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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Joseph B. Allen for the Master of Science in Sociology were presented February 12, 1996, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Joseph B. Allen for the Master of Science in Sociology presented February 12, 1996.

Title: Where the Extreme Right Took Root: A Comparison of Midwestern Counties in the 1980s.

This thesis evaluates two theories purporting to explain the rise of right-wing extremism in the Midwest during the farm crisis of the 1980s. The pluralist argument suggests that Midwestern right-wing extremism was rooted in previous episodes of agrarian radicalism. The political tradition perspective, on the other hand, claims that right-wing extremism in the Midwest was rooted in traditional conservatism. To evaluate these theories, an analysis of ten counties was performed. Particular attention was paid to seven variables which theorists argue point agriculturally based communities down political paths of radicalism or conservatism. Regional analyses were also performed on those counties which resided in similar areas of the Midwest. The findings offer stronger support for the political

tradition perspective than for the pluralist argument. These finding suggest that those counties in which right-wing extremist activity did not occur were ones which supported past agrarian radical movements while those counties which experienced right-wing extremism were for the most part opponents of past radical agrarian movements.

The thesis suggests that future research on right-wing extremism should focus attention on the political traditions of the communities were such movements become established and that a number of alternative variables should be considered.

WHERE THE EXTREME RIGHT TOOK ROOT:
A COMPARISON OF MIDWESTERN COUNTIES
IN THE 1980S

by
JOSEPH B. ALLEN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
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1996

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

More than any other occupational group, American farmers have been linked with radical protest. From Shay's Rebellion in the late 1700's to the agrarian movements at the turn of the 20th century through the movements spawned by the Great Depression, farmers have voiced their grievances through political protest. The Midwest farmer is the archetype of this group. Farmers residing in America's "heartland" have been the best organized and most disciplined, and because of their efforts have been the most successful of agrarian protesters.

The radical agrarian protest movements which came out of the Midwest were predominantly liberal or socialist, such as the NonPartisan League of the upper Midwest and the Farmer's Alliance of Kansas. These movements called for a number of reforms such as state ownership and regulation of railroads and grain elevators, crop and hail insurance, and a federally or state administered banking system (see Morlan, 1985, Goodwyn, 1976, and Chrislock, 1971). Although most of these movements failed, they gave the momentum and numbers which brought about many of these changes at the state and federal level during the 1930's.

The 1980's saw the development of a new phenomenon of

political protest among Midwestern farmers. This was the use of right-wing extremism as a form of legitimate political protest. While they did not gain as broad a following as traditional agrarian movements, right-wing groups became popular and influential in certain areas of the Midwest.

The rise of right-wing extremism in the Midwest is interesting because it departs from the tradition of radical agrarian movements. Most right-wing extremist groups called for a reduction in the powers of federal and state governments and a shift of these powers to local county governments. With its history so rich in radical, left-wing agrarian protest, how did the Midwest become fertile ground for the growth of right-wing extremist movements? To answer this question one cannot generalize about the Midwest as a whole. Rather, areas where right-wing extremism gained a foothold must be looked at in contrast to other areas of the Midwest where right-wing extremism did not take hold.

This thesis attempts to explain why right-wing extremism took root in some Midwestern communities and not others. To do this, a comparison is made of two competing theories: the pluralist perspective which states that right-wing extremism in the Midwest is rooted in radical agrarian movements (Bell, 1963, p. 4; Rogin, p. 27-29), and the political tradition explanation which finds right-

wing extremism in the Midwest to be rooted in traditional conservatism (Rogin, p. 30-31). These theories are evaluated through a systematic analysis of a group of ten counties, five in which right-wing extremism received strong support and five in which there was little or no support for such a movement. For these counties I assembled indicators which the theories claim are associated with the political leanings of agricultural communities.

I use a comparative analysis to determine what factors contributed to support or lack of support for right-wing extremism among Midwestern counties. This analysis is supplemented by two comparative analyses of counties which reside in the same regionally specific areas. The research reveals that support of right-wing extremism among Midwestern counties could not be attributed to any one variable, but was instead based on the influence of a number of factors. These factors established a tradition within communities in regard to their political response to economic crisis. These political responses were either radical or conservative. The findings offered stronger support for the political tradition argument than for the pluralist perspective.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON AGRARIAN PROTEST

This chapter is divided into four sections, each dealing with a separate body of literature reviewed for this study. The first section looks at literature on the rise of right-wing extremism in America after World War II. The second section looks at literature dealing with right-wing extremism during the farm crisis. The third section looks at literature which deals with agrarian radicalism in the Midwest. These sections will look at the different agendas and ideologies of the movements. The section dealing with agrarian radicalism will look at theories which scholars have advanced as indicators of support or nonsupport for the movement. The fourth body of literature deals with two competing theories, the pluralist argument and the political tradition perspective, which attempt to explain support and nonsupport for right-wing extremism among farmers in the Midwest.

Literature on right-wing extremism

Only a small amount of work has been done by scholars on right-wing extremism in general and even less on right-wing extremism during the farm crisis in the Midwest.

Most research looks primarily at the rise of right-wing extremism immediately after World War II in the form of McCarthyism and the John Birch Society.

The research on this movement primarily addressed two questions: why such a movement occurred and how it was different from other movements in the United States.

Lipset (1960) sees the post-war right-wing extremism of the 1950s as a contemporary cousin of a number of past "fascist" movements in America (these past movements have not been exclusively right-wing but have also come from the center and the left). Such movements shared strong group self-interests and nationalistic ideologies. They differed, however, as to whether they sought to protect traditional positions of elites, further the interests of their group against intrusions from the government and business, or took an anti-elitist stance in the name of the underprivileged (Lipset, 1960, p.142).

Scholars tend to agree on three ideological aspects common to both contemporary right-wing extremism and past movements which Lipset would define as "fascist," although they seem to be much more apparent in right-wing extremism than in other movements. First is a strong antipathy toward the federal government. Robert Rosenstone quotes Robert Welch, the founder of the John Birch Society, from a 1958 speech: "The greatest enemy of man is, and always has been, government. And the larger,

the more extensive that government, the greater the enemy" (Rosenstone, 1968, p. 21). Right-wing groups of the post-war era advocated a reduction in government, or at least a reduction in the role the federal government played in the lives of individuals. They favored not necessarily a leaner government, but a government that was more localized. This ideology led many extreme right organizations like the Birch society, the Minutemen, and the White Citizen's Council to endorse the candidacy of George Wallace of the States Rights party for President in 1968 (Lipset, 1970, p. 359). For these groups, state government was the most ideal form of government.

A second key ideological aspect in recent right-wing extremism, though to a lesser level in past movements, is Christian fundamentalism. Christianity, but more specifically fundemetalist Protestantism, is espoused more because it is the main theological belief system of most of the followers of the extreme right than because of what it stands for. Most of those who supported right-wing extremist groups of the post-war era were white, Western European, and at least second generation natives of the United States. These people are also overwhelmingly Protestant. A return to Christian principles was seen by the far right as a way to save America from what they feared to be increasing moral decay. This moral decay was manifested in atheistic communism and the increasing

numbers of non-Protestants flooding into the United States (see Rosenstone, 1968, and Lipset, 1970). Right-wing extremist groups cited numerous examples as evidence of a decline in morality. These included "pornographic" books like those by Salinger and Steinbeck, Rock n' Roll and folk music, and Supreme Court decisions such as desegregation and the abolition of prayer in school (Rosenstone, 1968, p. 8-9). For the right-wing extremist, the antagonism between Christian moralism and moral decay is a fight between good and evil, between right and wrong, with no possibility for compromise.

The third key aspect, and the one which unites the other two aspects, is the belief in a conspiracy by outside forces against America and the American way of life. Lipset, in his historical analysis of right-wing extremism in the United States, The Politics of Unreason (1970), points out a number of examples of this conspiracy theory at work in American social movements. In the 1950s, the conspirators were Communists. In the 1920s, they were Catholics and Jews. And in the 1850s, the conspiracy was among the Monarchies of Europe. Throughout all these conspiracies, the target of the conspirators were the same: White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants who were native to the United States.

Richard Hofstadter (1965) called this common vein of conspiracy theory running through the political and social

movements of the United States the "paranoid style in American politics." He described the spokesmen and adherents of the paranoid style in the following way

(He) finds it (the conspiracy) directed against a nation , a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not only himself alone but millions of others. His sense that his political passions are unselfish and patriotic, in fact, goes far to intensify his feeling of rightousness and his moral indignation (p. 4).

Hofstadter goes on to say that this paranoid style is part of many left-wing movements as well, including such movements as those of radical agrarian protest being dealt with in this thesis.

Daniel Bell (1963) saw the post-war extremist right differing from past movements in a fundamental way. In earlier movements in American history, when there was a feeling of a conspiracy, the conspiracy was foreign, such as the Catholic church or the Masons. The leaders and supporters of the movements still felt in possession of their country and their way of life. But after World War II, the extremists saw the conspiracy as not only foreign, but, even more dangerously, as occurring domestically as well. For them, the American way of life had either been taken away or was gradually being taken. Bell described this as the feeling of dispossession (pp. 1-38). It was this feeling that made the post-war extremists more militant and uncompromising in comparison to their previous counterparts.

Right-wing extremism in the Midwest: The farm crisis of the 1980s

Scholarly research, like that done by Hofstadter, Rogin, and others for earlier periods, is lacking for the right-wing extremism that emerged in the Midwest during the farm crisis in the 1980s. There are several reasons for this. First, the farm crisis that hit the Midwest is still very recent, ending at the close of the last decade. Also, the extremists of the Midwest during this time did not receive as much national attention as those of the 1950s and 1960s. Finally, the full impact of the influence of this movement is just now starting to be felt, as exemplified by the recent bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City and the attention now being given to the state militia movement.

Most of the information on the subject is available through research reports and articles published by research groups and institutes. Most prominent among these are the Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Southern Christian Poverty Law Center, and Prairie Fire Rural Action. Useful material also comes from journalists who wrote books and articles covering the movement.

The literature on Midwestern extremism during the farm crisis looks mainly at what groups were influential, the ideological stances of these groups, and what

political or social actions and activities they took. This literature, unlike that from the post-war period, does not really try to explain the social forces and undertones behind the movement or the social origins of the groups in the movement. Close inspection of the material dealing with 1980s right-wing extremism, however, suggests striking similarities with their mid-20th Century counterparts but also striking differences.

The right-wing extremist groups of the 1980's farm belt were descendants of the right-wing extremism of the 1950s and 1960s. Many of the leaders of these groups honed their beliefs during the post-war era. A number of the groups are offshoots of groups from the post-war era extremist right. For example, the *Posse Comitatus* was founded by Robert L. Beach, a former member of the neo-Nazi Silver Shirts (Corcoran, 1990, p. 29). The same key aspects prevailed among these groups as well: an anti-government mentality, Christian fundamentalism, belief in a conspiracy, and an uncompromising political stance. But just as the extremists of the post-war era were more militant than their predecessors, so to were the extremists of the 1980s farm crisis more militant than those of the post-war era.

A reason for this increased militancy could be their increased feeling of being dispossessed. The farm crisis adversely affected the region economically, socially, and

politically. Corcoran (1990) explained that right-wing extremism in the Midwest appealed to farmers who were facing a double-edged sword of decreasing political clout and worsening economic conditions. The number of farmers and farms nationally, but especially in the Midwest, had been declining since the turn of the 20th Century. Between 1960 and 1980, the number of people living on farms had decreased by 80 percent. Where in the past farmers once had a commanding voice in political matters, by the 1980s they comprised only four percent of the electorate. Economically, farmers saw the value of their land decrease by as much as 40 percent. The national farm debt by 1983 alone exceeded \$215 billion. And by the late 1980s, 17 percent of rural Americans lived below the poverty line (Corcoran, 1990, p. 19). Farmers attempted to find some way to make sense of the strain caused by such daunting times. Some found the best answer to come from the ideologies of right-wing extremist groups (Corcoran, 1990, p. 30).

Thus, with the dispossession they faced, farmers turned to militant right-wing extremism. The state's rights preferred by their predecessors was dropped and advocacy of county rule was adopted. The old line conspiracy theory of a communist take-over was maintained, but added to it were other conspiracies from the ranks of the international Jewish bankers and the minorities of the

United States. And Christian fundamentalism became even more extreme with the introduction of the racist and anti-Semitic theology of Christian Identity (Identity is a religious alternative to mainstream Christianity which contends that the people of Northern Europe are the Lost Tribes of Israel and that Jews are the children of Satan) (Zeskind, 1987, p. 7).

Literature on radical agrarian movements

The radical agrarian movements of the late 1800s and early 1900s greatly impacted the political and social nature of the Midwest. A testament to this fact is the considerable attention scholars have given the subject. Those who studied these movements looked at more sociologically based topics in comparison to those who studied right-wing extremist movements. These included the type of movement culture that was created and the ethnic, economic, ecological, and agricultural characteristics of supporters and opponents.

Most of the literature looked at movements that occurred between 1888 and 1934 in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. These movements included the Populist Alliance, the Progressive Movement, the NonPartisan League, and the Farmer's Holiday Alliance. Previous agrarian movements such as the Grangers and the Greenbacks were not

considered for this thesis because their popular base was in the South and in states east of the region focused on here such as Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Furthermore, they were relatively short-lived and unsuccessful in comparison to the agrarian movements dealt with in this study. Literature analyzing movements outside of the United States was looked at because it also examined social and economic factors behind agrarian rebellion.

Because they favored ecological analyses, ethnic ancestry was a much studied topic by those interested in the origin of support for radical agrarian movements. The turn-of-the-century Midwest was ethnically diverse, and some ethnic groups were supporters of agrarian radicalism while others were not. Scott McNall (1988) found Germans to be the most ardent opponents of Populism in Kansas. According to McNall, this was mainly because of their opposition to many liberal reforms advocated by the Populists. Germans were seen by many who studied these movements to be extremely conservative both politically and socially (see Rogin, 1967). McNall concluded that cultural factors based on ethnicity were to prove as important as economic issues in determining who supported the Populist Alliance (McNall, 1988, p. 267).

