



**START**

# **Recruitment and Radicalization among US Far-Right Terrorists**

*Report to the Office of University Programs,  
Science and Technology Directorate,  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

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**National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism**  
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## About This Report

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This report is part of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) project, “Recruitment and Radicalization among U.S. Far-Right Terrorists,” led by Pete Simi, University of Nebraska Omaha.

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The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or START.

## About START

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is supported in part by the Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through a Center of Excellence program led by the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information, contact START at [infostart@start.umd.edu](mailto:infostart@start.umd.edu) or visit [www.start.umd.edu](http://www.start.umd.edu).

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**Contents**

**Executive Summary** ..... 1

**Introduction** ..... 5

    Types of Right-Wing Extremists ..... 6

    Conceptual Definitions and Scope of the Study..... 7

    Significance and Relevance ..... 7

**Theoretical Framework**..... 8

    Violent Extremism as Normal Crime ..... 10

    Overview of Life Course Criminology ..... 12

        Developmental Life Course Theories..... 14

        Age-grade Theory of Informal Social Control..... 17

        Cognitive Transformation Process ..... 20

    Advantages of Applying Life Course Criminology to Violent Extremism..... 22

    Future Directions in Life Course Criminology ..... 24

    Conclusions ..... 25

**Data and Methods**..... 26

    Sampling Procedures..... 26

        Snowball Sampling..... 27

    Data Collection ..... 28

        Life History Interviews..... 28

        Open-source coding ..... 29

    Specific Methodological Approaches..... 30

        Thematic Assessment..... 30

            Sample Characteristics ..... 30

            Analysis and Coding Process..... 30

        Childhood Trauma and Adolescent  
        Misconduct as Precursors to Violent Extremism ..... 31

            Sample Characteristics ..... 32

            Analysis and Coding Process..... 33

        Circumplex Model of Affect..... 34

Sample Characteristics ..... 34

Analysis and Coding Process..... 35

Overall Methodological Strengths and Limitations ..... 37

**Results**..... 38

**Report 1: Thematic Assessment** ..... 38

        Family Socialization Prior to Entering Violent Extremism..... 38

            Ideological Socialization Strategies ..... 39

                Linguistic Devices ..... 40

                Blatant Racism..... 42

                Subtle Racism..... 43

        Entry into Violent Extremism ..... 44

            Pushes and Pulls into Violent Extremism ..... 45

                Searching for Belonging and Acceptance..... 46

                The Thrill of the Forbidden ..... 49

                Protection..... 51

                Quest for Significance ..... 52

        Violent Extremists Recruitment..... 56

            Extremist Taxonomy ..... 56

            Recruitment into Violent Extremism..... 58

                Target Population ..... 59

                Marketing Strategies..... 61

                    Fliers, Stickers and Leafleting ..... 62

                    Face-to-Face Recruitment ..... 64

                WPM Music Scene ..... 67

        Subculture of Violence ..... 70

            Street Codes..... 71

            Violence as a Rite of Passage..... 74

                Commitment and Status ..... 75

                Disciplinary and Policing Strategies ..... 76

Emotional Experiences during a fight .....	78
Situations When Violence Goes Too Far .....	81
<b>Report 2: Circumplex Model of Affect</b> .....	84
Risk Factors for Organized Violence .....	85
Findings: Pre-Entry Risk Factors.....	86
Pre-Entry Ideological Variables and Pathways to Engagement .....	90
Cognitive Variables.....	96
Findings: Turning Point Events .....	100
Categories of Turning Point Events .....	100
Industrial Organizational Variables.....	103
Cognitive Variables.....	105
Moral Based Variables.....	107
Circumplex Affect Variables.....	108
<b>Report 3: Childhood Trauma and Adolescent Misconduct as Precursors to VE</b> .....	111
Violent Extremism, Crime, and Pathways to Entry .....	113
Trauma, Conduct Problems, and Violence .....	114
Trauma and Life-Course Criminology .....	115
Sequential Model of Violent Extremism.....	116
Early Experiences with Trauma as Environmental Adversity	119
Conduct Problems during Adolescence .....	121
Non-Ideological Functions of Extremist Participation.....	122
Summary Case Description.....	124
Discussion and Conclusions.....	125
<b>Report 4: Why Radicalization Fails – Barriers to Mass Casualty Violence</b> .....	127
Black Swans and Rarity of Terror Incidents .....	129
The Current Status of Radicalization Studies .....	130
Types of Barriers to Mass Casualty Violence .....	133
Barrier One: Sorting Mechanisms Away from MCV .....	133
Mass Casualty Violence as Counterproductive.....	133
Preference for Interpersonal Violence.....	135

Barrier Two: Changes in Focus and Availability ..... 138  
     Drugs and Alcohol..... 138  
     Personal Obligations..... 140  
 Barrier Three: Disillusionment..... 142  
     Hypocrisy and Disappointment..... 142  
     In-Fighting..... 144  
 Barrier Four: Moral Apprehension..... 145  
     Failure to Employ Moral Disengagement ..... 145  
 Discussion and Conclusions..... 147

**References**..... 150

**Appendices** ..... 185  
 Appendix A: Thematic Assessment Codebook..... 185  
 Appendix B: Circumplex Model of Affect Codebook..... 192  
 Appendix C: Trauma Model of Extremist Participation ..... 199  
 Appendix D: Risk Factor and Recruitment Codebooks ..... 200

## Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a two-year study, “Recruitment and Radicalization among US Far-Right Terrorists.” This investigation examines multiple aspects of recruitment and radicalization, such as the quality and quantity of exposure to right-wing ideologies prior to extremist involvement; types of recruitment; pre-entry risk factors for extremist participation; and the extremists’ perception about why he/she was unable to progress beyond the planning stages of a terror plot. The empirical analysis is divided into four distinct but overlapping reports.

Report one consists of a comprehensive thematic assessment, which focuses on family socialization prior to extremist involvement; entry processes into extremism; recruitment strategies and the extremist subculture of violence. In terms of socialization, although only a small segment of our sample (n=3, 9.7%) were raised by parents who were members of extremist groups, a vast majority (n=28, 90.3%) were exposed to racist/anti-Semitic beliefs during childhood. Regarding motivation for entry into violent extremism (VE), our findings indicate a variety of non-ideological factors increased the appeal of these groups such as acceptance from peers, attraction to the group’s forbidden social image and the ability to increase ones’ level of personal significance. In addition, participants also felt the group offered protection from bullies at school and rival gangs in their neighborhoods.

In terms of recruitment, extremist groups relied on a variety of marketing strategies (e.g., leafleting and house parties) in order to promote their political agenda. Our data suggest these groups targeted marginalized youth who were angry and looking for solutions to their problems. However, the most effective recruitment tool was extremist music. Music provided recruiters with opportunities to introduce potential recruits to the extremist subculture in venues and through mediums with decreased monitoring from agents of formal social control.

In addition, report one also examines the violent subculture of right-wing extremist groups. As part of this discussion, we highlight the role of various cultural practices such as violent rituals which were used to increase commitment to the group and to distinguish strong members from weaker ones. As our data indicates, however, there does seem to be a threshold for violence. That is, some extremists condemned violence when it was directed towards “defenseless” targets. Overall, these findings underscore the similarities individuals experience throughout their extremist careers.

Report two contains a detailed description of pre-entry risk factors for VE participation. Specifically, we apply a circumplex model of affect to examine sample of extremists. The circumplex model of affect proposes that rather than viewing emotion from independent neural systems, affective states should be understood as arising from common, overlapping neurophysiological systems (Posner, Russel, and Petersen, 2005; Russel 1980). More specifically, this model proposes that affective states arise from two fundamental neurophysiological systems: valence (please-displeasure continuum) and arousal (or alertness) with all emotions reflecting some combination of these two dimensions. Report two relies on this model to help examine how individuals reflect on their entry into VE and the affective states that can be discerned from their narrative descriptions of those events.

Our findings are drawn from a subsample of the study (n=20) and emphasize the role that non-ideological push factors have in extremist participation and the onset of violent offending. For instance, the majority of our participants reported dysfunctional family environments such as divorced parents (n=16, 80%), child abuse (n=7, 35%), emotional abuse (n=2, 10%), sexual abuse (n=4, 20%) and neglect (n=4, 20%). In terms of the motivation for entry, the two most common turning point events related to entertainment and peer relationships. In total, 14 (70%) subjects expressed both entertainment and friends in their turning point event description. Seven subjects expressed disillusionment with society and 8 participants expressed negative exposure to diversity during their recollection of the turning point



event that led to involvement in violent extremism. These findings highlight the influence of pre-entry risk factors on VE participation.

Report three presents an empirically informed trauma model of extremist participation. This study relies on an expanded sample of right-wing extremists as compared to report two (n=44) and examines childhood trauma and adolescent misconduct as precursors to the onset of VE. This model consists of three primary dimensions: 1) different types of childhood trauma experienced, 2) subsequent onset of conduct problems during adolescence, and 3) non-ideological motivations and circumstances leading to extremist participation.

Based on the analysis, we find the model fits slightly more than one-half of the subjects in the sample (n=27, 55%) with some variation of additional fit for the remaining subjects. For instance, a large portion of the sample reported experiencing some type of childhood maltreatment such as physical abuse (n=20, 45%), sexual abuse (n=10, 23%) or neglect (n=21, 48%). In addition to maltreatment, participants also reported a variety of chaotic living conditions such as parental incarceration (n=13, 30%), parental abandonment (n=14, 32%) and family substance abuse (n=21, 48%).

In terms of adolescent conduct problems, a significant portion of our sample (n=28, 64%) reported experimenting with alcohol and illicit drugs prior to age 16. Furthermore, a majority of participants (n=26, 59%) reported skipping school as well as dropping out of school or being expelled from school (n=24, 55%). Although there is no single pathway to VE, our data suggests that non-ideological risk factors, in part, accumulate over time leading to substantial life course disadvantages that facilitate a number of possible negative outcomes including VE participation.

Report four examines the social and psychological barriers to mass casualty violence. Specifically, we describe four obstacles that decreases the likelihood of mass casualty violence (MCV). The first barrier functions as a sorting process away from MCV. Our data suggests one of the earliest barriers obstructing MCV is the preference for interpersonal violence rather than MCV. In other situations, the

extremist organization condemns violence as a counterproductive strategy. The second barrier involves the impact that various non-movement, personal obligations have on an individual's capacity to further radicalize toward MCV. That is, time spent drinking or using drugs, time dedicated to personal obligations (e.g., children, spouses or work) and time spent fighting rival gangs means less time available to coordinate acts of MCV.

The third barrier, disillusionment, occurs when an extremist is discouraged by behaviors observed in the movement that are inconsistent with the official movement doctrine. Over time, the extremist begins to question his/her own commitment and the legitimacy of the groups' ideologies. The fourth, and final, barrier involves the extremist's inability to justify the use of violence against other individuals especially a large number of unknown victims. Overall, findings from the current study suggest that internal and external influences interact with one another to reduce the likelihood of MCV which helps explain the rarity of this type of violence.

Findings from this project underscore the complexities of extremist participation. The current report begins to unravel these intricacies by moving beyond the traditional case study methods previously used to explore recruitment and radicalization processes. Overall, this study finds that VE participation is influenced, in part, through non-ideological risk factors prior to entering an extremist group and that social and psychological obstacles reduce the likelihood of MCV.

## Introduction

Since the growth of terrorist movements and organizations in the Middle East during the 1980s and 1990s, followed by the 9/11 attack, the term terrorism has become synonymous with Islamic radicalism. At the same time, other types of violent extremism have been relatively neglected. Despite the laser beam focus on radical jihadis, violence committed by right-wing extremists represents the oldest and most persistent form of terrorism in the United States (Michael, 2014; Newton & Newton 1991; Trelease, 1971) and surprisingly the deadliest form of extremism in the US since 9/11 (New America Foundation, 2015). In fact, since 9/11 right-wing extremists have killed more Americans on US soil than jihadi extremists by almost two-to-one (New America Foundation, 2015).

Yet the pervasive focus on violent jihadis obscures the large number of terror plots initiated by US right-wing extremists (RWE). Efforts by these domestic extremists suggest latent or unfulfilled potential posing a significant threat to national security and serves as the motivation for the project Recruitment and Radicalization among US Far-Right Terrorists, led by Pete Simi (University of Nebraska at Omaha). The goal of this study is two-fold: 1) conduct in-depth life history interviews with a sample of former violent US white supremacists; 2) develop a series of reports that highlight different aspects of the recruitment and radicalization processes among a sample of right-wing extremists that includes individuals who have participated in a broad range of violent extremism. As part of these analyses, we intend to focus on identifying environmental conditions that influence different levels of radicalization including those cases where individuals become fully operable as terrorists as opposed to the much larger number of RWEs who either fail to progress beyond planning a terror plot, adopt alternate trajectories encouraging criminal behavior less directly related to political motives, or avoid the use of violent tactics altogether. Rather than solely focusing on individuals who commit terrorism, this study will also examine “negative cases” that represent these different levels of radicalization that characterize political extremism.

The final report is organized around a series of inter-related studies each of which has a somewhat unique research focus and/or analytic strategy. Following the introduction, we begin by discussing our theoretical framework, life-course criminology (LCC), which we used to organize our study. Our discussion of LCC provides an overview of this approach with an emphasis on the current neglect of LCC within the study of VE. We see this omission as a substantial shortcoming as LCC provides a powerful framework for understanding a broad range of criminal behavior including violent extremism. As part of this discussion, we also provide an explanation of how LCC enhances the study of VE. Next, we present the methodological strategy we relied on to examine US RWE. The methodology section is followed by a series of empirical analyses.

### **Types of Right-Wing Extremists<sup>1</sup>**

This report focuses on the threat of US white supremacist groups (i.e., the extreme of the extreme right). We consider white supremacists as constituting an overlapping web of movements that include various Ku Klux Klans, neo-Nazis, Christian Identity, racist neo-Pagan believers, white power skinheads, Posse Comitatus, and segments of the anti-government Militia, Patriot, and Sovereign Citizen Movements.<sup>1</sup> While substantial ideological and stylistic differences exist across these movement networks, members also agree on some basic doctrines. First and foremost, white supremacists imagine they are part of an innately superior biogenetic race (i.e., “master race”) that is under attack by race-mixing and intercultural exchange. White supremacists see themselves as victims of a world that is on the brink of collapse (Berbrier, 2000; Blee, 2002). White supremacists unite around genocidal fantasies against Jews, Blacks, Hispanics, gays and anyone else opposed to white power. They desire a racially exclusive world where non-whites and other “sub-humans” are vanquished, segregated, or at least subordinated to Aryan authority. They idealize conservative traditional male-dominant heterosexual

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<sup>1</sup> While Christian Identity adherents are by definition white supremacists, most neo-Pagans are not associated with the white supremacist movement.

families and loathe homosexuality, inter-racial sex, marriage, and procreation (Simi & Futrell, 2010).

Beyond organizations explicitly committed to white supremacist ideology, there are overlaps between white supremacists and more mainstream movements like various Tea Parties and even elected officials within legitimate governmental institutions like the United States Congress.

### **Conceptual Definitions and Scope of the Study**

This study relied on several key concepts that guided the research. Following previous studies, we define terrorism as “acts of violence by non-state actors, perpetrated against civilian populations, intended to cause fear, in order to achieve a political objective” (Lafree, Morris, and Duggan, 2009). More often we use the term violent extremism (VE) throughout the report which can be defined as violence committed by an individual and/or group in support of a specific political or religious ideology and this term is often used interchangeably with terrorism (Borum 2011). We use this term to refer to the broad range of violence committed by extremists to include terrorism but also other acts of violence committed by extremists that may or may not meet the definition of terrorism. We think it is important to distinguish acts of violence that are ideologically motivated but relatively spontaneous. Although the definition of terrorism that we rely on does not explicitly specify any necessary degree of planning, we see the achievement of a political objective as requiring at least some level of planning. A political objective, by definition, involves an actor or actors who envision altering the current system in some fashion which requires planning. At the same time, we also recognize there is a highly subjective component to this distinction and there is also substantial difficulty distinguishing degree of planning. For example, is an act of violence planned a day before enough planning?

### **Significance and Relevance**

This project has significant relevance for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and various other national, state, and local law enforcement agencies. In particular, the findings can help expand the knowledge base for policy decisions about domestic terrorism in contemporary American society.

Diminishing the threat of terrorist recruitment and radicalization requires systematic research, analysis, and explanation. This study has clear practical application in terms of refining current investigative techniques regarding the threat assessment of group violence. The U.S. Secret Service's Model of Targeted Violence, for example, emphasizes the importance of analyzing situational factors, how individuals experience different types of spatial contexts, and the role of these contexts in facilitating violence. An important dimension of conducting threat assessments focuses on the recruitment and radicalization of new and existing members.

Understanding the threat of right-wing extremism is critical to ensuring the most effective counterterrorism measures are in place. Findings from this report will be shared with law enforcement training partners including the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). Briefings will be available to the Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center, the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Operation Unit (DTOU) and Domestic Terrorism Analytic Unit (DTAU). In addition, results from the study will also be shared with the FBI's National Academy and other trainings related to extremism and terrorism. Findings will also be made available to state-level and local law enforcement agencies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The conceptual and empirical boundaries of subfields are often contested and blurred (Brown, 2006; Lauritsen, 2010; O'Connell, 2008; Zedner, 2007). These boundaries are often informed by artificial distinctions that are more superficial than real. Partially informed by such distinctions, criminologists have shied away from studying terrorism or what we refer to as violent extremism (VE)<sup>2</sup> for too long (Borum, 2011); however, that is beginning to change. A decade ago, Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan (2004), and Richard Rosenfeld (2004) encouraged criminologists to begin applying existing criminological

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<sup>2</sup> Violent extremism is defined as violence committed by an individual and/or group in support of a specific political or religious ideology and this term is often used interchangeably with terrorism (Borum, 2011). We use the term violent extremism as a broader conceptual category that includes terrorism as well as other ideologically-motivated violence that occurs but is more spontaneous than the planning required as part of most terrorism definitions.

theories to the study of VE. At the same time, other prominent criminologists have suggested that VE is fundamentally different than “normal” crime because it “reflect [s] commitment to a political cause” (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 2001, p. 94). According to the latter perspective, criminological theory is poorly suited to explain this type of violence.

While a growing number of criminologists have begun analyzing the empirical characteristics of VE (see LaFree and Ackerman, 2009), far fewer efforts have emerged that apply existing criminological theories to explain this form of offending. In recent years, however, researchers have explored the applicability of using criminological theories to help explain VE vis-à-vis subcultural theory (Pisoiu, 2015), rational choice (Perry and Hasisi, 2015), displacement and diffusion (Hsu and Apel, 2015), social disorganization (Fahey and LaFree, 2015), routine activities (Parkin and Freilich, 2015), and deterrence (Argomaniz and Vidai-Diez, 2015).<sup>3</sup> Despite advances, the use of criminological theories to study VE remains substantially underdeveloped. In particular, although several observers have suggested the utility of using life course criminology (LCC) to study VE (Freilich et al., 2014; Hamm, 2013), few studies have incorporated this framework as part of their efforts (for an exception see, Hamm 2013).

There are two aims of our theoretical section of the report. First, we highlight the overlap between VE and generic offending. Second, we also focus on delineating how LCC can be used to improve our understanding of VE. Specifically, we rely on three major versions of LCC: developmental LCC (Farrington, 1995/2003); age-graded informal social control (Sampson and Laub, 1993/1996); and the cognitively-oriented version of LCC theory (Giordano, Cernkovich and Rudolph, 2002; Maruna, 2001). We draw on central dimensions of each version of LCC as part of our effort to apply LCC to the study of VE.

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<sup>3</sup> Subcultural theory and jihadi and Right-wing radicalization in Germany (Pisoiu, 2014), rational choice and suicide terrorism (Perry and Hasisi, 2014), the displacement and diffusion of aviation-related terrorist attacks (Hsu and Apel, 2014), social disorganization, state instability, and terrorist attacks (Fahey and LaFree, 2014), routine activities and right-wing extremists (Parkin and Freilich, 2014), and deterrence and counter-terrorism (Argomaniz and Vidai-Diez, 2014).

We see LCC as offering an opportunity to study the similarities and differences between VE and generic crime, rather than treating VE as a completely unique subfield.

### **Violent Extremism as Normal Crime**

Within the field of criminology, VE and “normal” crime (Sudnow, 1965) are traditionally studied separately from one another. The argument that LCC provides an important theoretical framework that can be used to study VE counters the conventional wisdom within criminology. VE is often characterized as unique from conventional crime for two principle reasons. First, VE is inherently an overtly political act motivated by clear ideological commitments and convictions. Generally, extremists use violence to express a particular grievance and to propose political solutions to perceived problems. Second, the group nature of VE often aids in the separation of VE from conventional crime because too often terrorism researchers focus exclusively on group dynamics while neglecting a person’s earlier biographical experiences prior to extremism. Thus, there is a tendency to neglect how extremists have been influenced by a variety of internal and external factors prior to embracing a particular political ideology and becoming involved in an extremist movement. At the same time, we also ignore that once a person becomes enmeshed in an extremist movement, the person may still be influenced by other factors external to the extremist movement.

Instead of focusing on VE as a unique and specialized type of violence, we adopt a perspective that emphasizes the importance of contextualizing VE within the broader realm of violent behavior. Of course, this does not mean there are no unique qualities associated with VE. On the contrary, we acknowledge that all violent offenders are heterogeneous. As Widom (2014) points out, there is meaningful heterogeneity among violent offenders, in general, and it is critical that scholars avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach (p. 338). We extend Widom’s argument by suggesting that heterogeneity applies within classes of what appear to be specialized violent offenders such as VE. At the same time, while heterogeneity is a



dominant characteristic within VE (and violent offenders more broadly), we also think it is critical to highlight several points of overlap between VE and generic violent offenders. Thus, when referring to VE, we see diversity within or among VE offenders but we also see continuities between VE and generic violent offenders. The combination of diversity and specialization parallels other subfields within criminology. For example, intimate partner violence shares similarities to other types of violence (see Felson and Lane, 2010) but can also be distinguished from more general offending in certain ways (see Archer, 1994; Browne, 1987; Fagan and Browne, 1994). One way to highlight the similarities and differences between VE and generic offending is by employing LCC theory.

In order to present the LCC framework, we discuss several broad conceptual similarities between VE and normal crime. For instance, generic offending and VE are disproportionately committed by young males. In the U.S. in 2013, males accounted for 89.3% of all murder, 82.4% of all burglaries and 86.6% of all robbery arrests (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2013). Similarly, VE is predominately committed by young males in their late teen and early twenties (McCauley and Segal, 1987; Russell and Miller, 1983). Another similarity between VE and some types of generic offending (i.e., street gangs and organized crime syndicates) is their adherence to an ongoing organizational structure (Maguire & Pastore, 1996; Short, 1997). Finally, similar to VE, involvement in street gangs, organized crime activities and serial crimes represent a continuous display of violence. That is, street gangs, VE and various serial offenders are not defined by a single act but rather are the amalgamation of multiple violent crimes over the course of that individual's criminal career.

The application of criminological theories to the study of VE is an important contribution to both criminology and terrorism studies. Until recently, criminologists have ceded the study of VE to various other disciplines. Alternatively, terrorism scholars can benefit from decades of theoretical and empirical research conducted by criminologists that highlight the causes and correlates of a broad range of violent and criminal behavior. In the next section, we provide an overview of the LCC perspective with a specific

focus on developmental LCC, age-graded informal social control, and the cognitively oriented version of LCC theory.

### **An Overview of Life-Course Criminology**

Historically, LCC is most closely influenced by the study of life course processes in sociology where scholars have focused on issues such as the generation of children raised during the Great Depression (Elder, 1985); the influence of historical events on subsequent development (Mannheim, 1932); and how immigrants moving to the United States develop American identities (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1920). Within the behavioral sciences, however, there is a tendency to characterize LCC as a relatively recent theoretical development. Yet, a long tradition within the study of crime relies on a life course perspective including Shaw's (1931) series of natural histories of delinquents and Sutherland's (1937) natural history of a professional thief.

More recently, LCC has come to be viewed as encompassing a broad range of theoretical elements across the criminological field. The influence and analytic power of LCC is so substantial that some observers have contended "Life-course criminology is now criminology" (Cullen, 2011, p. 310). During the 1990s, scholars began using LCC to examine childhood developmental processes and their later influence on criminal offending. As such, LCC places a substantial emphasis on risk factors (e.g., single parent households) and life events (e.g., marriage, becoming a parent) that occur during childhood, adolescence or adulthood and how these impact both criminal and non-criminal behaviors. Among other things, scholars have recently used LCC to study membership in street gangs (Decker, Pyrooz, and Moule, 2014; Thornberry et al., 2003), victimization (MacMillian, 2001) and desistance from criminal offending (Giordano et al., 2002; Moffitt, 1993; Sampson and Laub, 2003).

In general, LCC is concerned with the unfolding nature of life events and how these experiences shape offending (LeBlanc, 1997; Moffitt, 1993; Sampson and Laub, 1993). Life-course theories argue that

the presence of different factors at various stages of life may spark, strengthen or diminish criminal offending. While there are several different versions of LCC (see Farrington, 2003), a core set of theoretical principles unites this perspective. The three unifying principles include: (1) childhood precursors or “risk factors” to offending; (2) stability in antisocial behavior; and (3) desistance from criminal offending (Cullen, 2011; Farrington, 2003). In order to examine each these vantage points of criminal offending, LCC relies on an integrated theoretical framework using perspectives from sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, biology and political science.

LCC relies on a number of key concepts used to understand development across the life course. Trajectories, transitions and turning points are often used in LCC to describe important pathways and changes during an individual’s life span (Sampson and Laub, 1993). A trajectory is a pathway or state associated with at least one developmental period of a person’s life such as an educational or professional career (Wright, Tibbetts and Daigle, 2015). Transitions are discrete life events that mark changes in behaviors, thoughts or emotions. Major transitions occur within a trajectory and often include starting school, getting married, joining the workforce or becoming a parent (Elder, 1985). Alternatively, transitions can also redirect the individual away from conformity towards antisocial behaviors such as dropping out of school or joining delinquent peers groups.

The dovetailing of trajectories and transitions may generate a change in the individuals’ trajectory, often referred to as a “turning point” (Sampson and Laub, 1993). These events are “points in development” when an individual can reassess their current life course path (Strauss, 1959, p. 102). Broadly speaking, turning points may include incidents of betrayal, deception, accomplishment, failure or self-discovery. These transformation experiences are frequently accompanied by emotional reactions to life changes such as surprise, shock, anxiety, tension, bafflement, self-questioning, as well as the desire to explore and validate the new self. If these reactions are not present, then individuals are unlikely to recognize the experience as a turning point (Strauss, 1959). While the re-examination process that

accompanies the turning point occurs within the individual, this process is socialized. This is important because the same kind of turning point that precipitates transformation in one person might be overlooked by another.

Turning points can result in swift, dramatic changes or slow modifications in behavior (Elder, 1985). In some cases, turning points can strengthen an individual's involvement in offending. In other situations, turning points have the ability to disrupt criminal offending by altering a person's trajectory (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Primarily, desistance may occur as a result of a marriage, new employment, or joining the military, which helps the individual develop a new life course trajectory or pathway (Abbott, 2001; Elder, 1974; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 1993). These experiences help facilitate what some refer to as "knifing off" or instances of resocialization when individuals sever themselves from harmful experiences, environments, and even their own past (Brotz and Wilson, 1946; Elder, 1998; Laub and Sampson, 2003). Familiarity with the concepts of trajectories, transitions and turning points are vital for understanding human development and criminal offending.

Despite the widespread influence of LCC, researchers are only beginning to use this framework to explore the intersections between early childhood experiences including trauma and later stages of development (Cullen, 2011; Giordano, 2010). This trend is an important antidote to what Cullen (2011) describes as "adolescent-limited criminology" or the tendency to focus on adolescence at the expense of other developmental phases (Cullen, 2011; see also Sampson, 2000). We argue that many of LCC's core concepts can be applied to various phases related to the development of VE. In addition, LCC helps link processes that have been treated as distinct by criminologists and terrorism scholars. In the next section, we provide a brief overview of each version of LCC that informs our approach to VE.

