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Radicalization Pathways to Extreme Misogyny in the United States: County-Level and State-Level Factors

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Sociology

by

Anh V. Nguyen Tran

Committee in charge:

Professor Nella Van Dyke, Chair
Professor Paul Almeida
Professor Kyle Dodson

2023

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2023

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Abstract

Radicalization Pathways to Extreme Misogyny in the United States: County-Level and State-Level Factors

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University of California, Merced
2023

Dr. Nella Van Dyke, Advisor

Misogynist extremism has increasingly become a topic of concern for many researchers. Most research on misogynist extremism examines the online context that encourages the development of related ideologies. Using secondary data from a multitude of government and non-government sources, such as the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) and the American Community Survey (ACS), I conduct logistic regression and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to examine the regional factors that are associated with misogynist extremist presence in a county. I argue that gender-related, race-related, and economic regional factors help cultivate a hypermasculine social climate prime for misogynist radicalization. In the full regression model, only militia group presence is associated with misogynist extremist presence in a county. No sets were identified as true according to the inclusion ratio for sufficiency or the coverage of the outcome measure under QCA. Overall, there is some support that gender-related regional factors may contribute to misogynist radicalization.

Introduction

After posting an online video praising another misogynist extremist and denigrating women, the Tallahassee Hot Yoga gunman shot six women, killing two of them, on November 2, 2018 (Barrouquere 2018). He serves as just one example of one of the violent domestic terrorists associated with the incel movement. The largest incel forum on the Internet receives on average 2.6 million visits a month (Center for Countering Digital Hate 2022:8). Incels, an abbreviation for “involuntary celibate,” unite behind a male supremacist ideology “involving anti-woman hate, sexual objectification of women, and calls for violence targeting women” (National Threat Assessment Center 2022:3).

According to the literature on misogynist extremism, misogynist extremism involves an “aggrieved entitlement” to women spurred on by men being unable to adhere to norms of hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel 2018). Much of the research on misogynist extremism examines how misogynist ideology is expressed and disseminated online. There is a lack of literature on how offline factors at either the county-level or state-level also contribute to misogynist radicalization. Of note, most extremists, including misogynists, are nonviolent. Nevertheless, it is still important to examine the offline processes or conditions behind the emergence misogynist extremism.

In this study, I investigate the offline factors that may encourage misogynist extremist ideology to fester and focus on following questions. What are the social factors that predict misogynist extremist presence? What similarities or differences in regional factors does misogynist extremism have in comparison to other right-wing extremist groups? I hypothesize that the presence of misogynist extremism in a county is associated with gender-related, race-related, and economic regional factors. I also expect to find mainly similarities between misogynist extremism and other far-right extremists due to the overlaps in their ideological sentiments towards women and minoritized groups, although I suspect there are subtle differences in their constructions of masculinity. Using the theories of aggrieved entitlement and power devaluation to guide my analysis, I argue that the radicalization pathways to extreme misogyny involve a hypermasculine social climate in which feelings of resentment and anger against women can be cultivated in young men.

For my project, I categorize anti-abortion extremists as part of misogynistic extremism because their ideology centers on controlling women’s self-autonomy and bodies. I also include anti-LGBTQ+ extremists under the category of misogynistic extremism because of these extremists’ focus on heteronormative ideas about masculinity and gender. Far-right extremism encompass reactionary ideologies that seek to protect the racist, sexist, and heteronormative status quo, and I include the following right-wing groups as part of other right-wing extremists: anti-government/militia, white supremacist/neo-Nazi, and xenophobic/anti-immigrant extremists.

To test my hypothesis, I use logistic regression. I construct three regression models for testing gender-related, race-related, and economic factors. I also construct a full regression model with both gender and race factors, running this model on both misogynist extremism and other far-right extremisms for comparison. Focusing on counties that have extremist presence, I also use Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to analyze the relationship between the presence of misogynist extremism as the outcome and the predictors identified as statistically significant for misogynist extremist presence in the logistic regression models. I use QCA along with logistic regression because QCA provides the combinations of sets that can serve as models of the different pathways that lead to the same outcome.

This paper consists of four sections. First, I conduct a literature review of research on misogynist extremism and other far-right extremisms. Some comparative research that includes extremism in the United States are included within my review. Second, I explain the data sources and methods utilized in my research. I clarify how my variables are measured and recoded and how my fuzzy and crisp sets are created in this section. Third, I analyze the results and situate my findings within the literature. Finally, I conclude with some theoretical implications about my findings.

Literature Review

There have been major cultural and structural shifts in American society concerning gender roles and civil rights. Since the 1950s, there has been a substantial and sharp increase in the number of women participating in the labor force (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2000). Although systemic racism persists in the United States, the successes of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement include the racial desegregation of public facilities, such as restaurants, and legal protections against racist discrimination in the workplace (American Experience n.d.). Under these historical changes, some individuals, primarily white men, may perceive that there has been a decline in male economic, political, or social power and thus, may turn to far-right ideologies to explain their negative perceptions of their status. Certain social factors present in the region that an individual resides in may encourage them to fully adopt these extremist beliefs or simply exacerbate these sentiments. In this study, I explore the following questions. Do regional factors potentially play in misogynist extremist radicalization? Which regional factors are associated with misogynist extremist presence? Do regional factors that contribute to radicalization differ between misogynist extremism and other far-right extremist ideologies? To begin answering these questions, I look at the literature on far-right politics, including terrorism, and the economic, gendered, or racial regional factors that influence them published within the last two decades. Using the concepts of aggrieved entitlement and power devaluation to frame my investigation, I argue that a hypermasculine social climate, constructed through various economic, racial, and gendered regional factors, contributes to misogynist and other far-right extremist radicalization.

Defining Misogynist Extremism

To start, there is not one universal definition for extremism, and conceptualizations of extremism differ semantically across legal or academic domains, nationality, and political systems (Sotlar 2004; Williford 2019). Extremism may include acts of terrorism, although not all extremists engage in terrorism. Terrorism is defined “as the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (1987). One potential definition for extremism is ideological sentiments that “are not morally, ideologically or politically in accordance with written (legal and constitutional) and non-written norms of the state; that are fully intolerant toward others and reject democracy as a means of governance and the way of solving problems; and finally, that reject the existing social order” (Sotlar 2004:703). Although this definition is imprecise, it provides some guidance on understanding and identifying extreme misogyny. While discrimination against women is still prevalent in modern American society, extreme misogyny involves prejudice against women or strict adherence to toxic norms about masculinity that fall outside of what constitutes everyday sexism.

Regarding ideological membership, misogynist extremism is strongly associated with the manosphere, “a network of blogs and forums frequented by groups including incels, men’s rights activists (MRAs), Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), and pickup artists (PUAS)” (National Threat Assessment Center 2022:3). The incel community is one of the most infamous groups associated with the manosphere due to its members’ proclivity for violence. While not all incels will commit violence in their lifetime, the potential of violence from their community is severe enough to have warranted scrutiny by the U.S. federal government (Cameron 2019; Keller 2019). Much of the framing within the incel community is explicitly antifeminist and misogynistic. Using the term incel, meaning involuntary celibate, to describe themselves, incels air their grievances “against women, ‘social justice warriors’ and the ‘alpha males’ who have deprived them of sexual success”, blaming these groups of people and larger society for their lack of sexual success (Ging 2019:640).

