

# Addicted to Hate: Identity Residual among Former White Supremacists

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## Abstract

The process of leaving deeply meaningful and embodied identities can be experienced as a struggle against addiction, with continuing cognitive, emotional, and physiological responses that are involuntary, unwanted, and triggered by environmental factors. Using data derived from a unique set of in-depth life history interviews with 89 former U.S. white supremacists, as well as theories derived from recent advances in cognitive sociology, we examine how a rejected identity can persist despite a desire to change. Disengagement from white supremacy is characterized by substantial lingering effects that subjects describe as addiction. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of identity residual for understanding how people leave and for theories of the self.

## Keywords

addiction, symbolic interactionism, identity, culture, racism

The U.S. white supremacist movement represents one of the most enduring political subcultures in American history yet is surprisingly one of the least understood. Following the recent presidential election and the “alt-right’s” efforts to rebrand white supremacy to appeal to a younger and more tech-savvy generation, the movement has received greater attention (Futrell and Simi 2017). Yet the alt-right’s veneer of normalcy conceals a much deeper culture of hate and violence, in which adherents build a collective identity and participate in an all-encompassing movement lifestyle (Blee 2002; Simi and Futrell 2015). The hardcore and overt elements of the white supremacy movement make it one of the most radical, deviant, and stigmatized social movements in the contemporary United States.<sup>1</sup>

Progress has been made to understand how individuals come to enter the white supremacist movement (Blee 2002; Simi, Sporer, and

Bubolz 2016) and the socio-spatial contexts where collective identity is sustained (Futrell and Simi 2004), but much less is known about individual experiences following disengagement from the white supremacist movement. What happens after people leave such an intensive and marginalized lifestyle is a difficult question to answer because scholars tend to focus primarily on identity transformations prior to or at the time of mobilization while neglecting how people may remain tethered to

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a movement identity even after leaving. Moreover, scholars have emphasized activists' cognitive and relational transformations in terms of how individuals embrace new ideas and build new social networks, but research has neglected transformations involving deeper consequences, such as neurophysiological changes that may operate in more automatic ways and reflect alterations in bodily and emotional expressions that endure over time.

To address this gap, we ask the following question: Why do individuals who have already rejected white supremacist ideologies and left the movement (i.e., "formers") have such a difficult time shaking their former thoughts, feelings, and bodily reactions, and, in many cases, come to think of themselves as being addicted to white supremacism? The issue of addiction raises central issues in sociology, especially regarding the relationship between agency and deterministic forces embedded within biological and environmental processes (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Hitlin and Kirkpatrick Johnson 2015). Addiction is a concept that represents a variety of complex, overlapping processes that implicate social, psychological, and biological forces. As such, when both laypersons and clinicians use the term addiction, they are essentially referring to a bundle of different characteristics or symptoms. In this respect, we are less concerned about whether our subjects are actually addicted to white supremacy and more concerned with their descriptions of involuntary and unwanted thoughts, feelings, bodily responses, and behavior. To be clear, we are not suggesting that hate should become a new addiction diagnosis, but rather pointing to the ways social experiences can become so engraved in our interactions, psyche, and body that the parallels between identity residual and addiction become an interesting point of exploration.

This article relies on extensive life history interviews with 89 former U.S. white supremacist activists who were members of the overlapping networks (Burris, Smith, and Strahm 2000) of racist groups in the movement's four major branches: Ku Klux Klan, Christian Identity, neo-Nazi, and racist skinheads (Barkun 1997; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile

2000; McVeigh 2009). Organizational and doctrinal differences exist across these networks, but all share fundamental ideas such as the impending catastrophe of "white racial genocide" and the view that a multicultural society is antithetical to the interests of European-Americans (Zeskind 2009).

On the one hand, conventional wisdom suggests white supremacists are entirely consumed by hatred and thus the prospect of change seems unlikely ("once a hater, always a hater"). In this sense, being addicted to hate might make sense. On the other hand, previous studies note the high burn-out rate among members of the white supremacist movement and the substantial retention efforts initiated by various groups to sustain participation (Blee 2002; Simi and Futrell 2015). The question is not whether people can leave white supremacist hate groups, as they clearly do, but rather what happens after they leave?

White supremacist identity provides an important case to examine several broader theoretical concerns. Many treatments of identity change focus on either the stages of transformation (Athens 1995; Ebaugh 1988; Prochaska et al. 1991) or the conscious, intentional dimensions of self-change (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph 2002; Kiecolt 1994). Less is known, however, about the neurocognitive dynamics related to involuntary and unwanted aspects of identity residual. Identities are constructed and performed through situational occasions, so when situations are routinized, insular, and involve extreme hatred, the persistence of these identities may be much greater than previously thought. In this sense, disengagement is not really the end of that identity. Instead, a whole other layer of unwanted and involuntary thoughts, feelings, bodily reactions, and behaviors may persist and continue to shape a person's life.

## DISENGAGEMENT, RESIDUAL AND ADDICTION

Scholars use the term "disengagement" (Ebaugh 1988; see also Vaughan 1986; Wright 1991) to describe physical and psychological withdrawal from particular identities or roles.

The continuing influence an identity or role may exert following disengagement is what Ebaugh (1988) refers to as “residual” or “hangover identity.” More than 50 years ago, Anselm Strauss (1959:97–98) observed that disengagement from an identity may generate reactions similar to addiction: “The fuller meaning of temptation is this: you are withdrawing from an old psychological status and coming into a new, and in doing so something akin to the withdrawal symptoms of drug addiction occurs.” But not all identities or roles involve residual. As Turner (1978:1) explains, “Some roles are put on and taken off like clothing without lasting effects. Other roles are difficult to put aside when a situation is changed and continue to shape the way in which many of the individual roles are performed.” Yet, this point tells us little about the characteristics associated with identities that result in substantial residual, and few sociologists since Strauss have considered the addictive qualities that highly salient identities may produce. As such, our goal here is to analyze the social processes that produce qualities similar to addiction after leaving a highly salient identity. We do so by applying DiMaggio’s (2002) typology of cognition to the experiences of identity residual among former white supremacists and analyzing how these individuals develop self-talk strategies to resist such consequences.