**Developmental Life Course Theories.** Developmental-oriented LCC focuses, in particular, on the influence that various risk factors have on criminal behavior. For the purposes of brevity, we focus on research contributed by two of the most notable developmental criminologists: David Farrington and

Terrie Moffitt. Developmental criminology can be viewed as a type of life course theory that places a significant emphasis on risk factors for offending. As a point of distinction with many criminological studies which assume a cross-sectional perspective (Cullen, 2011), developmental LCC theories place substantial emphasis on how an individual's age partly conditions the influence of specific life events. That is, developmental LCC theories emphasize contextual variability of life events as they relate to the onset of criminal offending during childhood (Farrington, 2005). Specifically, developmental LCC emphasizes how the presence of a specific factor is likely to have different effects in childhood compared to late adolescence or adulthood.

The risk factor approach considers how individual, family, peer, school, and community factors increase susceptibility to anti-social behavior (Dahlberg, 1998; Hawkins et al., 1998; Howell, 2009; Lipsey and Derzon, 1998; Loeber and Farrington, 1998a). Individual risk factors include low intelligence, low school achievement, risk-taking, and antisocial child behavior including aggression and bullying (Farrington, 2005; Nagin and Tremblay, 1999). Family factors include large family size, poor parental supervision, harsh discipline, cold parental attitude, low involvement of parents with children, parental conflict, broken families and delinquent siblings (Farrington, 2005; Hawkins et al., 1998). Peer factors include delinquent peers, peer rejection and low popularity. Finally, community risk factors include residing in disorganized or high-crime neighborhoods and attending a school with a high delinquency rate (Hawkins et al., 1998). Individuals can be influenced by a single risk factor or by multiple risk factors occurring within a short period.

Individual, family, peer, school, and community risk factors can push or pull an individual towards deviant behavior (Reckless, 1961; Reiss, 1951). Push factors include adverse personal or environmental conditions that propel or *push* an individual away from conventional behavior towards criminal behavior. For example, Farrington's (1986) Cambridge study followed 400 South London males from age 8 to age 48 in order to see if each male committed more offenses while unemployed than during periods of

employment. Results from this study indicate that males committed more crimes while unemployed than employed but differences were only found for offenses involving material gains (e.g., theft, burglary, robbery, fraud). These results suggest that males were pushed into offending due to adverse personal conditions stemming from a shortage of financial support.

Pull factors include features of a criminal group or criminal behavior that attract or *pull* an individual such as opportunities to make money or promise of friendship. The interaction of risk factors, which Coie and colleagues (1993) referred to as “cumulative risk,” increases the likelihood of criminal or delinquent behavior. Research has found that individuals exposed to six or more risk factors are ten times more likely to engage in deviant behavior than a 10-year old exposed to a single risk factor (Herrenkohl et al., 2000). It is important to emphasize these push and pull factors work in conjunction with one another. That is, without the presence of push factors, (e.g., parental abandonment) pull factors (e.g., surrogate family) would likely be much less influential.

Terrie Moffitt’s work represents another important body of research within developmental LCC. Moffitt is likely most well known for her dual taxonomy of antisocial behavior. In light of the recognition that individuals differ in their rate of offending, Moffitt (1993) identified two unique types of offenders based on the trajectories they follow. According to Moffitt (1993), offenders can be separated into two categories: adolescent-limited (AL) or life-course persistent (LCP) offenders (see also Nagin, Farrington and Moffitt, 1995; Nagin and Land, 1993; Patterson, DeBaryshe and Ramsey, 1989). Each offender type occupies a unique developmental trajectory. AL offenders begin offending in adolescence and desist before entering adulthood. In addition, AL offenders possess well-developed social skills and sufficient levels of self-control, which minimizes the internalization of a criminal lifestyle while offending. The onset of offending is typically a result of emulation in order to achieve status and to conform to adolescent group norms (Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, and Silva, 1993; Magnusson, 1988; Moffitt, 1993;

Simmons and Blyth, 1987). Finally, AL offenders limit their offending to minor forms of delinquency such as petty theft and underage drinking.

The second type of offender, LCP, has a significantly different etiology and criminal trajectory. LCP offenders begin displaying antisocial behaviors during childhood and continue to offend throughout adulthood. LCP offenders commit more serious types of crimes than AL offenders. In addition, LCP offenders internalize the criminal lifestyle and continue to offend throughout adulthood. LCP offenders are more likely to struggle finding employment, steady marriages and are more likely to have problems with the criminal justice system (Huesmann et al., 2009; Odger et al., 2007).

The major contribution of Moffitt's (1993) dual taxonomy is the identification of two distinct etiologies that produce two distinct pathways toward offending. Generally, LCP are identified by specific individual characteristics such as hyperactivity and impulsivity that stem from neurological deficits. When these traits are combined with inadequate parenting techniques, LCP offenders display antisocial tendencies earlier than AL offenders and are involved in more serious offenses. Unlike the AL offenders, LCP offenders are at heightened risk for long-term problems such as chronic unemployment and substance use issues.

The development-oriented LCC perspective allows researchers to examine the context of criminal offending across the life course. This is especially useful for researchers investigating the etiology of criminal offending as well as risk factors that predispose someone towards delinquent rather than conformity. In the next section, we introduce another influential version of LCC: the age-graded theory of informal social control (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 1993) and examine the utility this perspective has for the study of VE.

**Age-Graded Theory of Informal Social Control.** Sampson and Laub's (1993/2003) age-graded theory of informal social control is one of the most influential versions of LCC. According to Sampson and Laub (1993), the life course is comprised of culturally defined age-graded roles (i.e., childhood,

adolescence and adulthood) and social transitions (e.g., first day of school, first job, first marriage) that are enacted over time. Informed by Elder (1985), Sampson and Laub (1993) argue that an individual's life course is based on one's bond to informal social controls within each age-graded period. For instance, the school is the main source of informal social control during adolescence whereas employment may become a central mechanism of informal social control during adulthood. Similar to social control theory, Sampson and Laub (1993) argue the likelihood that someone engages in crime and delinquency depends on the strength of their bonds to society. When bonds are weak, an individual shares less of a connection with society and is more likely to offend than when these bonds to society are strong.

Their model also focuses on the accumulation of disadvantage that occurs over the course of a person's life. Sampson and Laub (1993) emphasize how the depletion of social bonds serves to weaken attachments and limit legitimate opportunities. The weakening of attachments and the narrowing of opportunities work in unison. These processes accumulate during childhood and adolescence, which, in turn, facilitates criminal offending in adulthood (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Delinquency in adolescence creates a "cumulative continuity of disadvantage" (Sampson and Laub 1997, p. 144) produced, in part, by a series of entanglements with the criminal justice system. As such, the continuity of offending in adulthood reflects "snares" (Moffitt, 1993, p. 684) that produce substantial barriers in a person's life and, as a result, increase the necessity of criminal offending in the future. Snares include the "mark" of a criminal record (see Pager, 2003), teenaged parenthood and addiction to drugs or alcohol. Additionally, snares decrease legitimate opportunities for employment and education, which reinforces involvement in criminal activities.

A key concept within Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory is that delinquency and criminal offending can be interrupted at various stages in life. These events are referred to as "turning points," which involves a strengthening of bonds between the individual and society. Marriage or the



development of a career provides important types of social capital that create investments in society, and ultimately, reduce the likelihood of future offending (Sampson and Laub, 1993).

In addition, more time spent with significant others, or at work, reduces the amount of time available to spend with delinquent or criminal peers. In this sense, marriage and employment reduce opportunities to participate in criminal activities along two dimensions (Skardhamar and Savolainen, 2014; Warr, 1998). First, these relationships help create an infrastructure of constraints that discourages criminal offending. Second, marriage and employment help the person redefine their criminal behaviors as “risky” and “undesirable” (Sampson, Laub, and Wimer, 2006, p. 467-468). The presence of these relationships, however, is not enough to terminate a criminal career. The actor must assign a meaningful value to these new roles and relationships. Sampson and Laub (1993) argue the quality of these bonds prevents criminal offending rather than the mere presence. Furthermore, a “marker of progression” is needed for the actor to recognize the impact these relationships have on his or her life changes (Strauss, 1997, p. 95). Once recognition occurs, the actor internalizes a new stance and alignment in society.

Among its many strengths, the age-graded theory of informal social control also explains stability and change in rates of offending. That is, one of the most consistent findings within criminology involves the relationship between age and criminal offending (Farrington, 1986; Greenberg, 1977; Moffitt, 1993; Sampson and Laub, 1993). The age-crime curve indicates the onset of criminal offending peaks during early adolescent - between 8 and 14 years (Greenberg and Larkin, 1985). In terms of offending, the prevalence of deviant behavior peaks between age 15 and age 19 (Farrington, 1986). Finally, the peak age of desistance from offending is between 20 and 29 years (LaBlanc and Frechette, 1989; Nagin and Land, 1993). In light of Sampson and Laub’s (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control, criminologists are equipped with a theoretical model that explains stability and change in rates of criminal offending throughout the life-course.

In terms of VE participation, it is not unreasonable to believe the age-crime curve also applies to this type of violent offending. A series of studies already demonstrate that the typical hate crime offender is a male between the ages of 15 and 24 years old (Asal, Deloughery and King, 2013; BJS, 2013). Other studies suggest similar characteristics among international terrorists (LaFree and Dugan, 2004; Laqueur, 1977; McCauley and Segal, 1987; Russell and Miller, 1983). Despite these similarities, it is important to note that a unique age-crime curve may exist when examining lone-offender violent extremists. The phenomenon of lone-offenders committing acts of violent extremism provides an interesting test of sorts for the age-crime curve. Anecdotally, lone-offenders such as Wade Michael Page (40), Glenn F. Miller (75), and James Wenneker von Brunn (88) were all well past the peak age of desistance. In terms of lone-offender attacks, the application of LCC to the life histories of these individuals may provide important explanations for VE and mass casualty violence previously undocumented as well as broad issues related to terrorism research.

**Cognitive Transformation Process.** Giordano and colleague's version of LCC draws heavily from a long tradition of symbolic interactionist research focused on social interaction, interpretive processes, and the cognitive and emotional basis of human behavior (Cooley, 1902; Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1938; Thomas, 1923). More specifically, Giordano emphasizes "readiness" and "cognitive openings" (Giordano et al., 2002; Wiktorowicz, 2003) as key concepts useful for understanding criminal persistence and desistance processes. Both of these concepts focus on the individuals' willingness to accept alternative interpretations of reality.

Giordano and colleagues (2002) four-stage cognitive transformation process (CTP), includes: (1) readiness; (2) availability; (3) identify shift; and (4) transformation in the way actors view deviant behavior. The first stage, and most fundamental, is the actor's openness to change. During this stage, the actor develops a general readiness to change one's current behavior and attitude. A general openness to change is necessary although not sufficient for change to occur. The second stage of the CTP is exposure

to “hooks for change” (Mead, 1964). Hooks for change are positive influences that serve as catalysts, such as experiencing emotional attachment to a spouse, acquiring steady employment or furthering one’s education (Giordano et al., 2002). During this stage, hooks for change help the actor imagine their new environment as both positive and incompatible with their previous lifestyle. Similar to turning points, hooks for change alter a person’s trajectory and change their developmental pathway.

The third stage of the CTP is an identity shift. During this stage, the actor begins to develop a “replacement self” that can better function in their new environment. It is critical, however, that the actor refashions a strong identity because this new self will act as a cognitive filter for future decision-making and sustained behavior. If the actor’s replacement self is underdeveloped, the person is more likely to draw from previous experiences and continue to rely on destructive habits when challenged in their new environment (Giordano et al., 2002). The key point is that the new identity must completely replace the previous deviant identity. The final stage involves a transformation in the way the actor views deviant behavior or the lifestyle itself. The desistance process is complete when the actor no longer considers deviant behavior as positive, sustainable or important (Giordano et al., 2002).

Giordano’s version of LCC provides an important emphasis on documenting specific dimensions of cognitive shifts such as where, when, and how these shifts become linked to desistance. In the case of VE, scholars should apply these questions to both the frontend in terms of entering extremism but also to processes of indoctrination (social/cognitive learning) and radicalization (escalation of commitment to violence). These questions should also be applied to disengagement and deradicalization from VE, in particular, Giordano et al.’s (2015) recent application of “learning curves” (p. 8) to romantic partnerships that involve interpersonal violence to help explain how the domestic violence offender learns to approach the relationship in a non-violent manner. We see substantial application of learning curves to both entry and exit from VE as the concept emphasizes the processual dimensions of how a person becomes an extremist (see also Blee, 2002).

## **Advantages of Applying Life-Course Criminology to Violent Extremism**

To date, there have been no empirical studies investigating VE that utilized LCC. This is a curious omission as a broader understanding of VE requires a consideration of life course development across the age span. Studies of VE that do not consider a person's full range of experiences are limited and likely to lead to examinations that do not focus on the broader context of the individual's life experiences. Studies of VE often focus on incident-based analyses which necessarily isolate specific VE tactics from a larger biographical context that helped produce these incidents (e.g., LaFree, Morris and Dugan, 2010; Smith and Damphousse, 2002). Another strand of VE research focuses on organizational/group-level characteristics such as leadership, group size, and ideology (Bjorgo, 2011; Chermak, Freilich, and Suttmoeller, 2013; Hogg and Adelman, 2013; Ligon et al., 2013). While helpful, these studies provide limited insight about the developmental and life course trajectories of individuals who become involved in VE. The application of LCC to VE offers several important advantages.

First, the application of LCC to the study of VE allows researchers to break away from approaches limited to restricted phases of the extremist's life course such as the period of time of extremist involvement (for a similar argument regarding criminology more broadly, see Cullen, 2011, p. 289). LCC prevents researchers from focusing on one phase of person's life such as onset or desistance. Instead, LCC encourages researchers to examine the continuities and discontinuities across multiple stages of a person's life such as childhood, adolescence and adulthood. A similar tendency exists among scholars who tend to focus on a relatively narrow dimension of VE such as entry or violent radicalization. Alternatively, LCC relies on information from a persons' entire life-course to better understand the broader context influencing "push" and "pull" factors. For example, LCC focuses on various types of life course experiences, which decreases the tendency to bifurcate criminal and noncriminal activities.

The second advantage of LCC is the focus on risk factors such as child abuse or neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, history of mental illness, hyperactivity-impulsiveness, low intelligence, aggression or

bullying during adolescence. An emphasis on risk factors allows researchers to identify various types of ideological and non-ideological factors and how these factors may influence entry and involvement, disengagement, deradicalization, and desistance. LCC's emphasis on the importance of a broad range of risk factors provides an overarching framework to address a point several terrorist scholars have previously emphasized. Specifically, ideological concerns are not the only motivating factor to account for participation in VE (Bjorgo, 1997; Horgan, 2014; McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011), yet few studies empirically analyze non-ideological factors related to VE.

Third, LCC provides insight into how an individual experiences various social contexts. Whether one is interested in peer delinquency, victimization or violent extremism, these processes do not occur in a vacuum. LCC provides a framework for analyzing how different types of social contexts help shape human behavior (Cullen, 2011).

Finally, instead of investigating between-individuals differences in offenders, a LCC approach make it possible to examine within-individual changes over time. For instance, offending by individuals when they are unmarried can be compared with offending by the same individual when they are married. As another example, researchers can examine offending before an individual enters the military against the same person after they enter the military. In this analysis, each participant acts as his or her own control in terms of temperament, educational attainment, self-control and socio-economic status. This type of research provides more convincing evidence about causal influences than the corresponding between-individual research (Farrington, 1988). The focus of LCC on developmental issues and processes is important, in part, because this focus underscores that development does not begin and end with childhood and/or adolescence but rather continues throughout the entire life course.

To date, much of the VE research is focused on macro-level contexts such as societal characteristics, religious history, and group-level changes over time. While useful, these approaches are less sensitive to individual experiences over time. LCC can provide an important addition to explaining

and understanding VE. Various processes related to VE such as entry, radicalization, and disengagement overlap substantially with key points of focus within LCC such as onset, the continuity of offending across the life course, the role of turning points, and desistance.

### **Future Directions in Life Course Criminology**

Throughout this paper, we highlighted multiple strengths and advantages LCC provides researchers who study VE involvement. While previous LCC research has contributed tremendously to our understanding of criminogenic processes, there still remains several theoretical areas that need to be developed. To begin, although previous research has examined the influence of risk factors on delinquency and adult criminal offending (Farrington, 2005), future research should now examine the effect of these risk factors at different ages of an individuals' life-course. By doing so, we can determine if specific risk factors interact, mediate or moderate their influence on criminal offending. A similar line of research should also examine protective factors that undermine environmental and biological precursors to criminal offending.

Another area within LCC in need of development is the emphasis on biological factors. With the recent interest in biosocial criminology, LCC researchers should also examine how human biology influences development across the life course. For instance, psychology, psychiatry, genetics and neuropsychology, in particular, have brought light to many scientific findings showing the interconnection between environment and biology. It is not sufficient, however, to know that genes effect behavior. Instead, the complex relationship between genes and the environment in which genes operate must also be considered.

The role of environment and genes fluctuate over time. The environment in which a person lives is not static, rather, it undergoes change over time. Therefore, future LCC research should also focus on neighborhood contexts and immediate situational influences. It is imperative we are able to explain how offenders develop and why the potential offender commits the actual crime in the situation. According to

Cullen (2011), a major problem throughout criminology is that context is undertheorized. Criminologists too often treat context as a static domain in which individuals are inserted. One possible way to improve our current approach would be to combine longitudinal studies of offenders with longitudinal studies of places to try and explain the interaction of environment and individuals

## **Conclusions**

We began this section with a discussion of the tendency to view VE as a unique form of violence completely distinct from other more familiar forms of criminal violence. The empirical reality of VE, however, does not warrant such a stark distinction. As part of this, we discussed the need for criminologists and terrorism scholars to recognize the similarities between VE and generic violent offending. We provide several theoretical and empirical parallels as evidence of this overlap. First, VE shares many of the same risk factors as generic criminal offenders. Second, like conventional street gangs and organized crime syndicates, VEs adhere to well-established organizational structures. Finally, VE, street gangs and serial offenders all follow patterns of sustained violence rather than a single episode. In sum, VEs and various generic criminal offenders share a number of characteristics. For instance, both VE and generic criminal offending are predominantly committed by young males; both VEs and some types of generic offending (i.e., street gangs and organized crime syndicates) adherence to an ongoing organizational structure, and, finally, street gangs, VE and various serial offenders are not defined by a single act but rather are the amalgamation of multiple violent crimes over the course of that individual's criminal career.

Secondly, this paper focused on the applicability of LCC to the study of VE. In order to illustrate the utility of LCC, we provided an overview of three major LCC paradigms: development LCC, age-graded theory of informal social control, and a cognitively-oriented version of LCC. Each of these perspectives offers a unique approach to the causes and correlates of VE. For instance, developmental LCC focus on

how risk factors influence the onset of criminal offending can also be applied to examine motivations for entering extremists groups and reasons for the persistence of VE.

The age-graded informal social control variant of LCC offers an opportunity to examine whether certain types of cumulative disadvantage characterize the lives of VE. Specifically, a life history examination of these individuals' lives will provide greater specificity to the mechanics of cumulative disadvantage. Finally, researchers interested in the role of cognition and ideologies in the radicalization process will find great value in Giordano's theory of cognitive transformation. This paradigm focuses on agentic factors, which have led to participation in VE.

### **Data and Methodology**

In order to provide the most comprehensive assessment for the factors influencing why individuals become involved in violent extremism, our study relies on multiple methodological approaches. In the next section, we describe the sampling procedures and data collection processes used throughout the study. Following this discussion, we present techniques used to analyze life-history data gathered from our sample of right-wing violent extremists. Specifically, we present methodological procedures for the following studies: (1) thematic assessment; (2) childhood trauma and adolescent misconduct as precursors to violent extremism; and (3) circumplex model of affect report. Finally, we present overall strengths and limitations to each of these analytic approaches.

#### **Sampling Procedures**

Each of the studies included in the final report relied on interviews with individuals who self-identified as former right-wing extremists. The interview sample consists of three types of right-wing extremists: 1) individuals who engaged in acts of spontaneous but ideologically-motivated violence; 2) individuals who were part of violent right-wing extremist groups but who did not personally participate in violence themselves; and 3) individual right-wing extremists who engaged in targeted violence



consistent with most definitions of “terrorism” (including both lone offenders and members of terror groups).<sup>4</sup> In order to gather a sample of right-wing violent extremists, we relied on a snowball sampling technique, which we discuss in the following section.

**Snowball Sampling.** Interview participants involved in each of the following reports were recruited using a snowball sampling technique. The first author’s long-term ethnographic fieldwork with far-right extremists provided the basis for initial contacts with interview subjects. The study also relied on contacting former extremists with a “public” presence who have either written books about their lives and/or shared their experiences in some type of public forum. Each of the initial subjects were asked to provide referrals to other former extremists who might be willing to participate in the study.

This snowball sampling process produced contacts that would not otherwise be accessible using traditional means of contact such as the Internet or mailing lists (Wright et al., 1992). Multiple individuals were used to generate unique snowballs and, thus, only a small segment of the subjects were acquainted with each other. Roughly, one-third of the interview subjects included in this study have publicly discussed their previous involvement in an extremist group, while the remainder of the sample has not publicly discussed past extremist involvement. Substantial rapport was established and maintained through regular contact with subjects via telephone and email. Interviews were typically conducted in public settings such as restaurants and coffee shops although a subsample was conducted in private settings such as the subjects’ home. In the next section, we discuss two separate data collection techniques we used to gather relevant information related to VE participation: (1) life-history interviews and (2) open-source coding procedures.

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<sup>4</sup> In this study, we rely on the following definition of terrorism: acts of violence committed by non-state actors, perpetrated against civilian populations, intended to cause fear, in order to achieve a political objective (Lafree, Morris, and Duggan, 2009).

## Data Collection

**Life History Interviews.** Life history interviews are commonly used by social scientists as a tool to gather data pertaining to self-concept, social relations, and the biographical experiences that influence human development. A robust literature within criminology has long relied on interview methods (e.g., Athens, 1992; Shaw, 1966; Shover, 1973; Steffensmeier, 1986; Sutherland, 1937; Wright and Decker, 1997); a tradition that continues more recently (e.g., Copes, Hochstetler, and Forsyth, 2013; Topalli, 2005; Topalli, Jacques, and Wright, 2014). As Denzin contends, this interviewing technique “presents the experiences and definitions held by one person, one group and one organization as this person, group or organization interprets those experiences” (1978, p. 215). The telling of life histories produces a narrative that allows the researcher to understand the complexities and intersectionality of identity, ideology, and life experiences (McAdams, 2006).

Life history interviews are especially well suited to collect “storylines” (Agnew, 2006) where actors describe a temporary set of events, situations, and changes in the person’s life leading up to criminal activity. Interviewing former extremists as opposed to current ones provided several advantages especially in terms of examining highly sensitive issues such as involvement in violence and mental health factors. The sensitive nature of the questions would have made interviewing current extremists much more difficult and resulted in potential safety issues for the researcher (Blee, 1998).

Participants in this study were asked about their earliest memories moving forward to the present. Specifically, the interview procedure included structured and unstructured questions relating to cognitive, emotional, and social-structural dimensions of the person’s life. During the interview, subjects were asked direct questions at various points to focus on specific topic areas and probes were routinely utilized to encourage subjects to elaborate and expand aspects of their life histories. Interviews included questions about the subjects’ lives prior to involvement, entry into the movement and exit from the movement. Members of the sample provided a rich and detailed history of their lives that involved

themes such as family socialization, romantic relationships, job attainment and stability, reasons for joining and leaving extremism, and involvement in criminal and violent behavior.

The completed life-history interviews included an initial interview as well as several follow-up interviews. The interviews ranged between three and six hours, although multiple subjects provided access over the course of several days generating 10-to-20 hours of interview data. To date, the interview transcripts include 3,757 pages of life-history data. While there may be limitations in the ability to \generalize these findings, the life histories of former right-wing extremists will provide information unavailable using other methodological techniques.

**Open Source Coding.** The second data collection technique involved open source coding. This technique requires members of the research team to search publicly available, open-source materials (Ragin and Becker, 1992; Noble, 2004; LaFree and Dugan, 2009). These include electronic news articles, existing data sets, watchdog reports, legal documents, government documents and secondary source materials such as books, journals, videos and blogs. All information was digitally archived and provided to a coder. Graduate students trained in criminology and violent extremism relied on these materials to code predetermined variables included in our risk factor and recruitment codebooks. Whenever a coder encountered conflicting material, greater weight was granted to more “trusted” sources.<sup>5</sup>

The data collected for the open source materials paralleled the variables contained in the codebooks generated to extract information from the life history interviews. Thus, we collected comparable data for both methodologies and were able to examine similarities and differences across the two samples. In the following section, we discuss the methodological approach utilized in each of the following reports: 1) thematic assessment; 2) childhood trauma and adolescent misconduct as precursors to VE and 3) the circumplex model of affect report.

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<sup>5</sup> In order from most reliable to least reliable, we favored government and legal documents over watch dog reports, watch dog reports over uncorroborated statements from people with direct access to information provided and finally, statements from people who heard information secondhand (Sageman, 2004).

## Specific Methodological Approaches<sup>6</sup>

**Thematic Assessment.** Despite significant efforts to understand the radicalization process once an individual becomes a violent extremist, there is much less research that relies on in-depth life history data to understand the events and circumstances that surround these individuals' lives prior to extremist participation as well as during their initial involvement in VE. The current study relies on a modified-grounded theory approach to understand family socialization prior to extremist participation; the various pathways that lead to violent extremism; recruitment strategies used by extremist members and the subculture of violence within extremist groups. The combination of these dimensions provides a holistic illustration of violent extremist participation.

**Sample characteristics.** Participants included 30 male and 4 female subjects, ranging from 19 years to 47 years of age. More specifically, 1 subject was between the ages of 19-25 years, 5 subjects were between the ages of 26-35 years, 18 subjects were between the ages of 36-45 years, and 10 subjects were 46 years of age or older. With regard to current socio-economic status, 2 individuals described themselves as lower class, 12 as working class, 15 middle class, and 4 described themselves as upper class. The level of group involvement for members of our sample included 8 individuals who founded a white supremacist group and 26 subjects who were either core or peripheral members. In terms of education, 6 participants received less than a high school diploma, 7 received a high school diploma, 11 attended some college but did not graduate, 3 graduated from a 2-year college, four from a 4-year college and 2 attended graduate school.

**Analysis and coding process.** This study utilizes a modified grounded theory methodology with a sample of 34 former members of violent white supremacist groups in order to examine involvement in violent extremism (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In this approach, the research begins with a broad interest or question that provides the investigator with flexibility. Grounded theory allows the

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that sample sizes vary among reports and there is overlap among participants between each report.

researcher to analyze qualitative data in order to develop theories “grounded” within the data (Charmaz, 2006; see also Berg, 2007; Miles and Huberman, 1994). This technique involves the construction of themes and subthemes as the researcher reads each interview. Themes emerge from the interviews and the ongoing procedures, allowing the development and verification of central categories or “codes.”

Grounded theory involves an iterative process that develops over time and moves back and forth between data analysis and conceptualization. In the first step, each transcription was read completely to develop familiarity without coding for event themes. Next, transcriptions were re-read and codes were constructed based on a broad set of general categories such as socialization, entry, recruitment, and violence. Memos were used throughout the analysis process to help connect emerging themes and concepts and make sense of the data by generating a theory that might explain the processes being documented throughout data collection. This process is complete when “theoretical saturation” is reached (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 263) which means that no new concepts and properties emerge. The goal of grounded theory is to develop a theoretical explanation that fits the data. Researchers should not generalize theories constructed using grounded theory beyond the data, but they can test hypotheses developed at a later point in relation to other related phenomena (Charmaz, 2006).

Following the coding stage, each episode was individually analyzed for common themes and characteristics. Specifically, researchers used MAXQDA, a qualitative coding program that allows the researcher to develop codes from the interview transcripts. In addition, MAXQDA features a number of functions that aid in the analysis process such as pattern identification and visualization tools. All events related to socialization, entry, recruitment and violence were highlighted and summed. Finally, common themes and sub-themes were analyzed across the entire sample (see Appendix A for grounded theory codebook).

