and Prewitt, 1993; Gibson, 1994). Greater social freedoms, employment opportunities, political voice and personal autonomy enjoyed by American women since the 1960s threaten the tradition of male dominance over society, leading to a pool of popular resentment that can motivate right-wing extremism and can be exploited by right-wing terrorist movements (Freilich, 2003; O'Brien and Haider-Markel, 1998).

Empirical studies have examined the impact of multiculturalism and empowerment of women and minorities as drivers of violent right-wing extremist activity. However, these have produced some complicated results. Van Dyke and Soule (2002) found that states with more female state legislators contained more patriot and militia organizations, as do counties with growing minority populations. Durso and Jacobs (2013) find that states with larger black populations have a higher number of white supremacist groups. In his seminal study of the correlates of abortion clinic bombing attacks in the USA in the early 1980s, Nice (1988) determined that anti-abortion violence was prevalent in states where women more frequently exercised their rights to pregnancy termination. However, anti-abortion terrorism was also more likely in states with higher incidence of rape and whose US Representatives had voted against the 1978 Domestic Violence Act. These findings fit into multiple interpretations. Right-wing terrorism may be precipitated by women exercising rights that threaten traditional male dominance. Conversely, right-wing terrorism might be more frequent during conditions of women's disempowerment and victimization.[11] Freilich and Pridemore (2007) determine in their multivariate study that anti-abortion attacks are more frequent in states where women's legal and political disempowerment is higher and where tolerance of women's victimization is higher, although in an earlier (Freilich and Pridemore, 2005a) empirical study they do not find either women's or minority empowerment to be a significant predictor of the cross-state location of right-wing militia movements. Finally, Perliger (2012) produces some corresponding evidence showing that US Supreme Court decisions upholding the rights of state governments to place restrictions on abortion access in the late 1980s and early 1990s were followed by increased levels of right-wing terrorism, particularly against abortion facilities.

The literature on the impact of diversity, multiculturalism and empowerment of women and minorities on right-wing terrorism prompts the next set of hypotheses tested in the study. The first simply tests the racial diversity argument:

H4: US states with larger non-white populations are more likely to experience right-wing terrorism.

The second two test more specifically the impact of women's empowerment and exercise of personal autonomy:

H5: US states with higher rates of abortion experience more right-wing terrorism.
H6: US states with higher rates of female participation in the labor force experience more right-wing terrorism.

Hypothesis 5 tests an indicator that other scholars have used to gage women's empowerment and threat to white male dominance. Hypothesis 6 uses a more novel indicator, but one that is similar to measures used in other studies to operationalize women's empowerment (Caprioli, 2005).

"Big government" and political resentment as a motivator of right-wing terrorism

The final motivation category involves perceptions of government and the mainstream political system by right-wing extremists. Allegations of "Big Government" overreach and that mainstream politics and politicians are unaccountable and tyrannical have been central to far-right extremist rhetoric for decades (Gamson, 1975). Right-wing extremists believe that the US Federal Government has assumed too much power and is engaged in an assault on individual liberties, in particular against private property and ownership of firearms. The Federal Government has also pushed offensive taxation and regulatory public policies and has also failed to defend US national sovereignty by ceding too much control to foreign countries or international organizations like the United Nations, according to extremists. Although some right-wing extremist movements argue in favor of devolving power from the federal to the state level, views that state government are likewise tyrannical and illegitimate are also common.[12] As such, right-wing extremists feel alienated from mainstream politics, deeply resent mainstream politicians—particularly those that favor policies vilified by the far-right such as gun control—and believe that they have no voice within government. They therefore justify their activities as moves to patriotically cleanse and renew the American political system (Blanchard and Prewitt, 1993; Michael and Herbeck, 2002; Perliger, 2012).

Only indirect tests of the main components of this category have been attempted by scholars. For example, while measures of Federal Government power or feelings of political alienation have not been specifically investigated using empirical analysis, the partisan political environment has, to an extent. There are two opposing theoretical scenarios linking partisan political control to right-wing terrorism. First, when political office or public policy is controlled by the ideological enemies of right-wing extremists—liberal or Democratic Party politicians—right-wing outrage increases, producing more terrorist activity. For example, Risen and Thomas (1998) argue that the election of President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, in 1992 provoked strong feelings of political resentment among some segments of the anti-abortion movement, thereby triggering an increase in anti-abortion terrorism. O'Brien and Haider-Markel (1998) found that states where the Democratic Party held more seats in the legislature contained more extremist right-wing groups. While Nice (1988) did not find a significant relationship between indicators of political conservatism and rates of anti-abortion terrorism in US states, he did find that states with Congressional representatives that refused to endorse a constitutional ban on abortions experienced more terrorist bombings. King and Husting (2003) and Nice (1988) both find evidence that abortion clinic bombings were reduced in situations when the larger anti-abortion political movement found greater support in government, although these findings are not reproduced in Freilich and Pridemore's (2005a) study.

However, conversely, some scholars note that when political life is controlled by politicians that are more akin ideologically to right-wing extremists, terrorist activity may also be exacerbated because extremists find the political environment more permissive and encouraging (Gamson, 1975; Gurr, 1970; Hewitt, 2003; McAdam, 1982; Van Dyke et al., 2001). Several studies argue that right-wing extremist political violence receives passive encouragement when politically conservative politicians hold political power (Blanchard and Prewitt, 1993; Hewitt, 2003). Perliger (2012) found a bivariate correlation between periods of Republican dominance of the US Congress and the Presidency and incidents of right-wing terrorism overall. Van Dyke and Soule's (2002) empirical study finds corresponding

evidence, determining that states with more liberal polities—measured as the percentage of voters describing themselves as "liberal"—were less likely to contain right-wing extremist groups.

Therefore, to gage the impact of public policy and political (partisan) motivations for right-wing terrorism, I first test a hypothesis that captures the impact of Federal Government policy and fits within the political narrative of right-wing extremist groups:

H7: Increase of Federal Tax Rates produces higher levels of right-wing terrorism

I additionally test two other political indicators that have been variously used in other empirical studies of right-wing terrorism: partisan control over state-level politics and partisan control over national politics. Bearing in mind that there is literature predicting that control by both liberal/left and conservative/right political figures encourages right-wing terrorism, each of these hypotheses also has a counter-hypothesis:

H8a: US states experience more right-wing terrorism when their state legislatures are controlled by the Democratic Party.
H8b: US states experience more right-wing terrorism when their state legislatures are controlled by the Republican Party.
H9a: Right-wing terrorism increases when the US Presidency is held by a Democrat.
H9b: Right-wing terrorism increases when the US Presidency is held by a Republican.