Support for the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota varied across ethnic lines as well. Morlan (1985) found that Scandinavians were the most loyal supporters of the

NPL while Germans and Russian-Germans were, as in the case of Kansas Populism, very much opposed. He did find, however, that Germans did strongly support the League in the 1918 election. This stemmed from the isolationist stance taken by the League during World War I, which appealed to the German population (Morlan, 1985, p. xv). Other than that, Germans, once again politically conservative and opposed to outside forces and change, remained opponents of the League. An added explanation for this attitude came from Rogin who found that because of the political and cultural nature of the Germans as discussed above, they lived in very closed and tight-knit communities that were relatively isolated from the rest of the State. This made it hard for League organizers to penetrate this group (Rogin, 1967, p. 107). Evidence shows that Scandinavians were much more easily aroused politically because of their openness to change. Most of those elected to office between 1916 and 1924 on the Nonpartisan ticket were of Scandinavian stock and Scandinavians were strongly represented and had high voter turn out in the Northern Midwest (Morlan, 1967, p. 3 and Haynes, 1984, p. 10).

Economic factors and factors of class were found to have played dominating roles in the support and non-support of radical agrarian movements. Overwhelmingly, it was the rural middle-class where the highest degree of

support came. McNall and Lawrence Goodwyn (1976), both of whom studied Kansas Populism, found that movement support in that State came from those residing in the relatively prosperous central section, between the rich East and poor West (McNall, 1988, p. 235). Both the East and the West showed some degree of support for Populism, but not like that found in the center. McNall offers two reasons, related to social class and economics, for why the farmers in this region would be supporters of Populism. First, as middle class farmers, they had a greater desire for expansion and growth than their counterparts in the other sectors of the states, and therefore often carried greater debt loads (McNall, 1988, pp. 234-235). Thus, the Populist plan for debt restructuring and banking and loan reform seemed quite appealing. Second, the central sector had wide variations in amounts of precipitation and thus was hit harder than the East and the West by periods of drought (McNall, 1988, pp.66-68).

Shover's (1965) analysis of the Farmer's Holiday movement in Iowa in the early 1930s finds that movement to have been regionally specific for reasons of economics and class. The Holiday movement was a revolt by corn, hog, and dairy farmers in which products were withheld from the market in an attempt to raise prices up to cost of production. It occurred primarily in the extreme western part of Iowa along its border with Nebraska. This area

was very prosperous agriculturally and had above average farm incomes. Shover also noted that in the poorest parts of the state, that area in the southeastern region along the Missouri border, there was less positive response to the Farmer's Holiday movement (Shover, 1965, pp. 5-6).

Rogin found the same conditions existing in North Dakota in regard to support for Populism and the NonPartisan League in that State. While support may not have been as regionally specific as it was in Kansas, it certainly was class specific. The middle-class farmers had more to lose during times of economic depression than lower class farmers or subsistence level farmers. Rich farmers, on the other hand, had reserves to fall back on during hard times. Thus, middle-class farmers were more sensitive to economic crisis and, therefore, supported programs of economic reform such as those offered by the Populist party and the League (Rogin, 1967, p. 114).

Lipset (1968) came to a somewhat different conclusion about class support for agrarian radicalism. In his study of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Saskatchewan, Canada, he found that the rural population with the highest social and economic status was the strongest supporter of the movement when it was initiated (Lipset, 1968, p. 201). Lipset, like Rogin, theorized that farmers in this economic stratum have the most to lose in depressed times, but Lipset differed with Rogin in

suggesting that support came from upper-class farmers, rather than those from the middle-class. Lipset also pointed out that due to extreme economic hardship, those farmers in the lower stratum were difficult to organize, but after the depression ended and prosperity returned, these farmers became stronger supporters than than many of the wealthy farmers who had supported the CCF originally (Lipset, 1968, p. 205).

Crop production is another highly scrutinized variable among scholars of agrarian movements. The most common distinction is made between those who grow wheat and those who grow corn. Wheat growers were far more likely to support movements of agrarian radicalism than those who grew corn or had a diverse crop. This was found to be true in both the United States and Canada (Lipset, 1968, pp. 25-26).

Jeffery Paige (1975) stated that self-reliance among farmers, which is dependent on the types of crops they produce, can indicate their degree of favorability for movements of agrarian protest. In regard to corn and wheat specifically, Paige argued

Corn farmers are more dependent on their individual efforts than are wheat farmers. Wheat farmers are both more vulnerable to fluctuations in the international commodities markets and more susceptible to manipulation by middlemen than are corn farmers. Wheat farmers are also more vulnerable to weather. The relatively concentrated demand for labor in wheat production usually requires wheat farmers to find additional part-time labor by hiring laborers or forming associations with other

wheat farmers. Corn farmers on the other hand usually distribute their work evenly over the year, can always feed their corn to their hogs if the price is low, and are not subject to the same threat from the weather (Paige, 1975, p.36). Thus, according to Paige, self-reliance tends to be an economic reality as well as an ideology for the corn farmer (p. 36). When one looks at agrarian movements in the United States, he or she finds that, indeed, the wheat producing areas were those which had the highest rates of political radicalism.

Rogin's analysis agreed with that of Paige. His study found that corn belt farmers appreciated initiative and individualism more than do those involved in other forms of agriculture. Rogin felt that this attitude leads to an antagonism toward outside influence, "...an intolerance for places and events felt to be beyond individual control" (Rogin, 1967, p. 98). He felt that at during severe times of depression, corn farmers have taken matters into their own hands without using political routes. Rogin uses as evidence of this, interestingly outside of his own analysis, the Farmer's Holiday Movement (Rogin, 1967, p. 98).

In addition to ancestry, class, economics, and crop production, a number of other characteristics were considered, although they were not dealt with in as much detail. Rogin's broad study of Midwestern support for radical movements examined geographic location in addition to ancestry and class as an indicator of support for the

NonPartisan League and Populism in North Dakota. He found that League support was strong along what he called the "settled frontier" in the western part of the state and weaker in the richer and more stable east (Rogin, 1967, p. 123).

Chrislock (1971) found the degree of ruralness and urbanness to play a significant role in support for progressivism in Minnesota. While progressives enjoyed relatively strong support across both ends of this spectrum, it was the rural middle class that provided the strongest and most loyal support. McNall (1988) found that a measurably large portion of Populist support came from farmers in the rural regions. But those against the movement or not sensitive to it were usually merchants and those residing in cities and other urban areas. He noted that this was in good part do to ideological differences that existed between the two groups in regard to such issues as the meaning of growth and development (McNall, 1988, p. 132).

Unfortunately, agricultural economic characteristics like tenancy and foreclosure were not as widely covered as this writer had initially believed. The only scholar who looked at these subjects, and then only briefly, was Shover (1965). He found that the area of Iowa where the Farmer's Holiday movement occurred had tenancy rates above the State average of 50 per cent, but that other areas of

the State with even higher tenancy rates experienced no protest activity. As for rates of foreclosure, the counties where protest occurred ranked in the middle range of Iowa counties, neither highest nor lowest (Shover, 1965, p. 4). Shover found both these variables to be inconclusive in explaining agrarianism as it occurred in that State.

The competing theories: Pluralism and the Political Tradition perspective

Pluralism and Rogin's political tradition perspective have been the most popular explanations for the rise of right-wing extremism in the Midwest. Both were interested in trying to account for the popularity of McCarthyism in Midwestern states during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In doing so, both theories made linkages between the McCarthy phenomenon and traditional characteristics its followers and opponents from the region.

Pluralism, or more specifically modern pluralism, is generally a theory which defends shared power and diverse values in a contemporary world. As a theory of history, it sees industrialization is a key player. For the pluralist, the industrial revolution led to the rise of rational, socially stabilizing group politics (Rogin, 1967, p. 10). While industrialization destroyed old group ties, it created new ones. Where group ties were previously based on tradition, they were now based on

rationality (Kornhauser, 1959, p. 231). Thus, pluralists saw group politics as a triumph of the industrialized, modern society. Before industrialization, politics was based on the masses. Mass politics is seen as irrational and arising from desperation, not focusing on concrete group demands to improve the position of individuals within the group. The solution to problems in mass politics, according to the pluralist, is either pointless or threatening to society as a whole. Mass politics involves irrationality and chaos. Group politics involves ordered sensibility (Rogin, 1967, p. 15).

Pluralists see the rise of McCarthyism, the John Birch Society, and other right-wing movements that emerged after World War II as the essence of mass politics. They find the origins of this right-wing extremism to be rooted in pre-New Deal reform movements in general, and in Midwestern agrarian radicalism, in particular.

The connection between right-wing extremism and agrarian radicalism is unsurprisingly evident to the pluralist. Ideologically, both trafficked in moral absolutes and exalted a moral tone (Hofstadter, 1955, p. 315). They were both anti-industrial and anti-elitist in nature and demanded a radical reorganization of society. They were nativist, and they had a conspiracy theory which blamed political wrong-doing on individual moral failure instead of on the structure of society (Rogin, 1967, p.

28).

The pluralists defined the agrarian radical and the right-wing extremist in the same way. Hofstadter's "paranoid style in American politics" is as common in the Populist movement as it is in McCarthyism. Both movements found it necessary and legitimate to place the blame for their problems on a conspiracy by an outside, alien force. For McCarthy, it was Communism, for the Populists, it was the financiers and bankers of the East (Hofstadter, 1965, pp. 7-8). Bell felt that the title of "dispossessed" described the agrarian radical supporters just as fittingly as it described the supporters of right-wing extremism. (Bell, 1963, p. 3). Both groups were becoming culturally dislocated because of a quickly changing world. To the agrarian radical, this dislocation was brought on by rapid industrialization and massive immigration, the result of which was the decreased importance of the rural agricultural sector as a national economic and political force. To the supporters of McCarthy, dislocation was brought on by increased technology, civil rights legislation, and a cold war stalemate that did not allow the United States to be the unconditional victor (Bell, 1963, pp. 19-29).

While the theoretical evidence of the connection between right-wing extremism and agrarian radicalism is compelling, the physical evidence is less so. No real

research or study was done which looked for a link between the two movements in regard to support. The closest one comes to such research is a study by Martin Trow which shows disproportionate support for McCarthy in Bennington, Vermont, among those who opposed big business and big labor, traditional enemies of agrarian radicals according to the pluralist point of view (Rogin, 1967, p. 29). The best evidence that backed up the pluralist claim of a link between support for agrarian radicalism in the Midwest and right-wing extremism came from congressional records. Congressional support for McCarthy was strong in the Midwest, particularly in those states which were Progressive and Populist strongholds. States such as South Dakota, and Minnesota were represented by senators who supported or endorsed McCarthy. North Dakota, the most radical of the agrarian radical states, was represented by two senators who helped organize the Nonpartisan League. Both voted against McCarthy's censure in 1954 (Rogin, 1967, p. 104). McCarthy himself represented Wisconsin in the Senate and was re-elected in convincing fashion to that seat in 1952 while he was at the height of his anti-communist crusade.

Rogin's interest in McCarthyism as a mass movement and the claims made by the pluralists as to its origins led him to study the support base for this phenomenon. He was particularly interested in the pluralist claim that

McCarthyism had its roots in the agrarian radical movements of fifty years prior. Rogin wanted to see if, in fact, those Midwestern groups which supported agrarian radicalism were the same ones which supported the senator during his campaign against domestic communism.

Rogin's study looked at support for agrarian radicalism and McCarthyism at the county level in Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota, three states which showed relatively strong support for both types of movements. His analysis considered variables which scholars say point groups toward support or opposition of radical agrarian movements. These included ethnicity, crop production, economic prosperity, class, and voting pattern. Across the board, Rogin found that McCarthyism received no significant support from any group in his analysis which was inclined to support agrarian radicalism.

Rogin's study was ecological in that it looked not only at each state separately but looked at specific regions (based on ethnicity, class, geography, etc.) within each state. No one variable was a key indicator of movement support across all three states. Instead, each variable played a different role, be it positive or negative, strong or weak, in movement support in each state as well as each region. For example, Rogin found ethnicity to be more of an important indicator in North

Dakota than in the other two states. In North Dakota, Scandinavians were the supporters of Populism and the Nonpartisan League and Germans and Russian-Germans were the opponents. In the early 1950s the role of supporter and opponent would be reversed in regard to McCarthyism (Rogin, 1967, pp. 131-136). In South Dakota, crop production and crop diversification was to play a dominant role (Rogin, 1967, p. 166). Taken as a whole, the counties of each state which supported Populism, Progressivism, the League, and other agrarian movements from that era did not show any kind of similar support for McCarthyism.

Rogin concluded that McCarthyite support in the Midwest did not stem from the region's radical agrarian tradition but from a parallel tradition of conservatism that exists in the Midwest. This tradition not only explained support for McCarthyism but also explained opposition to agrarian radicalism. This conservatism, Rogin claimed, originated from numerous factors, including those variables which he deals with in his analysis. Ethnicity, crops production, class, and other factors led certain Midwestern farming communities to adhere to a conservative mentality (see Rogin, 1967, pp. 99, 119-120, and 162-165 for examples) which predisposed them to oppose movements of agrarian radicalism in the liberal tradition.

An analysis of what constitutes conservatism and

liberalism is necessary because of how the pluralists and Rogin differed in their views of agrarian radicalism. Both the pluralists and Rogin saw right-wing extremism as an irrational political and social movement that was more ideologically oriented than it was agenda oriented. As previously stated, pluralists link modern right-wing extremism to the agrarian movements of the turn of the century. Rogin, on the other hand, claims that modern right-wing extremism is not rooted in agrarian radicalism but rather in traditional conservatism.

Pluralists found agrarian radicalism to be irrational as a reform movement in comparison to the New Deal of the 1930s. As an example of this, Hofstadter points to the Populist emphasis on free silver as the cure-all for American economic woes (Hofstadter, 1948, p. 185-190). But even more than this, pluralists suggested that agrarian radicalism was irrational because of its concentration on moral rather than practical issues. Pluralists found agrarian radicalism to be anti-industrial, anti-elite, and in some cases anti-Semitic, nativist, and overindulged in theories of foreign conspiracy. They also saw it as a movement which attempted to return America to her rural, agrarian roots (Hofstadter, 1948, p. 183; Hofstadter, 1955, p. 62-93; Rogin, 1967, p. 26-28 and 173-177). The same charges have been made of modern right-wing extremism.