A growing number of studies examine the factors that prompt the initial point of disengagement, but what happens following a person’s disengagement from a highly salient identity such as white supremacism has received little scholarly attention. Existing studies of disengagement from political extremism tend to focus on the disengagement process as a discrete end point. Beyond this end point, individuals are assumed to begin another phase of life (post-extremism) that involves a new process of identity formation with new social roles and networks. In short, the person starts a new life. But life does not unfold in this type of linear fashion with clear-cut phases of beginning and ending (Wacquant 1990). Rather, as we analyze, a core identity sometimes lingers in a person’s

life after the person no longer holds that identity. As such, a former identity never truly disappears; we thus conceptualize becoming and disengagement as contiguous and emergent processes deeply tied together and ultimately inseparable.

Our focus is not *why* white supremacists disengage,<sup>2</sup> but rather the habitual and unwanted thoughts, feelings, physiological responses, and behavior that can follow exit. Although we cannot definitively conclude whether involvement in hate produces a form of addiction, the empirical evidence we present provides a strong starting point to further consider the sociological significance of addiction and the extent to which social processes are embedded in psychological and physiological ones. Although the sociological literature is rife with references to the addictive qualities associated with identity (e.g., hangover, residual), surprisingly few studies extend beyond the metaphorical to investigate the empirical overlap between residual and addiction. We use the term addiction cautiously in order to avoid older tendencies that pathologized deviant behavior (Lemert 1951). Sociological critiques of psychopathology, however, sometimes suggest an artificial distinction between broader social processes and supposedly individual-level phenomena. In contrast, we consider identity residual and addiction as reflecting the intersection between psychological, biological, and sociological processes.

The possibility of social processes having addictive qualities is supported by burgeoning neuroscience research that identifies how the consumption of licit and illicit drugs activates certain neural pathways that increase dopamine in the reward circuit (Goldstein and Volkow 2011). As Reinarman (2005:309) notes, studies have identified similar neurological consequences for a number of non-drug activities, such that people will like and thus tend to repeat “anything you can do that turns on these dopamine neurons.” This is not a trivial realization, but rather points to the possibility that under certain conditions (e.g., strong ties, high levels of commitment, long-term exposure) social environments and related identities may generate neuro-physiological changes that over time mimic addiction.

## IDENTITY AND COGNITIVE SOCIOLOGY

A long tradition within sociology focuses on the development of different types of identity, including distinguishing between personal and collective identities (Burke 1980; Cooley 1902; Mead 1934; Snow 2001; Stryker 1968). Identities are defined as part of a person's overall sense of self—"the meanings one has as a group member, as a role holder, or as a person" (Stets and Burke 2003:132)—and involve "self-cognitions tied to roles and thus to positions in organized social relations" (Stryker 2000:28). Identities function at conscious levels, through deliberate action, and at unconscious levels, as individuals process stimuli without awareness (Burke and Stets 2009; Erikson 1959). One's degree of commitment to an identity-related role specifies its salience. Identities, roles, and behavior are inextricably intertwined. Role behavior is the basis for identity, and identities strongly move people to actions that express these meanings (Stryker 2000). When an identity cuts across multiple dimensions (personal, social, and collective) and involves a deeply meaningful and emotion-laden set of associations and commitments, disengagement from that identity is likely to involve substantial residual (Thoits 1992). These are the kind of identities formed in marginalized insular groups that cultivate strong emotions such as extreme hatred.<sup>3</sup>

### *Cognitions, Emotions, and Residual*

To provide a deeper analysis of residual related to rejected identities, we turn to recent developments in cognitive sociology that integrate advances from the neurosciences (Cerulo 2010, 2014; Ignatow 2009, 2014). We rely on several concepts to explain different types of cognition and emotion and their relationship to identity residual. In particular, automatic cognition characterizes rapid, unintentional thoughts or fast cognition, whereas deliberate cognition refers to more reflective, planned thinking, or slow cognition (Cerulo 2010, 2014; DiMaggio 2002). The speed of cognition has been an area of recent

sociological interest (Moore 2017; Vaisey 2009) and underscores the potential sociological relevance of dual process models from the cognitive neurosciences (Lizardo et al. 2016). Dual process models argue that humans rely on two types of cognitive processing: system 1 is fast and largely unconscious, and system 2 processing is slower and conscious (Kahneman 2011; Moore 2017).

Neuroscientists have also described another dimension of cognition, called hot and cold, which refers to the extent that emotional affect is part of a particular cognition. Hot cognition involves a heightened response to stimuli, one that is saturated with a high degree of emotion. In contrast, cold refers to unemotional, calculating thought (Cerulo 2010; Ignatow 2014). The consideration of emotion distinguishes the hot–cold continuum from the automatic–deliberate continuum.

As an effort to synthesize these various aspects of cognition, DiMaggio (2002) proposed a typology that contrasts four cognitive combinations across two dimensions: hot–cold and deliberate–automatic. Cognition that combines automatic and hot orientations corresponds with impulsive, stereotyped action, such as adherence to a strong and rigid ideology, that we argue is most likely to characterize experiences with identity residual. Within the realm of politics, cognitive sociologists have also examined how the strength of a person's ideology can influence cognitive style such that strong ideologies have "pre-organized the world so as to make effortless, efficient associations" (Martin and Desmond 2010:9). Individuals with strong ideologies hold more available schematic information than do those with weak ideologies, and thus they are more likely to engage in automatic cognition and avoid deliberate cognition. This characterization is consistent with extreme hatred, which typically involves rigid boundaries of "us" and "them" and various types of dehumanization (Sternberg 2005). Hot and automatic cognition related to a strong ideology are especially important for understanding potential similarities between addiction and the persistence of a rejected identity (Gladwin and Figner 2014).

The strength of ideology is an important dimension to add to the hot-cold and automatic-deliberate typology. Related to ideology, we think two factors are especially important for understanding when identity residual is most likely to involve addiction-like qualities. First, when identities are highly salient a large portion of a person's life is organized around that identity (Burke 1980). When a highly salient identity involves participation in an insular social movement, the person may develop a dense set of social ties while simultaneously becoming isolated from nonmembers (McAdam 1989; Polletta 1999). The diminished presence of nonmember relationships magnifies the intensity and influence of relationships within the movement.

Second, identities that involve extreme hatred related to group-based prejudices, or what Fromm (1973) called "character-conditioned hate," are likely to produce identity residual. Part of white supremacism includes a central focus on hate, which can be defined as a strong cognitive and emotional disposition toward particular objects, groups, or individuals (Sternberg 2005). When directed at a social group, hate often refers to extreme dislike associated with prejudice that provokes aggressive impulses (Allport 1954), a process that is social-interactional as well as neuro-cognitive (Blee 2004; Zeki and Romaya 2008). Emotion is an important dimension of social movements more broadly (Berezin 2001; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001; Jasper 1998), but not all movements focus on extreme hatred in this respect. Movement identities that do involve high levels of extreme hatred are thus likely to produce different types of personal consequences for those activists.