**Childhood Trauma and Adolescent Misconduct as Precursors to Violent Extremism.** In the childhood trauma and adolescent misconduct report, we present findings from a qualitative study of

former members of violent extremist groups (n = 44). We use life histories of former violent white supremacists to examine how non-ideological factors such as trauma and various conduct problems influence becoming involved in a violent extremist group.

***Sample characteristics.*** Respondents included 38 male and 6 female subjects representing a wide variation in terms of age and socio-economic status. Three subjects were between the ages of 19-25 years, 6 subjects were between the ages of 26-35 years, 33 subjects were between the ages of 36-45 years, and 2 subjects were 47 years of age. With regard to current socio-economic status, 4 individuals described themselves as lower class, 20 as working class, 15 middle class, and 5 described themselves as upper class. The wide distribution of socio-economic status is consistent with previous studies of white supremacists (Aho, 1990; Blee, 2002). The level of group involvement for members of our sample included 7 individuals who founded a white supremacist group and 37 subjects who were either core or peripheral members. Overall, the length of participation among the subjects ranged from three to 21 years.

A relatively small portion of the subjects embraced white supremacist ideology prior to group involvement. Only three subjects were raised in a household with immediate relatives who were involved in extremist groups; however, a majority of the subjects (n=28) were socialized during childhood with ideas somewhat consistent with white supremacist ideology such as racism and/or anti-Semitism. A large portion of the sample have extensive histories of criminal conduct including property offenses such as shoplifting, vandalism, and other forms of property destruction. Individuals were also engaged in a variety of violent offenses such as murder, attempted murder, street fights, violent initiation rituals, and bomb making. Of the 44 subjects, 40 reported a history of violent offending, 38 reported a history of delinquent activity, 29 reported a history of arrests, and 13 spent time in prison. Although a small minority of the subjects were not directly involved in violence (n=4), each person belonged to a group that included members who were regularly involved in violence. With only a couple exceptions most

subjects did not report conduct problems that began prior to age 10 although a much larger portion of subjects reported conduct problems beginning between the ages of 10 and 13.

***Analysis and coding process.*** This study utilizes a life history methodology with a sample of 44 former members of violent white supremacist groups to examine how different factors related to childhood trauma and adolescent conduct problems precede the entry process into violent extremism. In order to avoid priming, we avoided asking subjects questions specifically related to trauma but instead asked subjects to describe different aspects of their lives (e.g., relationship with family during childhood, etc.). Based on availability, follow-up interviews were conducted with 17 individuals to produce a total of 66 interview sessions. Interview sessions averaged between 4-5 hours; however, a small segment of subjects participated in extended interviews that involved dozens of hours over several days. Subjects lived in 15 different states across all regions of the country.

All interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. In-depth qualitative studies are appropriate for developing theoretical models and analyzing social processes (Becker, 1966; Carlsson, 2013; Ragin, 2002). We analyzed the data using a modified grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; see also Berg, 2007; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1994) that included various coding steps, such as open or line-by-line coding and comparative coding to determine differences and similarities within and across our subjects.

These techniques helped us to identify and extract relevant empirical and conceptual properties present in our data. The constant interaction with data involved a virtual ongoing analysis and identification of social processes during each instance of data collection. Codes were used to organize the data into similar concepts. Deductive codes such as identifying different types of trauma were drawn from existing literature while inductive codes emerged from the initial phase of “line by line” analysis (Berg, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Lofland et al., 2006). Memos were used throughout the analysis process to

help connect emerging themes and concepts and make sense of the data by generating a theory that might explain the processes being documented throughout data collection.

After initial codes and memos were developed, 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). The goal of a grounded theory approach is to develop a conceptual explanation that closely fits the data (or incidents) which the concepts are intended to represent. Grounded theory is not meant to generalize beyond the data but the hypotheses developed can be tested at a later point for application to other related phenomena by the researcher or other researchers in future studies.

**Circumplex Model of Affect.** In recent decades, a growing number of studies have focused on the process of becoming an extremist and the transition toward terrorism (for example, see Blee 2002; 1996; della Porta & LaFree, 2012; Horgan, 2009; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2011; Sageman, 2004). Many of these studies have focused on international extremists with less attention directed toward domestic far-right extremists in the United States. Relying on in-depth life history interviews, we examine entry using a conceptual framework derived from organizational psychology and sociology. Our methodological framework relied on the circumplex affect model of emotion and cognitive function (Posner, Russell and Peterson, 2005).

**Sample characteristics.** Respondents included 16 male and 4 female Caucasian subjects who self-identified as former violent extremists. The respondents' average age was 38.85 and ranged from 23 to 47 years. Their average age at entry was 17.6 and ranged from 11 to 31 years. The respondents averaged 21.35 years since entry and ranged from 6 to 31 years. Five respondents reported having "some" high school education, 6 earned a high school degree or GED, 7 reported some college education, and 2 reported having a bachelor's degree. Many respondents had a history of criminal conduct including property offenses such as shoplifting, vandalism, and other forms of property destruction. Some



respondents also engaged in a variety of violent offenses such as murder, attempted murder, street fights, violent initiation rituals, and bomb making.

***Analysis and coding process.*** To examine risk factors and turning points toward violent extremism, we developed rating scales and codes to assess pre-entry risk factors and precursors to engagement with violent extremism; we also relied on the circumplex model of affect to examine how our subjects emotionally expressed their turning point event toward violent extremism. Historically, research that focuses on emotion has viewed affective states as discrete emotions such as anxiety, sadness, tension and elation (Izard, 1972; Tomkin, 1962-1963; Chipperfield, Perry & Weiner, 2003). Recently, however, the idea that affective states are independent of one another has been challenged (Russell, 1980; Posner, Russell, & Peterson, 2005). An emerging consensus views emotions as overlapping experiences that lack distinct boundaries (Russell & Fehr, 1994; Saarni, 1999; Posner, Russell & Peterson, 2005; Erbas, Ceulemans, Koval & Kuppens, 2015). Individuals rarely report feeling a specific emotion without also reporting other emotions. One possible approach to understanding the overlap of emotional affect is through the use of the circumplex model of affect (CMA).

Recently, the circumplex model of affect has become one of the most widely studied representations of emotional effect (Remington, Visser & Rabrigar, 2000; Huelsman, Furr and Nemanick Jr., 2003). The CMA was originated by Schlosberg's (1941, 1952) and later elaborated by Russel (1980). In the CMA, emotions are arranged in a circular structure, which can be divided into intensity (i.e., activation or deactivation) and valence (e.g., pleasant or unpleasant). In theory, the CMA assumes that affective states are related in terms of their distance from one another. For instance, excitement, pleasure and contentment should have positive correlations between one another. Alternatively, pleasure should be negatively correlated with misery, distress and depression. Constructs were drawn from subject matter experts and previous literature on pathways to crime and delinquency (see Appendix B for circumplex model of affect codebook).

In terms of coding, two graduate students trained in the psychology of violence, ideological extremism, and life narratives read the interview transcripts. Information pertaining to each participant's entry event was extracted, and an undergraduate student familiar with criminology and extremism was trained to help code the entry events. For purposes of the current study, an 'entry event' refers to a catalytic episode that spurs a progression towards extremist affiliations whereas an 'entry theme' refers to the underlining motif conveyed during the event. All raters individually coded each participants' entry event for broad themes as well as circumplex affect variables. Once all participants were coded, ratings were discussed and reviewed among all of the coders. Both graduate students reviewed final ratings for quality assurance. We now introduce specific coding procedures for entry themes and the circumplex model of affect.

*Entry Themes.* Each rater thematically analyzed the participants' entry event at a broad level by noting holistic, emergent reasons as to why participants joined (e.g., acceptance and belonging). These broad themes were coded dichotomously as *present* or *absent* within each entry event. The coding process was iterative, ensuring that each event was reviewed whenever a new theme emerged. Overall, 12 distinct themes were identified (see Appendix B for a full list of entry themes).

*Circumplex Model of Affect.* In addition to the entry themes, raters also coded each participant's entry event for circumplex affect variables. Raters coded each entry event and identified as many affective markers that could be coded using the circumplex affect codebook (Yik, Russell and Steiger, 2011; Russell, 1980; Posner et al., 2005). After researchers completed the coding process for each participant, frequencies for all twelve circumplex affect variable were summed and recorded.

Event-level variables included circumplex affect, moral-based emotions, cognition, industrial-organization, and turning point categories. Circumplex affect, moral-based emotions, cognition, and industrial-organization variables were content coded and summed across each subject and distinct variable. The turning point categories were dummy coded as present or not present. Pre-entry variables

included ideological, cognitive, risk factors, and controls. Each variable used Likert-scale ratings or dummy codes. Ideological variables included level of radicalization, level of engagement, involvement in movement activities, social proximity to non-members, political orientation, and religiosity. Researchers were trained to code each event rather than unique instances.

We conducted a series of basic descriptive statistics and correlations using STATA 12.1. We also conducted several cross tabulations to identify frequencies across multiple variables. Last, we conducted several analysis of variance tests (ANOVA) with significantly related variables identified in the correlations. Our statistical data are complemented with numerous narrative excerpts from each subject. We then selected between one and four excerpts and narratives that best illustrated each pre-entry and turning point construct.

### **Overall Methodological Strengths and Limitations**

There are several limitations of this study that 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. Despite these concerns, the rich life history accounts provide important insight from the subjects' perspective. Second, the sample was predominantly male, which may have yielded data subject to gender biases.

Third, due to the relatively hidden nature of this population, the sample was derived through snowball techniques and, as a result, is not representative, which prevents generalizing these findings to other violent extremist groups. Of course, the goal of this type of qualitative research is not generalization, but rather, identifying social processes, inductively building theory, and describing causal mechanisms.

Forth, our sample primarily included individuals who joined far-right extremist groups during adolescence, potentially neglecting differences in entry among individuals who entered during pre-adolescence or adulthood. Fifth, as part of our exploratory analysis, the findings are also limited by

problems with missing data. Lastly, our data does not allow us to address possibilities of biosocial interactions that may play a major role in an individual's genetic predisposition toward antisocial behavior (Wright and Beaver, 2005). We see biosocial interactions as an important aspect of violent extremism that future research should explore. Despite these limitations, this report represents an important effort in terms of providing an empirically informed theoretical explanation for participation in violent extremism.

## Results

### Report 1: Thematic Assessment

The following analysis has been separated into four broad areas of concentration. These include: (1) family socialization prior to entering violent extremism, (2) entry into violent extremism, (3) recruitment and (4) the subculture of violence. Each of these broad themes is comprised of multiple sub-themes intended to provide a rich empirical assessment.

**Family Socialization Prior to Entering Violent Extremism.** Relatively little research describes the early family lives of individuals who become extremists (for exceptions see della Porta, 1992). In terms of US far-right extremists, there have been virtually no studies that describe the early lives of individuals who become active in these groups. Previous research investigating violent extremist organizations (VEOs), however, indicates these groups rely on a variety of formal and informal practices to promote indoctrination (Bandura, 1990/1998; Borum, 2009; Hassan, 2001; Kruglanski and Fishman, 2009; Simi and Futrell, 2010). Throughout the indoctrination process, individuals are introduced to radical ideologies, attitudes and behaviors. While this line of research provides insight into group-based socialization processes, the following section examines socialization that occurs prior to a person's exposure to formally organized extremist groups.

***Ideological socialization strategies.*** According to Johnson (1995, p. 267), socialization is “a process through which we create a social self and a sense of attachment to social systems through our participation in them and our interaction with others.” These social experiences typically involve relatives and peers. Each of these experiences shapes the individual’s view of society as well as their identity. Previous socialization research has emphasized how parenting styles influence political orientations and activism among children (Flacks, 1988; Johnston, 1994; Johnston, 1995; Napels, 1998). Most of these studies examined the association between parental socialization and the child’s political beliefs with virtually no attention aimed at VE participation.

Only a small portion of the subjects in this sample can be described as embracing white supremacist ideology prior to group involvement or seeking membership primarily for ideological reasons. Instead interview subjects reported a wide range of non-ideological motivations for joining extremist groups. Only three subjects were raised in a household with immediate relatives who were involved in extremist groups; however, a majority of the subjects (n=28) were socialized during childhood with ideas somewhat consistent with white supremacist ideology such as racism and/or anti-Semitism.

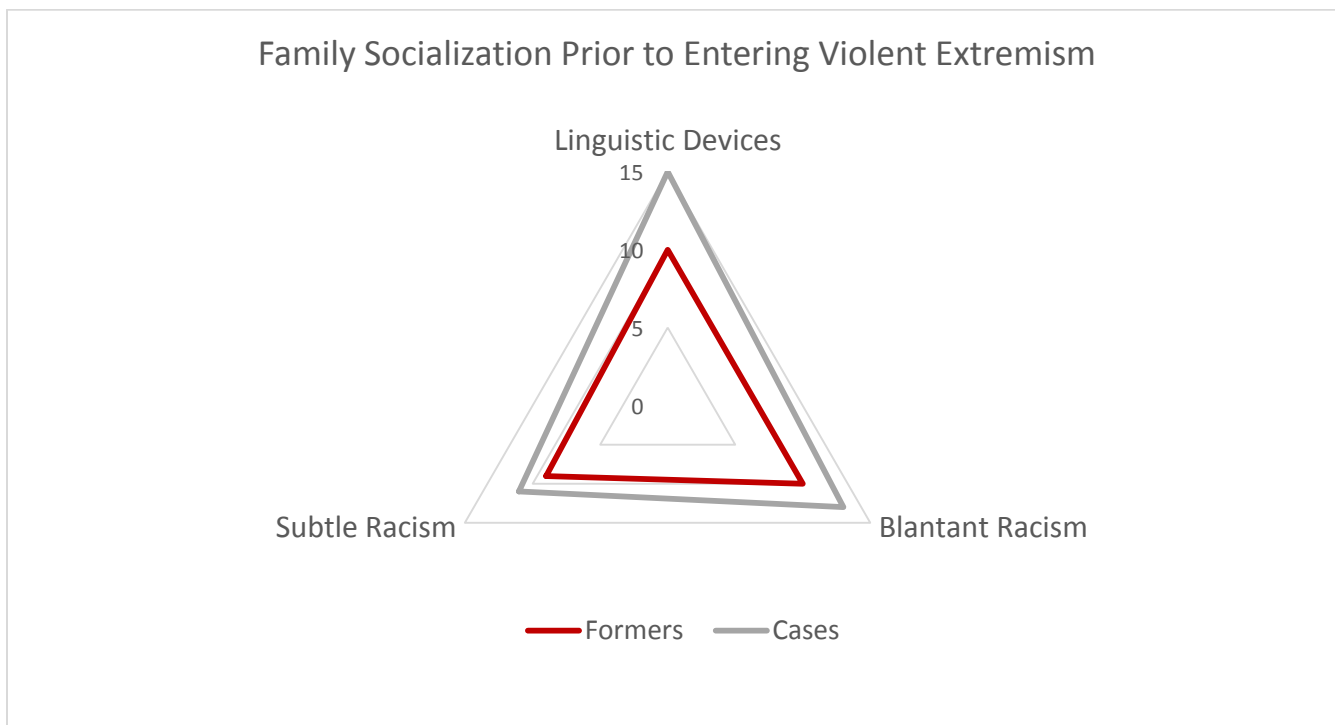
Due to the limited emphasis on family socialization prior to VE involvement, the following section focuses primarily on the overlap between racist socialization and VE. Of particular importance will be the everyday socialization that occurs within intimate social environments. Understanding the effects of parental socialization on children is important, and as the following discussion demonstrates, racist socialization has the ability to desensitize children to radical ideologies later in life. The following analysis examines three dimensions of parental socialization: (1) linguistic devices; (2) blatant racism; and (3) subtle racism.

Linguistic devices are used to personify out-group members as dangerous and whites as the embodiment of beauty and strength (Davies, 1990; Billig, 2001). For instance, mainstream stereotypes

tend to depict African-Americans, Jews, homosexuals and Hispanics as “criminals,” “greedy,” “weak” or “dirty” (Daniels, 2007; Pickering and Lockyer, 2009). The second dimension of racist socialization is referred to as “blatant racism.” Instead of exposure to racist comments in passing, blatant racism involves family members who openly propagate prejudice and racist views. Finally, subtle racism is a delicate, indirect form of socialization that normalizes racist and prejudice beliefs. Subtle racism includes the exchange of “negative” feelings about one race or culture through underlying gestures, remarks and behaviors.

Descriptive statistics for family socialization prior to entering VE are presented in Figure 1. Overall, 9 participants experienced subtle racism, 10 linguistic racism and 10 blatant racism. In terms of socialization, we identified 11 instances of subtle racism, 15 instances of linguistic devices and 13 instances of blatant racism. In total, 82% of subjects were exposed to racist family socialization.

Figure 1: Family Socialization Prior to Entering Violent Extremism



*Linguistic devices.* According to a long line of symbolic interaction research (Mead, 1932; Cooley, 1902; Blumer, 1969), our social experiences are constructed through the exchange and interpretation of

symbols. Language is one of the most common mechanism for the exchange of symbols. Language can be used to either glorify one's own group or dehumanize the out-group (Kruglanski and Fishman, 2009).

Throughout the life-history interviews, a substantial portion of our subjects recall early family experiences that centered on racist socialization. In the following accounts, language is used as a form of socialization to debase African-Americans through derogatory name-calling. For example,

We would go fishing all the time back in Kansas. If you caught carp, by law, you couldn't throw them back in because they were just so infested by the lox and the rivers. My uncle used to say, "Don't worry, just throw it on the ground. A nigger will come pick it up, take it. Don't eat that crap." Called it "nigger." Everything was, if they didn't like it, it was "nigger" this or "nigger" that. (Blake, Aryan Strikeforce, July 7, 2014).

It's weird because like throwing around the word nigger and stuff like that. I never heard anything but nigger, Mexicans and this fucking that. It was thrown around, tossed around like nothing. That was just like pretty acceptable. My grandfather was one of the nicest people... He still said stuff like that. So it wasn't that far of a stretch for me to accept some of the things that I was introduced to. (Seth, Western Hammerskins, February 17, 2014).

They wouldn't drink Budweiser. I think they either drank Hamm's or Stroh's or something back then, but wouldn't drink Budweiser because it was called "nigger beer." (Blake, Aryan Strikeforce, July 7, 2014)

That's another one I heard a lot of at home, "They can't be trusted. They're lazy. Mexicans are lazy foreigners. We're better than them because they're all in jail." You look at the population in jail and they're all in jail. That's back when you saw a lot of black people in jail. Not that you don't still see, now you see more whites... I got my purse stolen once and my grandma claimed, "Oh, the DMV is crowded because they're letting all the illegals get licenses now." I guess that kind of desensitized me to it as well. (Stacy, New Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, November 27, 2013).

My grandma was probably one of the most racist person, always talking, "Black this, nigger that. (Luke, American Front, July 7, 2013).

My mom loved Indians, because they were such good people when we were around them, but when we were at home it's, "Fucking Injuns," "goddamn niggers." (Doug, Shell City Creativity, July 23, 2014).

My dad's side of the family will deny it until the end. Anything that they've ever done in their life, I know they'll deny that they're racist, but I know that they are... My dad's side, all white. They

didn't claim to be racist but when grandma's using the N word, you got grandpa using it, all your uncles are and your dad is. (Richard, White Aryan Resistance, September 21, 2013).

As the participants described above, it was common for family members to refer to an African-American as a "nigger." In each account, there is an intentional effort to separate the out-group from whites.

Whether this is through the type of beer they drink or the quality of food they find acceptable, each of these experiences shapes the participants' definition of what it means to be white as well as black. In the next section, the socialization presented is more deliberate.

*Blatant racism.* Blatant racism is more engrained within the family structure. This dimension of racist socialization depicts a high degree of bias toward outgroups. Typically, participants described physical behaviors and mannerisms of relatives that signified dissatisfaction with other racial/ethnic groups. For instance,

[My grandma] had a special cabinet where she kept her special dishes. She called it her nigger cabinet, and her nigger dishes... My grandmother had her special dishes that she fed them on. She would wash them off with a water hose when they was through, then she would bleach them. She would bring them in the house and boil them, and then she would wash them like she did our dishes. (Ben, Knights of Yahweh, February 9, 2014).

We had this gigantic tree fort compound in the back that just consumed all my dad's tools as well as all the construction materials from the neighborhood springing up around us. We had a black kid in our neighborhood named Troy who was my age... I remember when my dad couldn't find a tool in his garage, he was like, "Was that Troy over here?" I'm the one who took his tool and lost it. I remember my mom called him out on that. "I can't believe you are racist..." He was like, "Well, the tool is missing!" (Andrew, Vinlanders, May 22, 2013).

I had a black football coach. He wanted to take me fishing, and my granddaddy was so happy that the coach was taking me fishing, until he found out he was a black man; then he wouldn't let me go. (Ben, Knights of Yahweh, February 9, 2014).

We loved *Different Strokes*. That was our favorite show. We love Arnold, he's so funny. My dad just hated that show. He would bitch and shut it off if we were out there... he didn't like it at all. There were a lot of blatant phrases on my dad's part. (Andrew, Vinlanders, May 22, 2013).

Growing up in a racist family, I didn't really make the connection that it wasn't really that different than... It took a lot of years before I kind of connected that. Definitely by high school. There was



definitely a, like a... I was definitely raised around that, "We hang out on our side of the tracks. They've got their side of the tracks." I was definitely raised around that whole idea that that's the way it's supposed to be... It was definitely this idea like, "We're not going to hurt them. We're not going to do anything wrong by them, but we're not going to be around them" that whole, we have our theater and they have their theater. (Stacy, New Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, November 27, 2013).

During a time before my parents were divorced and my father had a printing business, I used to love to go in there because I would steal all the scraps, and pretend like I had my own office and do stuff like that. But I also found that my father and one of his workers were printing racist flyers... Not any kind of organized racist group would, I'm talking more stereotypical kind of things. The one that I remember in the most detail was an image where a fisherman was actually in the water fishing and watermelon was the bait, and there was a black man going for the bait. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013).

The above narratives illustrate blatant racism. These experiences surrounded our participants during early childhood, and in some situations, conditioned them toward extremist views toward out-group members later in life. In the final section, we examine a more nuanced form of racist socialization referred to as "subtle racism."

*Subtle racism.* The subtle racism dimension favors a discreet bias. Individuals who utilize this understated tone attempt to conceal their beliefs within the conventional norms that comprise everyday life. Unlike the linguistic devices category, subtle racism does not attempt to dehumanize outgroup members through language, but rather, it functions to differentiate whites from other races. As the following examples illustrate,

I don't even recall an instance where there was anything specifically said against blacks or Jews. It was always one of those things that... "Those people down the street are moving in, they're black." That's it, they would just stop there. It wasn't like, "Those fucking niggers." It wasn't negative but it was still negative. They were still being prejudice but... It was a cultural thing. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013).

I mean none of my family was like Nazi-oriented or anything like that. They all had that underlying... we'd go out to the mall and if for some reason an African-American would walk by. My grandma and my aunt might hold on to their purses a little snigger than they normally would. They had that mentality. (Jeremy, Aryan Terror Brigade, November 9, 2013).

They weren't like, "Oh yeah, let's go waste six million Jews." No. They viewed the holocaust as being horrible and all that. They didn't have any affinity for National Socialism at all per se, but yet they did have some negative feelings, some negative beliefs about Jews. (Denis, Golden State Skinheads, July 27, 2014).

Each of these experiences illustrated a guarded mentality related to non-whites. These events do not depict family members degrading African-Americans; rather, these examples illustrate the internalization of more "mild" mainstream stereotypes against out-group members. For instance, Jeremy's grandma and aunt feared their purses would be stolen by minorities unless they were on guard. While these events did not demonstrate the same kind of debasement of African-Americans or Jewish people present in earlier examples, these experiences communicated general messages of fear and antagonism toward non-whites.

Each of the above accounts illustrates the early atmosphere that surrounded many of our participants' upbringing. As our data suggest, early family environments characterized by prejudices set the stage for the internalization of racist beliefs later in life. VE beliefs can be transmitted through overt and subtle forms of socialization. These dimensions can include verbal remarks, underlying gestures or deliberate attempts to degrade out-group members. Regardless of the degree of overtness, racist socialization that occurs during childhood alters the individual's view of society and primes them for VE membership later in life. In the next section, we focus on the entry processes by examining the various pathways into VE groups.

### **Entry into Violent Extremism**

Several studies have shown that membership in VE is not homogeneous (Hoffman, 1995; Horgan, 2012; Jacques and Taylor, 2008/2013; White, 2001). There are various motivating factors contributing to VE participation. In the following section, we examine "push" and "pull" factors that we found facilitated VE membership among our sample. The following discussion is not an exhaustive list of pathways, but rather, we present the most common motivations for entering VE. We begin this discussion by introducing the concept of "push" and "pull" factors. Next, we present the most prominent entry themes,

which include (1) searching for acceptance and belonging, (2) protection, (3) thrill of the forbidden and (4) quest for significance.

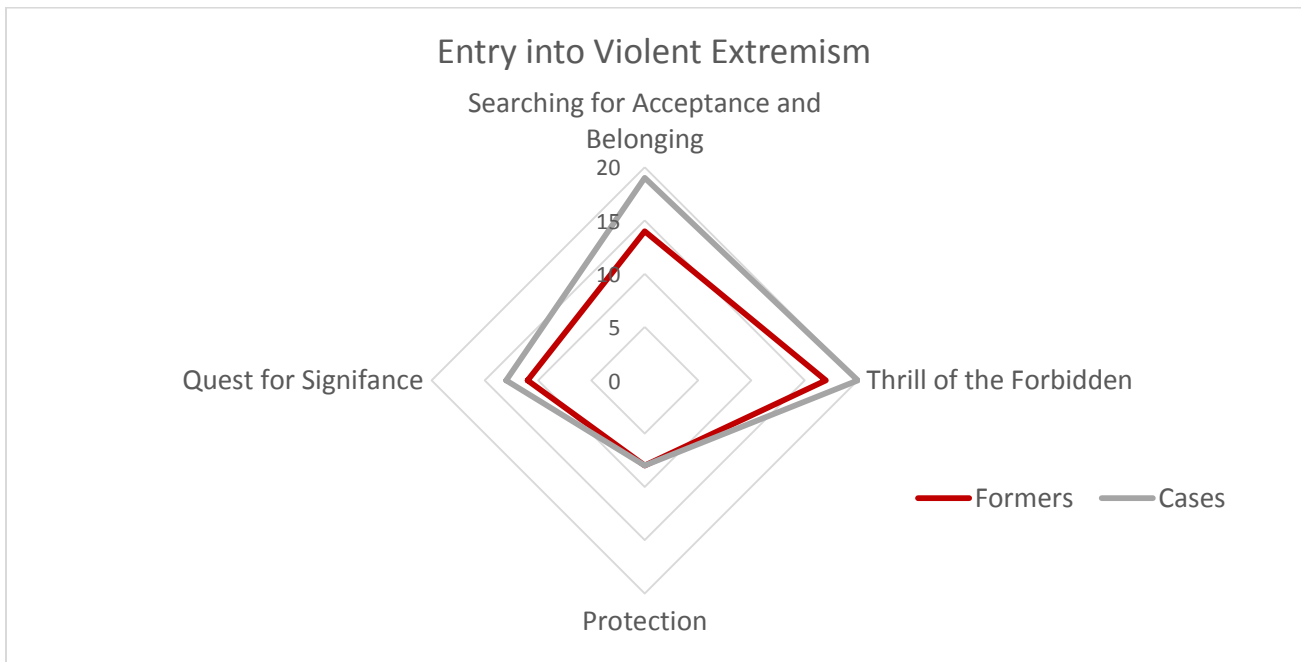
**Push and Pull Factors into Violent Extremism.** In order to understand the motivation for participation in VE, it is necessary to examine both ideological and non-ideological components. Previous research has suggested that people are “pushed” and “pulled” into delinquency by a variety of factors (Reckless, 1961; Reiss, 1951). These factors can include adverse environmental conditions (e.g., unemployment, childhood trauma) and attractive organizational characteristics (e.g., opportunity to make money, comradery). These factors, however, are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the influence of these factors work together to increase the likelihood of misconduct.