Rogin's view of agrarian radicalism greatly contrasts that of the pluralists. While some of the leaders and supporters of the agrarian movements may have had ideologies and beliefs that were rooted in anti-Semitism, anti-industrialism, and conspiracy theory, such views did not come out in the platforms or actions of the movements as a whole. Populists, Progressives, and the Nonpartisan League demanded a graduated income tax, government regulation of railroads, control over monopoly, lower tariffs, increased education, direct election of senators, an eight hour work day, hail and crop insurance, and government loans to farmers at low interest rates (Rogin, 1967, p. 171). These were not anti-industrial reforms or reforms which tried to return America to its rural, agrarian roots. Most of these reforms would come to pass by the end of the 1930s. Certainly there was conflict between agrarian radicals and industrial conservatives, but as Rogin stated:

This conflict was not about industrialization in the abstract, but about the control of railroads, the power of monopolies, the falling prices of crops, the benefits and dangers of inflation, big business control of politics, and other issues which could all have been met as the Populists desired without undermining industrialization (Rogin, 1967, p. 170-171).

Rogin went on to suggest that the agrarian radical movements were more supportive of labor than they were opposed to it. While they did not have a specific labor agenda, they did provide support to labor during the

Haymarket incident and the Pullman Boycott as well as a number of western mining strikes (Rogin, 1967, p. 173).

With the differences between the modern far right and the agrarian radicalism made clear, Rogin sought to find a new political origin for McCarthy, the Birch Society, and the post-war extreme right in general. He found this origin in traditional conservatism.

It is important here to distinguish between conservatism, of which Rogin claims is the origin of right-wing extremism, and liberalism, which Rogin suggests radical agrarianism is closely related. The main distinction between the two is how they view the role of government and business. Conservatism calls most importantly for a limited government and free market. Opposition to change is also a key view of conservatism, but this view must be put in proper context of American history. Opposition to change mainly means opposition to changes in the free market and the government as it was before the reform era of the 1930s and beyond. Hofstadter claimed that the post-WWII liberals were, in fact, now the new conservatives, since the liberal based New Deal legislations were firmly in place and this was something they wished to maintain (see Hofstadter's "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt" in Bell's The Radical Right, 1963, p. 63-65). In the end, the conservative felt that a free market and a *laissez-faire* government would help preserve

individual rights.

Liberals, on the other hand, advocate state intervention and dependence on government as a source of solutions for economic and social problems. Liberals would claim that this position, which encompasses welfare solutions and a redistributive policy, would also help to protect individual rights, but would do so by protecting the social collective as a whole.

Traditional Midwestern conservatism, Rogin suggested, is even more distinct from agrarian radicalism and liberalism than general conservatism. Besides being more right-wing on economic issues, it also tends to be less tolerant, more jingoist, more anti-intellectual, and more provincial (Rogin, 1967, p. 210). By putting conservatism and liberalism in to proper perspective, Rogin claimed:

In so far as farmers make left-wing economic demands, they place themselves behind a generally liberal leadership. In so far as rural economic demands are conservative, the leadership supported is generally conservative (Rogin, 1967, p. 210-211).

Rogin gives numerous examples of this in his study, but but so to do others who have studied agrarian radicalism. Morlan (1985) found this to be true in North Dakota where left-wing minded farmers supported the Nonpartisan League and its liberal economic agenda and right-wing, conservative minded farmers supported the Independent Voter's Association because of its opposition to the economic platform of the League (Morlan, 1985, p. 204 and

286-287). Lipset (1968) also found this to be true, especially among left-wing farmers who supported the wheat pool and the cooperative manufacturing, transportation, and distribution system advocated by the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (Lipset, 1968, p. 99-107 and p.161).

Thus, Rogin illustrates the differences between agrarian radicalism and traditionalism conservatism, and right-wing extremisms link to the latter. But while this link is justified, it must be reaffirmed that the right-wing extremism dealt with in this thesis was just that, extreme, more extreme than traditional conservatism. So much so that it deserved its own place on the political continuum.

Summary

The literature reviewed for this study considered right-wing and left-wing agrarian movements in the United States in general and the Midwest in particular. Post-World War II Right-wing movements were found to be anti-federal government, conspiracy oriented, and based on Christian fundamentalism. The right-wing extremism in the Midwest during the 1980s was also based on these ideologies, but to more of an extreme degree.

Literature on radical agrarian movements in the Midwest noted a number of different factors that played a

role in community support for such movements. Ethnicity, social class, crop production, and a number of other variables were considered by scholars to be influential. The influence of these variables were not universal but were dependent upon the specific movement and the specific region.

Finally, literature on two contrasting theories attempting to find a historical explanation for Midwestern right-wing extremism were reviewed. The Pluralist argument, coming from such theorists as Hofstadter, Kornhauser, and Bell, found Right-wing extremism in the Midwest to be rooted in the radical agrarian movements from the turn of the century. The political tradition perspective of Rogin, on the other hand, found Midwestern right-wing extremism to be rooted not in agrarian radicalism but in traditional Midwestern conservatism.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Statement of the Problem

The primary problem of this study, as stated in the introduction, is why right-wing extremism in the 1980s was supported by some Midwestern counties and not others. This problem shall be addressed by comparing the validity of the two contending theories: pluralism and the political tradition perspective.

The object being studied in this thesis is the Midwestern county. We make this our object of study because it is the community, not the movement, that is of prime importance. In the Midwest, counties tend to be communities in themselves; relatively homogenous, lightly populated, and rural (Leistritz, Barstow-Shoop et al., 1987). Midwestern counties tend to be homogenous not only in occupation (meaning that the population is made up of either farmers or are in some way dependent on farming) but also in ancestry, crops produced, and class.

Historical response to times of crisis is an important variable in this study. The pluralist argument and the political tradition perspective both claim that

how a county reacted politically to critical times in the past plays the key role in determining how that county would react to right-wing extremism. However, the theories find different answers as to whether this reaction to right-wing extremism would be positive or negative. According to the pluralist argument, those counties which were strong backers of agrarian radicalism were also the ones which backed right-wing extremism. The political tradition perspective, on the other hand, disagrees with this argument, claiming that no group inclined to support right-wing extremism were supporters of agrarian radicalism. Instead, it was those groups which opposed agrarian radicalism that supported right-wing extremism. These groups are defined by the political tradition perspective as traditional conservatives.

Historical response to crisis is dependent on those variables covered in the agrarian radical section of the literature review. These variables, which include ancestry, crop production, farm income/prosperity, and severity of crisis, point agriculturally based communities towards different responses to liberal movements of the agrarian radical tradition.

Thus, there are main two objectives in this study. First, we want to find out how and if the historical response variable affects county response to right-wing extremism, and secondly, we want to find if and how the

other variables affect the historical response variable.

A third objective of this study, distinct from the other two but of no less importance, is to apply a theoretical analysis to a relatively new phenomenon that has yet to be examined in such a way. Almost all work done on right-wing extremist movements has focused on those movements which occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. This study focuses attention on the more recent right-wing extremism in the Midwest. This thesis also studies the subject systematically, similar to Rogin's work on McCarthyism in the Midwest and Paige's work on third world agrarian revolutions. Such a study is not typical of those who have analyzed right-wing extremism in the United States.

Measurements of Right-wing Extremist Activity During the Farm Crisis

Unlike the literature which looked at radical agrarian movements (see Chrislock, Goodwyn, and Morlan), the literature which looked at right-wing extremism during the farm crisis did not deal intensively with the activities and actions of the groups and organizations involved. The literature on Populism, Progressivism, the Nonpartisan League, and the Farmer's Holiday Movement looked closely and systematically at what the groups involved in these movements did to establish influential footholds and

movement cultures within receptive communities throughout the Midwest. This included the county alliances formed in Kansas and Nebraska during the Populist movement (Goodwyn, 1976, pp. 173-175), the solicitation of subscriptions by Nonpartisan League organizers to that movement's paper (Morlan, 1985, pp. 35-45), and the roadblocks formed by Farmer's Holiday members in Iowa to stop shipments of crops and other produce into cities for nationwide distribution (Shover, 1965, pp. 41-46). Based on this literature, one could pinpoint where the movements had a following with relative ease. The problem this writer had with the literature on right-wing extremism during the farm crisis was its reliability. As stated in the literature review, the literature on right-wing extremism is not as scholarly as that on agrarian radicalism. Rather, it is more journalistically oriented. To compensate, the literature on right-wing extremism during the farm crisis was analyzed in such a way that connections of activities could be made. In other words, the establishment of, for example, a *pro se* law school in a certain county, as cited in three or four of the texts or research reports reviewed, would justify that activity or organizational element as an indicator of right-wing extremism in that county.

Two levels of right-wing extremism were specified in this study: a high degree and a lesser degree. These two

levels were based on both the amount and type of extremist activity within each county. For this thesis, a point scale was devised as a way to designate a county as having a high degree or lesser degree of extremist activity. This point scale was set up mainly because of the scarcity of data on right-wing extremism. Because the data was so thin, this scale will help readers understand incidences of right-wing extremism and their intensity.

This scale gave a certain amount of points to different types of activity. Activity which showed mobilization of local citizens towards right-wing extremism was worth one point. Activity which showed extremist organization building was worth two points. And activity which showed extremist militancy within counties was worth three points.

The type of activity which showed mobilization in counties was meetings of right-wing extremist groups and organizations that involved local citizens. These local citizens could have included not only farmers but others as well, such as law enforcement officials, local government officials, and businessmen.

Activity which constituted organization building was that type of activity which established right-wing extremist institutions. These institutions included Christian Identity churches, Christian Identity schools, and *pro se* law schools.

Three types of activity fell under the category of extremist militancy. The first of these was tax protest among county citizens. As stated in the literature review, many of the right-wing extremist groups that took root in the Midwest during the 1980s did not believe in government above the county level. Because of this, many of the members of these groups refused to pay state and federal taxes. This activity is defined as militant because such activity could and often did lead to direct confrontation with state and federal law enforcement officials (see Corcoran, 1990; Coates, 1988; and Klanwatch, December, 1989, for examples). The second type of activity that was considered militant in this study was the formation or attempted formation of Constitutional Townships. Constitutional Townships were town governments that were set up to be independent from state governments and the federal government, assuming all responsibility for the protection and welfare of its citizens without any outside help (Corcoran, 1990, p. 77). The third type of activity which fell under the category of militancy, was actual confrontations between the extremist groups in a county and law enforcement officials. These confrontations usually stemmed from the belief of Midwestern extremist groups that government above the county level should not be recognized (see, Corcoran, 1990; Coates, 1988; Klanwatch, December, 1989; Zekind and

Levitas, 1986; and ADL Special Report, 1986). Extremists who practiced this belief many times not only refused to pay their taxes, but also didn't register for selective service or register and license their vehicles.

There were three other types of recognized extremist activities, each worth one point. The first of these activities is the presence of an extremist compound within a county. The second of these activities was the presence of an independent extremist group within a county. These were local groups which did not set up chapters or groups in other locations in the country (see Klanwatch, December, 1989, for examples). The third type of activity was the residence of nationally recognized extremist leaders within a county. These activities did not fall into the categories of mobilization, organization building, or militancy, but did suggest some type of extremist presence within a county.

Table I shows the point total for each county. Shawano gathered the most points, a total of ten. Two of those points came from the presence of Identity churches within Shawano and another two came from the presence of a *pro se* law school called the Christian Liberty Academy. Another three points came from the presence of a Constitutional Township known as Tigerton Dells (Corcoran, 1990, p.29). The three remaining points came from the presence of a *Posse* compound, the presence of an Identity

Table I
Right-wing Extremist Activity in Midwestern Counties

	<u>Mobilization</u>		<u>Organization Building</u>		
	Meetings of extremist groups		<u>Identity schools</u>	<u>Identity churches</u>	<u>Law schools</u>
1) McIntosh	-		2	-	-
2) Richardson	1		-	-	-
3) Shawano	-		-	2	2
4) Stutsman	1		-	-	-
5) Wells	-		-	-	-

	<u>Militancy</u>			<u>Other</u>
	<u>Tax protesters</u>	<u>Confrontation</u>	<u>Const. Township</u>	<u>Compound Extremist groups Extremist leaders</u>
1) McIntosh	3	-	3	-
2) Richardson	-	3	-	1
3) Shawano	-	-	3	3
4) Stutsman	-	3	3	-
5) Wells	3	1	1	1

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rank Order</u>
1) McIntosh	8	2
2) Richardson	5	4
3) Shawano	10	1
4) Stutsman	7	3
5) Wells	4	5

group known as Christians for Truth, and the residence within Shawano of two national leaders of the *Posse Comitatus*, James Wickstrom and Thomas Stockheimer (Klanwatch, December, 1989, p. 26).

McIntosh had the second most points with a total of eight. Two of those points came from the presence of an Identity based alternative grammar school. Three other points came the presence of documented tax protesters and another three from the attempted establishment of a Constitutional Township.

Stutsman gathered a total of seven points, placing it third among the five extremist counties. One of these points came from the meetings of the local *Posse* chapter which was attended by local citizens. The remaining six points came from the militancy category, three for the attempts of the citizens of Medina, North Dakota, to form a Constitutional Township (Corcoran, 1990, p. 77) and three for a major shoot-out between *Posse* members and U.S. Marshals in 1983 which left two U.S. Marshals dead (Coates, 1988, p. 104-108).

Richardson and Wells gathered the least amount of points, five and four respectively. Richardson's points came from the meetings of the local *Posse* chapter (one), the presence of an extremist compound (one), and a double murder in 1985 which lead to a stand off between *Posse* members and law enforcement officials (three) (Coates,

1988, p. 133-135; ADL Special Report, 1986, p. 7). As for Wells, three of its four points came from the presence of documented tax protesters and the remaining point from the residence within the county of nationally renowned *Posse* member Gordon Kahl who was killed in a shoot-out with the F.B.I. in Arkansas in 1983 (Corcoran, 1990, p. 71, 139-142).