## THE SOCIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ADDICTION AND HABIT

The addiction concept remains somewhat peripheral within sociology (for exceptions, see Denzin 1993; Graham et al. 2008; Hughes

2007; Lindesmith [1968] 2008; Ray 1961; Weinberg 1997, 2000, 2002, 2011), but habit has received renewed interest (Bennett et al. 2013; Crossley 2013), including recognition of its long-standing significance within classical social theory (Camic 1986). The habitual dimensions of behavior are generally understood as durable generalized dispositions that permeate an entire domain, or even the entire course, of a person's life (Bennett et al. 2013; Camic 1986).

Addiction, on the other hand, can be defined as thoughts, emotions, bodily experiences, and unwanted behavior of a chronic, relapsing, and compulsive nature that occur despite negative consequences and are characterized by episodes where people feel they have lost control (Boshears, Boeri, and Harbry 2011; Dingel et al. 2012; Marks 1990). Addiction implies an element of unwanted and negative consequences that are present in some (but not all) types of habitual behavior.

Although addiction can be understood as a form of habitual behavior (Graybiel 2008; LaRose, Lin, and Eastin 2003; Lindesmith [1968] 2008; Weinberg 1997, 2000, 2002, 2011), the line between habit and addiction is currently unclear. In colloquial terms, an addiction is often referred to as a "bad habit" or a "hard habit to break." More recently, neuroscience studies suggest a substantial overlap between the transition from goal-directed to habit-driven behavior and addiction (Bergen-Cico et al. 2014; Goldstein and Volkow 2011; Graybiel 2008). Following Everitt and Robbins (2005) and Marlatt and colleagues (1988), we argue that addiction is a type of habit. Not all habit can be described as addiction, but all addiction involves habitual behavior. At the same time, it is unclear how broadly the term addiction should be applied to habitual behavior, as evidenced in the controversies over the growing number of behaviors now referred to as "behavioral addictions" (e.g., game-playing, Internet use, excessive sexual behavior) (LaRose et al. 2003; Marks 1990; for a critique of expanded definitions, see Akers 1991).

## Embodying Addiction

To understand how the addictive qualities of white supremacism are experienced through—but also projected outward from—the bodies of participants, we turn to two strands of scholarship on the social body (Crossley 1995; Howson and Inglis 2001; Turner 1997). The phenomenological writings of Merleau-Ponty (1982) are the foundation for one line of research on the intertwined nature of the corporal body and subjectivity. In one example, he describes how soccer players absorb the lines of the field into their sense of self until players and the field in which they play become indistinguishable. The ways the body intersects with personal identity, experience, and perception are similarly described in scholarship on how physical limitations condition how people see themselves and the outside world (Turner 1997).

A second line of scholarship considers the body as a site from which cultural symbols are projected—for example, in the bodily performances of various athletes. Although the two research trajectories are distinct, Turner (1997) argues that they intersect in Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, in which the body is understood as both socially constructed to hold cultural representations and lived within a complex web of social relationships and interactions. Recent sociological studies of the body draw from both traditions, such as Wacquant's (2004; see also Wacquant 2014, 2015) "carnal ethnography" that considers bodily construction and practices in a boxing gym, or Crossley's (2001, 2006) work on "embodied reflexivity" that positions the body as mediating social practices and personal intentionality.

This dual theoretical perspective is particularly useful for understanding the construction and residual effects of a white supremacist identity that individuals continue to experience. Moreover, research on the body is useful for thinking about how addiction to hate becomes etched in physicality and performance while simultaneously serving as a perceptual lens to which people return after

leaving white supremacism. Indeed, addictive-like qualities are embedded within a broad range of human behavior, in part because environmental features are processed through social (e.g., interaction, networks, situational) and biological (e.g., physical capacity, size, attractiveness of stimuli) mechanisms to produce habitual behavior. Previous studies highlight the social aspects involved in the formation of addiction, but less attention has been given to the possibility that social processes themselves may have addictive qualities.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Sample

Sociologists studying deviance use innovative approaches to gain entry into any subcultural environment, but two factors make access to former members of organized hate groups particularly difficult. First, former white supremacists are often loath to be identified as such. They fear that information about their prior affiliations or activities will expose them to violence by current extremists, to legal prosecution, or to sanctions by current employers, neighbors, family members, child protection agencies, and others. Second, unlike current members, former extremists cannot be found through network ties or spatial locations, since most seek to sever all connections to their previous lives. Because there is no way to compile a list of former members to serve as a sampling frame, we identified interviewees by snowball sampling from multiple starts to ensure variety in the location and type of extremist group (Wright et al. 1992). We developed initial contacts for the snowball chains through a variety of means, including our research team's extensive prior research with active and inactive far-right extremists, identifying former extremists with a public presence (e.g., media, book authors, lecture series), and using referrals from our project partners.<sup>4</sup> Because we used multiple individuals to generate unique snowballs, only a small

segment of the participants were acquainted with each other.

Our sampling method resulted in life history interviews with 89 former members of U.S. white supremacist groups. Participants were interviewed in the places they now live, with 85 located in 24 states across all regions of the United States and four in Canada. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 61, and included an unusual gender diversity with 68 men and 21 women. Among respondents, 11 described their current socioeconomic status as lower class, 42 as working class, 31 as middle class, and five as upper class. They had participated in white supremacism from three to twenty-one years. A large portion had extensive histories of criminal conduct, including property offenses such as shoplifting, vandalism, and other forms of property destruction, and a variety of violent offenses such as murder, attempted murder, street fights, violent initiation rituals, and bomb-making. Of the 89 participants, 69 reported a history of violent offending, 77 reported a history of delinquent activity, and 39 had spent time in prison.

To be clear, the individuals in this sample no longer identify as “white power” and are no longer affiliated with organized hate groups. All of the individuals currently see themselves as “formers” or something equivalent to a former (e.g., “I’m not involved anymore,” “I moved on”). In some cases, individuals have been disengaged for more than a decade and have experienced substantial changes in their social and cognitive orientations (e.g., interracial marriage; conversion to Buddhism). In this sense, the residual we identify does not reflect individuals moving from a high level of extremism to a lower level of extremism, but instead characterizes individuals who experienced substantial transformation.