Push factors refer to those forces that compel individuals to join VEOs (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998; Loeber and Farrington, 1998). For example, an adolescent may join because various social conditions such as unemployment, poverty or parental abandonment make them feel powerless to resist the temptations of VE (Pyrooz and Decker, 2011). On the other hand, pull factors refer to the features individuals find attractive about the group (Howell and Egley Jr., 2005; Peterson, Taylor and Esbensen, 2004). For instance, an adolescent may be attracted to the promise or expectation of friendship, opportunities to make money or the promise of protection (Curry and Decker, 2003; Decker and Van Winkle, 1994; Melde, 2009; Vigil, 1990). It is important to emphasize these push and pull factors work in conjunction with one another. That is, without the presence of push factors (e.g., living in a neighborhood with a high crime rate), pull factors (e.g., protection) would likely be much less influential (Decker, 1996; Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Padilla, 1992). Over the course of this report, we relate the influence of push and pull factors to entry and recruitment processes.

Descriptive statistics for entry into violent extremism are presented in Figure 2. For the total sample, 14 participants pointed to the search for acceptance and belonging as their primary motivation in joining a VEO, 17 described their attraction to the forbidden social reputation, 8 were motivated by the

protective qualities of the group and 11 were motivated by significance quests. Regarding the frequency of each entry motivation, we identified 19 instances of searching for acceptance and belonging, 20 instances of the thrill of the forbidden, 8 instances of protection and 13 instances of significance quests.

Figure 2: Entry into Violent Extremism



In order to provide greater specificity to the entry process, we present a discussion of the most common factors that motivated our participants to join a violent extremist organization (VEO). Throughout the following discussions, we examine how these experiences relate to the push and pull concepts previously presented. The most common pull factor among our sample was the search for acceptance and belonging within VEOs, which we examine in the next section.

***Searching for acceptance and belonging.*** In terms of entry, the most prominent pull factor identified was the search for acceptance and belonging. As part of this discussion, formers routinely

attributed the initial appeal of VE as stemming from the support and comradery experienced among members in the movement. When some of the participants reflected back on the reasons for joining a VEO, they often discussed the attractiveness of the family and community atmosphere. For example,

It was just great. We had our garden. Everybody worked in the garden at one point or another, so you always had that community feel to it that was where you could enjoy belonging. We worked hard, we worshiped hard, and we enjoyed life. It was the dream for all of us. We were all there for the same reason. It was good. In the early days, before the guns even, you couldn't have asked for a better place. (Keith, Creativity Alliance, May 4, 2013).

They sort of feed your ego. They're really not lying to you, because they want you to feel special. They want you to feel a part of the lead group; like the way it was growing up, living everywhere, and my grandparents finally helping to raise me. I felt a sense of belonging. (Ben, Knights of Yahweh, February 9, 2014.)

It was always about having your back covered. It was always about family, not about selling out. Not about selling somebody to somebody for a pack of cigarettes... about family. And that's what attracted me. (Mark, Milwaukee East Side Bullies, August 19, 2013).

It wasn't about the racism and stuff. I mean that was even before that. I knew the whole time that it wasn't right, I knew it. But to be accepted, to feel like I belonged somewhere, I mean that was kind of the price that I was paying, because I was a part of something. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

I was like they were all very family-oriented, very respectful. Now if you fucked with one of them they have no problems squashing you. Now it's like that because every gang is a family. You get a lot of kids from broken homes. They're looking for a family, that's all they want. They want someone to call to them and tell them it's okay and they're alright. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

It was an interesting experience because I guess for the first time I really felt accepted. That's what I really wanted. I didn't even care about the ideology. Just these guys are cool, they like me. Maybe their beliefs are kind of cool, that kind of thing. At 13 you'll believe this about anything to be in with the crowd. (Adam, New Order Skins, September 16, 2013)

Two participants indicated they were especially attracted to groups with a high level of order and dependability. This is an additional dimension related to the search for acceptance and belonging theme. For example,

The thing I liked about it was like when we got together at like family situations, barbecues and stuff like that, and even just hanging out, I knew that there wasn't going to be some kind of ruckus going around, some kind of drugs or some kind of crazy shit happening. It had like its good and bad qualities, like if I needed to, in the middle of the night, call somebody and say, "Hey, look, man, I need help changing a tire. I need to get something for my kid. Bam! Friends show up. (Seth, Western Hammerskins, February 27, 2014).

I was an angry child and I think mostly the key was just a lack of love. Wanted unity, wanted people who were dependable... I got really intrigued watching like World War II movies, and one of the things I think that I really gravitated towards was the order that I saw within the movies. You'd watch the American soldiers were all like with beards and all grubby looking and then you see like a World War II Nazis and they are all like dressed nice, there is order. I think what spoke to me was just, through those movies was just there was so much disorder in my life, and I wanted order. That was the lynch pin that just kind of drew me towards the movement. (Drew, White Boy Society, July 6, 2013).

The examples above illustrate that feelings of belonging and acceptance as well as dependability and order were largely absent from our participants' daily lives. These characteristics increase the attractiveness of the extremist organization and pull the individual towards the VE subculture. This feature was particularly attractive for our participants because they often discussed a lack of support within their families and social relationships. In this way, the pursuit of acceptance and belonging was especially meaningful because many of the subjects reported feeling deprived of a supportive, nurturing home environment. In some cases, this was the first time individuals felt a sense of closeness in their lives because of growing up in "broken families" and experiencing dysfunctional social relationships throughout childhood.

While each of the specific reasons for joining VE slightly varies, the participants discussed searching for a bond and connection with others. Because of the dearth of research on the early childhood of US VE, it is unclear how our findings compare with other samples of domestic extremists. Our data, however, align with previous studies of conventional gang research that identifies an association between entry and the desire of acceptance and belonging (see Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Harris, 2005; Thornberry, 1998/2001). As the participant's accounts suggest, the movement represented

a lifestyle unavailable to them prior to their involvement. For another portion of the sample, VE provided an opportunity to meet the desire for thrill seeking and rebellion.

***The thrill of the forbidden.*** One of the principle points of attraction related to entry was the desire for thrill seeking and the internalization of a forbidden social image. Participation in VE is often facilitated by the construction of a social image and personal identity (Arena and Arrigo, 2005; Blee, 2002; Borum, 2014). The collective nature of a subcultural group, including its “style” (Hebdige, 1979), expresses a certain attitude to people outside the group. A portion of our sample were motivated to create offensive reactions from the public by wearing “taboo” symbols such as swastikas, iron crosses and confederate flags. The appealing nature of these forbidden symbols attracted our participants to the VE subculture, and by extension, the taboo nature of neo-Nazism. As the following participants explain, the display of forbidden imagery can produce both positive (e.g., toughness, badass image) and negative reactions from the public (e.g., fear, annoyance or indecency). For example,

I don't know how to explain it just to make it seem like, in the high school we attended they were like the bad asses because they were the skinheads that wore swastikas... When I started hanging out with them again, at first, it was like that shock factor... I was like, hey, they're getting attention, pissing everybody off. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013).

I was a punk rocker, I was into shock value. I would wear things that I knew would get a rise out of people, I think it was a way for me looking back a way for me to have control of the situation, if I could push somebody's buttons I could control them, as stupid and pointless that is, it was empowering, to be able to shock somebody. (Cooper, Aryan Fourth Reich Skins, November 10, 2014).

I don't know why, what drew me, it's just tougher. I wanted to hang with the tough dudes. Dudes getting the pussy. So swastikas, swastikas were always cool and if it's cool, I always liked it and glamour, the robes. It was exciting. Powerful and I saw people how they reacted with swastikas and you got reactions out of people. (Dillon, Old Glory Skins, September 20, 2013).

Everybody was trying to look, or try to be on the edge of the edge. So some people would suddenly go from having long-hair to having a Mohawk or whatever, and some of them shaved their heads to be like skinheads and then of course had to have the badge of a swastika and stuff... It was just more trying to be shocking and whatever you could do to be more shocking, more extreme was

what was in, and almost more self-destructive, like drinking yourself and being a junkie and drugging, all that stuff was really admired. (Jacqueline, Society Skin Nation, April 5, 2014).

We got a total rush, I remember. “Who is this?” She said, “*Skrewdriver*. If you come to Cleveland they have a whole skinhead group and they are all Neo-Nazis and they are all cool people.” I was, “Yes! Yes!” I loved the rush from it and this feeling that this is my people. This is what I was meant to do. Also, I knew right away the peace punks would hate this. They would hate it, so that was a big thing too... because it was something that was repulsive to everyone. It was repulsive to not only the mainstream society, but it was repulsive in my own little counterculture. That’s what gave all the more appeal to me was the shock thing. (Andrew, Vinlanders, May 22, 2013).

I was 15 or 16, I saw a skinhead and I was like “What’s that?” because I didn’t know. Somebody said “Oh, that’s a skinhead”. He had red Doc Martins, jeans, t-shirt, a tough looking dude, could handle himself. I was like “I like that”, not ideologically, just... He wasn’t weak... There was always kind of this element of danger or violence involved. I think the skinhead thing just took it to the next level. It was almost acceptable. Yes, we do this. They’re willing to fight openly, like “Yeah, we fight. That’s what we do” ... everybody admitted it, but skinheads wore it on their sleeve like a badge. “Yeah, we fight.” (Cooper, Aryan Fourth Reich Skins, November 10, 2014).

It was more fashion than politics by a huge factor. Like it really had virtually nothing to do with politics, other than what, really nothing, other than just hate the N’s. You know, hate the N-word, whatever, that kind of stuff. (Jacqueline, Society Skin Nation, April 5, 2014).

As these narratives demonstrate, participants were attracted to the defiant reputation of the group and were attracted by the thrill associated with this forbidden social image. The display of a swastika and other offensive imagery created a negative reaction from other people and was an essential “prop” in their efforts to develop a “bad ass” and “tough dude” image (Katz, 1988). Each of the above participants discusses the utility of wearing swastikas around other people in terms of provoking reactions such as stares or comments. Participants also indicated that wearing these symbols helped internalize the “tough” social image that defined their group.

A segment of our sample also indicated they were raised in “tough neighborhoods,” which consisted of youth and adult gangs. In terms of motivations for joining an extremist group, associating with the movement offered protection from “bullies” and other street gangs. In the next section, we examine how VE groups function as a protective factor for these individuals.



**Protection.** The desire to protect oneself from verbal and physical injury is a common feature that cuts across many cultures (Cannon, 1929/1932; Vetlesen, 2009). A major function of human social groups is to provide protection and security from various environmental threats to the ingroup (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008). In terms of the current analysis, participants often described their neighborhood and schools as “tough” or “rough.” In some cases, these individuals constituted a numerical minority in terms of racial demographics in their schools and/or neighborhoods. Several participants reported they were bullied by older kids at school or by gangs in the neighborhoods. For instance,

I think my neighborhood experience as a kid definitely had an influence on me being vulnerable to being recruited into the movement. If some of the stuff that happened with the kids, fighting with them and Donald [Black kid in the neighborhood] stealing from us after we were so nice to him, I don't think I would have been as open to people saying this is why those people are like that. You should be like this. I think that opened me up and then I was susceptible to it. I think if that stuff didn't happen that I might have met those same people and when they tried to give me the literature I might have been like yeah, whatever. (Sebastian, Hammerskin Nation, May 26, 2014).

It sounds cool to a young man, especially if you're going to school with blacks and they're bullying you. You show up dressed like a skinhead, with your skinhead friends, they're going to leave you alone. That really worked for a lot of them. A lot of these boys were picked on in school that would come to our house.” (Jacqueline, Society Skin Nation, April 5, 2014).

My reason for joining, honestly was I mean I'm a small guy, you know, and my intent was just to have people fear me, you know, because I'm not a very intimidating guy... I mean it absolutely worked. You know even if there was just like 3 or 4 of us, when you got guys with full gear on, the flight jackets and braces and boots and everything it definitely generated some fear. I mean we saw it even with large groups of people. (Harry, Las Vegas Skinheads, June 8, 2013).

I've always aligned myself with people that were tougher and stronger than me. Because I was never a tough kid... I remember this other Skinhead had come down to fight the guy I knew or something from this other neighborhood. [He] brought somebody with him, this older guy and this guy's brother showed up. He would have been real hardcore and pulled a screwdriver and I thought well that's cool. (Toby, Blood and Honour, May 27, 2014).

What I signed on originally was for the brotherhood and back in the original days, when the LADS were formed and when we were all a localized gang, you can call someone and say, “Hey man, could you back me up if we fight?” and everything else... We were getting beat up, somebody

would jump in... I knew if I turned around and saw them, my back was covered. It was always about having your back covered. (Mark, Milwaukee East Side Bullies, August 19, 2013).

As the above examples illustrate, these individuals felt they could find protection within VE groups. The perceived threat of impending harassment is central to the individual's decision to join a VEO, as these groups are viewed as capable of preventing future injury (Melde, Taylor and Esbensen, 2009). Interview data have documented consistently that gang members are drawn to these groups for their perceived protective quality (Miller, 2001; Padilla, 1992; Vigil, 1988). Fear of victimization at the hands of other gang members, community residents, or family members influenced their decision to join an extremist group in hopes that this group would reduce the probability of victimization (Cohen and Short, 1958; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Moore, 1991). If these individuals choose to not join a VE group, their risk of physical injury would likely increase due to an absence of protective influences.

Bonding together with other extremists can be thought of as a form of "problem solving" behavior (Cohen, 1955). Beginning with Thrasher (1927; see also Klein, 1971), researchers have documented the role of conflict in street gang development. Based on this research, gangs form out of a desire for protection and competition between outside forces (e.g., rival gangs and police) over desired goods (e.g., turf and drugs). In this sense, joining with peers who are experiencing similar threats can reduce the risk of injury by increasing protective influences.

In the final section, we move beyond the social image and personal attraction to the movement. In these examples, participants discuss their initial attraction as stemming from the political and religious significance the group represented.

***Quest for significance.*** Humans are fundamentally motivated to achieve personal significance (Becker, 1962; Frankl, 2000; Maslow, 1967). Whether real or perceived, a quest for personal significance is based on the view that an individuals' personal significance is being threatened (Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, and Orehek, 2009; Kruglanski and Orehek, 2011). Threats to personal significance

include: social rejection, exclusion, personal loss, and humiliation (Bloom, 2005; Sageman, 2004; Speckhard and Akhmedove, 2005). In an attempt to protect oneself from the threat of personal insignificance, individuals will often align with groups experiencing similar perceived injustices (Kruglanski and Orehek, 2011).

These experiences motivate a person to accept extremist ideologies, which often encourages the conception of violence as a form of retaliation or “self-defense.” Participants in our sample often claimed they were protecting their race from attacks instigated by multi-culturalism and “leftist” politics. As the following participants explain, their involvement in VE was an effort to preserve white culture. For instance,

Of course, I believed I was doing something noble, altruistic, that I was dedicating my life to my people, my race or whatever. I actually believed I was doing well. It wasn't like, “Hey, I'm a hater and I'm proud of it.” I didn't view myself that way. (Donald, White Aryan Resistance, May 31, 2014).

You want to preserve your family heritage and all that. It was all about preservation that what we were concerned with. The underdog, justice... trying to get the truth out. Along the way, we're still trying to find what is the truth. You see a little glimmer of truth and we're on it like moths. That's all we thought was the truth. (Callie, American Front, July 23, 2014).

Yeah, that's pretty much how I was introduced to everything. It's just that the fact that I was being told I can't be white pride while everyone else can be brown pride, black pride, or gay pride... I didn't get into it to be hateful. I didn't get into it to be racial. I got into it to be proud of who I am and make a better place for my kids. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

I always knew that I was either prison bound or going to die. I'll go to prison for my race. I'll die for my race, I'm okay with that. I was okay with that. It is just something you except. (Denis, Golden State Skinheads, July 27, 2014).

The more I got into all the different aspects of the racist scene, every one of them; I would find something that I liked. Identity, the openness, the pagan thing, the Klan, Hammerskins, every single group had something about it that appealed to me. Even if it was just the overarching theme of White supremacy or White separatism or pro-White, whatever you want to call it. I can remember wanting to be a Skinhead before I became one. I thought, that's what I want to be, because in my mind, it was the best. (Cooper, Aryan Fourth Reich Skinheads, October 22, 2013).

As the examples above illustrate, these participants believed they were performing a duty for their race by dedicating their lives to the preservation of white supremacy. Historically, when a white supremacist member dies in the service of the movement their actions are celebrated as “heroes,” “warriors” and “guardians” (Blee, 2001). These individuals are considered martyrs and their level for significance increases substantially.

The notion that VEs are “warriors” and “guardians” of the white race is common among far-right groups (Daniels, 2009; Simi and Futrell, 2010). Many of their symbols and insignias are based on Nordic mythology, which celebrates a warrior mentality (Daniels, 2007). A prominent ideology among white supremacist groups is the 14 words creed: “*We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.*” Many white supremacist members interpret this motto as a call for the complete destruction of their racial enemies. As the following participants explain, they felt they were warriors fighting in a racial holy war.

I was drawn in in a very benign way. Then quickly got infected with the rhetoric and the belief and I fully bought into it, would never deny that. I thought I was saving the world... Across the board, 13, 14 years old, looking for an identity, you join an organization like that. You get brought in by somebody who’s a really charismatic leader with rhetoric and become involved, because you’re passionate about that. You really believe you’re saving the world at that point. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013).

I was so appealed with the fact that these guys were talking about a race war and all this stuff. I was so hung up on the fact that I felt like I was fighting this super-important war and battle. (Scott, Northern Hammerskins, September 1, 2013).

Both of these participants discussed the notion of a war occurring between the white race and all other ethnic/racial groups. Furthermore, both of them believed they were part of the “super-important war and battle” and thought they were “saving the world.” Unlike previous studies that have examined significance quests of suicide bombers (Kruglanski et al., 2009; Kruglanski and Orehek, 2011), our findings extend this framework by applying it to a sample of right-wing extremist (RWE).

A final dimension of the quest for significance theme includes a religious aspect. Similar to the previous participants, these individuals “frame” (Goffman, 1959/ 1974) their quest for racial survival within religious terms. For instance,

Why I kept it up was mainly a belief in God... being one of Yahweh’s soldier saints, that, being one of the main things that kept me in. (Jack, Skinhead Dogs, June 1, 2014).

It was the army of God. We’re here to defend God and defend people. It’s very important that it’s to defend. It’s all about defending; not oppressing or taking over. That’s like teenage stuff. (Callie, American Front, July 23, 2014).

When Brad got hurt with a missile in his hands, for us, we determined that as God doesn’t want us to blow up the Bank of America building. If Brad hadn’t gotten hurt, chances are, we would have blown up the Bank of America building, you know? Like when we were on our way to do the assassination plot. Here we had the car wreck. Stops us from doing it. Theoretically if we hadn’t had a car wreck, we’d probably done it. For us everything was a sign from God. (Keith, Creativity Alliance, May 4, 2013).

As these accounts demonstrate, participants seeking to elevate their personal significance align themselves with groups that frame the out-group as the enemy and their own cause as righteous and honorable (Kruglanski, Gelfand, Belanger, Sheveland, Hetiarachchi and Gunaratna, 2014; Kruglanski et al., 2009; Kruglanski and Orehek, 2011). As compared to other entry pathways, the quest for significance theme relies more heavily on the importance of formalized extremist ideology as a mechanism for attracting, recruiting and building commitment.

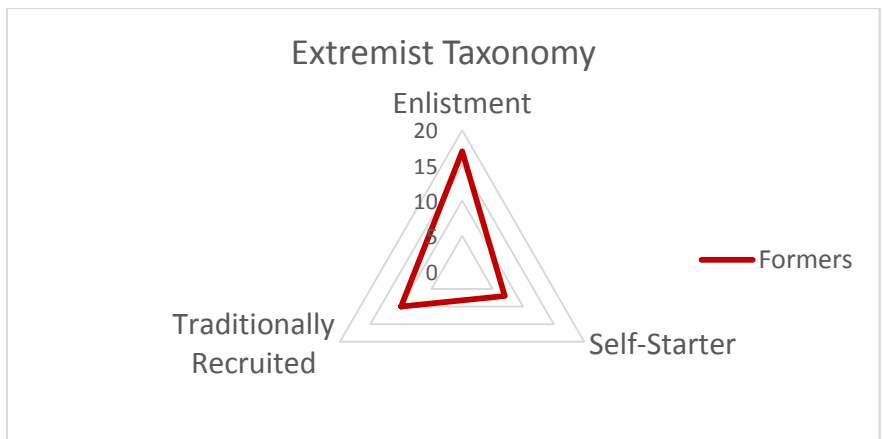
Overall, the motivation for entering a VEO varied among our participants. In some situations, the desire for acceptance and belonging or the thrill of the forbidden appealed to these individuals. Due to the promise of friendship and the thrill of a forbidden subculture, our participants were pulled into an organization that endorsed radical and violent ideologies. At other times, the threat of racial enemies and loss of personal significance increased the need for protection. As our data suggest, these individuals were either compelled to join a VE group or risk physical and personal losses. In the next section, we move our focus to VE recruitment strategies.

**Violent Extremist Recruitment**

In the following sections, we discuss several dimensions of VE recruitment. Each discussion offers a unique vantage point into the recruitment process and demonstrates a variety of tactics used by VE recruiters. We begin this discussion by introducing an extremist taxonomy, which describes three unique types of violent extremists. Next, we examine the type of individuals VE groups target for recruitment. We then turn our discussion to the marketing strategies used by VEOs to promote their group and aid in their recruitment processes. Finally, we discuss how white power music functions as a recruitment tool.

**Extremist Taxonomy.** Entry into VE includes both active and passive processes. In some cases, extremists are formally recruited into the movement and adhere to an organizational structure. In other situations, such as lone offenders, extremists consider their actions to be more effective working alone rather than alongside other members, and therefore, do not create associates with formal organizations (Borum, 2013; LaFree, 2013). Below, Figure 3 presents frequencies for our extremist taxonomy. Overall, we identified 17 participants as “enlistment,” 10 participants as “traditionally recruited” and 7 participants as “self-starters.”

*Figure 3: Extremist Taxonomy*



The first type of extremist is referred to as a “traditionally recruited” extremist. These individuals have been officially recruited into the movement and adhere to a formal organizational structure. The second type of extremist is known as a “self-starter” (Benjamin and Simon, 2005). These individuals

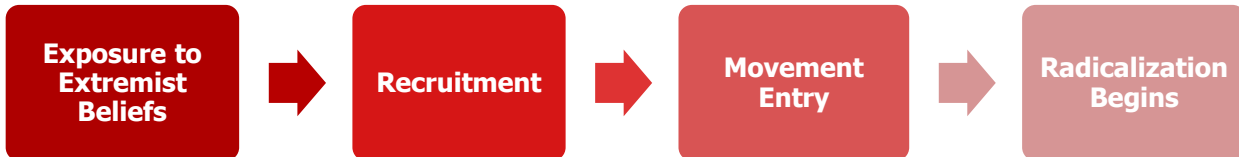
begin the indoctrination and radicalization process without the assistance of active extremists. At a later point, these individuals may reach out for membership in VEOs. The third type of extremist is a hybrid that we refer to as “enlistment.” Similar to the self-starters, these individuals have been exposed to VE beliefs before entering the movement but do not begin the indoctrination and radicalization process until they are recruited by current members.

The following diagram illustrates our conceptual model. Path 1 illustrates the traditionally recruited entry process. Path 2 demonstrates the enlistment entry process. Finally, path 3 illustrates the self-starter entry process.

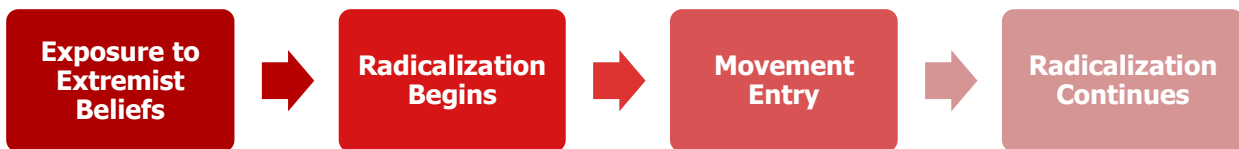
**Path 1: Traditionally Recruited**



**Path 2: Enlistment**



**Path 3: Self-Starter**



In the traditional recruited path, individuals are actively targeted by current members. Recruitment is not limited to a single type of location, but, rather, our data suggest recruitment occurs in a variety of social spaces such as music shows, schools, house parties, neighborhoods, and online. Unlike self-starters and self-recruiters, individuals who are traditionally recruited have no previous exposure to any formal extremist beliefs beyond racist family socialization. These individuals do not begin the radicalization process until they are members of an extremist organization. The following two paths into violent extremism include more involvement

Individuals who “enlist” have an interest in extremism but do not join or begin radicalizing until after they have been recruited into the movement. Enlisted extremists have been previously exposed to extremist beliefs through media forums (e.g., music, movies or books), social relationships (e.g., family members, peers) or social institutions (e.g., school, law enforcement). Similar to the traditional extremist, enlisted extremists do not begin the radicalization process until they enter the movement.

Finally, self-starters take an independent role in terms of entry and radicalization (Benjamin and Simon, 2005). Self-starters indoctrinate themselves by seeking literature and other resources without the assistance of current members (Kirby, 2007). Similar to self-recruited extremists, self-starters have been exposed to radical beliefs prior to making contact with a formal organization.

### **Recruitment into Violent Extremism.**

Recruitment in VE groups is typically a gradual and dynamic process (Bjorgo, 2011; Blazak, 2001; Blee, 2002; Horgan, 2008; Sageman, 2004). Recruitment can either occur in formal or informal settings such as bars, schools, music shows, neighborhoods, online or between peers. In some cases, recruitment strategies target a specific population (e.g., youth, ex-military), and other times these strategies are more general, intending to promote the group’s ideological position to a relatively broad audience (Benford and Snow, 2000; Fisher, 1997; Goffman 1974; Oliver and Johnston, 2000; Zald, 1996). Some of the most common recruiting tactics include leafleting public areas, schools or at concerts; placing stickers in obtrusive places; and creating signs, slogans and persuasive arguments (Simi and Futrell, 2010).

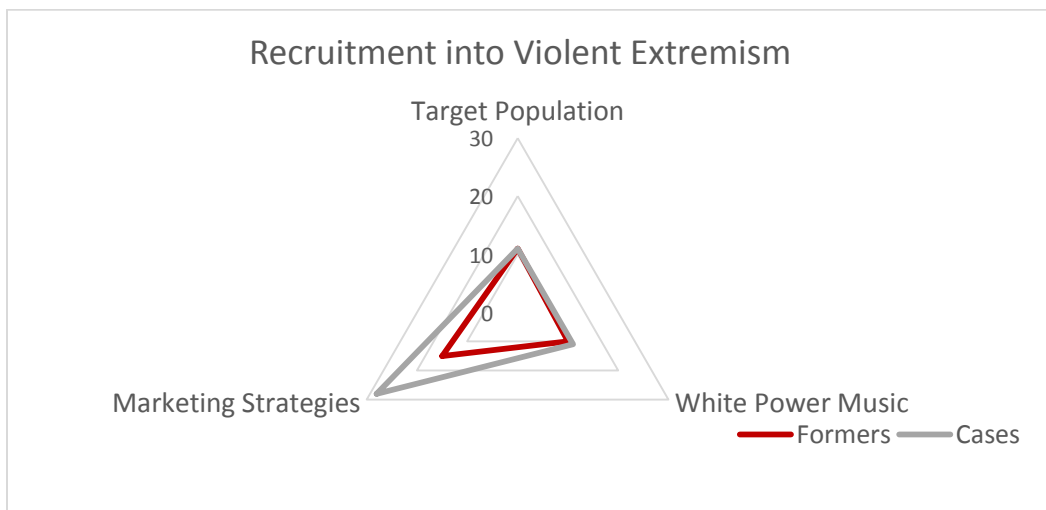
Recruiting youth into VEOs offers several challenges. First, recruiters often encounter conflict from opposing groups (e.g., anti-racist and leftist groups) who promote mainstream political beliefs and non-violent ideologies. Second, recruitment involves the dissemination of extremist and often violent beliefs (Ligon, Harms and Derrick, 2015). Some of the participants explained the difficulty in presenting their group’s political views to potential recruits without it being dismissed as too radical. These participants explain that recruitment takes time and that the indoctrination process develops gradually



as one becomes more comfortable with the group’s political agenda. In light of these challenges, VE recruiters have learned to utilize a variety of social settings (e.g., music shows, house parties) to recruit potential members into VE groups and rely on various marketing techniques to advertise their groups’ political agenda.