To separate these counties into levels of a high degree of extremist activity and a lesser degree of activity, a cutoff line was drawn at six points, where those counties with six or more points were designated as having a high degree of extremist activity and those counties with five points or less were designated as having a lesser degree of extremist activity. Thus, three counties, McIntosh, Shawano, and Stutsman, had a high degree of extremist activity, and the remaining two counties, Richardson and Wells, had lesser degrees of extremist activity.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

To answer the question of why right-wing extremist activity occurred to a greater degree in some communities and not others, I used a comparative analysis of a sample of Midwestern counties. The sampling was done purposively. A group of 10 counties were matched so that there was equal or near equal representation of hosts and non-hosts of right-wing extremism. They were selected in a way so that almost all Midwestern states involved would be represented. A matched sample was used instead of a random sample to assure that all counties were similar in regard to agricultural dependency and ruralness.

The selection of the ten counties was based on data collected through the review of literature. The literature dealing with right-wing extremism described the actions and activities of extremist groups in counties and communities throughout the Midwest. All counties where these groups or organizations were present and active, as described by the literature, were considered. A total of five right-wing extremist counties were selected for this study. These counties were then labeled as having a high degree or a lesser degree of extremist activity depending

on how active groups were within each county. The criteria for labeling each extremist county is described in chapter III.

The selection of the five remaining counties was based on the following criteria: one, they could show no level of extremist activity as described in the literature on right-wing extremism; and two, to make regional analyses possible, they had to reside in the same region or area as most of the right-wing extremist counties. These counties were selected based on data collected through the review of literature on the farm crisis and the literature on agrarian radicalism.

Upon completing the selection of the sample population, attention was focused on the collection of variable related data from each county. The variables being used in this study are as follows:

- 1) Historical response to crisis
- 2) Ancestry
- 3) Crop production
- 4) Farm income/prosperity
- 5) Severity of crisis
- 6) Tenancy
- 7) Voting record

These variables will be dealt with independently to illustrate how each is defined and how information for each county was collected.

1) Historical response to crisis -- Historical response to crisis is how a community or county has traditionally responded to times of crisis. In other words, how has a community or county reacted politically to crises in the past. Crisis is meant in the economic sense. There tends to be two types of responses. One response is to react with left-wing political movements. This response in the Midwest means agrarian radicalism. The second type of response is no response at all. This "nonresponse" is defined as traditional conservatism (Rogin, 1967, p. 31). Right-wing political movements are not an option because they did not occur in the Midwest as a regionally specific movement until the 1980s, the time period under scrutiny in this thesis.

The data on this variable was drawn from the literature dealing with agrarian radicalism and partially from the literature on right-wing extremism.

2) Ancestry -- Ancestry is the ancestral and/or ethnic make up of the population of each county. The data for this variable was obtained from the 1980 Bureau of Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics of each state involved in this study. The 1980 Census was used because it was the last one taken before the beginning of the farm crisis in the Midwest. The majority ancestral group from each county was highlighted along with the second most common ancestral group. In some cases, when there was no

clear majority or only a slight majority, the third and sometimes forth most common ancestral groups were considered.

3) Crop production -- Crop production is the types of crops produced in each county. The crop produced by the most farmers is considered the majority crop and is highlighted as the most prevalent crop in that county. The second most produced crop by farmers within a county was also considered. When there was no crop produced by a clear majority of farmers within a county, the third and sometimes forth most common crop produced considered. The data for this variable was obtained from the 1982 Census of Agriculture for each state involved in this study. The 1982 agricultural census was used because it was the last one taken before the 1980's farm crisis became serious.

4) Farm income/prosperity -- Farm income/prosperity is defined as the general economic well being and prosperity of farms and farming within each county. There are two components to this variable. The most important is the average value of land and buildings per acre and is measured by dollars per acre. This component is the most important because land value is the basis of a farmer's wealth. The greater a farmer's land value, the greater his or her ability to borrow larger sums of money with which more land can be purchased, thus increasing both property values and the amount of crops which can be

produced (Friedberger, 1988, p. 7 and Corcoran, 1990, p. 8-9). The data for this component of the variable is obtained from the 1982 Census of Agriculture. The 1982 Census is used because land values were at their peak at that time before they made their dramatic downward spiral.

The second component of this variable was the average total sales of farm products per farm. This component reflects farm prosperity through farm productivity and was measured in dollars per farm. Data for this component was also obtained from the 1982 Census of Agriculture.

5) Severity of Crisis -- Severity of crisis is defined as the degree of economic loss suffered by each county during the farm crisis. Like the farm income/prosperity variable, severity of crisis is made up of two components. The first component, and again the most important, is the average decrease in value of land and buildings per farm per county. The data for this component of the severity of crisis variable comes from the 1982 Census of Agriculture and the 1987 Census of Agriculture. Its value comes from subtracting the 1987 value from the 1982 value, then dividing that value by the 1982 value, yielding a percentage. That figure is the percent decrease in value of land per farm between 1982 and 1987. The 1982 census is used because it is the last one taken just before the full effects of the farm crisis were felt, thus land values were at a higher level than any time

before. The 1987 census is used because it was taken at the height of the farm crisis when land values were decreasing and in most cases at their lowest.

The second component of the severity of crisis variable is percent change in farm earnings from the 1970s, a decade of record prosperity, to the 1980s. Farm earnings is determined by subtracting farm business operating expenses and debt repayment and family living expenses from total gross income from all sources (Johnson, Morehart, and Erickson, 1987, p. 7). The data for this variable was obtained from the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis. Farm earnings are recorded on a yearly basis, as opposed to once every five or ten years like the information taken from the the general U.S. Census and the Census of Agriculture. Thus, the farm earnings for each year are added together to get a total for each decade. The totals for each decade are then compared to get a percent increase or decrease in farm earnings.

6) Tenancy -- Tenure was used as a supplemental variable to the farm prosperity and severity of crisis variable. Tenancy is not often considered in the study of agrarian movements in the United States. However, it may be a variable worth examining. Paige took an exhaustive look at tenancy when studying third world agrarian revolutions, but the tenancy he was concerned with was sharecropping

in which the tenant is, for the most part, dependent on the landlord and has minimal ties to the land, not a condition that the writer of this thesis found very prevalent in the Midwestern United States. Paige found that certain types of crops produced leads to certain types of tenant conditions (stable as compared to unstable) which in turn leads to either conservative or radical political behavior (Paige, 1975, p. 60-66). Ellinger and Barry (1987) found that as tenancy increases so does a farm's leverage and accounting rates of return because land is a lower proportion of total assets (Ellinger and Barry, 1987, p. 107). Such conditions are compounded in times of crisis.

Rate of tenancy is the amount of land owned in comparison to the amount of land rented or not fully owned. Data for this variable was obtained from the 1987 Census of Agriculture. It was measured by recording the number of full owners, part owners, and tenants among the total number of farms per county.

7) Voting record -- The voting record of each county for the 1964 and 1968 Presidential elections was analyzed to see if there was a consistent pattern of conservatism through the years which interceded the radical agrarian movements and the right-wing extremism of the 1980s. These elections were used because they offered two prime examples of Presidential candidates who were considered to

be on the far right of the political spectrum: Barry Goldwater for the Republicans in 1964 and George Wallace for the American Party in 1968 (see Ribuffo, 1983, and Lipset, 1970, for examples of the extremist ideas and agendas of Goldwater and Wallace and their supporters).

Data for this variable was obtained by consulting the Congressional Quarterly's America Votes manual, which lists the voting record of each county in the United States for Presidential, Congressional, and State elections.

After the data had been collected, it was then analyzed to find correlations between each variable and county levels of right-wing extremism. In all cases, the variable values for each county was measured against the State average for that variable. Separate regional analyses were made of counties which were in specific geographic or regional areas. This was done to determine why counties from the same region would have different levels of right-wing activity.

CHAPTER V
DATA ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

The ten counties involved in this study represent six of the seven Midwestern states with the most movement activity throughout the history of agrarian movements in the United States. These counties and their levels of right-wing extremist activity are presented in Table II.

Table II

Right-Wing Extremist Activity by County

<u>Some</u>	<u>None</u>
1) McIntosh Co., North Dakota	1) Cowley Co., Kansas
2) Richardson Co., Nebraska	2) Kidder Co., North Dakota
3) Shawano Co., Wisconsin	3) Plymouth Co., Iowa
4) Stutsman Co., North Dakota	4) Sioux Co., Iowa
5) Wells Co., North Dakota	5) Union Co., South Dakota

All ten counties are rural in character, with none having a population of more than 40,000 or a city within its borders with a population of more than 16,000. All ten counties are also economically dependent on agriculture or have a sizable portion of their economy coming from agriculture.

This study looked extensively at the correlation of independent variable rates with the dependent variable of degree of right-wing extremist activity. The degree of extremist activity in each county is discussed in chapter III. The findings for each variable are complex and are thus dealt with individually.

Economic variables

The economic variables are: farm income/prosperity, severity of crisis, and tenancy . They are presented in Table III. These variables proved to be weakly associated with county support or nonsupport for right-wing extremism. There was little difference in the rates of farm prosperity among both hosting and non-hosting counties. Three counties with high farm prosperity did not host right-wing extremism, but their significance is somewhat offset by two counties with high farm prosperity which hosted right-wing extremism. Counties with moderate rates of farm prosperity were also shown to be only slightly revealing with two hosting right-wing extremism and one not hosting right-wing extremism. Two counties with low levels of farm prosperity were split with one hosting and one not hosting right-wing extremism.

Severity of crisis and tenancy were only slightly indicative of county support or not support right-wing extremism. The mean percent decrease in land value among non-host counties was 34.4 percent, as compared to 30.3

Table III

Economic Variables

Farm Income/ProsperitySupporters of Right-Wing
Extremism

<u>County</u>	<u>Income/Prosperity</u>
1) McIntosh	Low
2) Richardson	High
3) Shawano	High
4) Stutsman	Moderate
5) Wells	Moderate

Nonsupporters of Right-Wing
Extremism

<u>County</u>	<u>Income/Prosperity</u>
1) Cowley	Moderate
2) Kidder	Low
3) Plymouth	High
4) Sioux	High
5) Union	High

Severity of CrisisSupporters of Right-Wing
Extremism

<u>County</u>	<u>Crisis Severity:</u> <u>% Decrease in Land Value</u>
1) McIntosh	27.3%
2) Richardson	40%
3) Shawano	22%
4) Stutsman	28.3%
5) Wells	34%

Nonsupporters of Right-Wing
Extremism

<u>County</u>	<u>Crisis Severity:</u> <u>% Decrease in Land Value</u>
1) Cowley	30%
2) Kidder	29.8%
3) Plymouth	37.5%
4) Sioux	41.5%
5) Union	33%

TenancySupporters of Right-Wing
Extremism

<u>County</u>	<u>Tenancy Rate</u>
1) McIntosh	14.3%
2) Richardson	21%
3) Shawano	4.8%
4) Stutsman	16.5%
5) Wells	20.6%

Nonsupporters of Right-Wing
Extremism

<u>County</u>	<u>Tenancy Rate</u>
1) Cowley	16.2%
2) Kidder	12.9%
3) Plymouth	24.5%
4) Sioux	21.4%
5) Union	20.7%

percent among those counties which hosted right-wing extremism. Percent change in farm earnings did show some degree of difference between the two sets of counties. Counties which hosted right-wing extremism had an average increase in farm earnings of 15.4 percent while non-host counties had an average decrease in earnings of 13.1 percent. However, both sets of counties had an extreme outlying score: Shawano for the hosting counties with an increase of 60.4 percent, and Kidder for the non-host counties with a decrease of 13.1 percent. When these scores are dropped, the differences decline significantly, with non-host counties averaging a two percent decrease in farm earnings and hosting counties with a 14.9 percent decrease in farm earnings.

Non-hosting counties had a mean tenancy rate that was only slightly higher than hosting counties, 19.4 percent compared to 15.4 percent. Because there is such a small number of cases being dealt with in this study, these differences do not appear to be very significant.

Ancestry

Ancestry was a more telling factor than any of the economic variables. The findings for this variable are presented in table IV. The five counties which hosted right-wing extremism all had high rates of German ancestry, between 58 percent and 87 percent. The next

most frequent ancestral groups made up less than 20 percent of the population in any of these counties.

Three of the five counties which did not host right-wing extremism also had high rates of German ancestry. One of these counties, however, Union County, had a German ancestral population of only 31 percent, as compared to the 67 percent and 75 percent found in the other two counties, Plymouth and Kidder. Union happened to be the most diverse county of the entire sample with Norwegian, Swedish, and Irish ancestral groups all making up between 10 and 20 percent of the population.

Table IV

Ancestry

<u>Right-Wing Extremist Activity</u>		<u>No Right-Wing Extremist Activity</u>	
<u>County</u>	<u>Ancestry</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Ancestry</u>
1) McIntosh	German (87%)	1) Cowley	German (29%)
2) Richardson	German (58%)	2) Kidder	German (75%)
3) Shawano	German (71%)	3) Plymouth	German (67%)
4) Stutsman	German (61%)	4) Sioux	German (14%)
5) Wells	German (70%)	5) Union	German (31%)

The other two counties which did not host right-wing extremism, Sioux and Cowley, had high rates of Dutch and English respectively. Cowley county's 34 percent English ancestry rate was followed closely by a German ancestry rate of 29 percent. Each county's total ancestral rates

can be found in Appendix A.

Crop production

There was at least a moderate degree of differentiation between hosts and non-host of right-wing extremism in regard to crop production. Table V shows the findings for this variable in each county.

Wheat growing counties were prominent among counties

Table V
Crop Production

<u>Right-Wing Extremist</u> <u>County</u>	<u>Crops Produced</u>	<u>Not Right-Wing Extremist</u> <u>County</u>	<u>Crops Produced</u>
1) McIntosh	Mostly wheat	1) Cowley	Mostly wheat and cattle
2) Richardson	Extremely diverse -soybean -corn -wheat -cattle -hog	2) Kidder	Mostly wheat and cattle
3) Shawano	Mainly dairy and some cattle	3) Plymouth	Extremely diverse -corn -cattle -soybean -hog
4) Stutsman	Exclusively wheat and cattle	4) Sioux	Extremely diverse -corn -soybean -cattle -hog
5) Wells	Wheat and high degree of cattle	5) Union	Mainly corn plus soybean and cattle

hosting right-wing extremism in this study. Three counties, McIntosh, Stutsman and Wells were all either exclusively wheat growers or were wheat growers plus cattle or another crop. The two counties hosting right-wing extremism, Shawano and Richardson, did not have a high degree of wheat grown. Shawano was mainly dairy and cattle. Richardson was very diverse, growing soybean and corn plus wheat to a lesser degree, as well as raising hog and cattle. No county hosting right-wing extremism was an exclusive corn producer or had a high degree of corn production.