### *Procedures and Data Analysis*

We established rapport prior to interviews through regular contact with participants via telephone and e-mail. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview

protocol and in private settings such as hotel rooms and residential homes and public settings such as restaurants and coffee shops.<sup>5</sup> Most of the interview was spent eliciting an in-depth life history to produce narratives that reflect the complexities and intersectionality of identity, ideology, and life experiences (McAdams 1997). Subjects were asked to describe their childhood experiences as an initial starting point. The interviews included questions about broad phases of the subject’s extremism, such as entry, involvement, and disengagement, with probes to encourage subjects to elaborate on aspects of their life histories. Subjects were periodically asked direct questions to focus on specific topic areas, but the interviews relied on an unstructured format intended to generate unsolicited data embedded in their personal narratives. We view the elicited narratives as instructive in terms of assessing how individuals make sense of their lives (Blee 1996; Copes, Hochstetler, and Forsyth 2013; Giordano et al. 2015; McAdams 1997). Each interview concluded with more structured questions and scale items to collect comparable information across interviewees in terms of risk factors (e.g., history of child abuse, mental health problems), demographic information, and criminality. Interviewing former extremists as opposed to current ones allowed us to elicit information on highly sensitive issues such as previous involvement in violence, crime, and substance abuse.

The interviews lasted between four and more than eight hours and generated 10,882 pages of transcripts, which indicates the level of detail provided by the life histories. We used modified grounded theory (Charmaz 2006; see also Berg 2007; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Miles and Huberman 1994), in order to combine a more open-ended, inductive approach while also relying on existing literatures and frameworks to guide the research and help interpret the findings.<sup>6</sup> The constant interaction with data also involved a virtual ongoing analysis and identification of social processes that affected each new round of interviews. The initial data coding began by reading entire interview transcripts line-by-line to determine differences and similarities

within and across our subjects. Subsequent coding techniques helped identify and extract relevant empirical and conceptual properties and organize the data into similar concepts. Inductive codes emerged from the initial phase of line-by-line analysis (Berg 2007; Charmaz 2006; Lofland et al. 2006). Deductive codes were extracted from scholarly literature on white supremacism, group affiliation, disengagement, and related topics. After developing the initial codes, we compared and contrasted data themes, noting relations between them, and moving back and forth between first-level data and general categories (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Miles and Huberman 1994). Analysis of these interviews also required balancing between accepting and decoding the subjects' narratives. For example, narrated statements about addiction may reflect a larger cultural tendency to frame deviant behavior in medical terms (Conrad 1975; Schneider 2015) and actors' tendency to adopt readily available discursive models that absolve them of responsibility for past and current behavior. Yet it is also important to consider the possibility that addictive qualities may actually characterize certain types of identities. We return to this issue in the conclusion.

Several limitations of this study are important to mention. First, the retrospective nature of the life history interviews raises questions about validity and reliability due to memory erosion, distortion, and selective recall (Baddeley 1979). The practice of remembering is a reconstructive process where memories of events are typically reinterpreted during each recall (Bridge and Paller 2012). Despite these concerns, the rich life history accounts provide important insight from the subjects' perspective. Second, due to the relatively hidden nature of this population, we derived the sample through snowball techniques, which means it is not representative and we cannot generalize from these findings. The goal of a grounded theory approach, however, is to develop a conceptual explanation that closely fits the data (or incidents) the concepts are intended to represent. Grounded theory is not intended to

provide generalizations, but the hypotheses developed can be tested in future studies.

## RESULTS

### *Hate as a Totalizing Commitment*

Involvement in the white supremacist movement includes a complete identity transformation, in much the way Lindesmith ([1968] 2008) describes opiate addiction. In addition, an extensive set of commitments characterize organized hate groups, similar to communes and various new religious movements (Kanter 1972), although there is substantial variation among these groups in terms of adherence to extreme hatred. White supremacist groups socialize members by outlining collective expectations for membership that strongly emphasize hate-directed beliefs, feelings, and behavior. Expressing or acting on the basis of hatred toward non-whites, homosexuals, and various other perceived "outgroups" is the primary marker that white supremacists use to establish group boundaries and ideological coherence, and they provide the basis for a broad range of cultural practices that include everything from violent acts to ordinary lifestyle preferences (Simi and Futrell 2015). In turn, these cultural practices help develop the solidarity and commitment necessary to sustain a collective identity (Fantasia 1989).

Being a white supremacist is comparable to holding a "master status" (Hughes 1945): white supremacy cuts across a person's multiple identities, is typically at the core of one's self-concept, and occupies a central position in one's daily life (Simi and Futrell 2009). The group context of hate, in particular, offers powerful experiences, which Durkheim ([1915] 1965) called "collective effervescence," in which individuals begin to feel outside of themselves and part of a larger being (i.e., the group context) (Collins 2004). Indeed, white supremacism involves vitalizing and reactive emotions (Jasper 1998) and bodily engagement (e.g., ritualized dances, salutes, uniforms, and paramilitary training). In turn, disengagement from

white supremacy requires separating from a central aspect of one's identity and finding new friendship networks, systems of support, music, clothing, and a variety of other lifestyle changes.

We begin by illustrating how a white supremacist identity involves a totalizing set of experiences that permeate all aspects of a person's thoughts, emotions, body presentation, and actions. Doug<sup>7</sup> explained the process of becoming a white supremacist and the related lifestyle:

Your whole life is not just an ideology but when your whole life. . . . We call people a surfer why? Because they've taken on that image. It's usually because they embrace that to a greater degree than somebody who's just a casual surfer. I think with an ideology of skinheads the whole person is being consumed by the idea of what they're embracing and espousing. It is an addiction because you order your life according to what you believe or think . . . your life is ordered according to that pattern. . . . You're presenting an image and that projection is something that's in your heart. It's deep-seated. Not to say something that is deep-seated can't be dislodged but it's about recreating a new life. (Interview, June 7, 2015)

Doug referred to a social evaluation process in which others come to define the person in particular ways, a critical component of self-identification (Cooley 1902; Felson 1985; Matsueda 1992). For Doug, becoming a white supremacist formed an identity of how "you order your life." White supremacy is about more than just adhering to certain ideas; it is an entire way of life that includes parenting, recreation, and entertainment. In this way, white supremacism has the deep physical embodiment of specialized practices that require strict regimes of rehearsal and mastery; it is akin to ballet dancers, for example, who feel unable to stop even when their bodies revolt (Aalten 2007).