Analysis

To test the aforementioned hypotheses, the study uses a cross-sectional panel time series design[13] to examine the predictive quality of a series of state and national-level economic, social and political indicators on counts of domestic terrorist attacks launched by right-wing terrorist movements and individuals in the 50 US states for the period 1970–2011.[14] I regard counts of terrorist attacks per state-year to be the optimal dependent variable for the study, as opposed to the presence or counts of right-wing groups and individuals employed which are used in other empirical studies (Durso and Jacobs, 2013; Freilich, 2003; Freilich and Pridemore, 2005a, 2007; O'Brien and Haider-Markel, 1998; Van Dyke and Soule, 2002). The latter type of dependent variable is susceptible to measurement and selection errors that have implications for empirical analysis and interpretation of results. For example, data on groups are commonly derived from reports by advocacy organizations, like the Southern Poverty Law Center or Anti-Defamation League, that are suspected of over-counting, while data on individuals is frequently estimated, with considerable inaccuracy, or derived from police reports that exclude unknown perpetrators (see Freilich and Pridemore, 2005b). The dependent variable of the study is derived from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), an open-source database built and maintained by the University of Maryland Center for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).[15] Note that, because the GTD is missing data for the year 1993—data for this year were infamously lost during an office move for the Pinkerton Agency, the company that originally constructed the database that would become GTD—state-year observations for the year 1993 are omitted from the analysis. The study confines itself to the prediction of domestic terrorism, which is operationalized as US state-year counts of attacks occurring within the boundaries of the 50 states, perpetrated by US citizens or residents against other US citizens or residents with the intention of

influencing a primarily domestic, US audience. The analysis, therefore, excludes any attacks launched by perpetrators from abroad and any attacks launched by US citizen or residence against targets in other countries. Also excluded are all attacks that have a significant foreign or transnational motivating component.[16]

I constructed the dependent variable by hand using two processes. For the time period 1970–2011, the GTD reports 2362 incidents of terrorism within the USA. Of these reports, 1802 or 76.2% identify a perpetrating group, or specific type of perpetrator, for the attack. I first tallied, by state-year, all attacks launched by identified terrorist groups fitting into one or more of the following categories: (a) domestic terrorist groups motivated by racist, xenophobic, nativist or white-supremacist ideologies; (b) domestic terrorist groups motivated by extreme anti-Federal Government ideologies; and (c) domestic terrorist groups motivated by Christian religious extremism. The groups included in constructing the dependent variable are listed in Appendix Table A1. These categories are consistent with the typology of extremist right-wing movements in the USA identified by Perliger (2012: 3). Moreover, because Perliger documents the existence of groups that share characteristics of multiple categories—for example, the now-defunct white supremacist and religiously extreme Aryan Nations movement—while Quarles (1999: 118–122) recounts the history of alliances and collaboration among racist, anti-Federal Government and religious groups, I opted to aggregate all forms of domestic, right-wing terrorism into a single count variable.

I then examined the 560 terrorist attack reports in GTD that either identified an individual, rather than an organized group, as the perpetrator of an attack or listed the perpetrator as unknown to try to discern whether or not the attack could be classified as domestic, right-wing terrorism. To do this, I made use of the description of the motive behind the attack, the target of the attack and any available notes on the attack provided in the GTD attack narrative. In many cases these notes gave crucial clues to the motivation of the attacker. In many instances, the notes section of the attack narratives in the GTD provides information on the target that reveals the ideological motivation of an unknown perpetrator; for example, attacks against abortion clinics or African American churches can be reasonably assumed to be the work of a right-wing perpetrator. Attack narratives frequently also provide details on the incident from police records, such as notations that a hate-crime or anti-government motivation was suspected. In instances when the attack was depicted in the narrative as fitting into a racist/xenophobic/white supremacist/nativist or anti-Federal Government or religious category, I included it into the count for the dependent variable. This produced a further 202 terrorist events that could be safely characterized as domestic, right-wing terrorism.

I furthermore created separate count variables of terrorist attacks to use in comparative estimations. These include a variable based on counts of terrorist attacks perpetrated by left-wing groups by classifying as left-wing all groups identified as communist, left-wing black and Latino nationalist and extremist environmental groups. I also constructed a variable based on counts of attacks by unknown perpetrators and a variable comprising a total count of all terrorism occurring per state-year observation regardless of perpetrator. I regress all predictors to these three alternative dependent variables to demonstrate the unique precipitants of domestic right-wing terrorism.

Table 1 displays the distribution of attacks by group or perpetrator type in the study along with their frequencies, while Figure 1 graphs the historical patterns of right- and left-wing domestic terrorism in the USA.

Table 1. Distribution of domestic terrorism in the USA by type, 1970–2011

	Number of attacks	(%)
Right-wing[a]	578	24.4
Left-wing[b]	1156	48.9
Unknown	313	13.2
Other	315	13.3
Total	2362	100.0

[a]Includes racist, anti-Federal Government and extremist religious/anti-abortion groups.
[b]Includes communist, black nationalist/leftist, Latino nationalist/leftist and extremist environmental groups.

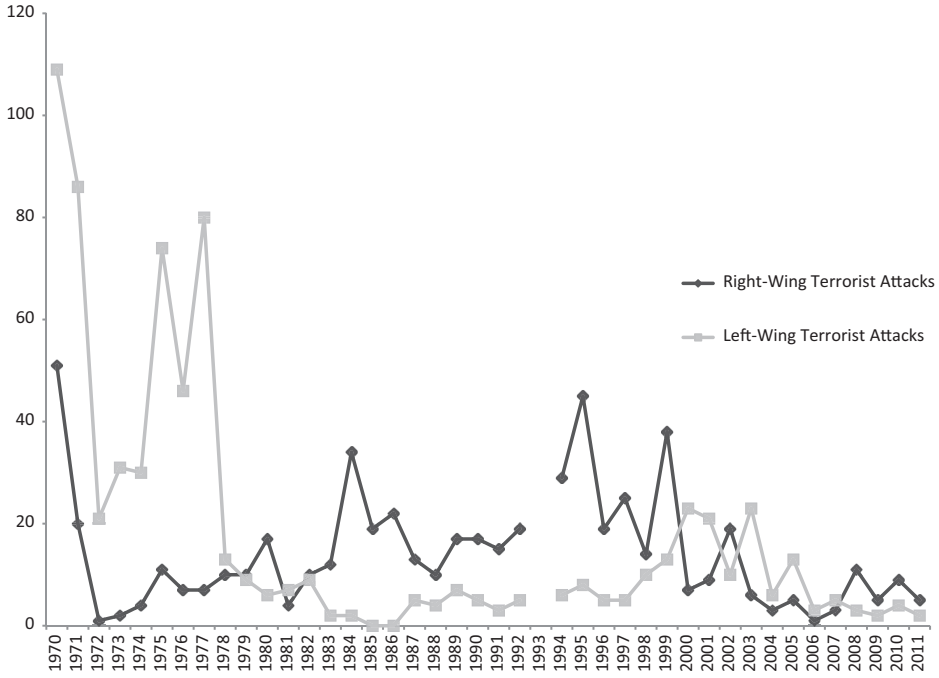

Figure 1. Right- and left-wing terrorism in the USA, 1970–2011.