Three of the counties which did not host right-wing extremism had a diverse crop production. These counties were Sioux, Plymouth, and Union, although Union County's crop diversification was less than the other two. Sioux and Plymouth both grew corn and soybean and had a high degree of hog and cattle raising as well. Union produced corn and soybean and raised cattle as well. Cowley and Kidder, the other two counties which did not host right-wing extremism, were both wheat growers and cattle raisers.

Historical response to crisis

How a county responded to prior economic crisis proved to be the most telling variable in this study. Table VI shows the results. Four of the five counties

which showed no extremist activity were strong supporters of radical agrarian movements. The lone exception, Sioux County in Iowa, showed no support for agrarian radicalism.

None of the five counties which experienced right-wing extremist activity had high levels of support for agrarian radicalism. Only two, Shawano and Wells, showed even low levels of support. The three remaining counties

Table VI
Historical Response to Crisis

<u>Right-Wing Extremist Activity</u>		<u>No Right-Wing Extremist Activity</u>	
<u>County</u>	<u>Support for Agrarian Radicalism</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Support for Agrarian Radicalism</u>
1) McIntosh	None	1) Cowley	Strong
2) Richardson	None	2) Kidder	Strong
3) Shawano	Low	3) Plymouth	Strong
4) Stutsman	None	4) Sioux	None
5) Wells	Low	5) Union	Strong

which hosted right-wing extremism, McIntosh, Richardson, and Stutsman, all showed no support for agrarian radical movements.

Voting record

There was almost no variation between the ten counties in regard to how they voted for the Republican Party in 1964 and the American Party in 1968. Table VII

shows the county voting rates for these parties during these elections. Both those counties which hosted right-wing extremism and those which did not voted in the middle range for Goldwater in 1964. Hosts and non-hosts averaged around 50 percent. When the high and low scores are not considered, non-host counties actually had a slightly higher voting rate for Goldwater than hosting counties, 48.5 percent in comparison to 47.1 percent. Only two Richardson, Nebraska, which was an extremist county, and Union, South Dakota, a non-extremist county, had voting rates for Goldwater that were lower than their state average. The voting rates for Goldwater in the seven Midwestern states covered in this study were relatively high, ranging from 36 percent to 47.4 percent, but he carried none of these states. Goldwater received 38.5 percent of the total U.S. vote in 1964.

The voting rates among the counties for George Wallace and the American Party in 1968 were virtually identical, averaging around seven percent for both counties which hosted right-wing extremism and those which did not. Both the highest and the lowest voting rates from non-host counties, Cowley at 11.8 percent and Sioux at 2.5 percent. Six counties, Richardson, Nebraska; Shawano, Wisconsin; Kidder and Wells, North Dakota; Cowley, Kansas; and Union, South Dakota, had voting rates higher than their state averages. However, all the

Table VII

1964 vote for Goldwater

<u>Right-wing Extremist Activity</u>		<u>No Right-wing Extremist Activity</u>	
<u>County</u>	<u>1964 vote</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>1964 vote</u>
1) McIntosh	66.6%	1) Cowley	47.9%
2) Richardson	46.8%	2) Kidder	51.3%
3) Shawano	49.7%	3) Plymouth	46.4%
4) Stutsman	42.1%	4) Sioux	65.6%
5) Wells	44.8%	5) Union	37.9%
National Average: 38.5%			

1968 vote for Wallace and American Party

<u>Right-wing Extremist Activity</u>		<u>No Right-wing Extremist Activity</u>	
<u>County</u>	<u>1968 vote</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>1968 vote</u>
1) McIntosh	4.7%	1) Cowley	11.8%
2) Richardson	10%	2) Kidder	9.9%
3) Shawano	8.9%	3) Plymouth	5.5%
4) Stutsman	5.2%	4) Sioux	2.5%
5) Wells	6.5%	5) Union	5.1%
National Average: 13.5%			

counties had voting rates that were lower than the national average. Wallace gained 13.5 percent of the total U.S. vote in 1968, most of which came from the South and the Deep South where he won all of his electoral votes (Scammon, 1970, p. 1).

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this analysis show a higher degree of support for Rogin's political tradition perspective than for the pluralist argument in regard to whether a county hosted or did not host right-wing extremism. To review briefly, pluralists found both post-war right-wing extremism, of which the Midwestern right-wing extremism of the 1980s is an extension, and the radical agrarian movements of the turn of the century to be preoccupied with issues of morality and fear of industrialization and urbanization. Groups which supported Senator McCarthy and general right-wing extremist organizations and individuals were the same ones which supported agrarian radicalism. Rogin's political tradition perspective ran contrary to this point of view. Rogin contended that agrarian radicalism was not based on moral issues or irrational arguments that were anti-industrial and anti-elitist like that found in post-war right-wing extremism, but rather it was democratic and offered concrete, rational solutions to the social problems it attempted to address (Rogin, 1967,

p. 30). Rogin further argued that right-wing extremism was rooted not in Midwestern agrarian radicalism but in traditional conservatism. His study found that those groups which supported radical agrarian movements did not provide support for right-wing extremism. This analysis finds considerably more support for the historical perspective than for the pluralist argument.

Ancestry and historical response to crisis provided the most evidence which supported Rogin's claim. Five of the eight counties with high rates of German ancestry hosted right-wing extremism. Of the three counties with high rates of German ancestry that did not host right-wing extremism, one, Union county, had a German ancestral majority of only 31 percent with three other ancestry groups having over 10 percent of the total population each. German ethnic groups were found to be the most ardent opponents of agrarian radicalism except for a few times when foreign crises or wars came into the picture. To the pluralists, these opponents of agrarian radicalism would not host right-wing extremism. But as the findings from this study show, counties with high rates of German ancestry, an ancestry group found by scholars to be extremely conservative (Rogin, 1967, p.118-121), did indeed host right-wing extremism.

Response to economic crisis provided the most backing for Rogin's political tradition perspective. This

variable looked directly at a county's support or lack of support for both right-wing extremism and agrarian radicalism. All four counties with high rates of support for agrarian radicalism showed no evidence of hosting right-wing extremism. Of the five counties which did host right-wing extremism, three provided no support for agrarian radicalism and the other two had only low degrees of support. One county, Sioux, provided support for neither.

Crop production actually provided slightly more support for the pluralist argument than for the political tradition perspective in comparison to ancestry and historical response to crisis. The findings for crop production are complex. Three of the four counties which produced wheat, traditionally supporters of agrarian radicalism, hosted right-wing extremism. Two of these counties, however, McIntosh and Stutsman, were opponents of agrarian radicalism, thus providing more support for the political tradition perspective claim than for the pluralist argument. Those counties with diverse crop production were more evenly split between hosts and non-hosts of right-wing extremism. Three of the five showed no right-wing extremist activity. Traditionally, diverse crop production was an indicator of opposition for radical agrarian movements. Scholars link this attitude to the conservatism spawned by self-reliance, a characteristic of

diverse crop producers and corn producers. The political tradition perspective would place these counties among the ranks of those who hosted right-wing extremism. But only two of the five counties actually did. One of these two, Richardson, was an opponent of agrarian radicalism. The other one, Shawano, was less diverse, being mainly a cattle raiser and dairy producer. Shawano, provided a low degree of support for agrarian radicalism. Two of the three counties which did not host right-wing extremism were supporters of agrarian radicalism. The sole corn producer, Union, did not host right-wing extremism and was a supporter of agrarian radicalism.

County voting rates for Goldwater in 1964 and Wallace in 1968 appeared to be inconclusive. Even so, some of the findings for this variable as it pertained to certain counties were interesting. First, McIntosh, a county which had one of the strongest extremist followings in the sample, had the highest voting rate for Goldwater among the ten counties, 66.6 percent. Sioux, which was a non-host of right-wing extremism and did not support agrarian radicalism, had the next highest with a voting rate for Goldwater of 65.6 percent. Union, one of the strongest supporters of radical agrarian movements, had the lowest voting rate for Goldwater at 37.9 percent. This was the only county in the sample that had a voting rate for Goldwater that was lower than the national average of 38.5

percent.

The Wallace vote in 1968 in these counties was also interesting. McIntosh and Sioux, who four years earlier had the highest voting rates for Goldwater, had the lowest voting rates for Wallace, 4.7 percent and 2.5 percent respectively. Cowley, a supporter of agrarian radicalism and the birthplace of Kansas Populism, but a county which did not host right-wing extremism, had the highest voting rate for Wallace at 11.8 percent. All the Midwestern states from which the sample counties came had low voting rates for Wallace and had a majority of votes for Nixon, the eventual winner. All of the counties in the sample had voting rates for Wallace which were below the national average of 13.5 percent.

Despite how interesting these findings on voting rates are, they lack in their ability to show any clear distinction between counties which played host to right-wing extremism and counties which did not. McIntosh and Sioux had the highest voting rates for Goldwater in 1964. Such evidence would be somewhat supportive of Rogin's argument. McIntosh had a high degree of right-wing extremist activity in the 1980s and was an opponent of agrarian radicalism. Sioux did not show signs of extremist activity. But neither did it show support for agrarian radicalism. Had these high conservative voting rates carried over to 1968 in the form of high votes for

Wallace, they would have supported the political tradition argument. But these two counties in 1968 had the lowest voting rates for Wallace.

Pluralists would get support for their argument from two counties. Cowley, the birthplace of Kansas Populism, had the highest voting rate of the ten counties for Wallace and would rank in the middle range of the ten in votes for Goldwater. Kidder, one of the strongest supporters of the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota, ranked third among the ten counties for both Goldwater and Wallace.

Support for the political tradition perspective in regard to voting rates was most evident in Union County. Union, the strongest supporter of agrarian radicalism in the entire sample, consistently had low voting rates for the conservative in both elections with the lowest for Goldwater in 1964 and the third lowest for Wallace in 1968. The voting rates in Richardson, which had the fourth highest in both 1964 and 1968, were somewhat supportive of the political tradition perspective, but not to the same degree as the rates found in Union.

A comparison of the county voting rates with their state and the national rates seemed to provide slightly more support for the pluralist argument than for the political tradition perspective. County voting rates for Goldwater tended to be higher than the national average

except in one case, that being Union. In all but two of the counties, Richardson and Union, voting rates for Goldwater were above the state average. County voting rates for Wallace were all lower than the national average of 13.5 percent. However, Wallace's appeal was mainly in the South, where most of his votes came from. Thus, these low rates may be misleading. The states from which the ten counties came averaged around seven percent for Wallace. Six of these counties, three of which hosted right-wing extremism and three which did not, had voting rates for Wallace that were higher than their state average.

Finally, the economic variables of farm income/prosperity, severity of crisis, and tenancy, provided no significant support for either the political tradition perspective or the pluralist argument. Farm income/prosperity was split regard to whether a county hosted or did not host right-wing extremism. Two of the four counties with middle income farms were hosts of right-wing extremism. Middle class farmers were considered by most who studied the subject to be supporters of agrarian radical movements. However, of the two middle income farm counties, Stutsman and Wells, Wells was the only one to provide any degree of support for agrarian radicalism, and even then only to a low degree. Cowley, the middle income farm county which did not

provide experience right-wing extremist activity, was a strong supporter of agrarian radicalism. Plymouth, one of the two counties which were upper income farming communities, did not host right-wing extremism, but was a supporter of agrarian radicalism. Shawano, one of the two upper income counties which hosted right-wing extremism, provided a low degree of support for agrarian radicalism. The other upper income county, Richardson, provided none.

Severity of crisis was evenly split between hosts and non-hosts of right-wing extremism. Of the six counties with very severe economic crises, three hosted right-wing extremism and three did not. Wells was the only one of the three which hosted right-wing extremism to show even slight support for agrarian radicalism. As for the three counties with very severe crises which did not host right-wing extremism, only one, Sioux, showed no support for agrarian radicalism.

Tenancy provided no real useful information, but this was mainly because of the lack of past research dealing with it in regard to movement support. No association could be found between a county's tenancy rate and the degree of right-wing extremist activity therein. It was found that those counties which did not host right-wing extremism had, on average, higher rates of tenancy, but this was mainly due to extreme outlier counties among both hosts and non-hosts of right-wing extremism.

These findings show that right-wing extremism was hosted mainly by those counties which opposed or did not support agrarian radicalism. The findings further show that those counties which were not hosts for right-wing extremism were traditional supporters of radical agrarian movements. However, because of the number of variables dealt with in this study, certain aspects of these findings remain complicated. For example, Stutsman County, North Dakota, a county which supported right-wing extremism and opposed agrarian radicalism, was found to have a large German ancestry group, indicative of the county's decision of support and opposition of each movement. However, Stutsman was also found to be a wheat growing county, as well as a county with mostly middle income farms and a relatively severe economic crisis during the 1980s. Such characteristics would normally point a county down a road toward support of radical agrarianism. In order to understand why a county would support one movement and oppose another under such conditions requires an in depth look at the characteristics of the region, area, or state, in which the county resides.

The Regional analyses in this study involved two areas: North Dakota, containing Kidder, McIntosh, Stutsman, and Wells; and the Missouri River corridor, containing Union county, South Dakota, Plymouth and Sioux counties, Iowa,

and Richardson county, Nebraska. Cowley was disregarded because it was an ideal agrarian radical county in that it was ancestrally non-German, wheat growing, and had a moderate farming income. Shawano was disregarded because it was relatively isolated from other counties so much that a regional analysis could not be done with it involved.