The intensive nature of white supremacy is also illustrated by participants' references to

the lengthy period of time necessary to remove themselves from this disposition. Carter, a former member of a paramilitary compound, described the difficulties he experienced when leaving the pervasive lifestyle of white supremacy. As Carter underscores, hate required substantial time to learn and even more time to unlearn:

I've said before that it took me less than two years to learn to hate and it took me nine years to unlearn it. You don't just stop hating just like that. There is still a lot of pollution in there. . . . Since we were religious [Christian] based, I had to learn to look at those scriptures differently. That was hard. For years, I didn't even pick up a Bible anymore. I couldn't read it without only reading it from the bad point of view. I just couldn't see another interpretation of that. I didn't want to read it. I was putting myself under a pressure. . . . Getting that out of me took . . . I think it was '92 [nine years] before I got rid of it all. (Interview, May 20, 2012)

Carter's talk of "pollution in there" is a metaphor for both the destructive effects of white supremacism on his very being and his physical embodiment of this destruction. The reference to pollution symbolizes the depth of Carter's experience and how profoundly he was affected by his years as a white supremacist.

Despite clear differences, both Doug's and Carter's statements underscore how much a person's life is affected by adopting a white supremacist lifestyle. Even their relationships to institutions, such as religion, and their peer relations became completely defined by this worldview. Carter, for example, practiced daily Bible studies and sermons that expressed a white supremacist interpretation of Christian doctrine. He was completely enmeshed in daily rituals and basic living practices organized around the group's racist ideology. Carter's role commitments were so intense that even after he no longer identified as a white supremacist, his previous white supremacist interpretation of the Bible remained involuntarily salient. Doug's experiences represent a

more street-based involvement in white supremacist activities and included routine acts of violence to express his commitments. Whereas Doug and Carter focused on cognitive and emotional aspects of the addiction to hate, Teddy, a former Hammerskin (racist skinhead), detailed his bodily sensations:

Being a part of something and having an ideal and thinking I believed and grabbed a hold of a certain type of truth, you know, meaning of life truth. What we're all seeking for, I guess. . . . It was a high. I'd get chills and everything when I listened to Skrewdriver [white power music].<sup>8</sup> (Interview, June 26, 2015)

To Teddy, racial hate was not simply what he believed; it was what he *was*:

I really believed that I was in the truth. . . . I liked it because it was my heritage, my grandma was from Finland and she came over here and that's, you know, part of what I am, you know, all the symbols, the Vikings and stuff. (Interview, June 26, 2015)

Teddy's point that he believed he was "in the truth" is especially revealing in terms of the all-encompassing and totalizing character of involvement in the white supremacy movement.

### *The Addictive Qualities of Hate*

Because of the intense nature of white supremacist involvement and the difficulties associated with disengagement, some formers described the time period after leaving as a "recovery process" from an addiction to hate. In this section, we examine interviews in which former members explicitly or implicitly described addictive qualities of hate. A small portion of our interviewees reported that disengagement was "not that hard" ( $n = 15$ ), but a majority described it as "substantially difficult" ( $n = 74$ ). Approximately one-third explicitly described hate as a form of addiction ( $n = 35$ ), and a much larger number recounted urges to return to hate or described some type of relapse ( $n = 62$ ).

Formers who described their struggles in terms of addiction narrated an involuntary lingering of white supremacist thoughts, feelings, physical responses, and, in some cases, unwanted behavior. Their residual involved more than a sense of longing for comradery and other aspects related to group dynamics; it was also a deeply ingrained default to hate that could be overridden or repressed but not completely erased. In this way, their narratives evoke Merleau-Ponty's (1982) description of soccer players for whom the rules and motivations of the game are so deeply internalized that they seem to operate on autopilot. Melanie, a former member of the American Nazi Party, talked about racial hate as something fused into her brain:

Somebody needs to do a study . . . subject us to the [white power] music, to the literature, to the racial slurs and watch what fires in our brains. I guarantee you it's an addiction. I can listen to white power music and within a week be back to that mindset. I know it. (Interview, October 13, 2015)

Melanie's comment suggests the automatic and hot dimensions of cognition related to white supremacist involvement and the extent to which these qualities endure over time. Alicia, a former member of the World Church of the Creator, also talked about the role of music in terms of creating enduring thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations that remained years after having listened to the music:

I haven't listened to Skrewdriver [white power music band] or any of that crap in so many years. And even today I have snippets of songs [in my head]. Odd moments then I wonder, well it makes one wonder and think more about hate as an addiction because there can be so many different aspects of it. (Interview, June 23, 2012)

Alicia went on to speculate that the types of affirmation individuals derive from hate groups, such as pride and respect, reinforce the lifestyle and worldview. The process is recursive: white supremacists express their

lifestyle and worldviews through cultural markers such as white power music and, in turn, these cultural practices offer powerful social and psychic rewards. Alicia's speculations have been confirmed by neuroscience studies that underscore the broad-based and intensive nature of social influence on the human brain (Blakemore 2008; Cozolino 2004; Gazzaniga 1987).

In the next sections, we expand our focus by examining two types of residual: each type initiated by a triggering event and, in turn, characterized by an auto-pilot quality the interviewees described as "it just happens." During the first type of residual, the person's previous thoughts, feelings, and bodily reactions related to white supremacy are reactivated, but not necessarily in terms of any concrete unwanted behavior. The second type of residual, however, involves a complete, although relatively short-lived, relapse or return to their previous identity. In this respect, the second type of residual is characterized by a more clearly visible embodiment of their previous identity, although it is experienced and described as involuntary and unwanted.