While anti-abortion extremism and anti-LGBTQ+ extremism also fall under the umbrella term of far-right extremism, both ideologies could be classified under misogynist extremism as well. Anti-abortion extremism is motivated by the political and misogynist belief that women should not have autonomy over their own bodies, which manifests in “violence as abortion clinic bombings and assassinations of abortion clinic doctors” (Gentry 2022:210). Anti-LGBTQ+ extremism is similarly motivated by implicit misogyny, as there is a “ideological linkage between sexuality and gender” that gay people are perceived as violating (Herek 1990:322). In particular, transphobia is linked to misogyny, as trans victims of sexual abuse and hate crimes “highlighted their victimization experiences as involving misogynistic attitudes and behaviors combined with transphobic exhibitions of devaluation, fetishization, and objectification” (Matsuzaka and Koch 2019:41). While hypermasculinity and misogyny are

characteristics found across the far right, these two traits are heavily concentrated within misogynist extremism.

What leads to the emergence of Misogynist Extremism?

As the name implies, misogynist extremism is different from other categories of far-right extremism for its intense antifeminist and anti-women sentiments. Much of the research that specifically studies misogynist extremism looks at the online context, discourses, or networks that breed misogynist extremism (e.g., Blais 2020; Wright, Trott, and Jones 2020; Hopton and Langer 2021; Van Valkenburgh 2021; Górska, Kulicka, and Jemielniak 2022; Habib, Srinivasan, and Nithyanand 2022; Vallerga and Zurbriggen 2022). Many groups that make up the manosphere, including fathers' rights activists, have either always operated primarily on the Internet or have moved the bulk of their activities to online forums, although misogynist extremists do sometimes engage in offline activities, such as advocating for legal reforms, in relation to their ideologies (e.g., Crowley 2008; Dragiewicz 2008; Alschech and Saini 2019). Studies that look at the anti-abortion extremism or terrorism branch of misogynist extremism investigate the offline context these ideologues operate in, but these studies tend to focus on the individual extremists, their victims, and patterns in their harassment rather than county-level correlates or regional factors that contribute to radicalization (e.g., Baird-Windle and Bader 2001; Cohen and Connon 2015). More research is needed on aggregate-level processes and offline social context behind misogynist extremism. Some theories that I draw upon to explain the existence of misogynist extremism and how it operates include the following concepts: aggrieved entitlement and power devaluation.

Aggrieved entitlement, an entitlement that originates from hegemonic masculinity, has been theorized as a key driving force behind why men engage in violent extremism, and this aggrieved entitlement is accompanied by feelings of humiliation and anger (Kimmel 2013; Kimmel 2018). Michael Kimmel (2013) defines aggrieved entitlement as the "sense that those benefits to which you believed yourself entitled have been snatched away from you by unseen forces" (18). According to Kimmel (2013), the benefits that violent extremist men feel entitled to are based on norms about hegemonic masculinity, and going without these benefits, such as economic success in the job market, results in a "crisis of masculinity" in which their validation as men are challenged (46). However, Kimmel (2018) also asserts that the most salient reason for why men join far-right movements is for brotherhood, or in other words, for validation as men, although social and economic factors, such as a lack of job opportunities, are important pathways to radicalization for young men as well. Victimhood is a key component of aggrieved entitlement. For example, Gamergate, an online harassment campaign launched by groups in the manosphere against feminists and female game critics and developers, relied on themes of white male victimhood and perceived misogyny to rally recruits to join them in networked harassment (Marwick and Caplan 2018). Men who participated in Gamergate believed that feminists and other liberal game critics, including LGBTQ+ individuals, are "attacking" white men and are trying to "censor" video games through their critiques on the sexism, racism, and

heteronormativity commonly seen in video games (Marwick and Caplan 2018). These men essentially felt entitled to a video game culture that caters to primarily their heterosexual and masculine interests and refused to entertain attempts at making games more diverse. Similar to the hostile sentiments present in Gamergate against women's and minoritized individuals' empowerment in video games, anti-abortion extremist attitudes may derive partially from aggrieved entitlement as well. One study found that far-right terrorist attacks are associated with increases in abortion rates (Piazza 2017).

The concept of aggrieved entitlement holds theoretical similarities with power devaluation theory, commonly used to explain far-right mobilization rather than specifically misogynist extremist mobilization. Power devaluation theory posits that privileged individuals, specifically white men, who traditionally dominate in society join reactionary movements when their status is threatened or perceived to be threatened (McVeigh 2001). The threats to white men's status can come from a variety of "economic and political factors", such as high employment rates, and these threats incentivize "individuals to support conservative movements such as the Ku Klux Klan" to reclaim their perceived loss of power (McVeigh 2001:4). While the concept of aggrieved entitlement emphasizes the role of negative emotions, like humiliation, that drive individuals to extremism, power devaluation theory focuses on more structural and group-based perceptions with regards to grievances. At its core, power devaluation theory examines the macro-level process behind how right-wing extremism mobilizes. This theory provides us with a way to shift focus from the individual to the social factors influencing the individual that contribute to extremist radicalization.

At the macro-level, regional factors, such as the presence of extremist organizations, cultivate a hypermasculine social climate, which is an environment in which white masculinity is a salient identity for men to rally around. A hypermasculine social climate can potentially increase the likelihood of individuals becoming radicalized into misogynist or other far-right ideology. Extremist organizations provide individuals with exposure, sometimes regular exposure, to right-wing and misogynist ideology and ideas. Changes in group status, such as the increasing political representation of women and minorities, alongside individual grievances with the economy or political environment, may breed the negative emotions, such as resentment, hate, and anger, that pushes white men towards adopting the extremist thinking provided by these organizations. Essentially, the aggrieved entitlement that comes from a difference between what a white man perceives as what they deserve versus their material reality evokes negative emotions from them and encourages them to ideologically identify with misogynist extremist thought about who is to blame for their economic or social woes.

Much of the research on the regional factors that contribute to radicalization examine the radical right as a homogenous group. The regional factors found to be associated with far-right extremism may hold significance for specifically misogynist extremism as well. I expect to find primarily similarities in the regional social factors that predict misogynist extremist presence and other far-right extremist presence, although there may be some subtle differences as well. The social factors possibly predicative of

far-right extremism can be categorized into one of the following three categories: economic, race, and gender.