Regional Analysis I

Analysis of Four North Dakota Counties

From the beginning of the first agrarian movements in the late 1800s through World War II, no state in the Union was more consistently radical than North Dakota. It was carried by the Populists in the 1892 election. Between 1906 and 1954, it had either a left-wing governor or senator in office. And more than anything else, it was the birthplace of the most successful radical agrarian movement to occur in the Midwest, The Nonpartisan League. This radical tradition left a deep mark on North Dakota politics, a fact illustrated by Quintin Burdick's representation of North Dakota in the United States senate during the 1960's (Rogin, 1967, p. 134). Quintin Burdick's father, Usher Burdick, was a leading League politician during the 1920's.

Despite its tradition of agrarian radicalism, North

Dakota would become a hotbed for right-wing extremism during the farm crisis of the 1980's. Of the four North Dakota counties in our sample, McIntosh, Stutsman, Wells, and Kidder, three hosted Right-wing extremism to one degree or another. Kidder was the exception in that it displayed no right-wing extremist activity.

A comparative analysis of these four counties shows they are similar. All four had high rates of German ancestry, ranging between 61% and 87% of the county population. The Prosperity of the farms and severity of the farm crisis within the counties were similar. Tenancy rates within the four counties were not significantly different, with all being relatively low. As for crop production, the four counties were almost all exclusively wheat producers, with some amount of cattle production in Stutsman, Wells, and Kidder. Despite these similarities, only one county, Kidder, exhibited a high degree of support for agrarian radicalism and the Non-Partisan in particular. Wells showed a moderate degree of support while McIntosh and Stutsman showed no support at all.

Because a historical explanation is the most convincing argument for explaining why a county hosted or did not host right-wing extremism, this variable of traditional support for radical agrarian movements is important. The hypothesis of this study is that there is a negative correlation between county support for right-

MAP I

North Dakota

wing extremism and county support for radical agrarian movements. It has been determined that one of two traditions was established among Midwestern counties during the politically volatile years of agrarian upheaval. One, a county supported radical agrarian movements, or two, a county did not support radical agrarian movements. These two traditions have existed among Midwestern counties throughout the 20th century and into the 1980's. The question being asked now is what factors played a role in affecting a county's choice to follow one of these paths.

Michael Rogin, in his 1967 study of Midwest support for senator Joseph McCarthy, made an in depth analysis of North Dakota and found numerous reasons for a county's support or lack of support for Populism, progressivism, and the Non-Partisan League. His explanations, among others, included reasons of ancestry, crop production, class, county location and farm prosperity.

Rogin found ancestry helpful in explaining county support for radical agrarian movements, especially in North Dakota. Non-Partisan League support was drawn across ethnic lines, with Scandinavians and Native Americans (those living in the United States for two generations or more) strong League supporters and Germans, Russian-Germans (those of German ancestry who immigrated to or resided in Russia and retained their cultural

identity before immigrating to the United States) and Catholics staunchly anti-League (Rogin, 1967, p. 116-118). While this holds true for many North Dakota counties, it does not completely fit the four North Dakota counties in our sample. All four had high rates of German ancestry.

Crop production and diversification was a telling variable for Rogin across the Midwest as a whole. North Dakota, like most North Midwestern states, was mainly a single crop producer, that crop being wheat. Because of the economic instability in wheat production and single crop production, farmers of this region tended to support radical agrarian movements due to their advocacy of assistance programs and market improvements (Chrislock, 1971, p. 107). This was precisely the case in North Dakota. However, it does not explain non-support for single crop, wheat producing counties like those in our sample that are from the state.

The class argument for radical agrarian support among farmers is that middle class farmers were more likely to revolt because their fortunes fluctuate so much. Success depended on weather and changes in the international market. These farmers had something to lose. This fear of economic loss drove them into the Populist party and the Nonpartisan League. Lower class farmers lived closer to subsistence level. Because of this, their fortunes did not fluctuate as much as the

middle class. Upper class farmers, on the other hand, had reserves and diversified agriculture to fall back on during hard times (Rogin, 1967, p. 114-115). The class argument is useful in explaining county support for agrarian radicalism in North Dakota. For example, the six counties in the Red River valley in the Northwestern part of the state all had high Scandinavian ancestry but were extremely anti-progressive and anti-League. This lack of support can be explained by economic conditions of that region. It was, in fact, the most prosperous agricultural area in the state (Rogin, 1967, p. 117). This explanation, however, is not entirely useful for our four counties. All four are located in the central and South central part of North Dakota, an area generally considered to be poor in the economic and agricultural sense.

Economic class, ancestry, and crop production fail for the most part to explain the difference in support or lack of support for radical agrarian movements among the four counties. Most of the counties in this region joined the likes of McIntosh, and Stutsman by not supporting Populism and the Nonpartisan League. The strong support these movements received from Kidder and the moderate support received from Wells seems to be almost unexplainable. Rogin, when he focused special attention on the same area, could only partially explain the

difference by pointing to particular economic conditions or organizational factors that may have existed within each county (Rogin, 1967, p. 123).

A multiple explanation may be needed to understand the different patterns of movement support within this region. This explanation combines some theories to understand the differences between each county and also uses some theories singly to explain such differences.

The geographic location of a county is an important variable in this theory. Rogin found League support to be strongest in the western and northern counties of North Dakota and weakest in eastern, southern, and south central parts of the state (Rogin, 1967, p. 123). This demonstrates the attraction of the league in the newly settled parts of the state where local community tradition had yet to be installed and times were economically tough (because of the primitiveness of the location).

Location of urban areas is also an important variable. Progressivism, Populism, and the Non-Partisan League were all supported more in rural areas than in cities. Chrislock, in his study of progressivism in Minnesota, notes this antagonism between the state as a whole and the Twin Cities area of Minneapolis-St. Paul:

While the progressive approach to some issues, notably tariff protection, coincided with vital St. Paul and Minneapolis interests, Progressivism's hostility to large cities in general and the fears of the metropolitan business community that overly enthusiastic reform might create a climate

unfavorable to commerce and industry, discouraged full Twin Cities identification with the movement

(Chrislock, 1971, p. 25).

A further indication of this point, particularly in the case of North Dakota, was the vehement opposition given to the Non-Partisan League by city newspapers (see Morlan, 1985).

These two variables, geographic location and urbanness, thus provides further insight into understanding the differences in support for radical agrarianism in the four counties of which we are interested. The South central region of North Dakota was more recently settled when compared to the East. However, it was far more less recently settled in comparison to western North Dakota. This moderate degree of recent settlement, as compared to the high degree of recent settlement in the west, explains the lack of support for agrarian revolt in the region, except for those counties in the extreme South, where McIntosh resides. This was a generally poor agricultural area that was more recently settled than the rest of the South central region. It is also extremely rural (Its current census is just over 4,000). The area's lack of support for radical agrarianism could be explained by it high Russian German ancestry. In 1930, this area had the states highest concentration of Russian-Germans, between 50 and 70% (Rogin, 1967, p. 107).

Thus, Russian-German ancestry, when combined with urbanness, explains the support or lack of support for agrarian movements in the remaining three counties. All three had strong Russian-German communities, but they were not near the level of that found in McIntosh. Kidder, had the highest of the three with a Russian-German population of between 20 and 27%. Stutsman and Wells both had a Russian-German population of between 10 and 19% (Rogin, 1967, p. 107). This can partially explain the support for Populism and the League in Kidder and the moderate support found in Wells but not the lack of support found in Stutsman. The introduction of the urbanness variable helps to show the reason behind the difference in support in these counties.

As previously stated, counties with a high urban population tended to not support agrarian movements. Stutsman contained a relatively strong urban population, contained within the city of Jamestown. All other North Dakota counties containing urban populations were unsupportive of agrarian movements. This can explain the anti-Populist, anti-League attitude found in Stutsman. Kidder and Wells did not have an urban population. Furthermore, these counties were both located along side counties with strong urban populations. Because of the high amount of trade and commerce within these urban counties and the money it generated, surrounding counties

like Kidder and Wells may have felt they were in a state of vassalage to these urban counties, thus driving them towards support for agrarian movements like Populism, progressivism, and the Nonpartisan League.

This analysis shows how counties, seemingly similar to each other and within the same state or region, choose different paths in regard to political and economic movements. These paths of support or lack of support for agrarian radicalism were established for reasons of ancestry, geographic location, degree of urbanness, and degree of ruralness. But once these paths were established, they became traditions. And these traditions would guide these counties' political trajectory throughout the 20th century and into the 1980s.

Regional Analysis II

The Missouri River Corridor

The farmland along the lower part of the Missouri River, from where it leaves North Dakota to where it enters the Mississippi, is recognized as some of the richest in the United States. The area's abundant water table and numerous tributaries allows for steady crop production and relative prosperity when the climate permits. This area is also unique in the political sense in that it did not show strong support for the agrarian

movements which took hold in the Midwest during the late 1800s and early 1900s (Shover, 1965, p.8).

The four counties in our sample which are located in this region showed a wide variety of attitudes toward political protest. Only two, Richardson County, Nebraska, and Sioux County, Iowa, did not support radical agrarian movements. In regard to right-wing extremism during the 1980s, only Richardson showed signs of activity. Sioux stands out in that it was the only county in the entire sample that did not support either radical agrarianism or right-wing extremism.

An analysis of these four counties showed that there are noticeable differences between each of them in regard to the primary variables of this study. Before these variables can be looked at, however, the counties must be scrutinized individually and compared with trends across their respective state and region as a whole to consider other possible factors which may have played a role in determining what path of political protest they chose.

Union is located in the extreme southeast corner of South Dakota, bordering on both Iowa and Nebraska. This area was divided over support for agrarian movements. It was anti-Populist in the early 1890s but supported progressivism in the early 20th century. In the 1920s this area again supported the progressive cause, but not to the degree that it did earlier in the century (Rogin,

MAP II

STATES OF THE MISSISSOURI RIVER CORRIDOR: SOUTH DAKOTA, NEBRASKA, AND IOWA

- 1=PLYMOUTH CO., IOWA
- 2=RICHARDSON CO., NEBRASKA
- 3=SIoux CO., IOWA
- 4=UNION CO., SOUTH DAKOTA

1967, p. 140). Union remained loyal to the Populist and Progressive cause throughout this era of agrarian revolt. This trait of divided support for Populism was characteristic of most of South Dakota. This differs from most Midwestern states where there was a tendency for support to be drawn across clear geographic lines. The western part of South Dakota supported Populism in the early 1890s but was anti-progressive from the turn of the century through the 1920s. The northeast supported Populism in the 1890s and was split in progressive support in the early 1900s.

Rogin found the best explanation for radical agrarian support in South Dakota to be wealth and crop production. Both Populism and progressivism were supported by middle class farmers but there was also strong support among the richer counties, except for the very richest (Rogin, 1967, p. 140). This support among the rich counties can be understood by looking at crop production throughout the state. Populist and progressive support was strong in the South Dakota corn belt, located in the southeastern part of the state. This is the same area where Union co. is located (In general in South Dakota, Populism was supported more among the wheat producing counties and progressivism was supported more among the corn producing counties). Because corn was a durable and abundant crop, it proved easier to produce and thus provided a greater

cash flow to its growers. This made the counties in the southeastern part of the state richer in comparison to the rest of the South Dakota. The northeast was the location of the South Dakota wheat belt. These counties were poorer than most of the rest of the state except for the central region. While these counties did provide support for radical agrarianism (mainly during the Populist revolt), it was to a lesser degree than the southeast when looked at over the entire time span (Rogin, 1967, p. 140). The western part of the state was mainly a livestock producing region and sparsely populated. Lack of support in this area can probably be explained less by wealth and more by lack of affiliation with the agrarian cause.

South Dakota thus differed considerably from the rest of the Midwest in regional support for turn of the century agrarian movements. Support came more from the richer counties than the poorer ones. Also, corn producing counties in South Dakota backed radical agrarianism much more strongly than anywhere else in the Midwest. Union co. would follow these rich, corn producing counties by also supporting agrarian radicalism. It would differ from them, however, by being a stalwart radical supporter. It was, in fact, one of the loyalist followers of the Populist and Progressive movements.

Iowa and Nebraska were probably the most difficult states in the Midwest for the radical agrarian movements

to gain a following. Nebraska would provide only moderate support for Populism and neither would provide even a low degree of support for progressivism and the Nonpartisan League. The major reason cited for this is these state's concentration on corn production and, later in history, crop diversification. It is believed that this focus on corn production and crop diversification provides certain advantages over wheat production and single crop farming. For one, it is more durable. As Paige stated, this durability allows greater protection from adverse weather and also allows it (the crop) to be stored more easily. In addition, corn is not as susceptible to market fluctuations as wheat. Crop diversification allows farmers reserves that they can fall back on during times of economic difficulty. For these reasons, corn producers were fairly self sufficient and thus did not advocate or support the calls for protection and assistance found among wheat growers of the same time (Hofstadter, 1955, p. 100).

Lack of sympathy for the calls of protection and assistance explained the absence of support for agrarian revolt in Nebraska and Iowa. Nebraska, although located between two Populist supporting states (South Dakota and Kansas), never developed even a modest movement culture and really had no movement there at all (Goodwyn, 1976, p. 210). Thus, Richardson co. followed in the footsteps of

the rest of its state. The same condition existed in Iowa. With the stability and economic well being provided by corn production and crop diversification, no organization or movement was needed. The Populist party would severely suffer in its attempt to contend for the national presidency because of the lack of interest in these two states. Weaver would lose Nebraska and Iowa in 1892, and in 1896, William Jennings Bryan, running under the fusion ticket with the Democrats, would also lose these two states (Hofstadter, 1955, p. 100).

Iowa, however, differed from Nebraska in one key aspect. During the early 1930's, western Iowa would become the hotbed for a short-lived but fairly successful and influential latter day agrarian movement known as the Farmers' Holiday movement. The movement gained strength in only 11 counties. But nine of these counties are located in the same area, along the Missouri river in the western part of the state. Plymouth co. is one of these counties which had high levels of protest activity. Sioux co., located in the same region, did not provide support for the movement.

Shover, in his analysis of this movement, noted many of the differences between this region of Iowa and the rest of the state. Gross income per farm was well above the state average. Tenancy in the region was above the state average of 50%. Other areas of the state, however,

had extreme high rates of tenancy but did not support the protest activity. For example, north-central Iowa had tenancy rates over 75%, but this region had no counties with protest activity arose. The protest counties of west Iowa had both land value and mortgage debt per acre rates that were in the middle range of the state (Shover, 1965, p. 5). This suggests support among middle class farmers, the same as in our example in North Dakota. Shover shows that poorer farmers showed little interest in the movement. The southeast part of Iowa displayed no support for the Farmers' Holiday protest. In this region land values and gross income were among the lowest in the state (Shover, 1965, p. 6).