Below, Figure 4 indicates that 11 participants identified a specific population that was targeted for recruitment, 10 participants discussed the white power music scene as an effective recruitment techniques<sup>7</sup> and 15 participants described marketing strategies for VE recruitment. In terms of the frequency of these instances, we coded 11 instances that identified a target population, 10 where the white power music scene was considered an effective recruitment technique and 15 instances related to specific marketing strategies used by VE recruiters. In the following section, we present characteristics of the individuals VEs targeted for recruitment purposes.

*Figure 4: Recruitment into Violent Extremism*



**Target population.** Recruitment is a vital task for any organization (Shapiro, 2005). All groups seeking to increase membership engage in some form of recruitment (Ligon et al., 2015). VEOs are no exception to the rule. While groups may claim to recruit the most capable candidates possible, some

<sup>7</sup> This figure refers to a segment of extremists who reported that white power music was a primary tool used to recruit them. While a large majority of the sample (88%) discussed their attraction to white power music, our current focus is on the participants who were recruited or used white power music during the recruitment process.

groups found it more effective to pursue youth who were unstable and more susceptible to their recruitment strategies. Our data suggest VE recruiters intentionally sought out youth who they identified as vulnerable to their recruitment tactics. In most cases, VE recruiters targeted three different populations: (1) frustrated and angry<sup>8</sup> youth looking for solutions to their problems; (2) individuals looking for intimate relationships outside of their families and (3) younger adolescents who typically lacked maturity and may have been unable to fully comprehend the ramifications of a group's radical ideology. These individuals are especially vulnerable because they often experienced low levels of social support at home and many of them did not have positive role models to emulate. For example, the following participants discuss the types of individuals commonly targeted by VE recruiters.

The people coming up with the literature or stickers they are not looking for educated adults. They are trying to appeal to the young kids, whose brain connections are still forming. (Jacqueline, Society Skin Nation, April 5, 2014).

Even when I was a skinhead the biggest recruiter of all time was just the angry kids that they got sick of the hypocrisy. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

We would pinpoint the kids who we knew were having a bit of an identity crisis or having a problem fitting in with other groups... We gave them solutions to their problems or at least perceived solutions to their problems. If they were being abused by their parents, we would give them a family. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013).

Really the way that I see it is I think that the recruiting is all about preying on kids that are susceptible. That's never admitted. We would never admit that. It's kids that don't have families, "We'll be your family." Kids that need protection or whatever, for different reasons. "We'll be whatever you need." (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014)

We were targeting kids that were already borderline, full of piss and vinegar and hatred and working on that. When we were doing the flier campaigns and stuff, we hit the university bars. We were down on the campus and stuff. (Doug, Shell City Creativity, July 23, 2014).

They know what kind of people to target. You go after kids... every one of us were from a broken

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<sup>8</sup> Anger is an opportune emotion that can influence a wide range of behavior. For example, criminologists have found that outward expression of anger increased likelihood of intimate partner violence (Swan, Gambone, Fields, Sullivan and Snow, 2005); anger is a key emotion related to the experience of strain that often contributes to delinquent behaviors (Agnew, 1992); also, persistent anger contributes to high rates of depression among men and women (Simon and Lively, 2010).

home... That's where they recruit from, because it's easy pickings. (Denis, Golden State Skinheads, July 27, 2014).

[In] the skinhead realm, all these people are drop outs. They are. They're not part of society. They're easy to bring in, easy to just get them focused on one thing and that's white power. You start pumping people like that, that really don't have an education. It's that quick. (Luke, American Front, July 7, 2013).

Our data also indicate VE groups purposely targeted youth who were frustrated and looking for solutions to their problems. This technique is what Snow and Benford (1988) refer to as “diagnostic framing” (p. 198). To date, scholars have devoted considerable attention to various types of diagnostic frames used by a variety of social movements (see Anheier, Neidhardt, and Vortkamp, 1998; della Porta, Kriesi, and Rucht, 1999; Klandermans, de Weerd, Sabucedo, and Costa, 1999). A diagnostic frame strategy involves identifying a social injustice, assigning blame and urging others to act together in order to affect change. Overall, diagnostic frames aid in the recruitment process by identifying perceived social problems and offering solutions to individuals with social grievances.

As this section demonstrates, VE recruitment was purposefully targeted at youth raised in “broken homes” as well as angry youth unable to process the seriousness of the group’s ideological messages. Susceptible youth are pulled into VE because of the appeal of friendships, solutions to political grievances and the VE subculture. In the next section, we elaborate on the current discussion by examining the specific marketing strategies used by VE recruiters to attract susceptible populations.

**Marketing strategies.** Marketing strategies are tactics used to identify pull factors and draw attention to the positive qualities of the group. According to resource mobilization theory, in order for a movement to organize and exercise effective political protesting strategies, the group needs material resources such as people, money, leaders, organizations and communication networks (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1977) as well as non-material resources such as solidarity, legitimacy, loyalty and public attention (Fuchs, 2006). In the following sections, we examine the various strategies used by VEOs to advertise their groups’ physical presence, political agenda or to provide information about joining an

extremist organization. We begin this discussion by examining advertisement tactics that rely on the distribution of stickers, fliers and leafleting.

***Stickers, fliers and leafleting.*** For the purposes of the current analysis, political activism is defined as behaviors undertaken by an individual aimed at influencing public policy and civilian action (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). From this perspective, leafleting and recruitment are both forms of activism. Our data indicate one of the more common recruitment techniques, referred to as leafleting, involved members posting movement propaganda in public places such as schools, malls and neighborhoods. For some of the members, handing out fliers and literature is way for them to feel like they are furthering the movement. The messages presented within the fliers and newsletters vary between groups. In the following examples, the group's political message is somewhat neutral, intending to inform the public of the group's physical presence. For example,

The way I wrote literature was to make it as acceptable to the public as possible. The other guys thought the best thing to do was to be as extreme as possible. I disagree, I thought the soft early sell was the way to go. That was the approach I decided to take. That if I'm going to be a public spokesperson than how I appear changes how the message is perceived. That's why I did that. To me it was the obvious thing. (Seth, Western Hammerskins, February 27, 2014).

A few of us were very adamant about, you know, putting fliers out... We've got to open eyes, here. We've got to get people thinking. It was more of, you know ... "Think about this." You know. "Here. This is out here. This is what's going on. What do you think?" ... I'd have flyers made. I did one, White Awakening, and it had a picture from the late '50s/early '60s. It had a bunch of youth holding up banners that said "White Power" and stuff... It was more of just being proud of who you were, making a statement. (Simon, United Skinhead of Pennsylvania, April 20, 2014).

I figured it was like fishing in an almost empty pond. I figured, okay, you might put out a thousand pieces of literature and maybe get one new member. We figured that it was worth it... There's that evaluation process that always transpired. You would meet someone and try to kind of feel them out. If they were responding in a way, being sensible, I'd continue. If they revealed to be an idiot or just to be a lost cause, I just said, "Oh, the heck with it." (Donald, White Aryan Resistance, May 31, 2014).

So, the guy that headed it, his name was Aaron and he actually put together some really professional looking flyers for that time, computers were pretty basic, but he put together some

really professional looking flyers and I recruited some guys and we just canvassed the area, there was only a handful of us, 4 or 5 you know, but everybody was convinced we were huge. We would go early, like 2 or 3 AM and just canvass the whole area with flyers, put them under people's windshields and staple them to telephone poles, so everybody thought we were huge. I don't think we had the cops fooled. We told them we had about 25 members and I think they knew we were full of it. (Harry, Las Vegas Skinheads, June 8, 2013).

One of the guys that I hung out with he had a lot of literature from other places and had a whole stack of like these not regular stickers, they were like really cheaply made. Like you had to lick 'em and stick 'em, they were like food stamps, like the old food stamps or something. They plastered them everywhere. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013).

My sister had a half-black friend and they hated it. I did a couple of bad things. My sister had a paper route, and I used to put some of our fliers in her papers so people were getting fucking white power literature in their papers delivered by a sister and her half-black friend. (Sebastian, Hammerskin Nation, May 26, 2014).

Each of these accounts illustrate a non-confrontational approach to recruitment. The goal was to inform the public of the group's political agenda and physical presence in the community. The creation and distribution of fliers served as a form of activism and provided these individuals a role within the VEOs.

In other situations, however, the purpose of the fliers is to be offensive and create a reaction by using highly inflammatory images and slogans. For instance,

We tried to get a hold of folks that showed scientific proof of differences between whites and blacks. I remember a flyer that I made about the difference between the whites and the blacks brains... comparing the brain of the African-Americans to apes and chimpanzees and stuff, so I was distributing that at the Mall. (Harry, Las Vegas Skinheads, June 8, 2013).

We had so much of the literature... it was kind of done in like comics, like comical, to really get you to, it was to get to kids. They are appealing to...you know boys are already angry and have a lot of testosterone and they are appealing to them in any way that they can. The comics would say it in a funny way. They are trying to get their point across that Jewish people are the root of all-evil, but they have funny little sayings and stuff like that, that would stick with people, stick with kids. (Jacqueline, Society Skin Nation, April 5, 2014).

I would put [literature] all over my school because it would have really wound people up, you know. That was what it was for me, it was to get people upset. People are emotional about that stuff. (Cooper, Aryan Fourth Reich Skins, November 10, 2014).

We were focusing a lot on fliers, putting up fliers, posting up fliers, recruiting... It was stuff made black people look less than human. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014)

Some fliers came out. They were the typical, the red swastika or the black swastika stickers. I forget the stuff it's called. You could make with paste. White paste stickers or something. You'd put out a big piece of paper and put the paste on it like that. (Blake, Aryan Strikeforce, July 27, 2014).

Jefferson City was starting to bus the poor kids into the white neighborhoods. When I was with the NDF, we would put little stickers up around the schools that was about busing and ruining white neighborhoods and stuff like that. (Sebastian, Hammerskin Nation, May 26, 2014).

For each of these participants, the goal was to rely on the movement's taboo reputation to generate public concern. By generating this type of response, the group becomes "edgy" and is more likely to appeal to angry youth searching for an identity (Borum, 2014). This edgy reputation functions as a pull factor, increasing the attraction of the VE subculture (Curry and Decker, 2003; Katz, 1988). In the following section, rather than relying on advertisement tactics to increase the appeal of the group, VE recruiters approach adolescents at school, music shows and house parties in an attempt to personally recruit these individuals. The advantage of face-to-face recruitment is the opportunity to tailor the recruitment message to a specific individual (Simi and Futrell, 2015).

**Face-to-face recruiting strategies.** Another common recruitment strategy involves face-to-face interaction. Similar to leafleting, members often go to public areas, schools and parties attempting to persuade youth to join their groups. Face-to-face recruitment offers several other advantages for recruiters. First, unlike leafleting, recruiters are able to target multiple individuals at once. Second, recruiters are able to interact with individuals and determine if the potential recruit appears open to joining the group. Finally, face-to-face interaction allows recruiters to supply "perks." For instance, Scott explains the utility of alcohol and girls for recruitment tactics, "I always made sure I was the one that had booze. I had booze, I could get girls and all this stuff, because I knew that's how I brought in people" (Northern Hammerskin, September 1, 2013).

House parties are popular recruiting locations for VE (Simi and Furtrell, 2010). At these gatherings, members are able to perform VE rituals and share stories about their “racial awakening” (Blee, 2002, p. 32) House parties are intimate events, often requiring an invitation in order to gain entry. Members use house parties to recruit individuals because they are able to express their radical views without opposition from police and anti-racist groups. In the following account, leafleting and face-to-face recruitment work in conjunction with one another.

We'd start passing flyers for parties, saying come join us, come check us out. We're not saying you have to join us now, but come check us out, see what it's like. We had a keg every single night, no matter what. For about two summers, we had a keg every single day where at least kids could come in. There's minors, 15, 16 years old, we didn't care. You come in, join our ranks and see what it's like, and we'd do the same thing. Pushing women and girls out there. You'd get to know which girls were the easy ones, so you'd push them on to the guys. They'd just turn heads. These guys were like, " Oh man, we'd get this all the time. It's just one big party, life's great." (Richard, White Aryan Resistance, September 21, 2013).

In a final example, Drew explains how fighting and “sticking up for somebody” at a party gains a lot of appreciation from people, sometimes enough for them to join the group.

We would do our literature things, where we would go and hand out stuff, but was primarily just going to parties and recruiting and talking to people. “Hey, I like those guys.” You'd see, you would be out there and some other guy was beating somebody up or fighting, “Wow,” you would stand up or stick up for somebody and a lot of people would appreciate that and a lot of times you would get people who would want to join up. (Drew, White Boy Society, July 6, 2013).

House parties are effective recruiting strategies because they are exclusive. The privacy of house parties allows VEs to display racist and violent imagery. In addition, these spaces introduce new recruits to the group's culture and build unity among one another. Each of these characteristics increases the appeal of the VE groups and pulls the potential recruit into the subculture.

In addition to house parties, schools also allow recruiters to identify and isolate “social outcasts.” Recruiters are also able to utilize “bloc recruitment” strategies in order to recruit members among groups of individuals already organized for some other purpose (Bearman 1993; Bearman and Everett

1993; Diani 1995; McAdam 1988; McCarthy and Zald, 1977/1987; Oberschall, 1973, p. 125). Most importantly, while schools are considered agents of social control, there are situations where students lack observation from guardians such as during lunch breaks or on the school bus. As the following participants explain, these environments provided opportunities to talk with and recruit students.

Recruiting is one of the biggest things... like actually going and talking to people at the high school on their lunch breaks. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

I was driving a school bus and I was passing out literature and stuff. (Doug, Shell City Creativity, July 23, 2014).

They've always had a quota. I wanted certain new members a month... go high schools and junior highs. We were recruiting those guys and any punk rockers we could change over, switch them over to us. (Mark, Milwaukee East Side Bullies, August 19, 2013).

Recruitment at schools is especially common for members who are still enrolled in school themselves.

I had a few friends that I'd recruited, from my middle school and high school. Middle school was by my house, and we'd go spray paint all this stuff all over it, and then show up the next day and pass out all this stuff with flyers, with our crew and stuff. (Scott, Northern Hammerskins, September 1, 2013).

I remember the times when we were at high schools or middle schools handing out flyers, handing out CDs, and really trying to bring people in. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013).

Right after junior high, eighth grade I'm doing this and going into high school and soon as I get to that ninth grade, "Yes." I started, in the beginning, trying to be more political and activist, work in the school and I started recruiting people and I'm talking to people and I'm learning the arguments that these people have and then I'm conveying those and articulating those to other people, and before I know it I had a group of people that are in agreement with me... I just started to be a little more radical I started leaving papers everywhere and the literature campaigns which got me kicked out and sent to one of those alternative schools. (Drew, White Boy Society, July 6, 2013).

Face-to-face recruitment strategies are more effective and popular than leafleting strategies. The ability to bring potential recruits into the VE subculture at house parties and tailor their recruitment message to a specific audience cannot be matched using traditional leafleting techniques.



Recruitment strategies are intended to introduce “racially naïve” youth to the dangers threatening the white race in an attempt to characterize the movement as a source of safety and empowerment. These members advertise their group by either providing contact information or creating an offensive atmosphere. By creating an offensive reputation, the group is able to develop a taboo social image, and therefore, make VE appealing to angry youth searching for an identity. For them, face-to-face recruitment and distributing fliers were effective ways to introduce people to alternative sources of information. According to our subjects, however, the most effective recruitment strategy is white power music, which we discuss in the following section.

**White power music scene.** In terms of recruitment, the white power music scene proved to be the most common and effective strategy. This space was an attractive atmosphere where peers were exposed to an anti-establishment, subculture of violence. While originally not ideologically centered, these friendships exposed youth to alternative explanations and interpretations of reality, which recruiters used to educate potential recruits to radical ideologies. Even though there are various white power record companies, white power music is not considered mainstream. This was especially true for white supremacists active during the early to late 1980s when virtual record companies were not available. These activists were required to exchange bootleg tapes of white power bands. The fact that these tapes were taboo and difficult to obtain made them even more appealing to certain youth.

There are several styles of white power music including heavy metal, country, and techno; however, white power rock is the most common. Some of the most popular groups include *Skrewdriver*, *Bound for Glory*, *Bully Boys*, *Max Resist*, and *Aggravated Assault* (Futrell, Simi, and Gottschalk, 2006; Goodrick-Clarke, 2002). Regardless of the genre, white power music typically reflects the fundamental ideologies characteristic of far-right groups: anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, Aryan nationalism and white pride. White power rock is comprised of fast-paced vocals, heavy guitar riffs and drumming with

lyrics that emphasize Aryan heritage, global brotherhood and white pride (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). Additionally, it is common to hear themes of violence and racial superiority within the lyrics.

Participants often discuss the significance of white power music and the messages it delivers. As the following participants explain,

Music was the propaganda. The music was the most powerful tool to recruit anybody. You could teach through music, you could make things make sense with lyrics. You could inspire, motivate, insight, that's what I was good at. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013).

Music is the best recruiting tool you could ever have. (Dillon, Old Glory Skins, September 20, 2013).

Yeah, and then you add the music into that and that's just another armor tool for the movement. The music would really add the ability to network, the ability to say what we need here. (Jake, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, April 7, 2013).

I think it was mainly the first time we started talking; we started talking about music and whatnot. They turned me on to some National Socialist rock and whatnot. It sounded all right to me... The music's a big recruitment tool to them. (Adam, New Order Skins, September 16, 2013).

I was outside [at a music show] drinking Coors and my friend had a big giant old Walkman with Skrewdriver in it. I remember she had the headphones on and it was playing *Hail the New Dawn*. I was like, "Oh, yes!" We got a total rush, I remember [asking] "Who is this?" She said, "Skrewdriver. If you come to St. Louis they have a whole skinhead group and they are all Neo-Nazis and they are all cool people." I was like, "Yes! Yes!" (Andrew, Vinlanders, May 22, 2013).

Skrewdriver's a powerful fucking band... He wasn't talking about like niggers, niggers, niggers, or like Jews, Jews, Jews. He was like you were white; we believe in something, we love our heritage. He didn't fucking do it from a hate aspect. I think that's why he recruited so many people... The thing about Skrewdriver, Skrewdriver can relate to any race. They talk about prideness, being true. He talked about not race mixing, he talks about being the best you can be promoting your race. Most of his songs could identify with any person, religion, faith, race, creed, sexual orientation. I think that's what made him so powerful. (Sebastian, Hammerskin Nation, September 1, 2013).

Our data suggest that white power music provides an avenue for current members to establish contact with potential recruits. Members describe white power music as a "recruitment tool," which can be

educational, inspiring and motivational. The lyrics provided an alternative way to deliver ideological beliefs.

From the outside, white power music speaks to nationalistic and racial pride. As one travels deeper into the white power music scene, however, the music introduces recruits to an alternative lifestyle and message. As the following participants explain, white power music led them towards an anti-establishment, subcultural and, at times, violent lifestyle.

The music, man, is like what does it. You start listening to that shit, and... they all say that it's just for entertainment. Bullshit. That stuff pumps you up to go out and do some shit. You know what I mean. There's no way that they can defend it any other way than that. That's what it did to me, and that's what it did to all the guys I was hanging out with. It was like, "All right, perfect. Let's load up in a truck and crank up some tunes and see what we can get into tonight." (Jeremy, Aryan Terror Brigade, November 9, 2013).

I was all about it [the music]. That was it. If it wasn't for the music, I don't think I ever would've got completely into it. Skrewdriver, I don't know, their songs get in your head and those lyrics. I don't know. It's just weird. The music was definitely a major part for me. I think that the music and the skateboarding maybe led me more towards the subculture or anti-establishment stuff like that. (Sebastian, Hammerskin Nation, May 26, 2014).

I'd say since my early or mid-teens, that was my lifestyle. Like, most other old school skinheads, we found Skrewdriver and Ian Stuart just talked to us, and it spun out of control... It's the message that [is] in it. Hate rock is one of the best recruitment tools... It's very aggressive. You throw hate rock on top of the aggression or the aggression on top of the [hate rock] music and you're going to spit out some good Nazis. (Denis, Golden State Skinheads, July 27, 2014).

I feel guilty but there has been a couple of things I've seen go down that I wonder did the music put them in that frame of mind? Just in general. The lyrics and shit like that. I don't know enough about sociology and human behavior to say. You got to wonder when someone loses it like, "Wait, what made them do that? How many nights was he standing above my bed with a baseball bat wondering whose head he's going to kick in?" (Jake, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, April 7, 2013).

Everyone else was like Skrewdriver, No Remorse, Brutal Attack, which were great bands at the time, but listening to the Bully Boys, I mean those boys sang about that shit... I always think, "Yeah". I know that if I was drinking with my friends and we were listening to Midtown Boot Boys, somebody's getting fucked up. I'm going to get beat up and get myself into some trouble here, but

the music was the constant beating of the... like Fox News, constantly beating that fucking drum of fucking anger, fear, and violence. (Freddie, Midland Hammerskins, May 31, 2014).

White power music is more than a combination of lyrics and musical instruments. White power music functions as a gateway to violence and intimidation as well as a transmission device, capable of spreading racist and anti-Semitic beliefs to potential white supremacist recruits. White power music is an effective recruitment tool because it allows recruiters to cloak radical beliefs within musical lyrics. In some scenarios, white supremacist recruits may hang around without pressure to participate in extremist activities, but the continuous indoctrination from white power music can lead to more serious forms of activism and violence.

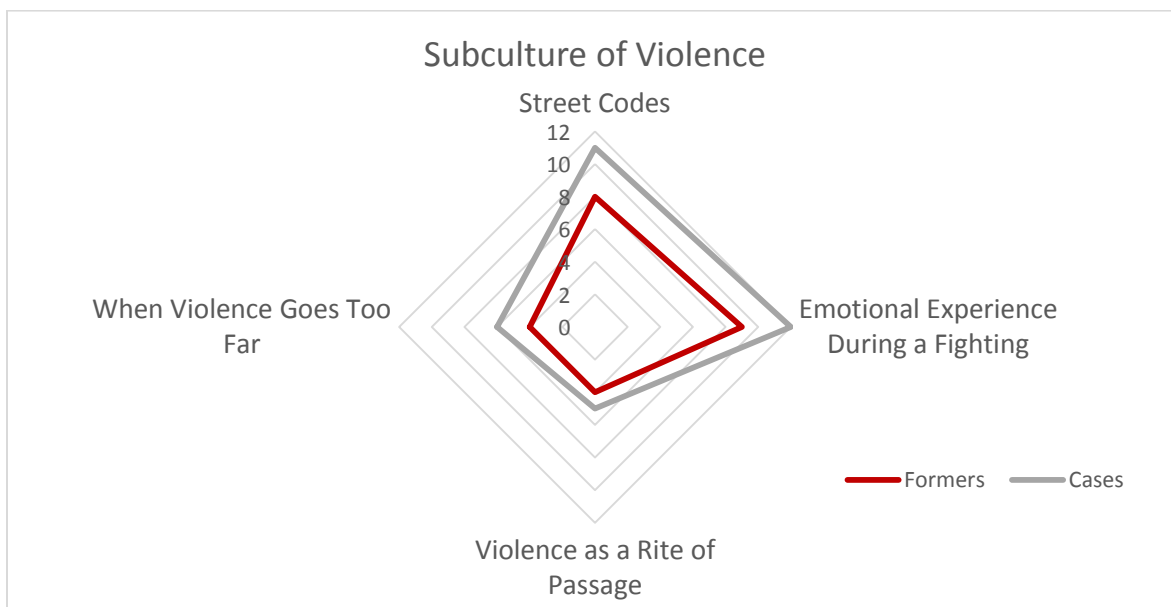
Overall, the most common recruitment tactics used by VE recruiters included leafleting, face-to-face recruitment and white power music. Some recruiters deliberately targeted frustrated youth from “broken families” because these populations were especially vulnerable to VE recruitment strategies. VE recruiters increased the appeal of their groups by offering, acceptance, and protection from rival gangs. The white power music scene, however, proved to be the most effective recruitment technique among VEOs. In the next section, we refocus our attention to the VE subculture.

### **Subculture of Violence**

A final dimension examined within this report is the subculture of violence. As previous scholars propose (see Cohen, 1955; Cohen, 1972; Fischer, 1995; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967), violent subcultures promote a relatively greater number of conditions and situations where violence is expected or required of its members. That is, violence stems from group “norms” that encourage and reward individuals to use violence. Throughout the following section, we explore several different dimensions of this violent subculture: (1) codes of the street; (2) violence as a rite of passage; (3) disciplinary and policing strategies; (4) emotional experiences during a fight; and (5) situations when violence goes too far.

Figure 5 describes the frequencies for the subculture of violence discussion. Overall, 8 participants identified an aspect of the street code, 9 participants described their emotional experiences during a fight, 4 participants discussed violence as a rite of passage and 4 participants identified an event when violence crossed the line. Regarding frequency of these instances, we identified 11 occurrences related to street codes, 12 related to emotional experiences during a fight, 5 related to violence as a rite of passage and 6 related to events when violence went too far.

*Figure 5: Subculture of Violence*



**Street codes.** While there is an extensive body of research that uses the subculture of violence framework to explore urban and rural violence and street gangs (see Anderson, 1999; Kennedy and Baron, 1993), few studies have used this to explore VE (for a recent exception see Pisiou, 2015). Contrary to the belief that all violent extremists are “crazy” and lack moral standards, our data suggest many extremists adhere to some version of the “street code” (Anderson, 1999). While an official rulebook does not exist, there are informal rules that prescribe acceptable fighting behaviors. As part of this interpretative process, members develop their own set of codes such as the type of weapons they consider acceptable or targets they consider off-limits.

Two of the most common targets considered off-limits are elderly people and children, even of other races (Anderson, 1999). Several participants explained they would not hurt elderly people and children because they are defenseless. The following participants illustrate this theme.

That was one of the things, if you see a rival person and they got their children with them or their wife you don't just... That was the code. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

Don't hit women, for the most part. There were chicks that I threatened. That was always... That was the big thing, don't hit women... I mean it was like, don't go around and randomly jump a white person. (Scott, Northern Hammerskins, September 1, 2013).

We get back to Boise, and I'm staying with my buddy Rick. I remember when I was sitting there with the AK, he's sitting there yakin because he lived in kind of a blacker neighborhood... what he said was this, there was a school up the street there an elementary school, he actually said he thought about going up there and just mowing them all down. I'm just like, "Dude, they're fucking kids man. I mean they're fucking kids you don't hurt kids... it doesn't matter man, it would be murder you know." (Blake, Aryan Strikeforce, July 27, 2014).

It's like violence is violence. I had my code. I don't attack elderly, with your family, and children. That was the thing. I just, I knew that was wrong, no matter what, for me, and so I avoided those things. Whether that's just my way of justifying it or I just don't give a shit, I don't know. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

Kids are innocent and even at my height of being a Nazi, every kid is innocent. I would have never harmed a black child, never. Because they're a kid. A kid can't defend themselves. It's like a dog fight in the skin head world. It's huge and I would never do that. A dog cannot defend itself against it. I would not harm that dog. I would not do something that would harm that dog and the same with kids. Kids cannot defend themselves. So I would not ... you don't hurt something that is defenseless, you're not a man if you do that... Even to the most hateful people in the world there are some things that are sacred, and kids are that thing. (Denis, Golden State Skinheads, July 27, 2014).

Although white supremacists are known for attacking racial and religious enemies who are "defenseless," several of our participants considered attacking any person unable to defend themselves, even members of other racial/ethnic groups, a violation of the code. In this respect, these individuals either privileged an alternative street code apart from their extremist ideology or adapted their extremist ideology in a way that set limits for targeting racial enemies only under certain conditions.

Another aspect of the street code is related to the rules within the group. Specifically, as it relates to violence, there is an expectation members will not back down from a fight when challenged. In the following examples, violence is used as a way to increase status and ensure the group's survival. Participants discuss using the maximum amount of violence possible in order to prevent rival gangs from retaliating against them.

It wasn't a deal like you had to fight, it was more like if it happened don't run. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

Once you have a fight and someone wants to call you, you have to be ready 24 hours a day. If I call you in the morning or I call you at 3:00 in the morning, if you don't show up at that fight, you're out. (Mark, Milwaukee East Side Bullies, August 19, 2013).