Economic Regional Factors

Economic regional factors related to poverty, unemployment, and income inequality may predict extremist presence by serving as sources of strong grievances for affected individuals, making them more susceptible to misogynist or other far-right extremist ideologies. In a study on disengagement from far-right extremism, extremists struggling with finding stable employment are less likely to deradicalize (Jensen, James, and Yates 2020). Across 113 countries, income inequality was found to be associated with domestic terrorism (Krieger and Meierrieks 2019). Another study found that long-term economic deprivation at the national level, which encompasses economic recessions and high levels of income inequality, promotes far-right mobilization (Varaine 2019). This finding suggests “periods of increasing inequality induce a sense of collective loss of status, which motivates conservative ideologies and hostility toward out-groups” (Varaine 2019:674). In other words, there is some evidence that individuals facing declining economic power or impoverished conditions may be more prone to viewing minoritized groups and women as threats to their social mobility or as the reasons to why there is a difference between what they believe is rightfully theirs (e.g., a good-paying job that allows for them to be the breadwinners in their families) and their actual lives, a key mechanism behind why far-right mobilization occurs under power devaluation theory.

However, some studies suggest that there is little evidence that economic factors contribute to radicalization pathways into far-right extremism. One study found that high rates of poverty predict far-right radicalization but not high rates of unemployment at the county level (Youngblood 2020). Another study concluded that unemployment or poverty rates and levels of income inequality at the state level are not associated with right-wing terrorism (Piazza 2017). Essentially, there is inconsistent evidence on the relationship between economic regional factors and far-right extremism. These mixed results indicate that macro-level economic regional factors that affect the general population may not adequately contribute to the hypermasculine social climate that encourages misogynist or other far-right extremist radicalization on their own. Regardless, the economic regional factors create an environment in which individuals feeling financial and social stress or anxiety may be more receptive to far-right extremist ideologies.

I hypothesize that county-level economic factors are associated with misogynist extremist presence. I expect to find similarities between misogynist and other far-right extremists with regards to how economic regional factors shape their radicalization processes. Therefore, I look at income inequality, poverty percentages, dollar median income, and unemployment rates by county in my study.

Racial Regional Factors

Racial regional factors, such as the percent of foreign-born residents within a county, may also be associated with misogynist or other far-right extremism. To start, racial resentment against minoritized or immigrant communities is found across far-right groups, transcending the boundaries between these groups (Jackson 2019; Miller-Idriss 2022). Racism involves sentiments about “the national and moral significance of natural and hereditary differences between races, and the conviction that certain races are superior to others” (Perliger 2012:16). White supremacy is an extreme form of racism, and white supremacists believe “in the intellectual and moral superiority of the white race over other races” (Countering Violent Extremism Task Force 2017:1). According to the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), the most common cause of extremist homicide is motivated by white supremacy (Freilich et al. 2014a). Nativist extremism involves “an irrational fear, hatred, and hostility toward immigrants, refugees, or others considered ‘foreign’ as threats” and “is also a form of racism that has functioned alongside...white supremacy as a function of institutionalized discrimination” (Lee 2020:5). Due to the similarities in racist ideologies between white supremacists and nativists however, “nativist extremism and racist extremism are better understood as two subtypes of xenophobic extremism, rather than as discrete primary categories” (Jackson 2019:9). Racism is present in discourse within the manosphere as well, as many misogynist extremists engage in racialized narratives about white male victimhood against minoritized women and people of color (Ging 2019; Dickel and Evolvi 2022). In sum, there is conceptual overlap across the radical right with regards to racist ideology, and like the rest of the far right, misogynist extremists’ perspectives on society are defined by white masculinity.

A hypermasculine climate that encompasses race-related regional factors, such as the presence of white supremacist groups, a large non-white population, or increasing minority political empowerment, may make extreme ideologies about race salient in individuals’ minds, making them more prone to misogynist or other far-right extremist radicalization. There are blurred membership boundaries between the manosphere and the rest of the “alternative right,” which includes neo-Nazis and white supremacists, as individuals move in and out of one extremist community to another (Anti-Defamation League 2018). These blurred boundaries act as a bridge between racist sentiments stirred by race-related regional factors and a hypermasculine social climate for misogynist extremists. Of note, some studies suggest that there may be no association between racial regional factors, such as the growth or proportion of the non-white population, and far-right extremism (Piazza 2017, Nemeth and Hansen 2022). However, other studies provide evidence of a relationship between racial regional factors and far-right extremism (e.g., Pridemore and Freilich 2006, LaFree and Bersani 2014). Many white supremacists and neo-Nazis blame minority groups for their relative loss of economic and social status (Pridemore and Freilich 2006). There is evidence that there may be a relationship between the proportion of minority presence in a state and white violence where there is a regional paramilitary culture or organization in that state (Pridemore and Freilich 2006). One study found that the proportion of foreign-born residents in a county is significantly

associated with rates of far-right terrorist attacks (LaFree and Bersani 2014). Another study concluded that increasing proportions of black residents in a state, up to a certain threshold, leads to an increase in the number of white supremacist groups (Durso and Jacobs 2013). Under racial threat theory, the presence or increasing presence of large numbers of immigrants or minorities in a region may be seen by white members of the community as a “scary” issue that needs to be addressed (Feldmeyer and Cochran 2018).

With regards to hate crimes, specifically ones that are motivated by race, gender, or sexuality, these crimes may serve as a way that privileged individuals uphold structural differences between dominant and subordinate groups and their hegemonic identities (Perry 2001). In other words, white individuals who are faced with perceived economic or political decline may engage with white supremacist ideology and participate in hate crimes as an attempt to hold onto their privilege. Although hate crimes are sometimes committed by lone white supremacists or far-right extremists, some hate crimes are carried out by members of an organized hate group. One study found that counties with white supremacist groups have higher rates of hate crimes (Mulholland 2013). There is also some evidence that the existence of at least one hate group in a county is associated with far-right violence (Adamczyk 2014). In regions with organized hate groups, individuals may be exposed to or have more constant exposure to racial extremist ideology through direct or indirect interactions with these groups or the beliefs they disseminate. Under this mechanism, hate group presence may help nurture the white male resentment that is at the core of aggrieved entitlement. Additionally, hate groups provide white men with the framework that positions them as members of a traditionally privileged group under decline due to the increasing empowerment of women and minoritized groups, stimulating the far-right radicalization and mobilization predicted by power devaluation theory.

I hypothesize that racial regional factors are associated with both misogynist and other far-right extremism. I also expect to find much overlap on the role of racial regional factors in misogynist and other far-right radicalization, but these racial factors may have a stronger effect on other far-right extremism. To test my hypothesis, I look at hate group presence, the percentage of foreign-born residents, and a diversity index that measures the extent of departure from ethnoracial homogeneity by county. I also examine minority political empowerment, measured in terms of the proportion of nonwhite state legislators compared to white state legislators, in this study as a potential regional factor that may exacerbate feelings of white male resentment. One study found that while the proportion of the white population and the presence of affiliated militia organizations are associated with patriot movement organizing in a state, the percent of black legislators in a state is not significantly associated with patriot movement mobilization (Van Dyke and Soule 2002). However, under the concept of aggrieved entitlement and power devaluation theory, minority political empowerment may be viewed as either a personal or group-based threat by white men who wish to preserve a racist racial hierarchy. Thus, I still examine this factor in relation to misogynist and other far-right extremism within the study.