These factors aside, Shover believed that two other variables played a critical role in the growth of protest in west Iowa in general and Plymouth in particular (Plymouth had the second most protest activity if the 11 counties involved in the Farmer's Holiday Movement). First was the amount of rainfall. Rainfall in Iowa in 1931 was 10% above normal except for one small area: the counties in the northwest corner where Plymouth is located. This caused serious depletion in crop output that year. The next year, when protest activity began, only one small area reported below average percipitation. Once again, Plymouth was located in this area. The second variable was the number of foreclosure suits. Nine

protest counties, among which was Plymouth co., were among eleven counties with the most suits pending (Shover, 1965, p. 6).

Although Shover neglected an analysis of Sioux County, no doubt because of its lack of protest activity, it can probably be concluded that Sioux's measurements on these variables are similar to that of Plymouth, due to their close proximity to each other (they do, in fact, border on each other). It is difficult to look at reasons for Sioux's lack of interest in the protest because of the shortage of data on it from that period. It is not incredibly secluded, or contain a large urban area, like the exceptional counties found in North Dakota. Its ethnic composition is not highly German like many of the unsupportive counties in our sample. Thus, particular economic or social factors in the county at that time may have played a role in its inactivity.

The comparison of these four counties along the Missouri River corridor displays the differences among them in their adherence to state and regional trends in support for radical agrarian movements. In comparison to the rest of the state and its region, Union was a Populist and progressive stronghold at a higher and more consistent level. Plymouth followed in the line of the rest of west Iowa by supporting the Farmers' Holiday movement. That region as a whole broke from the state's tradition of

non-support for agrarian movements. Sioux maintained this state tradition of non-support by not following in the footsteps of its neighboring counties who became involved in the protest activity of the early 1930s. Richardson would follow its state tradition throughout the era of agrarian revolt by not supporting Populism, progressivism, the Non-Partisan League, or the Farmers' Holiday movement.

As in the case of North Dakota, the counties of the Missouri river corridor would choose their path of political protest, mainly for economic reasons, and, again as in the case of North Dakota, these paths would be established as tradition through the 20th century and into the farm crisis of the 1980s where those who chose not to support agrarian radicalism would revolt in a direction completely different from that traditionally found in the Midwest.

The counties of the Missouri river corridor, however, differ from those of North Dakota in that an analysis of the primary variables of this study do point to a pattern of support for right-wing extremism.

Ancestry and crop production were the least telling of our variables in regard to these counties. Three of the four had high German ancestry. The exception was Sioux, the only county of the sample which supported neither agrarian radicalism nor right-wing extremism. Sioux had high Dutch ancestry at 76 percent. Its

surrounding counties were mostly German. Sioux's political inactivity might have resulted from a feeling of relative isolation its ethnic Dutch population may have experienced. Both Richardson and Plymouth had high German ancestry, but Richardson which supported right-wing extremism, had a German ancestry at 58 percent which was lower than Plymouth at 67 percent. Plymouth did not support right-wing extremism. Union, also a non-supporter of right-wing extremism, had a German ancestral population of 31 percent, but its total population was the most diverse of any in the sample with Norwegian, Swedish, and Irish populations all between 10 and 20 percent. Ancestry is therefore only slightly revealing. Sioux's Dutch population may explain its political inactiveness, and Union's diverse population may explain its non-support for right-wing extremism. The high German ancestry in Richardson and Plymouth is not revealing with Richardson county supporting right-wing extremism and Plymouth county remaining unsupportive.

Crop production was less associated with right-wing activity than ancestry. All four counties were corn producers and highly diversified when compared to the entire sample. The least diversified of the four, Union, had a low degree of soybean and cattle production. Union supported agrarian radicalism and was unsupportive of right-wing extremism. The other three were

undistinguishably similar in corn production and crop diversification.

The variables which revealed the greatest difference between the four counties are the economic variables: farm prosperity and severity of crisis. The least prosperous of the four, Richardson, was the one which provided the most support for right-wing extremism in the 1980s. The most prosperous, Sioux, was a neutral county in terms of both agrarian radicalism and right-wing extremism. The two middle range counties of Plymouth and Union were agrarian radical counties that did not support right-wing extremism. Not only was Richardson the least prosperous, it also suffered severely during the 1980's farm crisis with a 40 percent decrease in average value of land. Sioux suffered the greatest of the four with a 41.5 percent decrease in average value of land, but this was only slightly higher than Richardson's decrease in land value. Plymouth and Union County's crises were the least severe with a decrease in average value of land 37.5 and 33 percent respectively. Richardson was the only county of the four whose decrease in land value was greater than its state average.

Here we see a trend among the four counties in regard to the the economic variables. The least prosperous of the four, Richardson, also suffered the severely during the farm crisis. Its response to this crisis was to turn

towards right-wing extremism. The richest of the four, Sioux, experienced the most severe crisis, although only slightly higher than that experienced by Richardson. It maintained its tradition of neutrality by not supporting right-wing extremism during the crisis. The support for agrarian radicalism over right-wing extremism in Plymouth and Union can be explained by their prosperity. Both were fairly prosperous and suffered the least of the four.

In conclusion, the four counties in the Missouri river corridor held to their respective traditions of political activity. Richardson, following the path of the state of Nebraska, would never show support for agrarian radicalism and during the farm crisis in the 1980s would turn to right-wing extremism while suffering the most of the four counties. The extremely prosperous Sioux County would also suffer severely during the crisis but would remain, as it did through the era of agrarian revolt, wholly neutral towards political protest. The two counties to suffer the least during the crisis, Plymouth and Union, were fairly prosperous before the crisis and would, for the most part, remain so after the crisis ended. These two counties would keep their political identity with the left-wing tradition of agrarian radicalism and not display support towards right-wing extremism.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to explain why right-wing extremism took root in certain Midwestern communities during the farm crisis of the 1980s. A comparative analysis of 10 counties from six Midwestern states was used to evaluate two competing theories, each attempting to explain right-wing extremism in Midwestern communities. The pluralist argument suggests that the roots of 20th century right-wing extremism can be found in prior episodes of agrarian radicalism. According to the pluralists, those counties which supported agrarian radicalism were the same ones which supported right-wing extremist groups and movements. The political tradition perspective, on the other hand, argues that right-wing extremism in the Midwest is rooted in traditional conservatism. According to the political tradition argument, those counties which opposed or which were indifferent to radical agrarian movements were the ones which supported right-wing extremism.

This research considered six variables (historical response to crisis, ancestry, crop production, farm

income/prosperity, severity of crisis, and tenancy) which scholars of agrarian movements consider indicators of a county's support for or opposition to different movements. Voting records from the 1964 and 1968 Presidential elections were also considered to see how counties voted for conservative Presidential candidates, the Republican Barry Goldwater and the far right, separatist George Wallace.

The research supports the political tradition perspective more than the pluralist argument as an explanation of right-wing extremism in Midwestern counties. Counties in the sample which supported 1980's right-wing extremism were found to have been opponents of agrarian radicalism or to have shown at best a low degree of support for radical agrarian movements. Those counties which opposed right-wing extremism were found to be strong supporters of agrarian radical movements.

The most important finding of this study was the evaluation of the correlates of support for right-wing extremism. The evaluation addressed six variables which scholars identify as indicators of a county's support for radical agrarian movements and, thus, right-wing extremism. As the research from this study revealed, historical response to crisis was the most telling variable. Crop production, farm income/prosperity, severity of crisis, and tenancy were found to be weakly

associated with right-wing extremism in Midwestern counties. Ancestry was found to be strongly associated, but not as strongly as historical response to crisis.

The regional analyses provided additional support for these conclusions. Interestingly, these analyses found that county support or opposition toward right-wing extremism was based mainly on an established tradition of conservatism or radicalism. A county, because of a combination of a number of factors, including ethnic ancestry, crop production, prosperity, class, degree of ruralness, and geographic location, follows a political and social path to either support or oppose radical agrarian movements. A county's relative conservativeness or radicalness was based on the influence of these factors. Those counties which were radical became strong supporters of radical agrarian movements. Those counties which were conservative became opponents of radical agrarian movements. The counties responses to radical agrarian movements became traditional and would carry over into their responses to right-wing extremism, where traditionally radical counties would not attract right-wing extremist activity and those counties which were conservative would become fertile ground for right-wing extremism.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research was designed to test competing theories regarding the occurrence of right-wing extremism in Midwestern communities through the use of a comparative analysis of a sample of counties in a regionally specific area. Future research on this subject must address some limitations of this study. Several recommendations can be made.

The most important recommendation would have to be for a more thorough gathering of data on right-wing extremism as it pertains to the community, state, or region being studied. While there was an abundance of information on right-wing extremism during the farm crisis in the Midwest during the 1980s, it mainly dealt with the ideology and beliefs of the different groups and organizations involved, the actions and activities of these groups, and the impact they were making during the farm crisis. Future studies should attempt to obtain data regarding specifically where right-wing groups and organizations had gained a foothold and to what degree they influenced the political and social structure of the community (such information on agrarian radical movements was very available, a testament to the awareness among scholars and researchers as to the influence of this movement on the United States in general and the Midwest in particular). This author attempted to attain such

information from the a number of research institutes and advocacy groups, including the one from which data for this thesis was obtained. Another source which was attempted but which proved unsuccessful was the United States Justice Department. Because of their anti-government stance, a number of the right-wing groups researched for this thesis were considered extremely subversive by the U.S. government. During the farm crisis, numerous armed confrontations occurred between Justice department and law enforcement officials and right-wing extremist groups. While information on the locations where right-wing extremist groups have gained footholds and have become influential is certain, the access of this information to the general public is not. The gathering of such data would allow a researcher to pinpoint areas of strong extremist activity more concretely. Any future research on this subject should attempt to gather this type of data from these sources.

A second suggestion would be more research of certain variables used in this study and additional research into other variables that may be influential in a county's response to right-wing extremism. The variable where research could no doubt be extended would be *tenancy*. The data on tenancy in this study is lacking more in regard to theoretical applications than in regard to how the variable was measured or how information on it was

obtained. Future research should look at theories which explain tenancy effects on Midwestern community support for political and social movements.

Other variables not considered here but which might be considered in future research would be foreclosure rates and amount of government owned land within counties. Research on this thesis has found foreclosures and auctions to be popular staging ground for protest by right-wing groups, even though none of the counties involved in this study actually had such activities occur (most occurred in counties not involved in this study). Government ownership of land has recently become a volatile issue in the Western states of the U.S. and is becoming an agenda on which right-wing groups have based a new rebellion against the government in the rural American West (Eure, 1995, p. A1).

Another recommendation would be an alternative research strategy. County comparisons and regional analyses were extremely useful in this particular study because the focus was on counties. However, while community behavior could be inferred from these types of analyses, individual behavior could not. Future studies may wish to consider individual behavior in regard to Midwestern right-wing extremism. Such studies should use a strategy which includes collective biographies of activists and supporters, interviews, and surveys. This

type of research would allow one to obtain information regarding the demographic profiles of communities as well as individual attitudes toward right-wing extremism.

In the end, this analysis shows how sociology can contribute to our understanding of the emergence of right-wing movements. This study, along with current events in the Midwest, suggest the importance for more research. Since this study began eighteen months ago, right-wing extremism has exploded upon the national scene. The bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in April, 1995 and the scrutiny of the state militia movement that resulted from it has made the renewed study of right-wing extremism popular again. Hopefully, this popularity will spill over into the academic ranks. If so, it is the hope and belief of this author that one of the subjects that must be analyzed would be the historical, political, and social reasons for specific communities to become hotbeds for extremist activity.

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(1) All census information came from the United States Census work station in the Branford P. Millar Library on the campus of Portland State University, Portland, Oregon.

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APPENDIX A

COUNTY PROFILES

Cowley Co., Kansas

No support for right-wing extremism.

Historical response: Strong supporter of Agrarian
Radicalism.
-Populism of the 1880's and 1890's.

Ancestry: Majority English. Also German and Irish.
English: 4,589 of 13,439 (34%).
German: 3,886 of 13,439 (29%).
Irish: 1,101 of 13,439 (8%).

Crop Production: Exclusively wheat and cattle.
Wheat: 730 of 1,101 farms. \$14.9 million.
Cattle: 714 of 1,101 farms. \$52.2 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:
Avg. value of land and buildings: \$347,020 (\$551/acre).
Kansas avg.: \$384,197 (\$601/acre).
Avg. total sales per farm: \$72,257 (1982).
Kansas avg.: \$84,442.

Severity of Crisis:
Farm earnings- 1970s: \$104,163,000
1980s: \$82,773,000
20.5% decrease.

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$230,291
(\$385/acre). (30% decrease).
Kansas avg.: 1987: \$278,047 (\$413/acre).
(31.3% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure:

	Co.	KS
Full owners:	485	31,834
Part owners:	437	29,862
Tenants:	179	11,619

Voting Record: 1964: 47.9% for Goldwater.
1968: 11.8% for Wallace.

Notes: Cowley Co. is located in the relatively prosperous central section of Kansas, between the rich east and the poor west. During the Populist movement, this heavily Populist area had a high debt load due to desire for expansion and growth among farmers.

Kidder Co., North Dakota

No support for right-wing extremism.

Historical Response: Strong supporter of Agrarian
Radicalism.

-NonPartisan League.

Ancestry: Strong majority German. Minority Norwegian.

German: 1,901 of 2,521 (75%).

Norwegian: 256 of 2,521 (10%).

Crop Production: Exclusively wheat and cattle.

Wheat: 383 of 566 farms. \$7.4 million.

Cattle: 433 of 566 farms. \$11.1 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:

Avg. value of land and buildings: \$377,216 (\$282/acre).

North Dakota avg.: \$486,939 (\$439/acre).

Avg. total sales per farm: \$49,738.

North Dakota avg.: \$62,977.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$87,228,000

1980s: \$37,323,000

57.2% decrease.