Table 1 shows that, while right-wing terrorist incidents comprise nearly one-quarter of the total terrorist activity in the USA, incidents of left-wing terrorism are almost double the frequency, over the time period as a whole. However, this disparity is almost entirely due to the dramatic spike in left-wing terrorism in the early to mid-1970s, a period marked by considerable social upheavals such as the Vietnam War protests and a violent turn in race relations. This can be observed in Figure 1. During the mid-1980s through the 1990s, rates of right-wing terrorism surpassed those of left-wing terrorism in the USA and have remained more or less comparable through the 2000s. Indeed, were it not for the dramatic rise of a new type of terrorism categorized in this study as "left-wing"—extremist environmental

terrorism perpetrated by groups such as the Earth Liberation Front—rates of right-wing racist, anti-Federal Government and religious terrorism would remain higher in the 2000s than rates of left-wing terrorism. Also, across the time series, right-wing terrorism has remained more constant than left-wing terrorism. This demonstrates the enduring salience of right-wing terrorism as a subject and security threat.

An array of independent variables are used in the study to measure elements in hypotheses 1–3. To operationalize economic grievances and hardships and structural economic changes that have been previously theorized to foster radicalization and prompt terrorist activity in the USA, I use three indicators. The first is a measure of the percentage of the state population that lives below Federal Government-defined poverty levels reported in historical tables by the US Census Bureau.[17] The second is a measure of the percentage of the population employed in manufacturing reported in the *Economic Report of the President*.[18] The final economic measure attempts to capture long-term changes in agricultural livelihoods as well as the impact of the Farm Crisis by measuring the annual rate of change in the number of individual farms in a state using data obtained from US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, Farm Income and Wealth Statistics.[19] Also included in all models are measures of state-level unemployment and income inequality. These are intended as control variables and are discussed below, but also capture economic conditions within states that might propel terrorism. Given the hypothesized relationship wherein economic hardships suffered by ordinary people and dislocating structural changes in the economy produce economic grievances that increase the appeal of terrorist activity, it is expected that the percentage of the state population in poverty indicator will positively predict right-wing terrorism in states, while the measures of manufacturing employment and change (increase) in individual number of farms will be negatively related to right-wing terrorism.

To operationalize factors present in hypotheses 4–6—which comprise the societal changes that challenge traditional social values and white male dominance category—I use three social and demographic indicators. The first is a state-level measure of the rate of medical abortions per 1000 women aged 15–44 obtained from the State Politics and the Judiciary dataset compiled by Lindquist (2007) and made available by the *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* (SPPQ) website.[20] The second is a measure of female participation in the labor market—the percentage of the labor force that is female—obtained from the *Economic Report of the President*.[21] The third is a measure of change (growth) of the non-white/Caucasian population of the state, obtained from the US Census Bureau, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race".[22] Given the hypothesized relationship whereby societal changes affecting the dominant status of white males vis-à-vis women and non-white minorities produces strong grievances propelling right-wing radicalization and terrorism, it is expected that increases in abortion rates, female participation in the workforce and growth of the non-white population will positively predict terrorism.

Finally, to operationalize the final three hypotheses, and their counters, in which the state- and national-level partisan control and "big government" policies drive terrorism, I use three indicators. The first is a measure of Democratic Party dominance at the state government level that uses an ordinal scale coded between 0 and 3 combining three dummy variables coded 1 for Democratic control over the lower state legislative house, the upper state legislative house and the governor's mansion using data from the SPPQ database. The second is a simple dummy variable measuring whether or not the US President is a Democrat. The third is a measure of the average US Federal Income Tax rate for all households compiled by the

Tax Policy Center of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution.[23] My expectations for the latter indicator are simple: increases in average Federal Income Tax rates should positively predict right-wing terrorist attacks. Expectations for the partisan indicators are more complex: they may positively or negatively predict right-wing terrorism.

In all estimations, a set of state-level control variables is also included. Given that previous cross-national, time-series studies of terrorism have found economic development factors, distribution of wealth, population size and geographic area to be significant predictors of terrorist attacks (see e.g. Abadie, 2004; Derin-Güre, 2009; Eyerman, 1998; Li and Schaub, 2004), state-level measures of these are included in all estimations. These, more specifically, are the state-level unemployment rate,[24] state measures of income inequality using Gini coefficients,[25] natural-log-transformed measures of state population,[26] state population growth,[27] area[28] and Gross State Product per capita and growth rate of Gross State Product per capita.[29] Given that the literature examining social disorganization, previously discussed, observes that weaker social controls may precipitate terrorism, including right-wing terrorism, all models include measures of annual state-level population growth and urbanization rates.[30] These can be expected to positively predict right-wing terrorism. Noting that right-wing terrorist activity is greater in certain areas in the USA (Webb and Cutter, 2009), all estimations also include dummy variables for the major regions of the country: Midwest, South and West, with the East/Northeast used as a reference category. Finally, to correct for serial autocorrelation and to control for previous experience of terrorist attacks, all estimations include a one-year lagged version of the dependent variable on the right-hand side. A summary of all variables used in the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Because the dependent variable is a count indicator—and one that is marked by dispersion where individual observations cannot be assumed to be spatially or temporally independent of one another—I opt to use a negative binomial estimation technique rather than an ordinary least squares model (see Brandt et al., 2000; Cameron et al., 1998; King, 1988). This technique is, furthermore, standard in studies of terrorism using a count indicator for the dependent variable. Furthermore, to capture unobserved variations between and unique features of states, I calculate robust standard errors clustered on state in all estimations. The number of observations per model estimation ranges between 1450 and 1199 owing to missing data for some years.

Main results

The results of the main analysis are presented in Table 3. The estimations are run in a series ranging from a baseline model (model 1) to estimations that test the hypotheses of the study individually (models 2–4) and then a final estimation that includes all variables (model 5) and that same estimation run with state and year random effects.[31] The first model in Table 3 is a simple baseline model that includes only the control variables. In this model, US states that are characterized by large populations and higher levels of income inequality experience more right-wing terrorism, as do states located in the Midwest, South and West, relative to the East/Northeast. States with higher gross state products per capita experience less terrorism. States characterized by higher unemployment rates, larger surface areas, higher levels of economic growth and higher levels of urbanization are no more or less likely to experience terrorism. The lagged count of right-wing attacks is also not significant. Several of these control findings are consistent across all model specifications presented in Table 3: across all

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Indicator	Observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Right-wing Terrorist Attacks	2091	0.274	0.850	0	8
Percentage Below Poverty Line	2132	12.77	3.74	2.9	27.2
Manufacturing Employment (%)	2091	0.143	0.037	0.075	0.215
Change, No. of Individual Farms	2100	–0.003	0.038	–0.209	0.560
Abortion Rate	1745	18.710	9.768	0.3	172
Female Participation in Labor Force	2142	51.20	5.82	39.9	57.4
Growth Non-white Population (%)	2142	3.318	4.994	–28.8	32.3
Democrats Control State Government	1764	1.782	1.059	0	3
US President Democrat	2142	0.357	0.479	0	1
Federal Income Tax Rate	1581	20.977	1.250	17.4	22.7
Unemployment	1550	5.988	2.056	2.2	18.0
Income Inequality	1836	0.529	0.052	0.409	0.715
Population (log)	2100	8.043	1.021	5.717	10.568
Population Growth (%)	2050	0.01	0.01	–0.067	0.103
Area (log)	2100	10.708	1.225	6.955	13.618
Gross State Product per capita (log)	2100	10.201	.988	9.067	11.567
Gross State Product Growth	2050	0.021	0.039	–0.129	0.363
Urbanization Rate	1800	68.549	14.52	32.2	94.4
Midwest Dummy	2142	0.235	0.424	0	1
South Dummy	2142	0.294	0.455	0	1
West Dummy	2142	0.255	0.436	0	1
All Terrorist Attacks	2142	0.342	20.107	0	116
Left-wing Terrorist Attacks	2091	0.342	2.107	0	42

models, populous and Midwestern and Western states are found to experience more right-wing terrorist attacks.