Gender Regional Factors

For misogynist extremism, gender-related regional factors may be the most critical components for cultivating a hypermasculine social climate that encourages radicalization. Research on far-right politics indicates that misogyny, antifeminism, and hypermasculinity are key tenets of the ideology, which makes factors that tap directly into these values potential agents of radicalization (Kimmel 2013; Pally 2022; Belew 2018; Berlet 2012; Pridemore and Freilich 2006). Under the concept of aggrieved entitlement, white men are drawn to far-right extremism because these men “crave the dignity of the successful breadwinner, the family provider, the man who measures success by the look of respect in the eyes of his family and friends” (Kimmel 2013). Hegemonic masculinity, specifically white hegemonic masculinity, is tied closely with the male breadwinner archetype (Hodges and Budig 2010). Men who struggle with the job market or with finding a good-paying job may become resentful of women who appear to be successful financially or professionally (Kimmel 2013).

In the face of perceived male economic decline, white men may find extreme anti-women sentiments, including femmephobia, to be more compelling. In misogynist extremist ideology, one’s lack of romantic success is tied to one’s financial status, as many incels believe that women, who are perceived as the gatekeepers of sex and love, only care about men’s money (Menzie 2022). Structurally, gender is relational in that “patterns of masculinity are socially defined in contradistinction from some model (whether real or imaginary) of femininity” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:848). Traits associated with hegemonic femininity are generally subordinate to hegemonic masculinity and are sometimes devalued structurally and culturally (Connell 1987; García-Gómez 2020; Hoskin 2020). Drawing from gender hegemony theories, Lauren Menzie (2022) uses femmephobia, defined as the devaluation of femininity used as a tool “to [dichotomize] and police bodies that make use of feminine signifiers outside of patriarchal expectations”, to examine how incels discuss their hostile views on women and construct their own masculinity as lacking due to their romantic failures (70). Menzie finds that incels largely view women as manipulative and as lacking value other than their beauty and sexuality, with incels frequently engaging in discourse that mocks and demeans hegemonic femininity. In essence, femmephobia is a rhetorical weapon used by incels to place the blame on women for their lack of sexual success that is ultimately undermining their masculinity. Femmephobic sentiments may be awakened in certain individuals based on the gender-related factors present in the region they reside in. For instance, in one study that looks at state-level regional factors, high rates of abortion and female participation in the labor force are positively associated with far-right terrorist attacks, while economic regional factors, such as the percentage of those living below the poverty line, are not significantly related to far-right terrorism (Piazza 2017). Another study argues that far-right violence is the consequence of a backlash against gender equality, and this study provides evidence that counties with lower rates of gender equality, measured in terms of occupation and income between men and women, have decreased odds of far-right homicide (Mills, Schmuhl, and Capellan 2020).

Conceptually, femmephobia represents a reactionary response based on aggrieved entitlement that leads to a backlash against gender equality or women's empowerment. One study found evidence of the backlash theory, showing how a higher proportion of gender equality, measured using male to female ratios of median income, employment rates, and educational attainment, along with other variables related to the demographics of the workplace, is significantly associated with greater incidences of male violence against women in southern regions (Whaley and Messner 2003). Backlash theory, which posits "a positive relationship between gender equality and violence against women", provides another link between a hypermasculine social climate and misogynist extremism (Whaley and Messner 2003:201). To clarify, men perceive women's economic or political empowerment as a threat to their masculinity under backlash theory. This echoes the concept of aggrieved entitlement, as the negative emotions, primarily rage and resentment, connected with aggrieved entitlement may be driving the backlash effect. There are also parallels with power devaluation theory present here. Under power devaluation theory, viewing male economic or political power as in decline relative to female economic or political power may be the mechanism behind why the backlash effect occurs. However, there is some contrasting evidence for backlash theory. One study found that gender income equity is unrelated to overall female homicide victimization rates (Pridemore and Freilich 2005). However, this study did find that gender income equity is associated with White female homicide victimization rates in southern regions, which provides some evidence that backlash theory may be true for "certain groups, in this case mostly lower middle class White males, who experienced real and perceived status loss on several fronts" (Pridemore and Freilich 2005:219). Likewise, the results of another study indicated that the ratio of female median income to male median income is not associated with white male homicide arrest rates (Pridemore and Freilich 2006). However, even if there are some conflicting studies on backlash theory, gender-related regional factors may still be relevant for misogynist extremism, which by its ideological nature is hostile towards women.

Furthermore, there may be an association between misogynist extremism and militia group presence in a region. At the state level, one study found that female empowerment, minority empowerment, and general economic deprivation are unrelated to the number of militia groups, although there are higher numbers of militia groups in states that have experienced major job losses in the farming industry (Freilich and Pridemore 2005). Regardless, the militia movement is composed of primarily "dispossessed and displaced lower-middle-class men", and some of these men are facing "foreclosures, economic insecurity, and debt" due to the sharp decline of both manufacturing and farming jobs since the 1980s (Ferber and Kimmel 2003:142). Members of the right-wing militia movement see their power as "white men" undermined "by a federal government controlled and staffed by legions of the newly enfranchised minorities, women, and immigrants, all in service to the omnipotent Jews who control international economic and political life" (Ferber and Kimmel 2003:144-145). Along with the white male entitlement to power present in militia ideology, the membership composition of the militia movement makes clear the connection between declining economic power and misogyny. One study found that the percent of female state

legislators is positively associated with higher numbers of militia or patriot groups (Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Essentially, militia groups can be a powerful force fostering misogynist culture in a region. While militia organizations may be more likely to form in places where there is already a hypermasculine climate or where many white men are already feeling devalued, these organizations then become a structural force reinforcing misogynist culture in the local community. Similar to how hate group presence in a region may be associated with far-right radicalization due to how individuals are more likely to be exposed or constantly exposed to racist ideology if there is an existing white supremacist organization near them, the existence of a militia organization in a region may facilitate the dissemination of hypermasculine and misogynist ideology.

I hypothesize that gender-related regional factors are associated with misogynist extremist presence and other far-right extremist presence. Due to how sexist sentiments are common among both misogynist extremists and other far-right extremists, I argue that the existence of certain gender-related conditions in a region could tap into these beliefs. To explore my hypothesis, I look at the following regional factors, some of which are aimed at capturing some aspect of what extremists may perceive as male economic or political decline: militia group presence, male unemployment rates, male median earnings, and the female to male state legislator ratio. Most relevant studies on far-right extremism look at overall unemployment rates and median earnings, but I choose to look at specifically male unemployment rates and median earnings due to my focus on misogynist extremism.