### Type 1 Residual: Momentary Flashes

Teddy discussed how watching certain movies triggers his previous feelings and beliefs related to white supremacy, and also produces an involuntary physiological response in the form of "goose bumps":

I can't watch like the old war movies or like say *Inglourious Basterds* or, or something like that, you know, and they show like a, or like a, the *History Channel* has the World War II in HD and they, you know, even though they're showing the Germans getting slaughtered and stuff, I still see that, that, you know, the swastika in the background, you know. I get a little goose bumps. I can't lie, you know. (Interview, June 26, 2015)

Teddy discussed powerful but relatively short flashes in which his previously held beliefs

and feelings resurfaced. Flashes and goose bumps can be understood as expressions of automatic and hot cognition that characterize Teddy's involuntary reaction of pride and pleasure when encountering images related to white supremacy. Another participant, Brent, a former member of Volksfront, reflected on his taste in music now and in the past:

I don't have the same thoughts I don't have the same feelings but I can't stop listening to the music [meaning neo-Nazi rock music]. . . . It's pretty catchy fucking rock-n-roll you know what I mean? You know. Kind of cool. So I'm reliving some glory fucking days, this and that. You know, it's like fucking good music and except for the lyrics, it's some pretty good fucking music man, for the most part. (Interview, July 27, 2014)

Brent described his persistent attraction to neo-Nazi music as an involuntary action, and one he was unable to stop. Although he experienced this listening as beyond his control, it served as a pleasant reminder of his past, despite his current disavowal of the ideas represented in the lyrics. As Schwarz's (2015) fascinating study of "ghetto sounds" illuminates, what and how we hear reflects deeply held cultural values; environmental sounds can stimulate a variety of related (and unrelated) thoughts and feelings (see also Bryson 1996). At a neurological level, studies have long shown that different areas of the brain process music differently than other stimuli (Davidson et al. 1976; Molfese, Freeman, and Palermo 1975). Such studies suggest a direct, lifelong link between music and emotions. Given this neural differentiation, it is quite likely that music provides a complimentary process that facilitates the ability to learn and associate music with ideology and related actions (Levitin and Tirovolas 2009). Brent's statement suggested that Skrewdriver's music evokes feelings and activates memories that he still finds enjoyable. Memory activation triggered through distinct musical sounds, along with the lyrics, allows former extremists, like Brent, to recall their past selves in

some type of embodied fashion that includes listening, singing along, and dancing. In turn, these bodily experiences evoke visceral reactions that can be pleasurable or unpleasurable as individuals relive their former selves. The power of these experiences is particularly evident in Brent's case, as he continues to experience residual from his past identity despite his current marriage to an African American woman.

### *Type 2 Residual: Situational Relapse*

The second type of residual involves substantial relapses, where individuals fully embody a return to their previous identity as a white supremacist. For example, Bonnie described a recent incident at a *Jack in the Box* restaurant:

I go through the drive-thru and what'd they do? They fucked up [my son's] order and they didn't give me tacos or I don't know. So I go back in there and his burger's like tiny. I'm like, I'm like, "That burger was \$5.00, why is this little?" Okay, well, the lady, she was, they're all Mexican. They hardly speak English and she's like accusing me of coming back for free food and I got pissed off and she was like ignoring me, like and I'm trying to talk to her and, and she wouldn't listen to me and is talking to other people and accusing me of, "I put them in your," "No, you didn't. I wouldn't drive all the way back here if you gave me my food." I'm like, "You didn't give me this, this, and this." And so I don't remember what she said because I barely understood her. She wouldn't give me her name, you know. She wouldn't stand close enough where I could see the, her thing, and she wouldn't tell me, I asked for the manager. "Oh, there's no manager." She was really rude and so I told her, "Fuck you, you fucking Beaner, get the fuck out of my country," and I told her, "White power," and I walked out and I threw a heel up [Nazi salute] and I don't usually do that shit anymore but I was so angry and it's because of everything that's going on now. . . . I did it as I was walking out. . . . I don't even remember everything I said. I

was so angry. . . . No, all I saw was red and I saw her and I wanted to fucking beat the piss out of her. (Interview, July 20, 2015)

The *Jack in the Box* incident was an unexpected and involuntary response to an irritating but relatively mundane situation. Bonnie's reaction, however, reflected an automatic and hot cognitive style that she described as highly emotive ("all I saw was red").

At the conclusion of the incident, Bonnie reported she was overcome by shame and disbelief at what had transpired, further illustrating that Bonnie experienced the situation as unwanted and involuntary. Yet, her response to the momentary relapse did not seem any less automatic or hot. Bonnie simply knew and felt that what she did inside the restaurant was "wrong," and she was overcome with sadness by even discussing the incident. Whereas other individuals reported responding to residual with deliberate cognition by initiating different types of self-talk, we found little evidence in Bonnie's interview that suggested more deliberate cognition to offset the residual. In this sense, Bonnie was still very much wrapped up in her past identity and unable to find much, if any, emotional distance, which helps explain the substantial amount of residual she continues to experience. People are at greater risk of struggling with residual when they are unable to find an alternative source of self-worth and affirmation (Vaughan 1986). Bonnie's case exemplifies this. Her interview was filled with markers of shame (e.g., "I feel ashamed talking about this"; "I don't leave the house now without covering the [swastika] tattoo on my foot") and a diminished self-worth such that she did not consider herself "important enough" to be interviewed.

Bonnie's exit from hate group involvement was recent, but other individuals whose disengagements were more distant in time also reported similar types of relapse. Jackson, for example, who left the white supremacist movement more than 15 years ago, discussed how his daughter's recent relationship with a Latino person not only made him angry but forced him to evaluate how much

he had actually changed since exiting the white supremacist movement:

I reacted like Archie Bunker you know what I mean? “One of my friends told me my daughter is getting with a Mexican,” I went right to her, “Hey is he partly Hispanic?” “Yeah a little bit.” Oh man I came unhitched. I was just, I was like, “You are not getting with him he is this and you can’t because there is a bloodline,” I was freaked the fuck out like, “This can’t happen.” I said, “What the fuck do you think you are doing? Why did you get with him? You can’t. I swear to God if you fucking do,” but I made her cry and all that shit . . . just took me about half-hour to realize what I did. I mean all this weird shit comes out, all of this weird thoughts to counter what you had done. Because I know I’m not a shallow person but that’s shallow. That was a shallow thought process . . . that was shallow thinking. It’s Archie Bunker shit. That’s total fucking ignorant. It was ignorant and then I was just like don’t fucking think that you are all cured of fucking racism Mr. Fucking Racist. I was like damn. (Interview, April 17, 2014)

Jackson’s initial response reflected his previous beliefs regarding “racial purity” and “white genocide.” The fear and anger that accompanied his earlier racist beliefs were reactivated after Jackson learned about his daughter’s new romantic partner. Like Bonnie, Jackson described his initial reaction in terms consistent with automatic and hot cognition, but, unlike Bonnie, Jackson’s thinking transitioned to a more deliberate cognition style characterized by a careful reconsideration of his initial reaction. As this transition to deliberate cognition occurred, the degree of emotional affect seemed to lessen somewhere between hot and cold. Compared to Bonnie, Jackson’s shift to a more deliberate cognitive style may reflect the relatively lengthy period of time that has lapsed since his disengagement from white supremacy and the extent to which he has developed a new identity

focused around civil rights activism. Both time and a new political orientation may have helped Jackson develop a more flexible cognitive style that provides censors in terms of identifying and responding to residual. Finally, Jackson’s shift from automatic to deliberate cognition provides support for models that treat system 1 and system 2 cognition as integrated rather than completely distinct (Moore 2017).