The first category of motivators—associated with the argument that that right-wing terrorism is the product of economic distress, hardship and grievances produced by structural changes in the economy, particularly in terms of manufacturing employment and the agricultural sector—is tested in models 2 and 5 and is not supported. None of the indicators of economic hardship and change—state poverty rate, manufacturing employment and change in number of individual farms—are significant in any specification. Coupled with the absence of significant findings for unemployment and income inequality, these findings suggest that right-wing terrorism is not rooted in economic grievances, economic stress or structural economic change. This is consistent with a multitude of cross-national, time series multivariate studies of terrorism in other countries that fail to find a link between economic factors and terrorism (see e.g. Abadie, 2004; Berrebi, 2007; Piazza, 2006) and some other empirical studies of right-wing terrorism in terms of general economic indicators, but does not support the contention that economic restructuring of specific sectors—agriculture and manufacturing—drives right-wing terrorist activity

The second category of motivators—those associated with societal changes such as growth in ethnic diversity and empowerment of women—is tested in models 3 and 5, and many of these fare better. In model 3, two of three of the indicators of societal change—state-level abortion rates and female participation in the labor force—are significant, positive predictors of terrorism. The growth of the non-white population of states is not found to significantly predict right-wing terrorist attacks. These results are reproduced in model 5,

Table 3. Predictors of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA, 1970–2011

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Percentage Below Poverty Line		0.054			0.026	0.012
		(0.034)			(0.034)	(0.032)
Manufacturing Employment		3.751			22.804	30.732
		(6.751)			(18.584)	(21.832)
Change, No. of Individual Farms		2.532			−1.427	−0.226
		(1.953)			(2.748)	(2.946)
Abortion Rate			0.029**		0.026*	0.022†
			(0.010)		(0.012)	(0.013)
Female Participation in Labor Force			0.102**		0.183†	0.209†
			(0.033)		(0.100)	(0.125)
Growth of Non-white Pop (%)			0.026		0.016	0.015
			(0.016)		(0.020)	(0.016)
Democrat Control of State Government				0.055	−0.010	−0.043
				(0.076)	(0.085)	(0.082)
US President Democrat				0.673**	0.837**	1.164**
				(0.247)	(0.284)	(0.404)
Federal Income Tax Rate				0.043	−0.275	−0.295
				(0.138)	(0.232)	(0.313)
Unemployment Rate	−0.041	−0.081	−0.028	0.006	0.008	0.037
	(0.037)	(0.049)	(0.042)	(0.046)	(0.063)	(0.055)
Income Inequality	3.553†	2.619	−2.783	3.080	0.757	1.457
	(1.953)	(3.107)	(3.002)	(2.456)	(3.724)	(3.551)
(ln)Population	0.947***	0.954***	0.795***	1.011***	0.862***	0.858***
	(0.137)	(0.133)	(0.139)	(0.143)	(0.146)	(0.133)
Population Growth (%)	−4.960	−4.497	−8.289	−4.989	−6.892	0.712
	(7.152)	(7.010)	(7.483)	(7.601)	(8.187)	(5.340)
Urbanization Rate	−0.001	−0.001	−0.002	0.001	−0.002	−0.008
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)
(ln)Area	−0.034	−0.069	0.097	−0.004	0.075	0.022
	(0.135)	(0.136)	(0.135)	(0.128)	(0.138)	(0.125)
(ln) Gross State Product per Capita	−0.789†	−0.411	−1.224**	−1.176*	−0.950	−0.779
	(0.426)	(0.573)	(0.444)	(0.489)	(0.686)	(0.596)
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Global State Product per Capita Growth	−0.362	−0.812	−0.250	−1.711	−1.652	−2.721
	(1.842)	(1.863)	(1.782)	(1.958)	(1.816)	(2.047)
Midwest	0.900**	10.021**	0.934**	0.814*	0.964**	0.809**
	(0.308)	(0.305)	(0.329)	(0.338)	(0.328)	(0.286)
South	0.550†	0.484	0.600†	0.471	0.602†	0.429
	(0.325)	(0.315)	(0.325)	(0.351)	(0.314)	(0.300)
West	1.493***	1.546**	1.272**	1.481**	1.386**	1.121**
	(0.430)	(0.449)	(0.434)	(0.464)	(0.492)	(0.340)
Right-wing Attacks$_{t-1}$	0.005	−0.001	−0.022	−0.078	−0.095	−0.090
	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.056)
Constant	−3.169	−7.151	−1.491	−1.423	−8.088	−11.722
	(4.035)	(6.338)	(4.101)	(5.811)	(9.536)	(9.181)
Wald χ^2	167.07***	178.13***	200.91***	156.19***	264.87***	248.9***
No. of clusters (states)	50	50	50	49	49	49
n	1450	1450	1448	1225	1224	1224
State and year random effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

All models negative binomial regression estimations.
Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by US state.
†$p \leq 0.1$. *$p \leq 0.05$. **$p \leq 0.01$. ***$p \leq 0.000$.

although the abortion rate and female workforce participation indicators are significant at a lower level. What this suggests is a striking "gendered" dimension to right-wing extremist activity. In states where women are or are becoming more empowered, both in terms of personal choice and participation in economic and professional life, right-wing terrorism is more frequent.

The third category—those motivators associated with the ascendancy of left-liberal politicians and political control and "big government" public policies—is tested in models 4 and 5. This hypothesis receives only mixed support in the analysis. Of the three indicators used to test this hypothesis, only one of them, the dummy variable coded 1 when the US President is a Democrat, is significant. The other two, the degree of dominance of state government by the Democratic Party and the Federal Income Tax rate, are not significant in either specification. These findings are consistent with the conclusion that only peak-level and highly visible political predictors, such as the control over the Presidency by a Democrat, are associated with increased incidence of right-wing terrorism, whereas control by political opponents of lower-visibility government closer to home and fluctuations in an, albeit despised and symbolic, public policy instrument like federal taxation are not.

An alternative explanation of the significant, positive finding for the US President Democrat dummy variable, in testing hypothesis 3, is that the real process driving right-wing terrorism is not merely the presence of a political "enemy" in the White House, but key policy decisions made during Democratic Presidencies that have inflamed right-wing extremists. Given the surge of right-wing terrorism during the mid and late 1990s, it is possible that the Clinton administration's passage of a federal ban on assault rifles—a bête noire in right-wing circles—is the true driver of right-wing terrorism, rendering the relationship between the Democratic President indicator and attacks spurious. As a check, I also ran models including a dummy for the years 1994–2004, the years in which the federal ban was in place.[32] This Federal Assault Weapon ban is not significant in any specification, nor does its inclusion make the US President Democrat measurement insignificant. This further reinforces the conclusion what stokes right-wing terrorism is what a Democratic Presidency symbolizes rather than specific public policy outcomes under Democratic Presidents.