Despite of the overlaps between misogynist extremism and other far-right extremisms, there are differences between the two ideological categories with regards to their views on women. Although hostile sexism against women is found in white supremacist and other far-right ideologies as well, femmephobia is a defining feature of misogynist extremism. Another primary difference can be seen how these two groups conceive masculinity. For instance, the growth of the manosphere has resulted in the formation of new hybrid masculinities that still uphold systems of inequality and are heteronormative (Ging 2019). These misogynist extremists do not adhere to traditional norms about hegemonic masculinity because many of these extremists are not husbands or fathers in a traditional nuclear family; instead, many of them retreat from larger society into video games, porn, and online forums (Ging 2019). Within other ideological groups within the far right, gender embodies a secondary role in discourse, and when gender does become prevalent, more traditional gender roles and norms about masculinity are at the forefront. For instance, white nationalism upholds traditional forms of masculinity and emphasizes white men's "duty" to protect white women from racialized and feminized others, including Jews and feminists (Bjork-James 2020). As such, I expect to see that gender-related regional factors are more strongly related to misogynist extremism rather than other far-right extremism.

Data and Methods

Presence of Extremists by County

To test these hypotheses, I collected and merged secondary data from a variety of sources together by county. The presence of active misogynist and other far-right extremists by county through 2015 to 2018 are the dependent or outcome variables. I excluded extremists whose county or city of primary activity were unknown and those who operated primarily abroad from the analysis. Data on the presence of misogynist extremism and other far-right extremisms was collected from the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) dataset. Using the PIRUS dataset, both misogynist extremist presence and other far-right extremist presence were coded as dummy variables, with 0 representing a lack of at least one known extremist in the county and 1 for the presence of at least one known extremist in the county.

In the PIRUS dataset, extremists are defined as individuals “who have radicalized within the United States to the point of committing ideologically motivated illegal violent or non-violent acts, joining a designated terrorist organization, or associating with an extremist organization whose leader(s) has/have been indicted of an ideologically motivated violent offense” (START 2018:3). PIRUS codes far-right extremists as those “linked to extremist religious groups (e.g., Identity Christians), non-religious racial supremacists (e.g., Creativity Movement, National Alliance), tax protesters, sovereign citizens, militias, and militant gun rights advocates” (START 2018:4). I created my dummy variable for other far-right extremist presence using PIRUS’s criteria for far-right extremists, and I excluded misogynist extremists from inclusion under this variable in my study.

PIRUS also has information on the “ideological categories that best encapsulate the individual’s radical beliefs” with “some overlapping ideologies” depending on the individual extremist in question (START 2018:21). These ideological categories are used to construct the variable for misogynist extremist presence, as male supremacist, anti-abortion, or anti-gay extremists were coded as falling under misogynist extremism. From 2015 to 2018, there are 99 counties with at least one known presence of misogynist extremism and 849 counties with at least one known instance of other far-right extremists.

County-Level & State-Level Factors

To get information on the regional social factors serving as my independent variables, I collected secondary county-level and state-level data for 2014 from non-profit, government, and scholarly sources. One of these sources is the American Community Survey (ACS). For data collected from ACS, I chose to use the 5-year estimates, which are estimates “that represent data collected over a period of time”, because these statistics have “increased statistical reliability...for less populated areas

and small population subgroups” (U.S. Census Bureau 2022a). All data were cleaned and recoded using Stata.

Based on my hypothesis that gender-related regional factors may contribute to misogynist radicalization, I included the following variables: militia group presence, female-male state legislator ratio, male unemployment rate, and male median earnings. Militia group presence is categorized as a gender-related factor due to militia groups’ focus on hypermasculinity relative to hate groups’ emphasis on race. Data on the number of militia groups by county were obtained from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) for 2014. I created a dummy variable indicating militia group presence by county using this data. Counties with at least one known active militia group in 2014 were marked as containing militia group presence. I collected information on the gender demographics of members of state legislatures in 2014 from KnowWho, a data service provider. To create a variable representing the ratio of female to male members of state legislatures, I divided the number of female members of state legislatures with the number of male members of state legislatures and then multiplied by 100. Unemployment rates per county are provided by American Community Survey (ACS) for 2014. Male median earnings by county for 2014 were obtained from ACS as well.

Based on my hypothesis that regional factors related to racial demographics or minority empowerment may also contribute to misogynist radicalization, I included the following variables as race-related factors: hate group presence, nonwhite-white state legislator ratio, percent of foreign-born residents, and diversity index. Most hate groups are either white supremacist or anti-Semitic organizations, and thus, hate group presence is categorized as a race-related factor. I created a dummy variable indicating hate group presence by county in 2014 using the SPLC dataset. Similar to the variable for militia group presence, counties with at least one known active hate group in 2014 were marked as containing hate group presence. Additionally, data on the racial demographics of members of state legislatures in 2014 were also collected from KnowWho. I divided the number of nonwhite members of state legislatures with the number of white members of state legislatures and then multiplied by 100 to create a variable representing the ratio of nonwhite to white members of state legislatures. The ACS dataset also provides information on the estimated percent of foreign-born residents by county for 2014. Foreign-born estimates encompass “anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth, including those who become U.S. citizens through naturalization” (U.S. Census Bureau 2022b). For the variable measuring the racial and ethnic heterogeneity of a population, I used data compiled by a group of scholars. Based on the 2010 decennial census, Barrett Lee, John Iceland, and Gregory Sharp created a diversity index by county that “indicates how far a community’s population composition departs from perfect homogeneity (where a single group constitutes the entire population)” (Diversity and Disparities 2012).

As economic factors may play a role as well in misogynist radicalization, I included the following variables to investigate this: Gini index, percent of households in poverty, and dollar median income. The Gini coefficient, provided by the American Community Survey (ACS) for 2014, is calculated using the “difference between the

Lorenz curve (the observed cumulative income distribution) and the notion of a perfectly equal income distribution” (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). I converted the Gini coefficient into a percentage, also known as the Gini index in this form, by multiplying it by 100 (The Concise Encyclopedia of Statistics 2008). Poverty is determined by “a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size” (U.S. Census Bureau 2023). I constructed a poverty percentage variable for 2014 by dividing the estimated number of households living below the poverty threshold in a county by the population estimate for that county and then multiplying by 100. Data on the dollar median income by county in 2014 are also taken from ACS.

Population count and percent urban are included in all analyses ran in this study as control factors. According to the literature, there is evidence that both population size and percent urban are positively associated with homicide rates (Pridemore 2002). Another study found that the percent of urban residents in a county is significantly correlated with terrorist attacks (LaFree and Bersani 2014). Population count estimates by county are provided by the ACS dataset for 2014. The decennial census conducted in 2010 by the U.S. Census Bureau contains information on percent of the population living in an urban area per county. An urban area is defined as a “densely developed territory” with “50,000 or more people” (U.S. Census Bureau 2021).

