

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.¹

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 supremacy? 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.

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.³

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 supremacy 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 Harby 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).

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 *Inglorious Bastards* 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 Bearer, get the fuck out of my country," and I told her, "White power," and I walked out and I threw a heil 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 supremacy 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, defection, 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

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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