Finally, in model 6 the full estimation is rerun using state and year random effects.[33] This test produces the same core results as model 5—the state abortion rate, the rate of female participation in the labor force and the years in which a Democrat holds the White House are all positive and significant—while helping to adjust for omitted variable biases. It is possible that case idiosyncrasies or unobserved phenomena unique to specific states or present during specific years of the analysis are salient for right-wing terrorist activity. This model helps to test for these effects, producing more certainty in the core results.

Substantive effects

In order to investigate the relative substantive impact of the significant predictors of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA, I also calculated the mean marginal effects of indicators[34] and graphed them, along with their confidence intervals, in Figure 2.

These marginal effects are presented only for the predictors found to be significant in the main models presented in Table 3, but are all calculated with the full complement of control and other independent variables, held constant at their mean values. What Figure 2 shows is the following: predictors associated with women's rights significantly boost the incidence of right-wing terrorism in the USA, but are minimal contributors to terrorism compared with

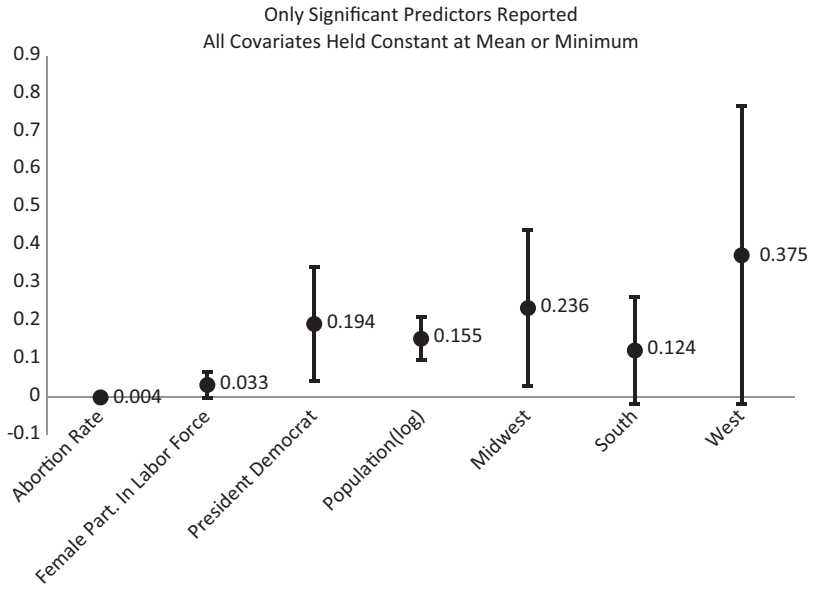

Figure 2. Average marginal effects of predictors on right-wing terrorism incidents in USA.

other factors. On average, increases in state-level abortion rates or women's participation in the workforce produce fewer than 0.05 more right-wing terrorist attacks per state per year. Years in which the US President is a Democrat yield somewhat higher rates of terrorism: about 0.194 more attacks. This is a little more substantive than the population size and the South regional dummy—more populous and Southern states experience between 0.15 and 0.12 more attacks per year—but less than the Midwest dummy—Midwestern states experience 0.23 more attacks per year.

These numbers may seem, at first glance, to be negligible. However, recall that a right-wing terrorist attack is a relatively rare event whose purpose is to influence a wider audience beyond those people directly affected (see Hoffman, 2013). Examining the percentage increase in terrorism associated with increases in the significant independent variables of interest helps to illustrate their true substantive effects. For every one point increase of the abortion rate, right-wing terrorist incidents increased by 7.5%. The substantive impact of women entering the labor force is even more dramatic, although this variable has a lower level of significance. For every 1% increase in female participation in the workforce, right-wing terrorist incidents increase by 153.1%, and attacks increase by 241.2% in years when the President is a Democrat.

Robustness checks

To test the robustness of these results, I conducted a number of checks using alternate specifications and indicators.[35] I also reran the models using different dependent variables—counts of left-wing terrorism, terrorism where the perpetrator is unknown and counts of all terrorist attacks—to make sure that the predictors in the main models are indeed unique to right-wing terrorism. The results of this main body checks are summarized in Table 4.[36]

Table 4. Summary of robustness checks

	Predictors run in separate models	Control for all terrorism	Model without lagged dependent variable	Rare events logit	Y = Right-wing, excluding anti-abortion	Y = Left-wing terrorism	Y = Unknown perpetrator	Y = All Terrorism
Manufacturing Employment (%)	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	†	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
Change, No. of Individual Farms	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	*	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
Percentage Below Poverty Line	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
Abortion Rate	*	Not significant	*	***	*	Not significant	***	*
Female Participation in Labor Force	*	*	†	*	†	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
Change in Non-white Population	Not significant	Not significant	**	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
Democratic State Government	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
US President Democrat	**	**	**	***	***	Not significant	*	Not significant
Federal Income Tax Rate	**	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant

Y = Counts of terrorist attacks perpetrated by right-wing groups and individuals.
Summaries of coefficients for main indicators of interest.
All models include (unreported) covariates.
†$p \leq 0.1$. *$p \leq 0.05$. **$p \leq 0.01$. ***$p \leq 0.000$.

To make sure that the results of the main analysis are not affected by multicollinearity, I reran the main models with the nine predictors separately. These mostly produced the same results. The state abortion rate, female participation in the labor force and the dummy for Democratic US President are all significant predictors of right-wing terrorism. The only difference is that the Federal Income Tax indicator is also found to be a significant positive predictor in these models. None of the other indicators are significant. Note that I additionally conducted standard collinearity diagnostics on the data—including variance inflation factor diagnostics on ordinary least squares versions of the models—and failed to find any problems.[37]

As a further check, I also ran the same specification as model 5 but controlled for total terrorist attacks—of all types and all perpetrators—in the place of the lagged right-wing attacks indicator. The count of all terrorist attacks is positive and highly significant in this specification, but it produces mostly the same results as depicted above. The indicators used to test the first hypothesis (economic factors) and the third hypothesis (political and public policy factors) remain non-significant, while two of the three indicators for the second hypothesis (societal change) remain significant. Only the abortion rate changes from significant to not significant in these specifications. This underscores the robustness of the main findings in Table 3.