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics for Regional Factors

Variable	Mean	SD	Missing Cases
<i>Gender Factors</i>			
Militia Group Presence	0.15	0.01	0
Female-Male State Legislator Ratio	29.70	11.15	1
Male Unemployment Rate	8.71	4.57	1
Male Median Earnings	32934.50	7517.79	1
<i>Racial Factors</i>			
Hate Group Presence	0.10	0.01	0
Nonwhite-White State Legislator	21.69	0.14	79
Percent Foreign-born	4.79	6.19	79
Diversity Index	34.91	18.70	78
<i>Economic Factors</i>			
Gini Index	44.18	3.61	1
Poverty Percent	11.41	5.58	1
Dollar Median Income	21993.80	26980.30	1
<i>Control Factors</i>			
Population Count	78163.60	249648.00	1
Percent Urban	41.84	31.75	56

**The total sample size is 3,221; SD = standard deviation*

While the independent variables representing militia group presence and hate group presence are dummy variables, the other county-level and state-level factors are all continuous variables. Table 1 displays the mean, standard deviation, and the number of missing cases out of a sample size of 3,221 for each independent variable. Listwise deletion is used to handle missing data in the statistical models. The unit of analysis is county. It is important to note that state-level data, specifically the female-male and nonwhite-white state legislator ratios, do not differ by county.

Logistic Regression

To analyze my results, I chose to use logistic regression because the outcome variables are dichotomous. First, I conducted bivariate logistic regression between misogynist extremist presence and the independent variables. I then created three additive models for misogynist extremism based respectively on the gender, racial, and economic factors. There is also a fourth “full” model for misogynist extremism that incorporates all these factors together based on the results for first three additive models, the bivariate regressions, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) scores ($VIF < 10$). Estimates for the full logistic regression model were also generated for other far-right extremist presence

for comparison. The VIF scores for all logistic regression models are available in Table B1-B5, and the results of the bivariate logistic regressions are available in Table A1. I cluster by state for logistic regression to control for potential correlation between the standard errors of variables in counties within the same state.

The equation for additive logistic regression is presented below, where p represents the probability of an event:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \varepsilon$$

Odds ratios for the regressions are calculated using the following conversion equation:

$$\text{Odds}(p) = \frac{p}{1-p}$$

Qualitative Comparative Analysis

I also ran a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of the counties with known misogynist, far-right, or far-left extremist presence in 2015 to 2018. PIRUS defines far-left extremists as those with links to “some form of Communism” or anti-capitalist ideology, including Communists, radical prison reformists, Black separatists, and environmental or animal rights extremists (START 2018:5).

I use QCA to look at regional pathways to misogynist extremist presence for the statistically significant factors in the full logistic regression model, controlling for percent urban and population count once again. I chose to use QCA for my analysis because while more purely quantitative methods, such as regression, show us which factors are associated with one another, QCA allows us to see the multiple pathways, or set of sufficient conditions, that predict extremism. Essentially, this method is appropriate for my study because its analytical power can reveal which combinations, or configurations, of socioeconomic and political factors at the county and state level are associated with misogynist extremist radicalization.

Using a statistical program for QCA available in Stata (Longest and Vaisey 2008), I generated results showing the various configurations of conditions necessary or sufficient for misogynist extremism. Significant factors, or specifically factors that are present in above-median levels, in a configuration have capitalized letters, while insignificant factors in a configuration have lower-case letters. The highest occurring configurations with the most frequencies between all groups are noted.

Frequently occurring configurations with contradicting factors are noted in the findings and discussion section. Contradictions occur when two high frequency configurations have all the same significant factors, except one factor; essentially, this one factor is respectively insignificant in a configuration but significant in the other.

When this occurs, it is an indication that the contradicting factor is not a significant predictor of misogynist extremism. Finally, sufficient conditions are differentiated from necessary conditions, and I examine the relationship between the configurations and between the configurations and the outcome using a sufficiency and necessity matrix. Necessary conditions include factors that are present in every configuration associated with a certain outcome. The numeric benchmark for sufficient conditions is set to 0.8 ($I_{XY} = 0.800$), as is convention (Ragin 2006).

The inclusion ratio for sufficiency is calculated using the following equation:

$$I_{XY} = \sum \min(x_i, y_i) / \sum x_i$$

The coverage of the outcome, a measure that shows how much of the outcome Y is covered by the configurations of predictors X , is calculated using the following equation:

$$C_{XY} = \sum \min(x_i, y_i) / \sum y_i$$

Fuzzy and Crisp Sets

For QCA analysis, the variables are transformed into either crisp or fuzzy sets. Fuzzy set logic is used for factors that lack clear cut-off points for inclusion or exclusion. Some factors, like whether a county has a known case of misogynist extremist presence, are dichotomous and thus coded as crisp sets. The outcome factor, derived from of the dummy variable for misogynist extremist presence, is the only set coded as a crisp set.

I use standardized rank transformation to turn the independent variables identified as statistically significant in logistic regression for misogynist extremist presence into fuzzy sets. These variables are first rank ordered and then standardized from 0 to 1 using the Stata program for QCA (Longest and Vaisey 2008).

The equation for standardized rank transformation is presented below:

$$\frac{\text{rankedvar} - \min(\text{rankedvar})}{\max(\text{rankedvar}) - \min(\text{rankedvar})}$$

Findings and Discussion

In Table 2, the results for economic, race, and gender models for misogynist extremist presence are presented. These models were respectively used to examine the effects of economic, racial, and gender-related factors on misogynist extremist presence in a county. For the economic model, only the percentage of those living below the

poverty line in a county is statistically significant for misogynist extremism. While this partially supports my hypothesis that economic factors are associated with misogynist extremism, this result indicates a negative association between percent in poverty and extremism, which is counterintuitive based on previous findings. There appears to be a 9% decrease in the odds of misogynist extremist presence in a county where there is an increase in the percent in poverty. Studies that found evidence that economic deprivation plays some role in far-right radicalization or violence suggest a positive relationship in which an increase in economic deprivation, which may include rates of poverty, predicts far-right radicalization or violence (e.g., Varaine 2019, Youngblood 2020).

In the race model, only hate group presence is statistically significant for misogynist extremism. The odds ratio of misogynist extremist presence with the presence of at least one hate group in a county is 4.63 when compared to the lack of hate groups in a county. As indicated by the literature, misogynist extremists are similar to white supremacists and neo-Nazis in that they are also defined by their white masculinity, as racist sentiments are common in misogynist extremist rhetoric (Ging 2019; Dickel and Evolvi 2022). Due to ideological overlap between misogynist extremists and other far-right extremists, it is not surprising that the presence of hate group may hold some influence over misogynist extremist radicalization as well. Ultimately, this provides some support for my hypothesis that race-related factors are associated with misogynist extremist presence.

There is also some support for my hypothesis that gender-related factors are associated with misogynist extremist presence, as militia group presence is significantly correlated with misogynist extremist presence in the gender model. The odds ratio of misogynist extremist presence with the presence of at least one militia group in a county is 9.79 when compared to the lack of militia groups in a county. This raises the question though of why this factor is estimated to be significant in contrast to the other factors included within this model. To start, militia groups promote militarized displays of masculinity, including the potential for violence, as a way to restore a perceived loss of manhood, making them enticing for men who feel angry or humiliated about their situations (Abrams 2013). White men who have suffered financial losses and who have little hope for the future find solace in militia groups who encourage “the deployment of racism, sexism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism” as a way to restore one’s masculinity, especially because militia groups ultimately reinforce the gender hierarchy rather than undermine it (Ferber and Kimmel 2003).