There's definitely an aspect of violence but it was kind of like more of self-defense when I came into it. At that point to when skinheads first hit the scene of Portland it was like there was so much gang violence. It was kind of like the only way to put them, to make them stop fucking with you is by being brutal. If they were going to flash a gun to you, you kick their face in. It was like you'd always put it up that next notch. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

Maybe a lot of them didn't live by a street code... But I think it was more of the "take no prisoners" type of attitude towards things. I think, too, that we didn't want people coming back at us, and I think when you just have a fight with rules, people will come back. So I think that was the other thing, they didn't want people coming back, and they wanted to inflict as much harm as possible. (Freddie, Midland Hammerskins, May 31, 2014).

Previously we discussed how individuals viewed extremist groups as a form of protection from bullies and other racial enemies. In the examples above, there is an expectation that members need to fight or at least not run from a fight in order to preserve this violent and intimidating social image. As Freddie and Stanley illustrate, brutal and extreme forms of violence serve to minimize future violent events. Both participants endorsed extreme forms of violence against outgroup members.

Ironically, a final theme related to the street code that we identified in the interview data is the absence of rules in street fights. For these individuals, the notion of a "fair fight" (Copes et al. 2013) did

not exist. Instead, the only code these members adhered to was the idea they should win at all costs. As the following participants illustrate,

You ever got a rulebook for fighting? The rules to fighting is I want to kick your ass before you kick mine. Know what I mean? (Bruce, Supreme White Alliance, April 17, 2014).

That was one of the things I noticed when I joined the skinheads that that word never applied anymore... I remember making references to the fair fight as a skin or whatever. I would say, "If you want a fair fight, there is no fair fight in a street fight." A brick is fair in a street fight. So it changed my whole attitude toward that. (Freddie, Midland Hammerskins, May 31, 2014).

In each of the accounts above, interpersonal violence in VE groups is regulated by codes of the street (Anderson, 1999). In some cases, specific people are off-limits such as children, elderly and personal property. Other times, there are codes for members. In these situations, there is an expectation for members to fight or be willing to back someone up when the time comes. Finally, the code of the street may be to win at all costs, including using extreme forms of violence against out-group members. In the next section, we discuss how violence functions as a rite of passage, intending to display commitment, masculinity and achieve social status among peers.

**Violence as a rite of passage.** Evidence of rites of passage (ROP) has been found in numerous cultures (Van Der Meer, 2003). ROP are a type of ritual that involve intensely emotional events where people transition from one social position to another. ROP also function to communicate meanings about social relationships through dramatic behaviors and chants (Bell, 1991; Collins, 2004; Wuthnow, 1987). In most cases, ROP are characterized by a specific ceremony, however, some ROP can extend over the course of months or even years (Van Gennep, 1960). Traditionally, ROP are institutionalized events that signify a change of status in society (e.g., Bar Mitzvah, quinceañera, or a white coat ceremony).

Rituals have been analyzed as symbolic performances that express conflict (Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1959/1967), symbolize resistance and rebellion (Schechner, 1993), frame grievances and communicate power (Benford and Hunt, 1992) and create the "emotion culture" (Gordon, 1989) and



boundaries of groups (Taylor, Whittier and Morris, 1992). These events are often less formal than traditional ROP, however, the purpose of these events still signifies a passing from one life-phase or social position to another.

**Commitment and status.** The current discussion provides insight into the events that strengthen one's commitment to the movement. The following participants discuss how a person's willingness to participate in violent and illegal activities demonstrates their loyalty to the movement:

A lot of people come in and get pushed into violence because it is a criminal mentality. If you not willing to commit the violence then you are suspect as being a plant or a rat or whatever you want to call it. If you are not willing to participate in the crimes then the only obvious answer to that you are a potential witness. (Chase, Aryan Terror Brigade, November 1, 2013).

With one of the kids they told me, you take his boots and his suspenders. I thought, oh they're trying to test me because I'm the new one, and I have to show them how serious I am. I did, I went and took the kids suspenders. I didn't take his boots, but I took his suspenders... I think that helped me get a little bit past that, we have to check you out and make sure you're okay kind of thing. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013).

There was one time in particular, that I think it was Gary that told me yes, you know test so and so. And that was his word for you know, not really jumping him in, but testing them and see how down they are, you know. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

Above the participants discussed the necessity of violence to prove one's commitment to the group. As our data indicate, some groups require their members violate the law in order to be considered part of the core.

Violence also serves to demonstrate masculinity (Kimmel, 2007/2010; Messerschmidt, 1993). A person's willingness to participate in violence can increase social status among male counterparts (Anderson, 1999). The following participants discuss how fighting is both a way to achieve status and to identify the most proficient fighters within the group. For example,

Violence to me, growing up very well it was just more of a manly status, a social status. It's like if you don't fight you're a bitch, and if you win fights you are a man. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

They decided to test this one young skinhead and see if he was going to take off like the other one did. We spent hours this one night instigating and instigating and instigating... When it comes down to it, he's not going to be the best choice to be with us in a fight because he doesn't win fights. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013).

One of the guys in our group ended up hitting a guy so bad that he ended up on probation that he collapsed a guy's eye socket and dude wasn't able to see out of that eye anymore. That was the first night of me hanging out with him. [I'm like] "All right. Now I see how it is with these guys and what I have to do to be around them." So that was the beginning. (Jeremy, Aryan Terror Brigade, November 9, 2013).

From this perspective, violence functions as a "weeding out" process to separate the strong from the weak. Violence serves multiple functions for VEs. In some situations, violence serves to demonstrate commitment to the group or to weed out the weak recruits. In the next section, we focus on the ritual aspects of violence by explaining how violence is intended to keep order within the group.

**Discipline and policing strategies.** Our data also suggest that violence is used to maintain order among members. When a current member defies ideological beliefs or decides to leave the movement, violence may be used to discipline the member. For example,

I would meet other people, and they didn't like them because they were black, or Mexican, or whatever. They threatened me all the time. They would say all blood in, blood out type of thing... They saw me or something like that. They were like, "You can't hang out with them, and that's your warning." Then they saw me again and I got a boot party. (Adam, New Order Skins, September 9, 2013).

Actually I think there was some fights but it was either disciplinary... I want to say that he had questioned Jeff's authority or something or maybe Jeff thought that he was trying to become leader. I want to say it was more disciplinary than anything. He probably did something stupid that they had to have discipline for or something. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

In the following account, Jake discusses how his group would police members who were violent because these actions could potentially threaten the group's social reputation, which could result in scrutiny from law enforcement agencies.

That was looked down upon really. We had people that would come and be violent, or do violent things. We policed it ourselves, really. If we see that there was going to be an ongoing issue then

really; here we go, that is when you need violence, alright. Because if someone is going to take your name and their going to go out there and commit acts, okay and it's going to cause problems with the feds... if people were ruining our shit and doing shit like that we had to show that we weren't going to allow that. They had to be made an example of. (Jake, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, April 7, 2013).

Ironically, Jake explains that violence is required in order to discourage unwanted violence within the group. In this way, although Jake openly prohibits violence, in some situations the use of violence against group members ensures the group does not encounter "problems with the feds." In these situations, violence is used as a disciplinary tactic against members who are violent and do violent things at the expense of the groups' safety.

Another situation where violence is used as a disciplinary strategy occurs when someone decides to leave the movement or depart from their group and join another clique. These events are known as "jump-outs." A jump-out is a ritual, where the departing member is formally expelled from the group through violence (Moore, 1991; Moore, Garcia, Garcia, Cerda and Valencia, 1978; Vigil, 1988; Vigil and Long, 1990). During a jump-out, current members fight the individual who is attempting to leave the group (Decker and Lauritsen, 1996). A jump-out typically lasts for several seconds or minutes. While only a segment of VE use jump-in and jump-out rituals, this finding underscores certain points of overlap between VE and gangs. The following participants explain their experiences with jump-outs:

I remember going to Luke's house. He was with Lisa at the time. I remember telling him, "Yeah, I'm out, dude. You guys just aren't organized enough. I'm going to start my own clique." Lisa, got in my face and she's like, "You know what's coming now. You're going to get jumped out." It started off with Eric. I was doing okay against Eric but then Luke jumped in. He basically just picked me up about shoulder-high and it's like, "Oh, god." It was over. It was just over. (Harry, Las Vegas Skinheads, June 8, 2013).

Well, that's what skinheads say. Once you're a skinhead, you're a skinhead, man, until you get jumped out or whatever. Unless you're a race traitor or whatever. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

Jump-outs signify a transitional event for members who want to leave the group. In both cases, Harry and Kevin discuss jump-outs as something required to move onto another phase of one's extremist career or to disengage from extremist subculture. In a similar way, Harry describes wanting to leave and start his own group, however, Harry was required to endure a jump-out before he could do so.

**Emotional experiences during a fight.** We also examined the emotions extremists report experiencing during a fight. Our data show that individuals interpret violence in a variety of ways. While some extremists enjoy fighting, and view it as a way to gain status or advance the cause, others are less willing to fight out of fear or because they have a preference for non-violent activism. In the following section, we introduce several themes that highlight these emotional dynamics experienced during a fight.

A segment of our participants described fighting as a pleasurable experience. Many of them indicated they were aggressive children and experienced their first fight during late childhood or early adolescence. In fact, several participants indicated that fighting was a physically stimulating experience. For example,

I would say as far as like being a normal teenager and getting in fights with people, I think [that] was normal, but I think as I progressed into the skinhead scenes, my interests peaked in that and I had a lot of fun confronting and beating people up and hurting people, actually was driven by that. I actually, can honestly say that hurting people was actually [a] lots of ways was better than sex. (Drew, White Boy Society, July 6, 2013).

There was definitely some things that were intoxicating about it, especially the power that you felt afterwards... Nobody wanted to mess with me. I definitely enjoyed that. I definitely enjoyed the fairy tale aspect of it. Younger, when I would actually physically do it, there was something intoxicating about winning, about doing that. There's always something about winning for me that you get a high off of. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013).

Fighting is a lot like a hug. It makes you feel good. Different ways of feeling good, by all means, but it's the same type of emotion click... I love violence. I hate getting hurt, but man I love violence. I get a hard on when I punch people in the face... Have you ever felt someone's eye pop out or feeling their teeth pop out or fucking nose crunching ... Oh my God it's amazing... It's amazing. Oh my God. It's always been that way. Ever since I got the shit beat out of me as a teenager, getting jumped and shit. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014).

For each of these participants, fighting allows them to feel a sense of empowerment and accomplishment. Fighting and violence provided these participants with personal and emotional satisfaction they could not receive outside of fighting.

Several participants also indicated the enjoyment and pleasure they experienced when they fought alongside other extremists. For instance,

There was always that constant outpouring of rage. I think that's addictive. The adrenaline rush and that sense of belonging and the camaraderie. When you're five guys and you fight eight and win that it's like, the feeling you get, the rush from it that was pretty fantastic. (Toby, Blood and Honour, May 27, 2014).

I guess before that time I had gotten in fights but there was always, I guess, fear behind that. I would just fight anyway. I guess it was probably like that with a lot of people. But it always strengthened my...being part of the skinheads always strengthened my fearlessness. Just being less fearful. I got these guys behind me that we all have each other's backs. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

I grew up in a tough neighborhood and so we fought and Irish kids fought and we did that type of stuff and I always knew I knew how to handle myself. When I got into this movement I noticed that now I got accolades. People would be like, "Man, you really hit that guy," or "You really fucked that guy up," and I liked that, because I wasn't getting accolades nowhere else. I'm a sports guy, liked that this was my team and after a big fight people always knew that I held my own, and I would go help you out, too, because you're on my team. (Freddie, Midland Hammerskins, May 31, 2014).

The participants above talked about the support they felt when fighting alongside other extremists. As Kevin explained, he was initially afraid to fight but feeling the support of other members strengthened his commitment to the group.

Fear is another emotion several of our participants indicated experiencing. As the following participants explain,

There was always the fear of if you're in a fight, if you're in part of a fight and you pull back then there's a fear of them coming after you because you didn't give it what you should of. It's as if "We're counting on you and you back down or you back off then, dude, we're coming after you." So that always made you go. It almost made you want to be the first to punch somebody because then you're part of the driving force. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

Even if I knew I was going to win the fight, I would be terrified because you had adrenaline going through your body and shake, there's always that fear of something happening. I didn't get to enjoy it, not at all, but after that, the knock out effects of after that, is better than any drug. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013).

Even though both of these individuals indicated a level of fear before fighting, it was not enough to deter them from participating in group violence. For these participants, the group expected and counted on them to fight. If these participants backed down or refused to fight, the group would be at risk of retaliation from rival gangs. In this way, fighting functions as a way to perpetuate the group's lethal reputation among rival groups.

In a different way, fighting was also used to deal with the emotional strain caused by childhood trauma. As the following participant discussed, he enjoyed fighting because it allowed him to experience "power."

I suppose you could enjoy moments of violence without being a psychopath. I enjoyed the power because it enabled me to get outside of that old cycle of being abused. I think that was the strategy I used because I had no other learning opportunity to go from. (Doug, Shell City Creativity, July 23, 2014).

Below, Freddie described picturing his stepfather's face on the people he fought:

The punching and the kicking part of it, which was what I was into is, for one, it released a lot in me... I would put my step dad's face on a lot of people when I was really ruthless at beating somebody who normally wouldn't have deserved a beating anyway... I thought of my stepfather, and so I would go balls to the wall against that person. (Freddie, Midland Hammerskins, May 31, 2014).

Thus, in order to gain control, these participants used violence as a form of cathartic release to alleviate anger, frustration and sadness. In addition, violence also provided a means of reducing helplessness. As the data indicate, these individuals used fighting as a coping strategy and a way to "release" emotional distress. In both cases, these participants were empowered by violence and relied on fighting as a way to expel their anger.

As previous examples illustrated, some of our participants view violence as an enjoyable and cathartic experience. It allowed them to increase their status among peers, feel empowered and strengthen their commitment to one another. In the next section, however, we examine a threshold for violence and provide several events where participants felt it crossed the line.

**Situations when violence goes too far.** In the final section, we examine events where violence goes too far. For this analysis, we are interested in episodes where violence caused emotional discomfort or disapproval. As previous accounts illustrate, violence is used to strengthen group bonds and to increase status among peers. Participants often discussed how participation in violence proved one's commitment to the movement and a willingness to break the law. An individual's willingness to "get their hands dirty" demonstrated they would not become an informant or "rat" if they were ever taken into custody by the police.

Our data, however, suggest there is a threshold for violence among extremists. As the following accounts illustrate, violence against innocent or defenseless targets produced physical and psychological discomfort among those involved. For example,

I remember something like that happened one night. Just me one-on-one with somebody else and I didn't feel good about that dude. I beat this dude really bad. I didn't even notice it until the next day when I saw stinking blood all over the beach. We were up in the middle of nowhere. It was just us on a creek... The next day you wake up and you see blood all over the beach... I guess at the time you feel kind of proud. "Oh, yeah..." But now it's like I was an idiot. [Another time] I felt like that with Ted because we shattered his jaw. He had to have his jaw wired shut... His buddies, right, his bros shattered his jaw. Doesn't compute. That's a wrong idea of a buddy or a bro... I see him walking down the street [and] he's got his jaw wired shut. It was stuff like that. (Kevin, Blood and Honour, July 7, 2014).

There were acts of violence I saw that I was not comfortable with... Just watching people get their heads jumped on. One thing I think of is a guy, he was unconscious and somebody is jumping up and down on his stomach and I was just like that's fucked up man. I'm out of here. That's pretty brutal. (Toby, Blood and Honour, May 27, 2014).

Yeah, like I said, we would raise our family to be white. We were going to have white kids and be in a white neighborhood... that didn't bother me but I wasn't one that was just going to go out and

hurt innocent people in the process. (Stacy, New Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, November 27, 2014).

I don't know that I could say when I was thinking of this gay church. I knew this would have been the largest act of its kind in U.S. history. That's part of why I thought that's what we were supposed to do, because we knew that it would have to be an impact of some sort. I don't think I realized how huge until I actually got into the church with the bomb, and saw the people, and saw the damage that could occur. It hadn't hit me yet. But once it hit me, yeah, it hit me. Being that close, there was no denying my life changed at that point... In my heart, at that point, CSA died. (Keith, Creativity Alliance, May 4, 2013).

Each of the participants above referenced violent situations that caused them to experience emotional stress. These events often occurred when violence was directed towards innocent or defenseless victims. In this regard, it would appear there is a threshold for violence among extremists. Specifically, the use of violence is only justified when it is directed towards racial enemies who are capable of fighting back. For individuals who cannot defend themselves, it is more difficult to sanctify the use of violence. Previous research has found that gang members and extremist often end affiliation with the group when concerns about escalating violence cause emotional discomfort (Decker and Lauvitsen, 1993; Bubolz and Simi, 2015).

Highly publicized acts of mass casualty violence and murders committed by other members in the movement were also a source of emotional distress and disapproval. For instance, several of our participants defined the Oklahoma City bombing as a situation where violence crossed the line. As the following participants explain,

I do remember there's a couple of occasions when I really did stop and think, 'Do I want to be that person?' With the Oklahoma thing, it wasn't even so much the thought of, 'What if I have children? Do I want them to be around that kind of violence?' but actually thinking there's a difference between murdering children and murdering adults. In my head then, I thought, "Oh, my God, he murdered children. There's a daycare in there." (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013).

Seriously, I remember it. It was '96, right after Oklahoma... All those people died, children died, that is not us. That is not how we thought, never. We're not saving people, helping people, or enlightening we thought. We thought that's what we were doing. We don't want to hurt anyone. I



don't care who they are or what they ... a baby's a baby. That was just too much. That was too much for any real human to take. (Callie, American Front, July 23, 2014).

Above, Abby and Callie describe their disapproval with Timothy McVeigh's willingness to kill children. In this situation, attacking defenseless individuals cannot be morally justified. In the following account, Jack described the physical reaction he experienced after hearing about the Oklahoma City bombing:

When that happened, we turned on the radio that day... I just got nauseous. I can't believe it, I really got nauseous over it. I'll never forget that. It was like I was carsick, for the whole ride. What made me sick to my stomach was the reality... it was an awful thing. It was a terrible thing... That's what made me sick to my stomach. It's not like, "You repulse me, nothing like that, it was, oh my God, this is something to do with someone in the movement. We had some real emotions there. We were emotionally tied to this thing. We were wrapped up in it. (Jack, Skinhead Dogs, June 1, 2014).

As Jack explains, hearing about the bombing in Oklahoma City and experiencing the reality of this situation made feel him "nauseous" and "sick" to his stomach. He attributed his strong emotional response to the fact that Jack assumed "someone in the movement" was responsible for the attack and because he was "emotionally tied to this thing." In essence, Jack felt indirectly responsible for the mass murder.

Below, Drew discusses similar feelings he experienced after a skinhead in Denver brutally murdered an Asian exchange student.

I think I had mixed feelings. In one sense, cool, but deep down I think I was little disturbed by it, a lot disturbed by it... I think my conscious wasn't totally seared. It did bother me... I think that caused me to question what I was doing. (Drew, White Boy Society, July 6, 2013).

Both Jack and Drew indicated they experienced a physical or emotional reaction to violence committed by someone in the movement against out-group members. In fact, this experience led both of them to reconsider their involvement in VE. Although neither of them immediately disengaged after this reaction, the emotional stress and turmoil were part of a larger series of events and reinterpretations that led both individuals to disengage from VE.

Overall, the subculture of violence discussion illustrates several dimensions the of VE culture. As the narratives above reveal, an individuals' willingness to participate in violent activities strengthens commitment to both the extremist group and to other members. Violence also conveys a strong sense of membership in an exclusive group when members successfully undergo initiation rituals. Furthermore, as our data suggest, involvement in violence is often treated as a celebration, an act of collective enjoyment and thus is widely legitimized. Finally, although violence is widely accepted among VE, there does exist a threshold for violence. The brink of violence typically occurs when injury is subjected to defenseless and innocent individuals.

## **Report 2: Circumplex Model of Affect Analysis**

The study of violent extremism (VE) has grown substantially in recent years, especially since 9/11 and the current wave of violent jihadi extremist attacks (Hoffman 2006). Earlier studies of terrorism attempted to develop psychological profiles in order to determine if certain personality structures or other psychological factors could explain why some people engage in this type of violence (Crenshaw, 1983; Ferracuti and Bruno, 1981; Hubbard, 1971). As these studies fell out of favor and few consistent findings could be found to support any specific personality types, research in this area moved in the direction of small group dynamics, organizational characteristics, and macro-level factors (Victoroff, 2005). One area that may provide important contributions to improving the understanding of VE is the research on risk factors related to criminal and delinquent offending. To this point, few studies of VE have employed a risk factor approach informed by developmental and/or life-course criminology.

The risk factor approach considers how individual, family, peer, school, and community factors push or pull a person towards or away from deviant behavior (Dahlberg, 1998; Hawkins et al., 1998; Howell, 2009; Lipsey and Derzon, 1998; Loeber and Farrington, 1998a; Morselli, Turcotte and Tenti, 2011; Pyrooz and Decker, 2011). In regards to engagement in criminal or delinquent behavior, push factors include adverse personal or environmental conditions that encourage or *push* an individual away

from conventional behavior and toward criminal behavior. Pull factors include features of a criminal group or criminal behavior that attract or *pull* an individual. Individual risk factors include histories of substance use, aggression, risk taking, and antisocial activities. Family-level risk factors include a variety of adverse conditions, such as antisocial parents, neglect, abuse, family conflict, poor parental supervision, or a family's low socioeconomic status. Peer factors include associating with friends who engage in delinquent or deviant behaviors while school factors include suspension or expulsion and low academic achievement. Community risk factors include residing in disorganized or high-crime neighborhoods and neighborhoods with a substantial gang presence. The interaction of risk factors, which Coie and colleagues (1993) referred to as "cumulative risk," increases the likelihood of criminal or delinquent behavior. Research has found that children exposed to six or more risk factors are ten times more likely to engage in deviant behavior than children exposed to a single risk factor (Herrenkohl et al., 2000).

Protective factors, on the other hand, minimize the likelihood a person will engage deviant behavior. These factors include positive social orientation, fear of sanctions, a warm, supportive relationship with parents, parental monitoring, commitment to school, and non-deviant friends (U.S. Surgeon General, 2001). Farrington and colleagues have done extensive research on both risk and protective factors (Coid and West, 2009; Farrington et al., 2006; Farrington and Welsh, 2007; Loeber et al., 1998), finding the most important factors include impulsiveness, school achievement, child-rearing methods, young mothers, child abuse, parental conflict, disrupted families, poverty, delinquent peers, and deprived neighborhoods.

**Risk Factors for Organized Violence.** Much attention has focused on how ideological factors influence extremist entry and radicalization, while less attention has been devoted to non-ideological risk factors that push individuals into violent extremism (McCauley, Clark and Moskalenko, 2011). Past research has found various pull factors that attract individuals towards VE, including a search for

excitement and thrill-seeking, the violent aspects of the group, the perception that it provides a substitute family, and the search for status and identity (Baron, 1997; Bjørge, 1997; Blazak, 2001; Blee, 2002; della Porta 1995; Kimmel, 2009; Sageman, 2004; Schafer, Mullins and Box, 2014; Simi and Futrell, 2010). Less attention has been given to non-ideological push factors influence the process of joining an extremist group and the onset of violent offending.

The study of street gangs has emphasized the role of risk factors on an individual's susceptibility to gang membership (Hawkins, Catalano and Miller, 1992; Hill et al., 1999; McGarrell et al., 2009; Papachristos, Mears and Fagan, 2007; Thornberry et al., 2003). The research has found the risk factors for gang involvement to be similar to risk factors for youth involvement in crime and delinquency (Esbensen et al., 2010; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Hill et al., 1999; Howell and Egley, 2005; Klein and Maxson, 2006; Loeber and Farrington, 1998a; Thornberry et al., 2003), including individual, social, and school-related risk factors. First, individual risk factors include reactivity, aggression, and impulsivity; and holding delinquent beliefs (Klein and Maxson, 2006). Second, gang membership is also preceded by adverse family and social conditions: belonging to families characterized by substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse and neglect, and poor parental supervision; associating with delinquent peers and being committed to delinquent peers; and experiencing negative life events, including school suspension (Fleisher, 2000; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Klein and Maxson, 2006; Miller, 2001; Moore, 1991; Thompson and Braaten-Antrim, 1998).

**Findings: Pre-Entry Risk Factors.** Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for pre-entry risk factors. Half the participants experienced or witnessed some form of violence, abuse, or neglect, including 3 females and 7 males. Specifically, 7 subjects experienced childhood physical abuse, 2 experienced emotional abuse, 4 experienced sexual abuse, and 6 experienced neglect.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Entry Risk Factors*

<b>Risk Factors</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>% of participants</b>
Witness Neighborhood Violence	3	15
Childhood Physical Abuse	7	35
Childhood Emotional Abuse	2	10
Childhood Sexual Abuse	4	20
Witness Domestic Violence	5	25
Parental Incarceration	4	20
Childhood Neglect	6	30
Parental Substance Abuse	9	45
Parental Racism	10	50
Parental Divorce	16	80

The 2 participants who experienced emotional abuse also experienced physical abuse, and 5 of the children who reported physical abuse also reported childhood neglect. Three subjects witnessed neighborhood violence and 5 witnessed domestic violence. Of the 5 participants who witnessed domestic violence, 4 were also physically abused by one or both parents. In the examples below, subjects reflect on specific experiences with abuse and family violence. The first case, Adam, a former member of the neo-Nazi group the Nationalist Coalition recalls some of his earliest memories related to family-level risk factors:

Both my parents were alcoholics. When tempers get flared they would hit each other, hit me, all that kind of stuff. I know now it was all pretty much due to the substance abuse...Not so much my mom. My mom would protect me. She still was kind of just old school, so she would discipline me by hitting me and stuff. It was never out of anger, it was always disciplinary reasons...Yeah, my dad would hit me when he was mad or if I did something to make him mad. I remember some of my earliest memories; I remember my dad being arrested and whatnot by the police for hitting my mom and knocking her teeth out, things like that...One of the ones that sticks out to me is my dad got mad at me and threw me off the roof, the back roof. It was a lower one; still, he threw me off ...I think I knocked something over and he got pissed off with me and picked me up and threw me. (September 16, 2013).

The second example involves Jacqueline, a former member of the Aryan Terror Brigade. She reflects on how early childhood neglect led to her engagement with substance abuse and delinquent behavior. These behaviors led her to a group of other “delinquents” who came to accept her, and, together, these individuals joined a violent skinhead group. Prior to her entry, Jacqueline was expelled

from school, yet her parents were inattentive to her problems at school and the peers she was spending time with.

I'll start with meeting Kyle. I first met Kyle, who later beat to death a homeless person when I was about 13. We hung out in the same music drug scene and a lot of people probably wonder at 13 why, like what would I be doing hanging out with anybody. The situation had a lot to do with how I was raised, I had parents too who didn't really care about my whereabouts, living with them was like I didn't even exist. For me there was no, they never taught me anything like right from wrong or told me not to do anything. There was none of that...So I was never taught right from wrong. Good behavior was never encouraged, and bad behavior was never discouraged. There was no hugs when you were hurt and none when you were good. I had extremely low self-esteem and felt worthless from never having heard anything positive about myself from my parents, my whole life. I started using drugs early towards the end of the sixth grade, it started with marijuana and drinking. It brought me acceptance and friends, and I also felt better about myself when I was high. By the middle of seventh grade I had been completely expelled from school. I went from being in the talented and gifted program, which I am sure you know, to being expelled. That was with no notice to anybody, nobody...How did this kid go from that without anybody reaching out to them and trying to help them. (April 5, 2014).

The next example, Richard, is a bit different from Jacqueline. Whereas Jacqueline's parents did not notice their daughter's troubles, Richard's, on the other hand, would punish him for poor academic achievement. In the following excerpt, Richard reflects on his father's alcoholism and violent outbursts as they relate to his education.