To assuage concerns that the estimations, which are dynamic panel models in which the number of time series observations per cross-section is smaller than the number of cross-sections (i.e. $T < N$), are marred by Nickell bias when a lagged dependent variable is included on the right-hand side of the equation (see Gaibulloev et al., 2014), I ran robustness models where lagged Y is dropped. These estimations produced the same core results. Again, none of the socioeconomic determinants are found to be significant while the state abortion rate, the rate of female participation in the labor force, the non-white population and the President is a Democrat dummy are all significant in the expected direction. Furthermore, to address the possibility that an excessive number of zero-values or high-count outliers in observations of the dependent variable affects the results, I also conducted rare-events logistical regression estimations on a dichotomous version of the dependent variable.[38] These too produced consistent results—abortion, female labor, non-white population and US President is a Democrat are significant and positive. This is the opposite of the hypothesized relationship, so it does not provide any support for the argument that right-wing terrorism in the USA is motivated by economic stressors.

It might be argued that the finding that counts of right-wing terrorism are predicted by measures of women's status, specifically access to legal abortion, is driven by targeting opportunities for right-wing extremists. For example, we might observe more right-wing attacks against abortion clinics in states in which abortion is more frequent simply because there are more targets of opportunity. To test for this, I removed all counts of attacks against abortion clinics from the dependent variable and reran the models. These produced the same core results. Both abortion rates and rates of female participation in the labor force increase (non-abortion clinic) right-wing terrorist attacks, as do years in which the US President is a democrat.

Finally, to check that the indicators used in the main estimations are unique in predicting right-wing terrorism, rather than merely being predictors of terrorism in general, I regressed all of the predictors to counts of left-wing terrorism, terrorism where the perpetrator is unknown and counts of all domestic terrorism in the US states. The indicators used to predict right-wing terrorism do not—generally speaking—predict other types of terrorist

activity. For example, none of the predictors used in the main analysis are significantly related to counts of left-wing terrorism. Only lagged counts of left-wing attacks, state population and area, unemployment and income inequality are significant predictors, although the latter two are significant but *negative*.[39] Similarly, none of the predictors are significant for attacks with an unknown perpetrator save for the state abortion rate, perhaps suggesting that some of these attacks are perpetrated by extremists motivated by the abortion/choice issue. Finally, none of the predictors are significant in models where a count of all terrorism is the dependent variable, with the exception of change in the number of individual farms within the state, which is inexplicably linked to lower rates of terrorism. Although it is difficult to interpret these results, it is clear that predictors of right-wing terrorism are not generally significant for other types of terrorism.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to execute a first-cut investigation of motivators of right-wing terrorism in the USA using a systematic empirical approach for a long time-period. Rather than focus on one or a narrow set of specific hypotheses, this is intended to be a brush-clearing exercise in testing a representative set of the indicators expected to affect right-wing extremist terrorism, given the theoretical and case-study literature on right-wing terrorism. Hopefully, the study eliminates many of these indicators, allowing future researchers to construct more focused hypotheses and to test them using other techniques.

The results of this study have several implications for scholarship on terrorism and for potential policy responses. First, they add to the burgeoning body of empirical evidence produced in the past 10 years that economic factors are not reliable predictors of terrorist activity. Although in some estimations, US states with lower economic output overall experience more attacks, right-wing terrorism does not seem to be driven by joblessness, income inequalities, poverty and the decline of agricultural and manufacturing employment. This reinforces the non-material root causes of terrorism. However, it also removes more straightforward policy interventions to fight terrorist activity, such as poverty alleviation, job retraining and wealth redistribution.

Second, the results clearly highlight the social factors driving right-wing terrorism. Right-wing extremist rhetoric squarely places the source of ills afflicting "traditional" American society and the proscriptive dominance of white males on the new, more prominent and more empowered place carved out for women in American life. As it turns out, the empowerment of women directly boost right-wing terrorism. This is an intellectually interesting finding in that it is deeply rooted in the literature. However, it does not suggest immediate policy recommendations. It is possible, rather, that as popular acceptance of the empowerment of women grows, right-wing terrorism will decline.

Finally, the study demonstrates that partisan control over government matters at the national level, but not the state level, in determining right-wing terrorism, while actual public policy decisions made by politicians, such as Federal Income Tax policy, are not significant. What these findings might suggest is the importance of visible, symbolic factors in motivating right-wing terrorism. The US President is the most visible politician in the USA, and when that office is held by an ideological enemy of violent right-wing extremists, it arouses violent behaviors. Less visible and more arcane factors, such as local partisan control over government, or policies, seem to not have the same impact on violent, right-wing extremists.

This set of findings indicates that state-level politics and policy concessions are not likely to impact right-wing terrorism, but that Federal officials can anticipate that the threat from violent right-wing extremists will increase during periods of Democratic Presidencies.

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Notes

1. The definition of terrorism used in this study conforms to that operationally used by the University of Maryland START Center GTD: "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious of social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation". GTD, 2012, *Global Terrorism Database Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables*. Available at: http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf.
2. It is important to distinguish right-wing terrorist activity from non-violent political activism engaged in by individuals and groups that espouse right-wing beliefs. This study exclusively focuses on the predictors terrorist attacks—bombings, armed attacks, hijackings, hostage-taking, destruction of property and kidnappings—perpetrated by right-wing extremists. It does not examine nonviolent and legal political activity.
3. Source: tally derived from author's data derived from the GTD, University of Maryland START Center.
4. Note, because this tally includes only domestic terrorist events—attacks launched by domestic perpetrators against domestic targets—the casualties from the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks are excluded.
5. It is important to note, however, that the objective of the Freilich and Pridemore (2005a) and O'Brien and Haider-Markel (1998) studies is to determine state-level predictors of militia membership, as a political and social movement phenomenon, rather than violent activity by militias.
6. For example, Freilich and Pridemore's (2007) empirical study focuses on predictors of Abortion Clinic attacks, but uses data provided by the Feminist Majority Foundation's 2000 National clinic violence survey report in which 361 out of 798 abortion providers responded only for the year 2000. The Van Dyke and Soule (2002) study is limited to 3 years of observation—1994–1996—and relies upon dummy variables coded 1 for change in values of the covariates.
7. An interesting contrast to this body of work is Asal et al. (2012), which conducts a county-level study of the relationship between hate crimes and terrorism in the USA for the period 1992–2008 and includes some evaluation of county demographic factors.
8. Work in sociology and criminology provides a number of other theoretical frameworks used to explain crime and violence that could, in principle, inform the search for motivators of right-wing extremism and terrorism (e.g. see Freilich and Pridemore, 2005a). These include social disorganization theory, racial threat theory and the defended neighborhoods theory. Social disorganization theory posits that, when communities lack the ability to maintain social norms of order, typically as a result of population dislocations, urbanization, rapid demographic and social change or poverty and economic stresses, individuals are more likely to test community control over behavior via anti-social behaviors (Shaw and McKay, 1942). Racial threat theory predicts that racial violence is more likely to occur when the ratio of racial minorities grows relative to the majority population (Blalock, 1967) while the defended neighborhood theory expects racial violence against minorities to occur in areas in which racial majorities are predominant (Green et al., 1998). Because these theories seek to explain crime and racial violence, rather than terrorism specifically, I do not develop and test explicit hypotheses grounded in social disorganization, racial threat and the defended neighborhoods theories. I do, however, include in estimations indicators associated

with these theories, such as urbanization rates, population growth and the size and growth of non-white minority populations.