### *Self-Talk Strategies to Resist Residual*

We now turn to DiMaggio’s (2002) typology to explore the self-talk strategies former white supremacists develop to deflect the involuntary thoughts, feelings, bodily reactions, and unwanted behavior that accompany the experience of residual. We conceive of these strategies as “agentic moves” (Giordano et al. 2002), in which actors willfully influence their response to situational circumstances. As opposed to residual, self-talk reflects deliberate cognition that ranges between hot and cold. Darren, for example, trained himself to “let it go” and “step back” to prevent himself from slipping into the person he once was:

For me, I still find myself, I’ll start kind of thinking, you know what I’m a truck driver and most of the truck drivers in New Mexico are Mexicans. I’m driving down the road and I got some guy that obviously I look at his truck and it’s, all right that guy number one, doesn’t have a license. Number two he’s illegal in general or whatever, then he cuts me off. Then the wheels start spinning. And I’ve got to catch myself, no. Let it go, that’s not how . . . maybe he’s just having a bad day behind the wheel. I mean it still happens. . . . Yes, it does. You just kind of step back and all right. . . . I constantly remind myself, you’re not that guy anymore, don’t do it. The tendency is always there. It is very easy to get back into that mindset. I think that is one of the things that a lot of people, especially the old timers that get out, they have a hard time with it,

because you get drawn back into it just by everyday things that you see. (Interview, November 6, 2012)

Darren's self-talk involves reminders to take the role of others (Mead 1934) to empathize with the object of his initial anger ("maybe he's just having a bad day"). Darren is clearly trying to avoid the kind of dehumanization that is a core component of white supremacist ideology. For Darren, learning new ways to act requires reminders that his past self need not be his current or future self. It is not simply a matter of changing his ideas or acting in new ways. He had to remember that he was "not that guy anymore" through repeated self-coaching. The reminders are an effort to suppress certain memories while reinforcing his new self-image.

In Teddy's case, Christ is the key to affirming to himself that he is no longer a white supremacist:

It's a struggle, you know. It is but, you know, I just got to turn to Christ and if I get them, I just drop on my knees and I just start praying, you know, and it works but, you know, you take a, you take a heroin addict for 30 years, he may be clean and sober 10 years but you dangle a bag of powder, you know, he's going to do that little mentality, so it's the same, you know. I may not be a drug addict but I was addicted to that, you know. I just exchanged one idol for another, you know. It was and yeah, I can't, I can't lie and say that I don't, you know, but I just got to, now I know how to subside all that. (Interview, June 26, 2015)

The lure of returning to his white supremacist self is visceral and too powerful for Teddy to resist on his own. It dangles like "a bag of [illegal drug] powder," exciting his bodily urges to pull him back into an identity and self that he battled to leave. Even when successful at maintaining physical distance from white supremacy, the effects lingered. Teddy considered the allure so powerful that he no longer imagined having an independent, self-directed self. Instead, Teddy saw himself as

permanently marked by his former role. At best, he had "exchanged one idol [extremism] for another [Christ]." Religious conversions are well-documented sources of self-change related to criminal behavior and substance abuse (Maruna, Wilson, and Curran 2006; Sremac and Ganzevoort 2013). In this respect, Teddy's new religious framework became a substitute of sorts that provided him with the same type of automatic and hot cognitions that white supremacy previously did. Although the content of Teddy's thinking changed, the form or structure of his cognitions remained quite similar.

These former extremists used self-talk as a strategy to respond to the sudden resurfacing of thoughts, feelings, physiological responses, and unwanted behavior associated with their previous identity as a white supremacist, but they had mixed results. Self-talk represents a concrete instance of human reflexivity, or a dialogue between the more spontaneous "I" and the more socially constructed "Me" (Mead 1934; see also Callero 2003). Its strategic value is multiple. The very act of self-talk buffers involuntary residual, allowing formers to suppress manifestations of a self they no longer embrace. At the same time, instances of self-talk may contribute to individuals' sense of self-efficacy by cumulatively demonstrating their ability to "initiate self change" (Thoits 2003:192; see also Bandura 2001). However, residual may persist despite self-talk and surface as overt expressions of white supremacy.

Because the process of internalization is both conscious and unconscious, individuals can exert agency in varying ways and in varying capacities (Hitlin and Elder 2007; Hitlin and Kirkpatrick Johnson 2015; Lizardo 2004). Emirbayer and Mische (1998; and more recently Hitlin and Elder 2007) provide important theoretical insight about how agency varies according to whether a person is acting within a set of highly constrained routines or during a period when routines have been disrupted and opportunities to innovate are more available. The disruption of a highly salient identity provides opportunities for a person to exert agency during an unsettled period of

time (Vaisey 2009). However, if a person's life remains unsettled for an extended period of time, residual may become more persistent and pervasive as the attraction to return to old habits may gain prominence.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we relied on in-depth life history interviews with a sample of former U.S. white supremacists to examine the complexities and difficulties related to exiting a highly salient identity and the ensuing residual an actor may experience. Specifically, we highlighted the embodied qualities associated with residual that subjects describe in terms of addiction. The results suggest that important lingering elements continue to manifest long after a person leaves white supremacy. Hate groups appear to generate a "phantom community" (Athens 1992) with persistent influence on thoughts, feelings, physiological responses, and behavior.

Residual effects are experienced on multiple levels that are cumulatively described as addiction. First, residual effects intrude on cognitive processes, as thoughts from individuals' previous extremist lives reappear in certain situations. Second, residual effects also involve emotional processes. Unexpected situational cues may provoke anger and other negative emotions that coincide with previously held beliefs about the inferiority of various outgroups. Furthermore, individuals' memories of enacting hate and trauma provoke feelings of shame for the harm, damage, and violence they inflicted. Former extremists also experience fear about a permanently damaged self that refuses their efforts to change and feels involuntarily tethered to hate. Third, long-term effects are experienced on a physiological level, as former extremists describe involuntary and impulsive bodily sensations that stem from the habitual aspects of their previous identity. Finally, some instances of residual involve formers experiencing a complete relapse, if only momentarily, where their white supremacist behavior

returns. These instances go beyond fleeting thoughts or feelings and extend into overt behavior and affect how individuals conduct themselves in certain situations.