To clarify, militia groups can provide an organizational and ideological structure for disillusioned men to easily fall into or recognize. However, even if many misogynist extremists do not directly become members of paramilitary groups, the presence of a militia group in a county can potentially affect local discourse and opinion on who is to blame for current affairs and can help construct an environment in which the weaponization of masculinity becomes a salient “solution” to social isolation, romantic and financial failures, or a myriad of other grievances that push individuals to embrace extremism. Essentially, simply having grievances about one’s status or life may not be

effective radicalizing agents on their own. An ideological framework in the local social climate that taps into themes of hypermasculinity, power devaluation, and aggrieved entitlement in the county may be needed for misogynist extremism to flourish.

TABLE 2
Logistic Regression Models for Misogynist Extremist Presence

Variables	Gender Model	Racial Model	Economic Model
<i>Gender Factors</i>			
Militia Group Presence	9.79** (6.83)	-	-
Female-Male Legislator Ratio	1.02 (0.02)	-	-
Male Unemployment Rate	0.95 (0.09)	-	-
Male Median Earnings	1.00 (2.94e-05)	-	-
<i>Racial Factors</i>			
Hate Group Presence	-	4.63* (3.27)	-
Nonwhite-White Legislator Ratio	-	0.96 (0.03)	-
Percent Foreign-Born	-	1.01 (0.04)	-
Diversity Index	-	1.00 (0.02)	-
<i>Economic Factors</i>			
Gini Index	-	-	1.12 (0.08)
Poverty Percent	-	-	0.91* (0.04)
Dollar Median Income	-	-	1.00 (1.21e-05)
<i>Control Factors</i>			
Population Count	1.00 (2.51e-07)	1.00 (3.42e-07)	1.00 (2.68e-07)
Percent Urban	1.08** (0.03)	1.08*** (0.02)	1.08*** (0.02)
Constant	9.79e-06*** (2.15e-05)	2.11e-05*** (2.89e-05)	2.56e-07*** (9.08e-07)

Estimates are odds ratios. Standard errors in parentheses. VIF < 10

** p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001; two-tailed*

Table 3 presents the regression results for the full models with both gender and racial factors for misogynist and other far-right extremist presence. Economic factors are excluded from the full model due to their general lack of statistical significance, except for the percentage of those living below the poverty line, in the previous model, as seen in Table 2, and for being highly correlated with other predictors in the full model. Some other variables in the full model, such as the male unemployment rate and male median dollar earnings, capture similar information on any potential economic stress that are more specific with an emphasis on gender.

Interestingly, hate group presence is not significantly significant for misogynist extremist presence in the full regression model with the addition of gender-related regional factors. In other words, the effects of the gender-related factors change the relationship between the race-related factors and misogynist extremism. Because of this, I fail to find support for my hypothesis that race-related factors are associated with misogynist extremism in the full regression model. In contrast, hate group presence is positively associated with other far-right extremist presence, and this association is statistically significant. This provides some support for my hypothesis that race-related factors are associated with other far-right extremisms. One potential reason why hate group presence is associated with other far-right extremisms and not misogynist extremism in the full model is that the ideological category of other far-right extremism encompasses racism and white supremacy; essentially, there is some overlapping membership between those belonging to hate groups and those recognized as far-right extremists in the dataset, strengthening the association between hate group presence and far-right extremism. Another potential reason that could explain the relationship between hate group presence and other far-right extremist presence is that hate organizations provide a structure, both ideological and organizational, for individuals to develop racist sentiments, similar to how militia group presence may help form a pathway to misogynist extremist radicalization.

Regarding gender-related factors, militia group presence is once again statistically associated with misogynist extremist presence in the full model. The odds ratio of misogynist extremist presence with the presence of at least one militia group in a county is 7.14 when compared to the lack of militia group presence in a county. This partially supports my hypothesis that gender-related factors are associated with misogynist extremist presence. The association between militia group presence and misogynist extremist presence in the full model as well as the gender model suggests a consistent relationship between militia groups and misogyny. As previously stated, militia groups may be actively creating a hypermasculine social climate, perhaps through the local proliferation of their sentiments on gender, that allows for misogynist extremism to flourish. After all, there appears to be no significant association between militia group presence and other far-right extremist presence.

However, male unemployment rates are positively and significantly associated with other far-right extremist presence. As seen in Table 3, the odds ratios of other far-right extremist presence in a county are multiplied by 1.06 for every one unit increase in

the male unemployment rate in that county. In other words, there is a 6% increase in the odds of other far-right extremist presence in a county when there is an increase in the male unemployment rate. Further research is needed into why male unemployment rates may matter for other far-right extremist presence but not for misogynist presence. One potential reason is provided by the literature on how masculinity is constructed differently by misogynist extremists and other far-right extremists. Misogynist extremists may not adhere as closely to the breadwinner ideal of hegemonic masculinity as other far-right extremists.

TABLE 3
Full Logistic Regression Models for Misogynist and Other Far-Right Extremist Presence

Variables	Misogynist	Other Far-Right
<i>Gender Factors</i>		
Militia Group Presence	7.14* (5.80)	1.68 (0.52)
Female-Male State Legislator Ratio	1.01 (0.02)	1.01 (0.01)
Male Unemployment Rate	1.03 (0.11)	1.06* (0.03)
Male Median Earnings	1.00 (3.98e-05)	1.00 (1.84e-05)
<i>Racial Factors</i>		
Hate Group Presence	3.21 (2.50)	2.27** (0.63)
Nonwhite-White State Legislator Ratio	0.95 (0.03)	0.99 (6.99e-03)
Percent Foreign-born	1.05 (0.04)	1.00 (0.01)
Diversity Index	0.99 (0.02)	1.00 (0.01)
<i>Control Factors</i>		
Population Count	1.00 (3.34e-07)	1.00** (3.51e-07)
Percent Urban	1.07*** (0.02)	1.03*** (0.01)
Constant	3.72e-05*** (7.33e-05)	3.43*** (2.60e-03)

Estimates are odds ratios. Standard errors in parentheses. VIF < 10

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; two-tailed*

Of minor note, the percent of urban areas is statistically significant for misogynist extremist presence across all the models. This control variable is also statistically significant for other far-right extremist presence in the full regression model. Population count is also statistically significant for other far-right extremist presence in the full model. However, the estimated odds ratio for population count is 1.00, and this indicates that there is ultimately no association between population count and the presence of other far-right extremism in a county.

QCA Configurations

After running QCA analysis on the presence of misogynist extremism in a county, among all counties with any known presence of extremism, far-right, misogynist, or far-left, in 2015 to 2018, no sets were identified as true according to the inclusion ratio for sufficiency or the coverage of the outcome measure. In other words, the social factors of militia group presence, percent urban, or population size are determined to not be either sufficient or necessary conditions for misogynist extremist presence. Results of the configurations that lead to the presence of misogynist extremism are presented in Table 4.