9. To clarify, Krueger and Pischke (1997) found no significant relationship between unemployment rates, education levels, manufacturing wages and rightist hate crimes in the 543 counties of Germany once a dummy controlling for the former East German areas was included in the estimation. The authors conclude that differences in policing and "pent-up animosity suppressed during Communism" explain spatial distribution of right-wing hate crimes in Germany.
10. These societal changes are also theorized to be intertwined with economic grievances. Kimmel and Ferber (2000), Blazak (2001) and McVeigh (2009) note that violent right-wing extremists frequently blame economic troubles suffered by working-class whites on women, minorities, immigrants and Federal policies such as affirmative action. Ferber (1998), furthermore, documents, using content analysis of white supremacist newsletters and periodicals published between 1969 and 1993, that resentments about changing statuses of racial minorities and women are inextricably linked. For these reasons, I interact macroeconomic indicators with the measures of societal change in robustness tests in the study.
11. Nice (1988) also raised the possibility of a more mundane interpretation: the findings might be the evidence of an "instrumental" relationship whereby anti-abortion attacks occur more frequently where there are more targets for right-wing extremists. Because of this, in the study I run test specifications where anti-abortion attacks are removed from the dependent variable.
12. For example, the once prominent and now defunct Posse Comitatus violent extremist movement regarded all governmental authority aside from the county sheriff to be illegitimate (see Perliger, 2012).
13. The time series design has both advantages and disadvantages. For the former, the time series is suited to the evaluation of qualities of cases that vary over time and can be used to evaluate causal relationships between variables through the use of lags. The main disadvantage is that the observations within a case are not mutually independent. To address the latter vis-à-vis measures of the dependent variable, I include a lagged measure of Y on the right-hand side in all estimations.
14. The unit of analysis for the study is the "state-year". This affords several advantages. First, more complete data are available at the state level than at the county or city level, particularly longitudinally, permitting a more reliable analysis using a greater number of variables. Second, previous scholars, such as Freilich and Pridemore (2007) in their empirical study of predictors of terrorist attacks on abortion clinics in the USA, have opted to use state-level indicators (Freilich and Pridemore, 2007) and observe that cities or counties might be too small a unit for an analysis seeking to examine the impact of large political, cultural and sociological forces that often affect wider regions of the country (see Baller et al., 2001; Chermak, 2002; Freilich, 2003; Freilich and Pridemore, 2005b; Pitcavage, 2001).
15. GTD defines a terrorist attack as, "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation" (*GTD Codebook*, p. 8. Available online at: http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf). This definition is distinct from the operational definition that the FBI uses in its tracking of "hate crimes" and as a consequence, the FBI data is distinct from the dependent variable in the study. In their study comparing GTD counts of domestic terrorist attacks in the USA with hate crimes from the FBI *Hate Crime Statistics*, Asal et al. (2012) determined that only between 3 and 5.3% of incidents in GTD overlap with reporting of hate crime incidents.
16. This latter criterion, therefore, leads to the exclusion of attacks by anti-Castro Cuban terrorist groups that were active in the USA during the 1970s and 1980s. Although many of these attacks did occur on US soil, were perpetrated by and targeted long-term US residents and might be said to be motivated by an essentially right-wing ideology—opposition to the Communist regime of Fidel Castro and to politicians and individuals in the USA deemed to be insufficiently anti-Castro—anti-Castro terrorists are animated by grievances against a foreign government rather

than the religious, political and social grievances within the USA common to domestic, right-wing terrorists.

17. Data available at: http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/people.html
18. Data available at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=ERP&browsePath=2011&isCollapsed=false&leafLevelBrowse=false&isDocumentResults=true&ycord=200. Note, owing to data availability, rates of manufacturing employment are aggregated to national level to capture general trends in employment.
19. Data available at: http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/farm-income-and-wealth-statistics.aspx#.Ua0w90CG18F
20. Commonly referred to as the SPPQ database. Data and codebook available at: http://academic.udayton.edu/sppq-TPR/tpr_data_sets.html. Note that the SPPQ database does not contain data for abortion rates for the full range of years of the study. I supplemented these missing years with data from the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts, "Rate of Legal Abortions per 1,000 Women Aged 15–44 years" (http://academic.udayton.edu/sppq-TPR/tpr_data_sets.html) and the Robert Johnson "Historical Abortion Statistics by State" (http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/).
21. Data available at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=ERP&browsePath=2011&isCollapsed=false&leafLevelBrowse=false&isDocumentResults=true&ycord=200. Note, owing to data availability, rates of female participation in the labor force are aggregated to national level.
22. Data available at http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/twps0056.html
23. Data available at: http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxfacts/displayafact.cfm?Docid=456.
24. Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics.
25. Source: Mark W. Frank, 2008, "A New State-Level Panel of Income Inequality Measures Over the Period 1916–2005", SHSU Economics and International Business Working Paper no. SHSU_ECO_WP08-02.
26. Source: US Bureau of the Census.
27. Source: US Bureau of the Census.
28. Source: US Statistical Abstract.
29. Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis.
30. Source: US Bureau of the Census.
31. A Hausman test indicates that a random effects, rather than a fixed effects, is a more efficient modeling technique for these estimations. Results available from the author.
32. Results available from the author.
33. Hausman tests indicate that random rather than fixed effects estimations are more efficient.
34. All substantive effects estimates are calculated based upon the full estimation in model 5.
35. In addition to these robustness checks, I also conducted other model specifications to test the main results of the study. These include adding additional controls, such as the number of police per-capita at the state level (source: SPPQ, Lindquist, 2008), the percentage of the state population with a high-school diploma (source: ibid.), and the number of illegal immigrants in the state (source: Wassem et al., 2012, "Unauthorized aliens residing in the USA: Estimates Since 1986", Congressional Research Service, 7-5700). Also, to account for the possibility that the variables measuring societal changes are affected by economic context, I interacted state abortion rates, rates of female participation in the labor force and the growth of the non-white population with the state unemployment and gross state product growth rates and ran these in the estimations. None of the new controls or interaction terms—except for the number of police per capita which was unexpectedly positive—were found to be significant predictors of terrorism and their inclusion did not change the core results. Because of this, and because in many cases the quality and availability across the time series of data for these indicators are suboptimal, I do include them in the

main analysis. However, I do report the results for these alternative specifications in Appendix Table A2.

36. Note, complete tabular results for all robustness checks and alternative estimations are available from the author.
37. Results available from the author.
38. An alternative technique would be to use zero-inflated negative binomial estimations. I built zero-inflated versions of the main estimations; however the main estimation with the full complement of covariates failed to converge. Estimations using a more select set of covariates do converge and produce, in most cases, the same results as the main models in the paper. However, these do not provide a confident test of robustness because covariates are excluded without theoretical reason.
39. Full results available from the author.