This study changes how we understand disengagement from violent extremism specifically, and residual more broadly, by emphasizing the long-lasting consequences of certain types of identities. Our findings indicate that disengagement from white supremacism is much more encompassing than simply disengaging from its activities or physically removing oneself from the group. Indeed, in such cases, leaving can be a very ambiguous process with no clear demarcation about when it begins or ends. As our research shows, this ambiguity is at least partially due to deeply held and felt aspects that reside outside conscious control, elements that are overlooked in most existing studies of disengagement, defec-tion, and deradicalization from extremism. Such omissions reflect a larger sociological bias that privileges conscious aspects of human behavior (Hitlin and Kirkpatrick Johnson 2015) while neglecting the physical nature of social reality (Wacquant 2015). Following Wacquant (2015), we suggest a holistic understanding of identity that goes beyond how one thinks or feels to include physical embodiment of identities. Such a formulation has practical implications: effective interventions may require much greater attention to the enduring qualities of extremism in order to offset residual-related issues.

To be clear, we are not arguing that all forms of deviance are addictive. Instead, we argue that the distinction between addiction as an experience with "real" symptomology, as opposed to the "idea" of addiction as metaphorical rhetoric that provides actors with a frame to understand residual experiences, is misleading. This type of distinction is unnecessary, because the symptoms of addiction are not experienced outside of linguistic processes used to make sense of our experiences retrospectively. Addiction is often assessed, in part, by asking individuals about their experiences in terms of how much they consume a particular substance or whether they

ever feel urges to consume the substance or engage in a particular behavior (Adams et al. 2004). Although some addictions (e.g., heroin) may involve physical symptoms such as vomiting or tremors, even those experiences are partially understood through a series of linguistic devices and involve important psychological and social dimensions. In short, the idea that interviewees may be using addiction purely as a rhetorical device reifies an overly rigid distinction between “real” and “discursive” (Hughes 2007).

This article provides an important first step toward examining the addictive qualities of identity residual. The case of white supremacist identity residual raises a number of intriguing questions future research should address. First, what are the differences between individual trajectories of disengagement that involve substantial residual compared to those that do not? In particular, it would be useful for future studies to more carefully trace how individuals’ network embeddedness during involvement shapes their experiences following disengagement. Additional analyses are also necessary to more closely examine the situational dynamics related to specific episodes of residual and to focus more on the neurocognitive qualities of identity residual. Toward this end, we suggest incorporating neuroimaging experimental designs as a means to gather neurophysiological data that can be integrated with self-report interviews or survey data. Finally, future research should compare former activists across a broad range of social movements, including other movements that may also emphasize extreme hatred (e.g., violent jihadists) as well as former members from other violent but less political subcultures (e.g., conventional street gangs).

Recognizing the addictive qualities of identity has substantial theoretical implications. Identities may be constructed and performed through situational occasions, but when these situations are routinized, insular, and involve extreme hatred, the persistence of these identities may be much greater than previously thought. In this sense, disengagement is not really the end of that identity. Instead, a

whole other layer of unwanted and involuntary thoughts, feelings, bodily responses and behaviors may persist and continue to shape a person’s life. We do not endorse the idea of “once a hater, always a hater,” but there may be shreds of truth in this statement: any kind of powerful identity will leave traces on the remainder of a person’s life. The point is not that change is impossible, but rather transformation is never complete nor total and some past identities linger while continuing to shape future selves. Individuals need to understand how these past identities may continue to shape their lives, rather than remain unaware of these influences.

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## Notes

1. The current political moment complicates the issue of white supremacist marginalization. Clearly a long history of institutional white supremacy has been part of the United States since the founding of the Republic; however, the post-WWII era has been characterized by a growing trend toward multiculturalism, with widespread social changes spurred by a broad constellation of progressive social movements. During this period, a white backlash has consistently been present and, in varying degrees, influential. In the most recent presidential election,

- however, this backlash became more overt and less coded than in previous decades.
2. Previous studies have found multiple social factors that contribute to disengagement from white supremacist groups, including the positive role of significant others (Aho 1994; Gadd 2006), the inability to maintain employment (Bjørge 2011), violence (Blazak 2004; Gallant 2014), and incarceration (Bubolz and Simi 2015). Activists may experience less “biographical availability” due to factors such as marital responsibilities and raising children (Bjørge 1997; Bjørge and Horgan 2009), or they may “mature out” of the movement and desire a more conventional lifestyle (Bjørge 1997, 2011). Disengagement has been tied to psychological factors such as burnout or disillusionment that stem from differences between expectations and reality (Aho 1994; Bubolz and Simi 2015; Kimmel 2007), as well as dissatisfaction with a group’s activities, lack of loyalty among members, and the way younger members are manipulated by veterans (Bjørge 2011; Gadd 2006), or moral uneasiness with movement ideology and activities (Bjørge 1997).
  3. In the terrorism and extremist literature, scholars conceptualize the processes of exiting as disengagement and deradicalization. The former refers to disassociating with extremist groups or individuals by ending behaviors related to extremism, whereas deradicalization refers to a more complete cognitive shift or transformation (Bubolz and Simi 2015; Horgan 2009).
  4. We benefited from advice from three prominent human rights groups: the Anti-Defamation League, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Southern Poverty Law Center; and from an outreach organization, Life After Hate, that assists individuals leaving far-right extremist groups.
  5. There was a high degree of overlap between the individual interviewers, as each interview was conducted with the same interview protocol and a subsample of interviews were conducted by multiple interviewers, which increased our ability to maintain consistency among interviewer behaviors. To increase interviewer consistency, the research team met in person for interview training and logistics planning prior to the initiation of any data collection. During the process of data collection, the research team regularly debriefed via telephone conference calls and in-person meetings that included detailed discussions related to research methodology and design.
  6. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed with only minor edits.
  7. Pseudonyms are used for all interviewees. To hide the identity of interviewees, we did not refer to them by name during interviews. If a name was mentioned inadvertently, this was stricken from the transcripts.
  8. A vibrant and influential “white power” rock music element provides powerful social rituals that reinforce far-right-wing ideology and belonging.

Skrewdriver is one of the most prominent of these music groups.

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