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$279,903
(\$198/acre). (29.8% decrease).

North Dakota avg.: 1987: \$366,475 (319/acre).
(27.3% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure:

	Co.	ND
Full owners:	229	12,428
Part owners:	264	17,769
Tenants:	73	6,234

Voting Record: 1964: 51.3% for Goldwater.

1968: 9.9% for Wallace.

McIntosh Co., North Dakota**Strong supporter of right-wing extremism.**

-Home of documented tax protesters and an identity based grammar school. Local citizens have formed a group to help create a Posse style Constitutional Township.

Historical Response: No support for Agrarian Radicalism.

Ancestry: Extremely high Russian-German.

German: 3,024 of 3,489 (87%).

Crop Production: Exclusively Wheat.

Wheat: 498 of 595 farms at \$8.7 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity: (1982).

Avg. value of land and buildings: \$265,939 (\$279/acre).

North Dakota avg.: \$486,939 (439/acre).

Avg. total sales per farm: \$47,057.

North Dakota avg.: \$62,977.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$79,814,000

1980s: \$65,600,000

17.8% decrease

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$209,034 (221/acre). (20.8% decrease).

North Dakota: 1987: \$366,475 (319/acre). (7.3% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure: (1982).

	Co.	ND
Full owners:	205	12,428
Part owners:	305	17,769
Tenants:	85	6,234

Voting Record: 1964: 66.6% for Goldwater

1968: 4.7% for Wallace

Notes: McIntosh Co. is found in an area of North Dakota with relatively poor soil and is thus considered to be, agriculturally, a poor county.

Plymouth Co., Iowa

No support for right-wing extremism.

Historical Response: Supporter of Agrarian Radicalism.
-Farmer's Holiday Movement.

Ancestry: Strong majority German. Minority English.
German: 8,565 of 12,842 (67%).
English: 1,054 of 12,842 (9%).

Crop Production: Strong corn, soybean, cattle, hog.
Corn: 1,197 of 1,874 farms. \$29 million.
Soybean: 1,299 of 1,874 farms. \$24.2 million.
Cattle: 1,101 of 1,874 farms. \$68.4 million.
Hog: 1,093 of 1,874 farms. \$60.3 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:

Avg. value of land and buildings: \$454,705
(\$1,674/acre).
Iowa avg.: \$471,011 (\$1,684/acre).
Avg. total sales per farm: \$101,783 (1982).
Iowa avg.: \$85,163.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$287,059,000
1980s: \$260,249,000
9.3% decrease.

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$291,724
(1,047/acre). (37.5% decrease).
Iowa avg.: 1987: \$283,597 (\$947/acre).
(43.7% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure:

	Co.	IA
Full owners:	711	53,934
Part owners:	688	38,427
Tenants:	475	24,052

Voting Record: 1964: 46.4% for Goldwater.
1968: 5.5% for Wallace.

Notes: Plymouth Co., was one of nine counties in Western Iowa that took part in the Farmer's Holiday Movement in the 1930's.

Richardson Co., Nebraska**Strong support for right-wing extremism**

-Site of a Posse compound where two identity related murders occurred in 1985. Home of numerous Posse members including businessmen, lawyers, and law enforcement officials.

Historical Response: No support for Agrarian Radicalism.

Ancestry: Mainly German. Minority of English descent.

German: 3,056 of 5,308 (58%).

English: 868 of 5,308 (16%).

Crop Production: Diverse. Majority soybean. Strong corn, wheat, cattle, and hog.

Soybean: 626 farms. \$14.2 million.

Corn: 385 farms. \$ 7.7 million.

Wheat: 407 farms. \$ 2.4 million.

Cattle: 550 farms. \$15 million.

Hog: 227 farms. \$ 7.7 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:

Avg. value of land and buildings: \$382,777

(\$1,011/acre).

Nebraska avg.: \$532,741 (\$701/acre).

Avg. total sales per farm: \$63,480 (1982).

Nebraska avg.: \$109,984.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$136,172,000

1980s: \$137,841,000

1.2% increase.

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: \$214,921
(597/acre). (40% decrease).

Nebraska avg.: 1987: \$344,253 (457/acre).
(35.4% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure: (1982).

	Co.	NE
Full owners:	378	24,840
Part owners:	264	23,083
Tenants:	171	12,320

Voting Record: 1964: 46.8% for Goldwater.

1968: 10% for Wallace.

Notes: Nebraska had a low degree of support for Agrarian Radicalism.

Shawano Co., Wisconsin

Strong supporter of right-wing extremism

-Home of a Posse compound and two Identity ministries as well as a "pro se" law school called the Christian Liberty Academy. Home of an identity group called Christians for Truth and Posse leaders James Wickstrom and Thomas Stockheimer. Constitutional Township of Tigerton Dells.

Historical response: Moderate degree of support for Agrarian Radicalism.

-Progressivism of the early 1900's.

Ancestry: Strong majority German. Small minority Polish.

German: 15,341 of 21,472 (71%).

Polish: 1,692 of 21,472 (8%).

Crop Production: Mainly dairy with some cattle. Minority grain.

Dairy: 1,213 of 1,761 farms at \$78 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity: (1982).

Avg. value of land and buildings/farm: \$193,604 (\$1,045/acre).

Wisconsin avg.: \$232,606 (\$1,113/acre).

Avg. total sales per farm: \$58,500.

Wisconsin avg.: \$58,858.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$215,394,000
1980s: \$345,844,000
60.5% increase

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$159,340 (814/acre). (22% decrease).

Wisconsin: 1987: \$182,950 (826/acre) (25.8% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure: (1982).

	Co.	WI
Full owners:	1,077	48,529
Part owners:	599	26,617
Tenants:	85	7,053

Voting Record: 1964: 49.7% for Goldwater.
1968: 8.9% for Wallace.

Notes: Wisconsin has the country's highest concentration of Posse membership.

Sioux Co., Iowa

No support for right-wing extremism.

Historical Response: No support for Agrarian Radicalism.

Ancestry: Strong majority Dutch. Minority of German.

Dutch: 17,004 of 22,274 (76%).

German: 3,140 of 22,274 (14%).

Crop Production: Very diverse. Corn, soybean, cattle, hog.

Corn: 1,176 of 2,100 farms. \$27.9 million.

Soybean: 1,295 of 2,100 farms. \$21.6 million.

Cattle: 1,239 of 2,100 farms. \$175.3 million.

Hog: 1,198 of 2,100 farms. \$75.8 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:

Avg. value of land and buildings: \$436,331
(\$2,020/acre).

Iowa avg.: \$471,011 (\$1,684/acre).

Avg. total sales per farm: \$154,282 (1982).

Iowa avg.: \$85,163.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$361,825,000
1980s: \$317,561,000
12.2% decrease.

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$282,218
(1,181/acre). (41.5% decrease).

Iowa avg.: 1987: \$283,597 (947/acre). (43.7% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure:

	Co.	IA
Full owners:	835	53,934
Part owners:	815	38,427
Tenants:	450	24,052

Voting Record: 1964: 65.6% for Goldwater.
1968: 2.5% for Wallace.

Notes: Sioux Co. is surrounded by eight counties which supported the Farmer's Holiday Movement of the 1930's, the only radical agrarian movement to occur in Iowa. The western part of Iowa is one of the states most prosperous areas agriculturally. During the 1930's, this area ranked in the middle range of county mortgage debt rates. Two distinguishing features of that time: 10% below normal rainfall when the Holiday movement occurred and above average foreclosure rates for this area when the movement occurred.

Stutsman Co., North Dakota

Strong supporter of right-wing extremism.

-Home of numerous Posse adherents including physicians and law enforcement officials. Citizens attempting to form a Posse style Constitutional Township. Sight of a major shoot-out between Posse members and U.S. Marshals in 1983.

Historical Response: No support for Agrarian Radicalism.

Ancestry: Strong majority German. Minority Norwegian.

German: 9,424 of 15,583 (61%).

Norwegian: 2,320 of 15,583 (15%).

Crop Production: Exclusively wheat as well as cattle.

Wheat: 875 farms at \$3.9 million.

Cattle: 675 farms at \$13.3 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:

Avg. value of land and buildings: \$530,801 (\$456/acre).

North Dakota avg.: \$486,939 (\$439/acre).

Avg. total sales per farm: \$80,083.

North Dakota avg.: \$62,977.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$221,347,000
1980s: \$169,513,000
23.4% decrease

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$366,432 (327/acre). (28.3% decrease).

North Dakota avg.: 1987: \$366,475 (319/acre).
27.3% decrease.

Farm Ownership v. Tenure:

	Co.	ND
Full owners:	399	12,428
Part owners:	548	17,769
Tenants:	187	6,234

Voting Record: 1964: 42.1% for Goldwater.
1968: 5.2% for Wallace.

Notes: Stutsman Co. resides in a tri-county area that had a high degree of right-wing activity.

Union Co., South Dakota

No support for right-wing extremism.

Historical Response: Supporter of Agrarian Radicalism.
-NonPartisan League.

Ancestry: Majority of German. Also a minority of
Norwegian, Swedish, and Irish.
German: 1,900 of 6,190 (31%).
Norwegian: 1,057 of 6,190 (17%).
Swedish: 589 of 6190 (10%).
Irish: 651 of 6,190 (11%).

Crop Production: Corn and soybean with some cattle.
Corn: 523 of 727 farms. \$15.3 million.
Soybean: 488 of 727 farms. \$12.1 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:
Avg. value of land and buildings: \$380,794
(\$1,131/acre).
South Dakota Avg.: \$418,940 (\$348/acre).
Avg. total sales per farm: \$82,759 (1982).
South Dakota Avg.: \$66,709.

Severity of Crisis:
Farm earnings- 1970s: \$134,173,000
1980s: \$179,483,000
33.7% increase.

Lowest Avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$307,854
(\$757/acre). (33% decrease).
South Dakota Avg.: 1987: \$326,333
(\$269/acre). (22.7% decrease).

Farm Ownership v. Tenure:

	Co.	SD
Full owners:	292	14,815
Part owners:	284	16,396
Tenants:	151	5,937

Voting Record: 1964: 37.9% for Goldwater.
1968: 5.1% for Wallace.

Wells Co., North DakotaStrong Support for Right-wing extremism.

- Home of numerous Posse adherents and tax protesters.
- Home of Posse leader Gordan Kahl.

Historical Response: Moderate degree of support for agrarian radicalism.

- NonPartisan League.

Ancestry: Mainly German. Minority Norwegian.

German: 3,236 of 4,612 (70%).

Norwegian: 761 of 4,612 (17%).

Crop Production: Wheat and a high degree of cattle.

Wheat: farms: 630 of 735.

value: \$2.4 million.

Cattle: farms: 345 of 735.

value: \$9.6 million.

Farm Income/Prosperity:

Avg. value of land and buildings: \$525,679 (\$500/acre).

North Dakota avg.: \$486,939 (\$439/acre).

Avg. total sales per farm: \$ 77,509

North Dakota avg.: \$62, 977.

Severity of Crisis:

Farm earnings- 1970s: \$173,491,000

1980s: \$139,435,000

19.6% decrease

Lowest avg. value of land and buildings: 1987: \$373,292
330/acre. 34% decrease.

North Dakota avg.: 1987: \$366,475 (319/acre).
27.3% decrease.

Farm Ownership v. Tenure:

	Co.	ND
Full owners:	236	12,428
Part owners:	347	17,769
Tenants:	152	6,234

Voting Record: 1964: 44.8% for Goldwater.

1968: 6.5% for Wallace.

Notes: Wells Co. resides in a tri-county area with McIntosh and Stutsman Co. that had a high degree of right-wing activity.

APPENDIX B

VARIABLES BY CASE

Variable Measurements

<u>County</u>	<u>Historical Response</u>	<u>Ancestry</u>	<u>Crop Production</u>	<u>Farm Income/ Prosperity</u>	<u>Severity of Crisis</u>
Cowley	Radical	Eng. (34%) Ger. (29%)	Wheat Cattle	Moderate	High
Kidder	Radical	Ger. (75%) Nor. (10%)	Wheat Cattle	Low	Moderate
McIntosh	Conserv.	Ger. (87%)	Wheat	Low	Moderate
Plymouth	Radical	Ger. (67%) Eng. (8%)	Corn Soybean Cattle Hog	High	High
Richard.	Conserv.	Ger. (58%) Eng. (16%)	Soybean Corn Wheat Cattle Hog	High	High
Shawano	Rad. (Mod)	Ger. (71%) Pol. (8%)	Dairy	High	Moderate
Sioux	None	Dut. (76%) Ger. (14%)	Corn Soybean Cattle Hog	High	High
Stutsman	Conserv.	Ger. (61%) Nor. (15%)	Wheat Cattle	Moderate	High
Union	Radical	Ger. (31%) Nor. (17%)	Corn Soybean	Moderate	Moderate
Wells	Rad. (Mod)	Ger. (70%) Nor. (17%)	Wheat Cattle	Moderate	High

Table

County -All underlined counties are ones in which right-wing activity occurred.

-Richard. is an abbreviated form of Richardson Co.

Historical Response -Conserv. is an abbreviated form of Conservative.

-Rad. (Mod) is a moderate degree of support for agrarian radicalism.

Ancestry -Ger. is an abbreviated form of German.

-Eng. is an abbreviated form of English.

-Nor. is an abbreviated form of Norwegian.

-Dut. is an abbreviated form of Dutch.

-Pol. is an abbreviated form of Polish.

(Continued)

<u>County</u>	<u>Tenancy Rate</u>	<u>Voting Record</u>	
		<u>For Goldwater</u>	<u>For Wallace</u>
Cowley	16.2%	47.9%	11.8%
Kidder	12.9%	51.3%	9.9%
<u>McIntosh</u>	14.3%	66.6%	4.7%
Plymouth	24.5%	46.4%	5.5%
<u>Richard.</u>	21%	46.8%	10%
<u>Shawano</u>	4.8%	49.7%	8.9%
Sioux	21.4%	65.6%	2.5%
<u>Stutsman</u>	16.5%	42.1%	5.2%
Union	20.7%	37.9%	9.9%
<u>Wells</u>	20.6%	44.8%	6.5%