But growing up as a kid, my dad was an alcoholic. He was very strict. If he found out you were doing anything, below a C in grades, if you were doing anything to cause hell, he'd pretty well...That was the one thing that he was about. He was not about the timeouts and let's talk to a kid and see what the real problem is. No, we'll put a whooping to him and see where it goes from there...Abuse. He'd come inside the house and he'd put your head through the wall. If he found out you did something, he was pretty bad. So I grew up with that. (September 21, 2013).

Like Richard briefly mentions in the above excerpt, parental substance abuse added to household dysfunction and instability for 9 subjects. All 4 female subjects and 5 of the 16 male subjects reported parental substance abuse.

Other subjects reflect on family environments consumed by violence. Abby's experience with abuse was connected to an unstable home and unreliable safety network. Below, Abby further reflects on

how her father kicked her and her sister and mom out of the house after a violent altercation, with nowhere to go.

My father went into more of a rage, and he picked up the phone yelling something. I faintly remember what he said. He slammed it down and he physically grabbed my mom, took her into the bedroom and just kept slamming her on the bed every time she tried to get up. The way the apartment was, we could see everything, my brother, my sister and I. We were crying hysterically. They were screaming at each other. My mom's trying to get away. He finally let her up and screamed and told her to get the fuck out and take her daughters with her, and of course she had nowhere to take us... To make a long story short, I have toxic amounts of organized religion just crammed down my throat, and both of my parents were prejudice...I didn't have a good relationship with him [my dad] at all. The things I knew about my father was that he was a drunk, that he was a racist, that he loved football and he liked to race cars and that was about the extent of the knowledge I had about my dad... (August 1, 2013).

Abby's narrative includes themes of family violence, racism, and substance abuse. She is one of 10 subjects who reported parental racism and, of those 10 subjects, one of 6 subjects who also reported parental substance abuse. Abby views her father's racism and alcoholism as contributing factors to her involvement in white supremacy.

Sixteen participants reported having divorced parents; of these 4 reported one or both parents incarcerated at some point prior to their extremist entry. In the first example of single-parent households and negative outcomes, Stacy reflected on how her mother "never got over" her father's departure from the family. Her mother's substance abuse, which was exacerbated after the father left, impeded her ability to care for Stacy and Stacy's brother.

That's kind of when I remember my mom slipping and kind of...In fact, I was thinking that this morning. I remember we really couldn't get her to wake up one morning. To this day, I don't know if she'd been drinking the night before or what. I remember my brother and I just shaking her and trying to get her...She had put a tea pot on and she was...She fell asleep. It just was like, by the time we got her awake, the whole thing had burned all the way through the bottom of the tea pot...We were just two little kids jumping on top of her...I would have been somewhere between five and six, because that's probably one of the first memories I have after we moved back to Tucson. Before that she took pretty good care of us. Once she moved away from him, she got kind of a let go and started going out...After she left [Stacy's father], it [drinking] started interfering with her

caring for us. I think some of her problems had to do with being angry. She never got over being angry at my dad. (November 27, 2014).

All but two male participants reported dysfunctional behavior (hostility, drug use) prior to their entrée to a violent extremist group. In the following excerpt, Jeremy reflects on how drug abuse and “shady characters” affected his life. Prior to this dysfunctional behavior, Jeremy wanted to be a police officer and was dedicated to his coursework; however, he became enchanted by the “tough guy” and “shady character” mentality.

Basically what ended up happening was I was going to school and out in high school in Virginia Beach. Hanging out with guys out there, the beach, started smoking weed and drinking. I let all my aspirations basically just go to shit because I liked to drink. Some of the guys out there that I looked up to were tough guys, covered with tattoos and been in jail. They’re just shady characters, drug addicts and shit like that. Whenever anybody in the area would say their name it was like, “Oh, well jeeze. You gotta watch out for that guy,” or, “Whoa, that guy’s this.” The whole thing intrigued me. I was like, “Wow, I kinda wanna be like that too.” (November 9, 2013).

**Pre-entry ideological variables and pathways to engagement.** Only a small portion of subjects can be described as embracing white supremacy ideology prior to their entrance to a violent extremist group. Table 2 presents descriptive data for pre-ideological variables. Four participants did not believe in the ideology *at all* while 2 participants were *completely* radicalized prior to involvement. The remaining 14 participants were partially radicalized prior to entry. Each of the female participants reported moderate to little radicalization, with none being fully radicalized prior to their identification with an extremist group. Males ranged from no radicalization to completely radicalized prior to entry. Thirteen subjects reported active engagement in white supremacist activities, and seven reported no active engagement. Seven of the 13 active subjects reported zero to low levels of radicalization. Correlations show that level of radicalization is significantly related to both participation in movement activities ( $r = .79$   $p < .05$ ) and dysfunctional behaviors ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .05$ ) prior to their turning point event. In other words, greater radicalization prior to entry was positively associated with increased participation in movement activities (e.g., attending concerts) and increased dysfunctional behaviors (e.g., fighting, drug



use). Six subjects who reported low levels of radicalization also reported low involvement in movement activities, while 5 subjects who reported moderate to high involvement in movement activities also reported high levels of radicalization.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Entry Ideological Factors*

<b>Ideological Factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>	<b>Range</b>
Level of Radicalization	2.35	1.18	2	1.06	3.41	1-5
Level of Engagement	0.65	0.49	1	-0.63	1.4	0-1
Involvement in Movement Activities	2.95	1.32	3	-0.19	1.9	1-5
Social Proximity to Non-Members	2.85	1.57	3	-0.08	1.45	1-5
Religiosity	2.55	1.5	2.5	0.24	1.53	1-5
Dysfunctional Behaviors	0.9	0.31	1	-2.67	8.11	0-1

In the examples below, subjects reflect on different pathways to radicalization. In some cases, subjects described a slow, gradual process of radicalization consistent with a number of previous studies (della Porta, 1995; Horgan, 2014; McCormick, 2003). More specifically, individuals gradually exposed themselves to extremist literature or social occasions where extremism was present and provided opportunities to learn the culture of extremism. In certain cases, subjects describe the selective or partial nature of the indoctrination process whereby individuals may identify with some aspects of the ideology but not embrace it entirely. At the same time, other subjects reported entirely embracing the ideology prior to their turning point event.

First, Ben, a former member of the United Klans of America, explained how he reached out to a local white supremacy group in response to racially motivated threats by the Black Panthers. Although he reached out, he did not radicalize until later.

I started thinking a lot about it...thinking about my past, and the things that have happened. I heard one day that Louis, from Louisiana, was bringing his Black Panthers to Ruston. I got really upset about that. He was talking about, they was going to start killing white people, and burning Ruston down. That’s where I lived, so I reached out for some help and support, and I got it. Thank goodness, the ones who reached out through the Internet was the Aryan Nations of the Ku Klux Klan...I typed in “Louisiana KKK” and about eight, nine sites came up when I was searching. I saw Aryan Nations of the Ku Klux Klan, and it looked a lot better than the other Knights. I met with them, way back in the woods. I remember it like it was yesterday. I started learning some things

that I hadn't been exposed to before. They didn't tell me any lies, that particular group...again, they didn't tell me all the truth...Still, I didn't hate anyone. It wasn't until I got affiliated with the United Klans of America...I started looking at the crime rate, and listening to what they had to say. (February 9, 2014).

Education and mentoring are important components in the pathway to violent extremism.

Thirteen subjects educated themselves about the movement, 17 reported having a mentoring relationship with an active member, and 5 reported educating others about the movement. Of the 20 participants, 11 reported both self-education and a mentoring relationship with an active member prior to entry. Abby was one of 3 female participants who had an extremist mentor: "When I started hanging out with them, like this is it going in? It was like another crash course. There were a couple of female skinheads that very early on, 'This is how you dress. This is how we roll our pants and how we shave our heads.'"

Stanley, one of 14 male subjects who had a mentoring relationship with an active member, met the mentor through a chance encounter with a stranger on a city bus. In the excerpt below, he reflects on the first time he met his long-term mentor and how his mentor offered insight and information that Stanley otherwise was unaware of.

I was on the bus and some guy was just like, "Hey, you're a skinhead." I was like, "Yeah." He's like, "Oh, I know a skinhead. Here's his number." I called the guy out and I'm like, "Hey, Dude. I'm a skinhead, I don't know anyone. I was just curious if you wanted to hang out and have a beer." He was like, "Sure. Where will I meet you?" I'm like, "Midland Hammerskins." Looking back I'm just like I can only imagine what this sounded like to this guy. He comes. He picks me up and just like he grabs up in the truck with the big old fire flags and these colors don't run. He's got a fucking ACAB on the back of his bag with fucking swastikas as dots and he fucking gets out of his truck. He's like 6'3 and he's just like, "You Stanley?" I'm like, "Yeah." He's like, "Get in." Looking back I was like I don't know what the fuck I was doing. We had a couple beers. We just talked. It was just like he asked me why I wanted to become a skinhead. He's like, "It's a hard life." Told me a little bit about the gang things like, "Well we don't just go out and jump black because they're black." I was like, "Okay." Which kind of at that time kind of made no sense to me because I was still kind of in the media type mind frame but yeah, he pretty much was like, "Dude, there's a lot of good black people." (July 7, 2014).

Despite this mentoring, several years later Stanley was convicted of a federal hate crime and sentenced to several years in prison.

In the next excerpt, Blake describes a slow progression to radicalization that involves both education and networking.

Like I said, they weren't pussying out, they were fighting back. But I failed to see the other people fighting back against them. I just glamorized their actions. I started hanging out with them and the more you get into it, I was never really a big Christian, I was basically left to go decide my own religion. My father never pushed me on religion. I started going just to hang out. "Hey, man, read this." You start reading the war papers. You start reading Mein Kampf, shit like that. Then you start getting a little of the pastor, I don't know if you heard of Paul...Yeah, when I was up in Dallas we drove down there. Jeremy, that dude. You'd start listening to these tapes. Jack would get them. I think Paul was actually the one getting them and distributing them. Putting them out...You'd see them fighting, you'd be at a show and all of a sudden boom, boom there's a cross-burning. Crazy shit out of nowhere. Have our fights. I just started hanging out, started learning the talk and learning the style. Went through some shit. Walking to Dallas. Playing the part. Now I'm a skinhead. (July 27, 2014).

Other subjects were primed to join a violent extremist group, either through personal opinion or family influence. In the following excerpt, Sebastian reflects on how literature had a significant impact on his pathway to violent extremism; and, as a youth, he always had sympathy towards Nazi Germany, which he views as a contributing factor to his identification with the violent extremist group the National Socialist Movement.

In the beginning [literature was] important, very important. I was reading stuff about the Holocaust and I was really into World War II history. When I read that maybe some of the facts were off, I got really into that. I read a couple serious books like Hitler: Born at Versailles, which is like a book. I read some serious stuff. Then when I went to Temple, they had a pretty open library and I could find like almost Muslim or Arabic literature that was anti-Semitic, because of Israel, and I was exposed to some of that. I really dove into the library and all that stuff... [When asked about sympathy towards Nazi Germany] Totally. I wore the uniform. I think they had the coolest uniforms. I loved the mythology. I still do. Dude, if you look back at their fucking parades and stuff. The big Nordic Aryan fucking floats, and the mythology's awesome. The uniforms were bad ass. I definitely did have...It's funny. My grandfather's German. Fought in World War 2 on the American side. He'd been here as a kid, I think. He was born in Germany. Came here. Grew up in Berlin, Germany and killed a bunch of Germans. I always didn't feel like that was right. That gave me a bad taste in my mouth that my grandpa...He had a stroke, so I couldn't talk to him. He couldn't speak. I

could never asked him questions about it. If he could speak he might have been able to sway me earlier in his direction. Because he couldn't speak I was always kind of like mad at him for killing Germans. You know what I mean? I don't know. I definitely had sympathy for Nazi Germany and no sympathy for...When I was younger I don't think I had empathy at all. I didn't give a fuck. If someone else was in pain, it didn't bother me. I don't know why. Now when I see someone else in pain, it bothers me a lot. You know what I mean? But when I was a kid and when they would tell the stories about Jews, I wouldn't even think...They were making it up. Liars. You know what I mean? Or they got what they deserved almost. That sounds terrible to say out loud, but I really felt like that...Like they were the cause of Germany being in such a shit after World War 1. They had made some bad treaties, and the Jews were taking advantage. It's their fault that the Germans were in the spot they were in. The Germans should have dumped them. I really believed that. (May 26, 2014).

Prior to entry, 13 subjects reported having non-white friends or intimate partners, and 7 reported no social proximity to non-whites. Of the 13 subjects who reported having non-white friends, 2 are female and 11 are male. Additionally, 1 subject fervently believed in the ideology, 4 did not believe in the ideology at all, and eight subjects reported belief in some parts of the ideology. In the examples below, subjects reflect on friendships and mentoring relationships with non-whites. In the first case, Ben reflects on his African-American football coach, a man he deemed highly influential in his life.

I never saw anybody mistreated at school. I had a black football coach. He took me fishing. He wanted to take me fishing, and my granddaddy was so happy that the coach was taking me fishing, until he found out he was a black man; then he wouldn't let me go. His son is now a professional football player...He really was an influence on my life. I'm thinking that the incident with those little girls, and the way that Coach Casey treated me, was one of the reasons I never really reached the level of hate. I recognized that I was beginning to learn how to hate, and woke up and got out of the groups. (February 9, 2014).

Ben continued having relationships with non-whites even after he started to identify with the United Klans of America. In the following excerpt, he reflects on a relationship with his Jewish best friend.

My best friend was a Jew, but I didn't tell nobody. He ended up moving out of the office. We had an office together, and I got so involved in it; he knew it. He told me, "Man, I can't sit in the same office with you. You're a different person." He moved out of the office. (February 9, 2014).

In the next case, Stanley, who also had black and Jewish friends prior to becoming fully indoctrinated and involved in racial extremism, reflects on balancing his non-Aryan friends with his own loyalty to the white race.

Though it [American History X] clicked I was like the first year I was claiming skin. I'm not sure, I was still hanging out with my black friend and my Jewish friend and all I just do is more of like trying to save, build or whatever you want to label it, promote my own people without tearing other people down but then you got these people telling you like, Nazis even telling you. You got Jessie Jacksons and these SHARPs and these fucking dudes just keep poking the fire. It's like they want it. (July 7, 2014).

Consistent with previous research (Simi and Futrell, 2010), our subjects participated in a variety of movement activities (e.g., white hate music concerts) that proved to be rich arenas for socialization and recruitment. A majority of our subjects reported involvement in movement activities: all but 6 subjects (n = 14) reported moderate to very high participation in activities that supported the white supremacist ideology. In the following case, Sebastian explains below how music played a significant role in his radicalization.

I was all about it [the music]. That was it. If it wasn't for the music, I don't think I ever would've got completely into it...Screwdriver, I don't know, their songs get in your head. I still fucking listen to it. The songs get in your head and those lyrics. I don't know. It's just weird. The music was definitely a major part for me. (May 26, 2014).

In the second case, Scott explains how he originally listened to anti-racist skinhead music. Eventually, however, white power bands started to appeal to him.

Yeah, and I was obviously too young to really get the point. My brother talked about knowing these guys, so that triggered that in me a little bit, I guess. I was never like...when I first got into it, because I'd been in the punk scene, I was militantly anti-racist. I was trying to get all the...going out here and all that. I was militantly about that. Obviously, then I started listening to...just out of curiosity, I listened to some white power bands and stuff. I would listen to that and I was like, "This music's way better than all the anti-racist stuff I was listening to." It emotionally appealed to me so much more. It was so passionate...Soon enough, the music started really appealing to me. I flipped to that pretty quick. (September 1, 2013).

**Pre-entry cognitive variables.** We also measured expressed cognitive variables in the subjects’ pre-entry narratives. Cognitive variables included anxiety, guilt and shame, persecution, and reflection (see Table 3 for descriptive statistics). Anxiety, which included expressions of fear, worry, and nervousness, was measured as the absence or rare occasion of anxiety, episodic anxiety, or frequent and generalized anxiety. Guilt and shame were measured concurrently and included expressions of regret or remorse. Of the 20 participants, during interviews with 6 participants we found expressions of “some” or “a lot” of anxiety prior to entry while 3 expressed “some” or “a lot” of guilt and shame. Thirteen subjects expressed zero guilt, shame, and anxiety.

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Pre-Entry Cognitive Factors*

Cognitive Factors	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Anxiety	1.75	1.37	1	1.59	4	1-5
Guilt and Shame	1.55	1.36	1	2.04	5.26	1-5
Persecution	2.15	1.42	1	0.63	1.8	1-5
Reflection	1.9	1.17	1.5	1.22	3.69	1-5
Educate Self about Movement	2.65	1.5	2.5	0.14	1.47	1-5
Mentoring Relationship with Active Member	2.8	1.28	3	0.38	2.23	1-5
Educate Others about Movement	1.6	1.27	1	2.05	5.76	1-5

About half of the 20 subjects, including 1 female and 8 males, reported distinct events grounded in persecution that instigated feelings of hate. Almost half of the subjects (n = 9) reported several instances of persecution and a general feeling of persecution for their general identity (as directly related to race, e.g., hateful remarks, stereotyping). One subject reflected on experiencing both guilt and shame and persecution.

In the examples below, subjects reflect on experiences of persecution in childhood and adulthood. In the first case, Luke reflects on how his non-white friend punched him during a barroom brawl, which led to feelings of betrayed, and subsequently altered his view on race relations.

Yeah, basic [Army]. Had a black guy; Anderson was his name. Best friends all the way through AIT and everything like that. [We were] out to the bar where...our other buddy [sic] there and fight

broke out. Black and white, he end up hitting. Like, “What are you doing, dude? We go through basic edge. We spend almost four months together and you hit me?” His excuse was if he didn’t hit me, all of his black buddies were going to beat him up. At that point I see the sweat of racism and that’s where more it started hitting me. You stabbed me in the freaking back over something that I don’t have a clue. There was nothing between you and I, then you swing on me because of your black buddies? (July 7, 2013).

In the second case, Sebastian reflects on negative interactions with non-whites as a child and as a teenager in his school and neighborhood.

I think my neighborhood experience as a kid definitely had an influence on me being vulnerable to being recruited into the movement. If some of the stuff that happened with the kids, fighting with them and Daniel stealing from us after we were so nice to him, I don’t think I would have been as open to people saying this is why those people are like that. You should be like this. I think that opened me up and then I was susceptible to it. I think if that stuff didn’t happen that I might have met those same people and when they tried to give me the literature I might have been like yeah, whatever... Grade school was cool. We only had maybe 4 black people in the school and I did have some problems with one of the girls. She used to try to get people from those projects come up and fight with me after school and stuff. Even in grade school I was already having some issues with that; fighting black people, black people coming from the projects into our neighborhood and stealing skateboards and stuff like that. At the same time though, I had a black friend. Remember Daniel? I had a black friend. The reason we stopped being friends, he ended up robbing our house. We used to take him with us on vacation, all kinds of places and he stole from us. I had problems with black people in the neighborhood, fighting kids after school, and then one of my friends ended up robbing our house. A lot of strikes going on. Then when I mentioned people that had pamphlets and Nazi propaganda, paperwork, stuff like that, I was right for it. (May 26, 2014).

In the third case, Scott reflects on how a negative interaction in his neighborhood enabled him to project blame on non-whites, and instill the need to “defend” his people.

I think what really laid the ground work was the first time that I got - because I remember the first time I got my bike stolen,...guys, they were calling me “pinche Cabrera” and all this other stuff, fucking...Spanish and stuff and I think that’s when it was like - it’s one of the first times it was - I think having those memories of that made it really easy for me...these guys are the trouble. I remember trying to explain to my Dad, when I stayed with this stuff, even though ...ourselves and stuff like that. Which is kind of bullshit, but it was like - it was years later that I actually really got into it from there. I think that - the fact that I was - had that happen, it also made it easier for me to get into it as a service...It was a slowish process for me from being just a skinhead, but not political to being...skinhead...Yeah, I looked back on that and was like, yeah these guys are a problem. This

is what's going on for white kids and we can't let this happen...Have to defend my people...  
(September 1, 2013).

In the next case, Richard, a former member of a skinhead group called Supreme White Alliance, did not negatively identify non-Whites until an episode in his adulthood in which he felt personally attacked by his African-American friends. He soon thereafter met members of a local extremist group and began learning about their ideologies. In the following excerpt, Richard reflects on how this event triggered a change in his perception of African Americans.

I'm sitting at the house one day, me and Julia, and I had a pizza that we had just made. I'm not talking about a big DiGiorno, I'm talking about those little Totino's pizzas. It wasn't for me. I had made it for Joanna because we didn't have a lot of food in the house and she's pregnant and I wanted her to be able to eat. Two of my friends were over...who were black. They asked me, "Hey man, can we get a piece of that pizza?" I'm like, "Look dude, you guys know that I'd feed the crap out of you. If we had steaks here, I'd give everybody shrimp, if I could afford it, but I can't do it. Julia's got to eat. She's pregnant." "Alright, alright." So they walk out the door. I come upstairs after I told them to go home, and the pizza's gone. The whole pizza. Not just a little piece, but the whole pizza's gone...I know it's crazy, it sounds like this is something that would trigger something this way, but the way I looked at it was, somebody stole my food. That's worse than stealing the TV out of my house, especially when they know it's feeding my wife who's got my baby in her stomach. So it started triggering some things. I was already stressed. I was already high tension. I came back from the war. I had high anxiety. Didn't know it at the time but I do now, I had PTSD. I was suffering from a lot of different stuff and I finally snapped. (September 21, 2013).

After this altercation, Richard's uncle introduced him to a local member of a violent extremist group. The ideology was immediately planted at this meeting.

My uncle pulled me in and introduced me to Randy and pulled a bunch of beer out that day. I remember he had a hidden keg. Randy always had a keg at the house. I'm pumping the keg and I'm, eh, this guy's got a keg, he's got all this nice stuff out, he's showing me his 9 mm pistols, he's showing me all the different stuff he's got. I thought, this is kind of cool, you know. He says, "Yeah, why don't you stay the night? We're going to have a party." ...So I stayed there for the night. All kinds of people showed up at his house. I mean, not normally the people that I'd always hang around with. There were some crazy people there, but all kinds of different people showing up and Randy's talking to a bunch of them. He starts giving the speech about year 2025, how whites are going to be the minority in America, and the world for that matter. Giving all these different facts out. You could see these kids listening to him. I know I was at the time. I was feeding into a bunch of it. I'm like, oh my gosh, this sounds like something I need to listen to. So I'm starting to



listen around, and he starts throwing all these females at me. Oh, Richard you can have this and you can have this. My uncle's like look Richard you can have this. So I'm not thinking anything of it meant they're recruiting me already. They've already started recruiting me. A couple of weeks later, Randy and them brought me back in. There were a couple of other guys who were there, and Randy says, "How would you like to be Vice President?" I'm going Vice President? I mean I just started in with you guys, how can I be a Vice President already? He goes, "LR, you can talk to the younger guys. You can recruit them. We'll put you right out front of the street. You'll have all this." (September 21, 2013).

Two subjects (1 male and 1 female) reported contemplating entry prior to their actual entry point. One subject expressed a brief or sporadic consideration prior to the turning point and one subject had consistently considered joining prior to the turning point. Half the subjects (n = 10) were reflective about joining the movement and how joining would impact their life status. In the first case, Stanley explains how he reflected on the current status of humanity and evaluated his constant victimization. He subsequently joined the Midland Hammerskins group.

It [American History X] clicked because I was just like I saw. It was like when I first was a kid growing up it sounds cliché to say. I could read every sign. Now that I'm a teenager it's like all you see is Spanish and like all these other stuff...It just showed to me that there are scumbags and I already knew by that time there were scumbags and everything. There's the people that actually are trying to make the better place and there's the one that just do it because they want violence, they want the fucking image. That made me really evaluate, it's like do I just want the image? I don't get jumped so many times or do I actually want to fight...It made a lot of sense to me. (July 7, 2014).

In the next case, Sebastian comments on how his family members and friends tried to persuade him away from extremist ideologies, but the way he reflected on "the reality of the truth" and the reinforcing messages of Aryan music made him "privy to a secret."

I guess I just felt like they were a lost cause. They were blind to the reality of the truth and that I was privy to a secret. That's how I think I just felt at the time. Somehow I had got behind the curtain and I knew the truth. I mean the music, it's like its own world. You get into it and everybody else was into it and it just seems fucking normal. You don't have black friends. You don't have Jewish friends. Everything seems copacetic and it's like you are privy to a secret that nobody knows about. I think that might be part of the attraction to it, too. (May 26, 2014).

**Findings: Turning point events.** In addition to pre-entry risk factors and correlates, we analyzed categories of turning points, and how meaning and emotion were expressed in turning point narratives. For the present study, a turning point event is the moment in which a subject identifies as an official member of a violent extremist group. Of the 20 participants, 1 female subject was unable to pinpoint the exact event in which she identified as a member; of the remaining 19 participants, 12 subjects had a “very distinct” event (attached to one event in time) and 7 subjects had a “somewhat distinct” event (focused on central theme, but not necessarily one particular point in time). The subjects expressed a variety of emotions in their turning point narratives, as well as justifications and rationalizations for joining a violent extremist group. In the following pages, we provide descriptive data on categories of turning point events, industrial-organizational variables (e.g., push and pull factors), cognitive variables, and circumplex affect variables.

**Categories of turning point events.** The categories include: disillusionment, exposure to diversity, incarceration, family, friend, religion, entertainment, work, intimate relationship, drugs, education, and violence (See Appendix B for description of each category). Table 4 presents descriptive data on categories for turning point events. Seven subjects expressed disillusionment and 8 expressed negative exposure to diversity during their recollection of the turning point event. Of these 15 subjects, 5 narratives included expressions of both disillusionment and negative exposure to diversity.

Table 4: Turning Point Categories

Turning Point	n	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Disillusionment	7	0.35	0.49	0	0.63	1.4	0-1
Exposure to Diversity	8	0.4	0.5	0	0.41	1.12	0-1
Incarceration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0-1
Family	4	0.2	0.41	0	0.17	3.25	0-1
Friends	15	0.75	0.44	1	-1.16	2.33	0-1
Religion	2	0.1	0.31	0	2.67	8.11	0-1
Entertainment	16	0.8	0.41	1	-1.5	3.25	0-1
Work	1	0.05	0.22	0	4.13	18.05	0-1
Intimate Relationship	4	0.2	0.41	0	1.5	3.25	0-1
Drugs	1	0.05	0.22	0	4.13	18.05	0-1
Education	13	0.65	0.49	1	-0.63	1.4	0-1
Violence	12	0.6	0.5	1	-0.41	1.17	0-1
Distinctiveness of TPE	n/a	4.4	0.99	5	-2.19	7.88	1-5

In the following case, Stanley reflects on these two categories as they pertain to perceived hypocrisy in which college students were free to march for a variety of reasons (e.g., black pride, gay pride), but a march for white pride was considered racist.

...it was when I went to college. It was like everywhere you went it was like gay pride, brown pride, black pride. Everyone had a pride and I was like, "I'm white pride, there's nothing wrong with that," and I'm at where you get the stigmata where you're caught you're a racist. You can't be white pride and not be racist supposedly. I was like, "Well that's kind of bullshit." Then I started to study shit and look into stuff. It was just kind of funny...Yeah, every other day they were celebrating some kind of like pride or power or something. I was like I mentioned to someone else like, "Dude, I'm white pride. We should celebrate white pride." They're like, "Oh that's just racist." I'm like, "Why?" They tried to explain too and I'm like, "That's bullshit." How does white pride have anything to do with racism? It doesn't. (July 7, 2014).

As noted earlier, entertainment (e.g., concerts) plays an important role in member recruitment and radicalization. For our sample, entertainment was expressed across 16 subjects' narratives. Relatedly, 14 of these 16 also talked about how friendships were significant in regards to entertainment and attending concerts, for example. Specifically, of the 20 participants, 16 talked about entertainment and 15 talked about friends playing a role in the turning point events. In total, 14 subjects expressed both entertainment and friends in their turning point event description. The examples below present

reflections on entertainment and friends in the subjects' turning point events. In the first case, Ricky describes how fighting alongside skinhead friends (prior to his entry) initiated a friendship with a current member, who soon became Ricky's roommate.