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Appendix 1

Table A1. List of right-wing terrorist movements including in sample

Americans for a Competent Federal Judicial System
"Anti-Abortion Activists"
"Anti-Government Group"
Army of God
Aryan Brotherhood of Texas
Aryan Nation
Aryan Republican Army
Continental Revolutionary Army
Covenant, Sword and Arm of the Lord
Fourth Reich Skinheads
Ku Klux Klan
Minutemen American Defense
"Neo-Nazi Group"
People's Brigade for a Healthy Genetic Future
Phineas Priesthood
Posse Comitatus
Republic of Texas
"Right-Wing Extremists"
Sons of Liberty
Sons of the Gestapo
The Order (Silent Brotherhood)
The Order II (Bruder Schweigen Strike Force II)
Up the IRS, Inc
"White Extremists"
World Church of the Creator

Table A2. Alternative controls

Variable	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]	[13]	[14]
No. of Police per Capita	0.259†								
	(0.140)								
Percentage of Population with High School Diploma		0.002							
		(0.017)							
National Illegal Immigrant Population (millions)			–0.177						
			(0.140)						
Unemployment × Abortion Rate				0.003					
				(0.004)					
Unemployment × Female Participation in Labor					–0.027				
					(0.015)				
Unemployment × Growth Non-white						–0.010			
						(0.011)			
Global State Product Growth × Abortion Rate							–0.045		
							(0.157)		
Global State Product Growth × Female Participation in Labor								1.099	
								(1.629)	
Global State Product Growth × Growth Non-white									–0.657
									(0.427)
Percentage Below Poverty Line	0.026	0.038	0.066	0.029	0.035	0.028	0.026	0.025	0.027

(continued)

Table A2. (continued)

Variable	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]	[13]	[14]
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.038)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Manufacturing Employment (%)	20.502	22.272	–4.700	24.440	27.175	23.137	22.428	19.309	23.658
	(20.231)	(20.497)	(38.953)	(18.359)	(18.959)	(18.391)	(18.949)	(19.609)	(18.675)
Change, No. of Individual Farms	–1.895	–1.766	1.518	–1.498	–1.292	–1.402	–1.451	–1.527	–1.304
	(2.710)	(2.776)	(3.096)	(2.775)	(2.880)	(2.743)	(2.749)	(2.723)	(2.750)
Abortion Rate	0.022†	0.023†	0.021	0.005	0.028*	0.027*	0.027*	0.025*	0.024†
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.017)	(0.030)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Female Participation in Labor Force	0.171	0.185†	–0.065	0.187†	0.364*	0.185†	0.180†	0.145	0.181†
	(0.111)	(0.111)	(0.150)	(0.101)	(0.142)	(0.100)	(0.105)	(0.117)	(0.101)
Growth of Non-white Population	0.016	0.019	0.010	0.016	0.018	0.082	0.017	0.017	0.034
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.032)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.072)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.024)
Democrats Control State Government	0.011	0.015	–0.014	–0.013	0.012	–0.008	–0.011	–0.012	–0.009
	(0.086)	(0.090)	(0.098)	(0.084)	(0.087)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.084)
US President Democrat	0.799**	0.826**	1.630**	0.882**	0.927**	0.866**	0.887**	0.863**	0.890**
	(0.285)	(0.289)	(0.612)	(0.286)	(0.297)	(0.274)	(0.284)	(0.284)	(0.282)
Federal Income Tax Rate	–0.179	–0.210	–0.319	–0.289	–0.372	–0.285	–0.270	–0.239	–0.279
	(0.232)	(0.231)	(0.423)	(0.229)	(0.250)	(0.235)	(0.233)	(0.236)	(0.233)
Unemployment Rate	0.021	0.006	–0.106	–0.061	1.371	0.027	0.008	0.004	0.010
	(0.070)	(0.065)	(0.097)	(0.114)	(0.738)	(0.066)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.063)
Income Inequality	–2.674	–2.894	3.608	–0.208	0.317	–0.823	–0.662	–0.288	–0.491
	(3.604)	(3.650)	(5.484)	(3.733)	(3.825)	(3.755)	(3.868)	(3.639)	(3.796)
(ln) Population	0.837***	0.851***	1.025***	0.869***	0.880***	0.867***	0.866***	0.874***	0.874***
	(0.143)	(0.143)	(0.171)	(0.145)	(0.147)	(0.146)	(0.147)	(0.153)	(0.150)
Population growth (%)	–8.968	–8.290	–0.453	–6.701	–8.920	–7.812	–6.987	–7.419	–6.841
	(8.985)	(8.866)	(9.298)	(8.349)	(8.769)	(8.541)	(8.241)	(8.332)	(8.185)
Urbanization Rate	–0.003	–0.006	–0.018	–0.002	–0.001	–0.003	–0.002	–0.002	–0.002
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
(ln) Area	0.111	0.112	0.112	0.050	0.074	0.080	0.073	0.065	0.067
	(0.139)	(0.143)	(0.186)	(0.134)	(0.138)	(0.139)	(0.138)	(0.134)	(0.141)
(ln) Gross State Product per Capita	–0.735	–0.638	–0.357	–0.976	–1.177	–0.999	–0.951	–1.121	–0.898
	(0.716)	(0.731)	(1.008)	(0.687)	(0.707)	(0.684)	(0.687)	(0.718)	(0.694)
Gross State Product per Capita Growth	–1.631	–1.619	–3.095	–1.648	–2.306	–1.726	–0.914	–63.848	1.616
	(1.758)	(1.775)	(2.140)	(1.803)	(1.824)	(1.819)	(3.316)	(92.093)	(3.106)
Midwest	0.933**	0.870**	1.069**	0.962**	0.960**	0.964**	0.966**	0.970**	0.966**

(continued)

Table A2. (continued)

Variable	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]	[13]	[14]
	(0.327)	(0.336)	(0.396)	(0.329)	(0.333)	(0.328)	(0.329)	(0.329)	(0.331)
South	0.467	0.403	0.104	0.614	0.583	0.578	0.603	0.592	0.604
	(0.322)	(0.328)	(0.409)	(0.315)	(0.310)	(0.315)	(0.315)	(0.312)	(0.319)
West	1.329**	1.335**	1.327*	1.409**	1.458**	1.403**	1.392**	1.417**	1.398**
	(0.477)	(0.490)	(0.550)	(0.488)	(0.508)	(0.491)	(0.496)	(0.500)	(0.501)
Right-wing Attacks$_{t-1}$	–0.068	–0.069	–0.191**	–0.100	–0.090	–0.094	–0.096	–0.098	–0.090
	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.065)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.061)
Constant	–11.061	–11.739	1.957	–7.610	–14.528	–7.697	–8.023	–4.688	–8.753
	(10.243)	(10.421)	(13.536)	(9.590)	(9.694)	(9.397)	(9.615)	(10.782)	(9.542)
Wald χ^2	300.21***	357.71***	306.46***	257.64***	298.10***	359.18***	340.85***	254.89***	257.64***
No. of clusters (states)	48	48	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
n	1199	1199	881	1224	1224	1224	1224	1224	1224

Y = Counts of terrorist attacks perpetrated by right-wing groups and individuals.
All models negative binomial regression estimates.
Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by US state.
†$p \leqslant 0.1$. *$p \leqslant 0.05$. **$p \leqslant 0.01$. *** $p \leqslant 0.000$.