Sets	Frequency	Percent
MILITIA * URBAN * POPULATION	42	32.56
MILITIA * URBAN * population	2	1.55
MILITIA * urban * POPULATION	4	3.10
MILITIA * urban * population	13	10.08
militia * URBAN * POPULATION	11	8.53
militia * URBAN * population	9	6.98
militia * urban * POULATION	2	1.55
militia * urban * population	46	35.66

N = 129

As shown in Table 4, the presence of militia groups in a county, a high percent of urban areas, and a high population size are conditions that could lead to the presence of misogynist extremism. This occurs in 32.56% of the configurations, making it the second highest common pathway to misogynist extremism. However, none of these factors are either sufficient or necessary conditions for misogynist extremist presence. The most frequently occurring radicalization pathway, appearing in 35.66% of the configurations, that leads to misogynist extremist presence is one in which there is no presence of militia groups in a county and a lack of a high percent of urban areas or a high population size.

In sum, the results of QCA suggest that while militia group presence, a high percent of urban areas, a high population size, or all these conditions may be present in a county with misogynist extremist presence, these factors are not necessary for misogynist extremism to exist in that county. Even when one or more of these factors are present in a county, there may still be an absence of misogynist extremism. These results imply that

other factors not included within this study also serve as pathways to misogynist extremism.

Limitations

Because the data used in this paper is measured at the aggregate level, ecological inference limits the conclusions that can be made from the results on how radicalization occurs on the individual level within the social context of a state or county. There is also high multicollinearity between multiple independent variables. As such, the effects of different explanatory factors on the presence of extremism in a county are highly intertwined.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there appears to be similarities between the pathways to misogynist extremism and other far-right extremisms. Under the framework of aggrieved entitlement and power devaluation, hate and militia group presence are factors that could potentially make salient ideological narratives, reinforced by feelings of anger, about women, people of color, and other minoritized groups as being the cause of one's grievances, whether those grievances relate to one's economic status or romantic endeavors. Hate group presence is more associated with other far-right extremists, according to results in the full model, which matches the ideological slants of these individuals.

As their name implies, misogynist extremists have a particular ideological focus on gender relations, and thus, gender-related factors may be especially pertinent as pathways to radicalization for them. There is some empirical evidence for this, looking at the consistent significance of militia group presence for misogynist extremism in both the gender model and the full model. Having at least one militia group in a county possibly creates a hypermasculine social climate where hostile ideological narratives about feminism or modern gender relations could strengthen feelings of aggrieved entitlement, fostering femmophobic sentiments, and encouraging some men to turn towards extreme misogyny. In the end, this result contributes some insight into the offline context in which misogynist extremist radicalization occurs. Outside of the online forums found on the Internet, militia groups appear to play an influential role in pushing young men towards extreme misogyny.

The QCA results indicate that while certain regional factors in a county, specifically militia group presence, may contribute to the emergence of misogynist extremism, there are most likely factors beyond the ones identified in this paper that serve as radicalization pathways to misogynist extremism. Past research indicates that the Internet is one such example of a significant factor that provides a platform through which young men are exposed to and radicalized into extreme misogyny. Future projects should look at the offline social context that contributes to misogynist extremist radicalization in conjunction with online radicalizing factors.

More research on the social context that leads to misogynist extremist radicalization is needed. McVeigh's power devaluation theory that far-right politics is related to perceptions of status loss is important to keep in mind. As we gather more data in a pursuit of effective policies against violent extremism, including violent misogynist extremism, we need to confront why it is primarily young men who engage in extremism. Is it primarily young men who engage in extremism because of how hegemonic masculinity socializes them to seek validation as men, or is it because these men perceive their group status and privileges as men declining? Power devaluation gives us a conceptual framework through which we can tackle this task. However, beyond just subscribing to extreme misogynist ideology, why do some individuals engage in *violent* extremist acts? Perry's argument that hate crimes are carried out to reinforce structural inequities and their privileged identities may also hold some merit here. For the same reasons behind why white supremacists engage in hate crimes against blacks or Jews, incels and other misogynist extremists may engage in violent acts motivated by extremist ideology as an expression of entitlement to women's bodies and as a strategy to confirm their identities as men in a society that they perceive is undermining that. Rather than focus on profiling individuals however, we should look at the social context that radicalizes these individuals and implement macro-level policies that suppresses radicalization group-wide.

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APPENDIX A: BIVARIATE REGRESSIONS

TABLE A1

Bivariate Correlations between Independent Variables and Misogynist Extremism		
Variables	Odds Ratio	Robust SE
<i>Gender Factors</i>		
Militia Group Presence	36.99***	22.21
Female-Male State Legislator Ratio	1.03*	0.01
Male Unemployment Rate	1.00	0.03
Male Median Earnings	1.00*	0.02
<i>Race Factors</i>		
Hate Group Presence	26.83***	16.99
Nonwhite-White State Legislator Ratio	1.00	0.01
Percent Foreign-Born	1.05**	0.02
Diversity Index	1.06***	0.02
<i>Economic Factors</i>		
Gini Index	1.19**	0.05
Percent Poverty	0.99	0.03
Dollar Median Income	1.00	1.30e-05
<i>Control Factors</i>		
Population Count	1.00	9.84e-07
Percent Urban	1.10***	0.03

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; two-tailed

APPENDIX B: COLLINEARITY TESTS

TABLE B1

Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for Gender Model of Misogynist Extremism	
Variable	VIF
Male Median Earnings	8.08
Female-Male State Legislator Ratio	7.31
Male Unemployment Rate	3.39
Percent Urban	3.35
Militia Group Presence	1.39
Population Count	1.33
Mean VIF	4.14

TABLE B2

Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for Race Model of Misogynist Extremism	
Variable	VIF
Diversity Index	5.86
Percent Urban	3.58
Nonwhite-White State Legislator Ratio	2.80
Percent Foreign-Born	2.57
Population Count	1.51
Hate Group Presence	1.35
Mean VIF	2.94

TABLE B3

Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for Economic Model of Misogynist Extremism	
Variable	VIF
Gini Scale	9.07
Percent Poverty	6.49
Percent Urban	3.23
Dollar Median Income	1.71
Population Count	1.27
Mean VIF	4.35

TABLE B4	
Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for Full Model of Misogynist Extremism	
Variable	VIF
Male Median Earnings	9.45
Diversity Index	9.06
Female-Male State Legislator Ratio	7.62
Male Unemployment Rate	4.69
Percent Urban	4.27
Percent Foreign-Born	2.89
Nonwhite-White State Legislator Ratio	2.84
Population Count	1.59
Militia Group Presence	1.43
Hate Group Presence	1.37
Mean VIF	4.52

TABLE B5	
Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for Full Model of Other Far-Right Extremisms	
Variable	VIF
Male Median Earnings	9.44
Diversity Index	9.01
Female-Male State Legislator Ratio	7.62
Male Unemployment Rate	4.68
Percent Urban	4.22
Percent Foreign-Born	2.86
Population Count	1.58
Militia Group Presence	1.42
Hate Group Presence	1.34
Mean VIF	4.50