So anyway, while I was still petitioning [for the legalization of marijuana], so early '88, I remember the WAR skins came up and they were trying to recruit all the skinheads there, and then there was a big fight at one of the shows. And I was there with all of my buddies, but all of my skinhead buddies were there, too, and obviously they don't get along real well. But this fight broke out, and I remember throwing down and I was fighting alongside my skinhead friends against the WAR skins. Because like they were trying to push us around, telling us how we're supposed to be white. We're like fuck you, this is our town, you're not going to take over. So there was a fucking fight, and we got in a fight with them. And I fought with the skins, because that's what Dennis asked. Like, and I'm so like I ended up in the middle of the fight. And he's like, I remember him looking at me going, "Fighting with who? Which side were you on?" Like he, and he was honestly asking, because at this time, I'm not racist. Like I didn't identify that way, but these were my friends. These were my friends, I was in high school with them. You know, both the Johns' were friends of mine, you know. And Wesley was a good friend of mine and all this shit. So these, I guess it was like who are you going to back? You know, and so I backed them. So I go and I come back and they're like who are you going to back? And you know, not everybody I met on my hippie journey was, most of them were white, but not all of them were upstanding individuals, you know. So. But so I come back and we get our first apartment. (July 27, 2014).

Family played a role in 4 subjects' turning point. In the following case, Kevin explains how he followed his brother and their mutual friends into The Hated, a violent skinhead group.

That was just trying to fit in. I went from that to kind of a hippyish...but during that time is when my brother became a skinhead and got jumped in about a week before I did. He played a big part. My big brother. He didn't have to sway me very hard because I looked up to my big brother even though I was bigger than him but I was still kind of towing the line. His friends were my friends kind of deal. (July 7, 2014).

Intimate relationships played a role in the turning point for 3 of the 4 female participants, while only 1 male mentioned a significant other in his turning point. In the next case, Jacqueline discussed her meeting with Kyle, a leader in of the Aryan Terror Brigade, whom she later married.

By the age of 16 Kyle and I got together. At first our relationship is filled with drugs and alcohol and of course music. Kyle was a stage manager for a big music promoter that brought the town a lot of metal and punk rock bands, and Kyle was in a local metal band. By late 1987, early 1988

there were a lot of skinheads running around San Diego within our punk rock clique. Kyle had a lot of time in and out of jail, and during that time he befriended...in the Aryan Terror Brigade and got into their teaching so it was an easy transition for him from punk rocker to white supremacist. I was a follower, I went right along with him. (April 5, 2014).

In the next case, Stanley explains how he already identified as a skinhead, but had yet to join a group. He randomly met another skinhead and, together, they networked and grew into a violent extremist group, called the Midland Hammerskins.

At the time, who would become one of my best friends, Jack, he saw me. He was like, "Dude, another Skinhead." She's like, "Yeah." He's like, "Fucking move aside, woman. Let me talk to him." We hung out. We ended up living together...Just drinking and laughing, man. He was just a down to earth guy. We just hung out. We drank. He grew up in an all-black neighborhood too. We had that in common. That's pretty much how we both learned how to throw down...We hung out all the time. We were best friends, dude. We did everything together...and he introduced me to people. It was kind of a mutual thing. (July 7, 2014).

***Industrial-organization variables.*** The industrial-organizational variables included turnover intentions, push factors, and pull factors. Turnover intentions included expressed interests in an extremist group or interested in being involved. Push factors, or risk factors, included aspects of a subject's life and environment that make him or her want to leave that life (e.g., perceived lack of support, work dissatisfaction, or exposure to negative diversity). In contrast, pull factors included characteristics of the extremist group that could encourage membership (e.g., promise of a better life, greater awareness of other ways of thinking). Table 5 provides descriptive statistics for the I/O variables.

In the turning point narratives, 15 subjects expressed having interests about the involvement and a desire to join, 16 reported a variety of internal push factors (e.g., personal factors), and each subject reported a variety of external pull factors (e.g., current members, promise of a better life). Ten subjects reported 2 or more push *and* pull factors. In the following excerpts, we present different narratives in which subjects reflect on a variety of push and pull factors.

Table 5: Turning Point Event - Descriptive Statistics for Industrial-Organization Variables

I-O Variables	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	n	Mean (for those who did express)
Turnover Intentions	2.25	2.2	2	0.83	2.54	0-7	15	3
Push Factors	2.9	3.26	2	1.48	4.4	0-12	16	3.63
Pull Factors	6.35 <sup>9</sup>	3.88	5	0.62	2.43	1-14	20	6.35

In the first exemplar, Callie reflects on working with anti-war/peace movement organizations, but, overtime, she started to perceive other members as “disrespectful.” Their behaviors pushed her towards right-wing extremism which she saw as a more respectable alternative.

We’re still doing peace stuff, see? We were working with [a non-violent action campaign]. About that time, I was starting to get a bad taste of the [non-violent action campaign], because I noticed...That had a lot how I felt about the people that run the [non-violent action campaign]. I think how I felt about that catapulted me more to the right because when we’d go over to the [non-violent action campaign] house where they get all their fliers and all that stuff, and everybody there was jobless. They were sucking off the donations, and the [non-violent action campaign] was paying for their house, and we started thinking, “Is this the Communist party behind this? Are they paying for this?” We started finding Communist literature that was being sifted out in the middle of the...and then when we have the galleries of the test site, there’s the Communist party there, and we think, “Wait a minute. Are they backing the [non-violent action campaign]? What’s going on here?” I remember the last time we went to their house, they just seemed loose morally, and just like, “Wait a minute, this is not...This doesn’t feel comfortable.” These girls just took off their clothes, right in front of us, and jumped in the swimming pool and I thought that was disrespectful. It’s one thing about being open and stuff, but it was almost blatant, in our face, pushing it on us, and it was disrespectful, I thought. I was like, “I don’t think I like these people so much.” That would’ve been about ‘87. I was like, “I don’t like these people.” I started getting like...For example, they come over your house in their bare feet and they put their feet on your couch. I start noticing things that they would do that seemed disrespectful. (July 23, 2014).

In the next two examples, the participants identified violent extremists as providing an immediate family or group of friends (see also Sageman, 2004). First, Seth reflects on how pull factors like “cool

<sup>9</sup> Pull factors are higher because push factors such as childhood abuse, neighborhood violence and parental drug abuse may not have been included in the entry event. Coder were trained to isolate the event in which the participants joined VE. In addition to this, every instance of push and pull factors were coded, not just unique experiences. For instance, if white power music was mentioned broadly, then the participant discussed Skrewdriver, both events were coded as separate pull factors.

guys,” “guns,” and “monster trucks” spiked his interest in associating with a violent extremist group. At the same time, he expressed a lack of friends or attachment to a non-racist social group.

The other thing, too, man, is like OK, so you're a 22-year-old guy, a 20-year-old guy, a 19-year-old, whatever. I was kind of a loner in high school. So you meet these guys and when it comes to the gun thing, that's up there with like monster trucks to me. I mean, how cool is it? It's pretty dam cool to have a couple of AK-47s and like go out to the range and shoot them and stuff like that. Not that it gives you a sense of empowerment. It's fucking cool. (February 27, 2014).

Like Seth, Mark found an instant social clique that he otherwise did not have without members of the violent extremist group. For Mark, the extremist group also offered him protection. Mark was one of 10 male and 2 female participants (n = 12) who referred to violence while discussing his turning point event.

What I signed on originally was for the brotherhood and back in the original days, when the Confederate Hammerskins were formed and when we were all a localized gang, you can call someone and say, “Hey man, could you back me up if we fight?” and everything else. And it was never about “You know what, you beat your girlfriend...But it was never about that, it was always about taking care of your family. And that's what attracted me to the Confederate Hammerskins and skinheads the first time, because we were attracted to the family part of it. We were getting beat up, somebody would jump in...Bounty Hunter Bloods, they were on my back. But I knew if I turned around and saw them, my back was covered. It was always about having your back covered. It was always about family, not about selling out. Not about selling somebody to somebody for a pack of cigarettes...about family. And that's what attracted me. And originally, in the beginning, it was just about protecting ourselves. About going to a concert and making sure we're not all getting beat up, you know what I mean? And that was it. (August 19, 2013).

**Cognitive variables.** In this section, we summarize expressed cognition in each subject's turning point event. Table 6 provides descriptive statistics for the cognitive variables. The cognitive variables included future orientation, uncertainty, isolation, affiliation, insight, morality, and immorality. Seventeen subjects expressed insight (e.g., reflection, surprise, epiphany), 10 expressed morality (e.g., ethical, justice, virtue), and 15 expressed immorality (e.g., aggression, criminal, violence). Ten subjects also expressed future orientation (e.g., anticipation, optimism), 9 expressed isolation (e.g., feeling lost,

loneliness), 9 expressed affiliation (e.g., companionship, friendship), and 6 expressed uncertainty (ambiguity).

*Table 6: Turning Point Event - Descriptive Statistics for Cognitive Variables*

<b>Cognitive Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean (for those who did express)</b>
Future Oriented	0.85	1.09	0.5	1.05	2.8	0-3	10	1.7
Uncertainty	0.35	0.59	0	1.41	3.97	0-2	6	1.17
Isolation	0.7	9.23	0	1.04	2.99	0-3	9	1.56
Affiliation	5.65	2.8	5.5	0.56	3.01	1-12	9	5.65
Insight	3.1	2.67	3	0.94	3.38	0-10	17	3.65
Morality	0.8	1.01	0.5	1.05	2.99	0-3	10	1.6
Immorality	2.55	2.42	3	1.33	5.46	0-10	15	3.4

Correlations showed two significant relationships. First, subjects who expressed future orientation were significantly less likely to express social isolation (-0.47,  $p < .05$ ). Two of the 10 subjects who expressed future orientation also expressed “some” to “moderate” social isolation; on the other hand, seven of the 10 subjects who did not express future orientation also expressed social isolation. Second, subjects who expressed social isolation were significantly less likely to express insight (-0.52,  $p < .05$ ) and morality (-0.47,  $p < .05$ ). Ten subjects who reported insight did not report social isolation and 3 subjects reported both insight and morality.

In the following turning point narrative, Cooper expressed immorality (e.g., we’re fighting, “I split his head open”), future orientation (i.e., “I wanted to be more extreme”), isolation (i.e., “I didn’t know anybody, I didn’t know anything”), affiliation (e.g., “Toby was like, ‘nope he proved himself, he’s good,’” “gave me status with the guys”) and insight (i.e., “so there must be something there,” “So I was like, ‘Hey, if they can be in those places, they can be here’”).

Interviewee: I stayed at Mark’s house with this guy Lonnie who was one of our Eastern Hammerskins who was in the army. He didn’t trust anybody; he was crazy. I was some new guy that he didn’t know. He was, “who are you? Where are you from?” “Pittsburg.” I didn’t know anybody, I didn’t know anything, I don’t know what happened but he freaked out and we started fighting in the house. I was like... cause he was huge. We’re fighting and he’s on top of me and he’s



got his fingers in my eyes, “do you want to go blind?” There’s a weight bench there and I take up a dumbbell and just smashed him in the head with it. I split his head open and I was like, “fuck me I’m dead now.” Mark’s like, “fuck him, he’s out of here.” About me, Ted was like, “nope he proved himself he’s good.” I didn’t really understand what was going on. After that nobody fucked with me they were like, “he’s good.”...

Interviewer: When did you first become aware of Skinheads?

Interviewee: Probably from the ADL, before 1990. It talked about those guys from Oklahoma and Dallas all getting arrested for whatever Federal crimes they had committed...government hated them a lot, because they were really making an example out of them, so there must be something there. They had a cool symbol, and it was by Skinheads for Skinheads. They seemed to be the most unorganized, kind of had their shit together, and based on what I knew...I had heard about CASH, the Chicago movement. There were a lot of groups like that, but they were only in their city. What am I going to do, move to Chicago? That’s not possible. Eastern Hammerskins weren’t limited to a geographic area. There were...in Tennessee, Georgia, wherever. So I was like, “Hey, if they can be in those places, they can be here.”

Interviewer: Do you remember when you first thought you wanted to be one?

Interviewee: Probably whenever I read that in 1990...I think I remember identifying with it...I wanted to be more extreme. Hammerskin even sounds tough. Everything about them is cool...Because was a bad motherfucker. Honestly the only thing that...There are two things that get you respect as a Skinhead; you’re a bad ass, or you’re smarter than everybody else or some combination of that. Steve could...He would fuck somebody up. He was a bad dude. For whatever reason he liked me and that gave me status with guys that he liked because they were like, “Steve likes him.” It was the same thing with Ted from Ohio. Toby liked me. He saw something in me. The people would be like, “Oh, Toby said he’s all right.” Being around, it does account for something, but you’ve got to be able to back that shit up...My dad left when I was 15. By the time I was 16 I was a fucking skinhead. He couldn’t stop me he wasn’t there. (November 10, 2014).

***Moral-based variables.*** Subjects also expressed moral emotions, such as disappointment, embarrassment, pride, forgiveness, or respect. The affective moral emotions were organized into two categories: self-focused or other-focused. Table 7 provides descriptive statistics for the self- and other-focused moral emotion variables. In total, 13 subjects expressed self-focus moral emotions, and 16 subjects expressed other-focused moral emotions; 11 subjects expressed both self- and other-focused

moral emotions. The 11 subjects who expressed both self- and other-focused moral emotions are included along with subjects who expressed self-focus and other-focused moral emotions.

Self-focused moral emotions include quotes such as, “I felt like I was fighting this super-important war and battle and stuff...It made me feel so important, like I was...I felt like such a tough guy, too” (Scott, 9/1/13); “They accepted me as one of them because I’d throw down with them during the WAR scenario and I knew everybody. At this point, I was accepted, long hair or not, as were a lot of the punkers...I got in the pit and I represented” (Ricky, 7/27/14). Other-focused emotions include quotes such as, “They were all very family-oriented, very respectable...while everyone else can be brown pride, black pride, gay pride...That’s when I saw all the hypocrisy and the shit just pissed me off” (Stanley, 7/7/14); “They [United Klans of America] didn’t tell me any lies...that particular group...again, they didn’t tell me all the truth” (Ben, 2/9/14).

*Table 7: Turning Point Event - Descriptive Statistics for Morality Variables*

<b>Morality Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean (for those who did express)</b>
Self-focused	2.1	2.1	2	0.64	2.15	0-6	13	3.23
Other-focused	2.1	2.1	1	1.05	2.96	0-7	16	2.65

**Circumplex affect variables.** Last, we analyzed emotion using a circumplex model of affect (Posner, Russell, and Peterson, 2005). Because the narratives were constructed with emotions like hatred, anger, and frustration, the circumplex model of affect offered us a means to understand the complexities of each subject’s behavioral, cognitive, and affective underpinnings in their turning point events. The circumplex model of affect also allows us to illustrate whether the turning point events are remembered as negative and/or positive.

Table 8 provides descriptive statistics for each variable. The most common expressed themes include pleasant activation (e.g., Blake, 7/27/14: “I learned their doctrine, the way they can recruit. I got into that.”), activation (e.g., Scott, 9/1/13: “The music started really appealing to me...It made me feel so

important, I felt like such a tough guy.”), activated pleasure (e.g., Abby, 8/1/13: “I was still like, wow, this is great...It was also a feeling of I can actually belong...I thought, they don’t have to listen to anybody. They don’t have rules and these family things they have to do. They do what they want...I felt great.”), pleasure (e.g., Adam, 9/6/13: “I guess for the first time I really felt accepted...They like me.”), and activated displeasure (e.g., Ricky, 7/27/14: “And then I started getting, well, this is what the media does. I started believing that fucking line of bullshit...I’m like no, we kicked those fuckers (WAR Skins) out of here, you know, they didn’t do fucking shit...And it just made me further enraged against it all.”).

*Table 8: Turning Point Event - Descriptive Statistics for Circumplex Affect Variables*

	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	n	Mean (for those who did express)
Pleasure	0.5	0.89	0	1.62	4.47	0-3	6	1.67
Activated Pleasure	0.75	1.21	0	2.33	8.69	0-5	9	1.67
Pleasant Activation	2	2.73	1	2.11	7.25	0-11	13	3.08
Activation	1.35	1.81	0.5	1.31	3.72	0-6	10	2.7
Unpleasant Activation	0.35	0.75	0	1.71	4.07	0-2	4	1.75
Activated Displeasure	0.8	1.64	0	2.16	6.6	0-6	6	2.67
Displeasure	0.45	1.05	0	2.37	7.8	0-4	4	2.25
Deactivated Displeasure	0.15	0.49	0	3.17	11.83	0-2	2	1.5
Unpleasant Deactivation	0.5	1.23	0	2.72	9.37	0-5	4	2.5
Deactivation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pleasant Deactivation	0.1	0.31	0	2.67	8.11	0-1	2	1
Deactivated Pleasure	0.2	0.41	0	1.5	3.25	0-1	4	1

Correlations are provided in Table 9. Significant positive relationships included expressions of pleasure and activated displeasure ( $r = .58, p < .05$ ), expressions of pleasure and displeasure ( $r = .71, p <$

.05), expressions of pleasant activation and activation ( $r = .55, p < .05$ ), expressions of activated displeasure and displeasure ( $r = .64, p < .05$ ), and expressions of activated displeasure and pleasant deactivation ( $r = .46, p < .05$ ). Pleasure and activated pleasure were both expressed in 11 subjects' narratives. Pleasure and displeasure were both expressed in 7 narratives. Pleasant activation and activation were both expressed in 14 narratives. Activated displeasure and displeasure were both expressed in 8 narratives. Activated displeasure and pleasant activation were both expressed in 15 narratives.

*Table 9: Turning Point Event - Correlations with Circumplex Affect Variables*

<b>Circumplex Affect Variables</b>	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]
[1] Pleasure	1											
[2] Activated Pleasure	0.42	1										
[3] Pleasant Activation	0.24	0.06	1									
[4] Activation	-0.02	-0.05	0.55*	1								
[5] Unpleasant Activation	-0.12	0.39	-0.1	-0.21	1							
[6] Activated Displeasure	0.58*	0.21	-0.09	0.08	-0.24	1						
[7] Displeasure	0.71*	0.05	0.09	0.05	-0.21	0.64*	1					
[8] Deactivate Displeasure	0.18	-0.11	-0.16	-0.18	0.43	0.22	0.27	1				
[9] unpleasant deactivation	-0.14	-0.2	10.02	0.3	-0.19	-0.18	0.06	-0.13	1			
[10] Deactivation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
[11] Pleasant Deactivation	0.19	0.21	-0.06	0.31	-0.16	0.46*	0.18	-0.11	-0.13	-	1	
[12] Deactivated Pleasure	0.43	0.11	-0.09	-0.03	-0.24	0.38	0.27	0.11	-0.1	-	-0.17	1

*Note: \* significant at .05*

### Report 3: Childhood Trauma and Adolescent Misconduct as Precursors to VE

Routine or “normal” crime (Sudnow, 1965) and violent extremism (VE) are typically studied as distinct phenomena (Mullins, 2009).<sup>10</sup> Violent extremists are viewed as different from more generic violent offenders because of their adherence to a particular ideology (Neumann, 2013). Until recently, criminologists have rarely considered VE within the broader realm of criminal offenders due to this apparent fundamental difference while terrorism scholars routinely ignore the potential for utilizing a criminological perspective to study this type of violence (Mullins, 2009; Rice, 2009). Some scholars contend criminological theory is poorly suited to explain VE (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 2001; Silke, 2008) because this type of violence “reflect [s] commitment to a political cause” (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 2001, p. 94). Other scholars, however, have recently explored the applicability of using criminological theories to help explain VE vis-à-vis subcultural theory (Pisoiu, 2015), rational choice (Perry and Hasisi, 2015), displacement and diffusion (Hsu and Apel, 2015), social disorganization (Fahey and LaFree, 2015), routine activities (Parkin and Freilich, 2015), and deterrence (Argomaniz and Vidai-Diez, 2015). Despite advances, the use of criminology to study VE remains substantially underdeveloped.

Life-course criminology (LCC) has come to be viewed as encompassing a broad range of theoretical elements across the entire discipline. The influence and analytic power of LCC is so substantial that some observers have contended, “Life-course criminology is now criminology” (Cullen 2011, p. 310). While VE scholars have suggested the relevance of LCC (Freilich et al., 2014), few recent studies have relied on a LCC framework to understand VE (for an exception see, Hamm, 2013). Our research draws from several key versions of LCC (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph, 2002; Hagan and Foster, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 1993, 2004). These studies suggest, in part, that negative experiences produce cumulative disadvantages, which, in turn, leads to delinquent and criminal behavior.

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<sup>10</sup> Violent extremism is defined as violence committed by an individual and/or group in support of a specific political or religious ideology and this term is often used interchangeably with terrorism (Borum, 2011).

We use life-history interviews of former members of VE groups (n=44) and a modified grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; see also Berg, 2007; Glaser and Straus, 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1994) to examine how non-ideological factors such as childhood trauma and adolescent conduct problems influence the onset of VE. The effects of childhood trauma are mediated through a series of social-psychological processes that implicate emotion and cognition. In turn, negative emotion and certain styles of hostile cognition influence self and reflected appraisals that increase the likelihood of adolescent conduct problems (Dodge et al., 1990; Matsueda, 1992). The pathway toward VE we identify results from a process of “cascading effects” (Granovetter, 1978) where negative experiences spiral together over time, conditioning the person toward various types of antisocial behavior.<sup>11</sup> We focus on one pathway but this is certainly not the only pathway that leads to VE.

In general, the predominant view within the study of VE can be described as a group dynamics model (Post, 2005; Silke, 2008) which focuses largely on the role of extremist ideology and the influence of group characteristics. While several past studies of VE point to the importance of non-ideological motivations (Bjørger, 1997; Horgan, 2014; Kimmel, 2009; McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011; Sageman, 2004), few studies of VE have carefully documented non-ideological concerns in a systematic, empirical fashion beyond single case studies, inventory-style lists, or broad generalizations. In addition, much of the research that acknowledges non-ideological factors related to VE focuses on group-level processes that “pull” or attract individuals toward extremism as opposed to “push” or risk factors. Without the presence of adverse environmental conditions, however, pull factors present within extremist groups would likely be much less influential.

The overall goal of the present research is to understand how actors’ traumatic experiences, in particular, are part of a cumulative and age-graded set of environmental adversities. Investigating this

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<sup>11</sup> Violent extremism is not necessarily the end point of this escalation process. In another paper, Simi (2013) finds that even after disengagement from violent extremism, a large portion of the sample continue to persist in various forms of violent and nonviolent criminal offending.

pathway can further develop the scope of LCC and provide a new theoretical framework for understanding the development of VE.

**Violent Extremism, Crime and Pathways to Entry.** White supremacist groups are part of a rising specter of far-right extremism mobilizing across the United States and Europe (Simi and Futrell, 2010). The organizational characteristics of white supremacists varies substantially and include terror groups, street and prison gangs, religious cults, and hybrid organizations that represent some combination of these different organizational types (Freilich, Chermak, and Caspi, 2009; Noble, 1998; Simi, Smith, and Reeser, 2008). White supremacists have a long history in the United States that includes substantial involvement in criminal offending such as mass murder, physical assaults, home invasions, property crimes, identity theft, counterfeiting, drug distribution, fraud, acts of terrorism, and various forms of hate crime (Flynn and Gerhardt, 1995; Freilich and Chermak, 2009; Freilich, Chermak, and Caspi, 2009; Hamm, 2002; Ligon et al., 2013; Simi, 2010; Simi, Bubolz, and Hardman, 2013; Smith, 1994; Wright, 2007). Similar to street gangs, not all white supremacists are violent and, in some cases, individuals form non-violent political organizations. In general, however, white supremacists express strong support for violence as a tactical strategy (Dobratz and Waldner, 2012).

Previous studies have found that white supremacist groups attract individuals for reasons such as ideological alignment, protection against enemies or perceived threats, a search for excitement and thrill-seeking, the violent aspects of the group, the perception that it provides a substitute family, and the search for status and identity (Baron, 1997; Bjørge, 1997; Blazak, 2001; Blee, 2002; Kimmel, 2009; Schafer, Mullins, and Box, 2014; Simi and Futrell, 2010).

In this report, we contribute to the broader study of VE by examining the presence of childhood trauma and adolescent conduct problems in a sample of former white supremacists. We focus on subjects' in-depth descriptions of childhood trauma and adolescent conduct problems and how subjects'

narratives suggest these experiences influenced the onset of VE.<sup>12</sup> As Giordano and colleagues (2015, p. 9) remind us narratives “do not mirror precisely the real reason...” but rather address “how [offenders] talk about and understand [their own] behavior...” In areas of less developed research, life history interviews provide an effective method for identifying different pathways that may be otherwise “obscured by a focus on aggregate trends...” (Giordano et al., 2015, p. 9) which characterizes much of the extant literature on childhood trauma and conduct problems.

**Trauma, Conduct Problems and Violence.** The term trauma refers to events that “overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life” and “generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death” (Herman, 1992, p. 33; see also Haapasalo and Pokela, 1999). The effects of trauma include adverse psychological and physical consequences, such as anger, hostility, lowered self-esteem, anxiety, and depression (Neller et al., 2005; van der Kolk, 2005). The role of trauma in the onset of delinquent and criminal behavior is widely recognized in multiple fields of study including criminology (Widom, 2014). There is a substantial volume of criminological research that finds childhood trauma significantly increases the odds of long-term offending (Herrenkohl, Egolf, and Herrenkohl, 1997; Maxfield and Widom, 1996; Smith and Thornberry, 1995; Widom, 2014). Previous criminological studies that examine trauma typically rely on either secondary data or large-scale self-report survey designs (e.g., Finkelhor et al., 2013; Forde et al., 2012; Smith and Thornberry, 1995; Widom, Dumont, and Czaja, 2007). Further, much of the criminological research that examines trauma uses it to predict various outcomes or as a control variable (e.g., Baron, 2004; Eitle and Turner, 2002; Song, Singer, and Anglin, 1998). These studies provide important insights but are limited in their ability to shed light on the meanings embedded in offenders’ narratives related to childhood trauma and adolescent conduct problems, and, in turn, how offenders understand these relationships.

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<sup>12</sup> Blazak’s (2001) research on US racist skinheads focuses on “structural strains” such as declining employment and large-scale demographic change as the primary mechanisms motivating youth to join white supremacist groups whereas our model and empirical data point to more intermediate problems such as family dysfunction.



The study of street gangs is an area of research that has previously emphasized the importance of childhood trauma and the role of risk factors in terms of increasing individual susceptibility to gang membership (Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller, 1992; Hill et al., 1999; McGarrell et al., 2009; Papachristos, Mears, and Fagan, 2007; Thornberry et al. 2003). Research on the life histories of gang members has consistently discovered family conditions characterized by alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, sexual molestation and incest, neglect, and instability (Fleisher, 2000; Joe and Chesney-Lind, 1995; Miller, 2001; Moore, 1991; Thompson and Braaten-Antrim, 1998). Traumatic family conditions such as child maltreatment encourage some individuals to cope with these conditions by relying on the gang as a source of social support (Miller 2001; Moore 1991; Thompson and Braaten-Antrim, 1998). As we discuss below, our results closely approximate findings from the street gang literature suggesting substantial overlap between a segment of violent extremists and members of conventional, non-ideological street gangs.<sup>13</sup>

**Trauma and Life-Course Criminology.** Early Freudian efforts emphasized the importance of trauma in terms of explaining childhood maladjusted behavior (e.g., Aichhorn, 1925; Freud, 1938). Since that time, trauma has consistently remained a major point of focus within psychology and much has been written about the relationship between trauma and a variety of maladjusted behavior (e.g., Alisic et al., 2011). Within criminology, the role of trauma as it relates to the onset of delinquent and criminal activity is well documented (Fox et al., 2015). From multiple theoretical perspectives, there is strong reason to consider how trauma impacts developmental and life-course processes and trajectories that may increase the likelihood of delinquent and criminal offending. However, researchers are only beginning to

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<sup>13</sup> Recent studies find a strong relationship between childhood trauma and conduct disorders (Greenwald, 2002). We use the term conduct problems to differentiate those subjects who were involved in more persistent and serious offending as compared to subjects involved in more typical delinquent behavior. Conduct problems are defined as a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior that disregards the rights of others and violates age-appropriate cultural norms (American Psychological Association, 2013; Barry et al., 2013). When conduct problems constitute a pervasive pattern that meet clinical criteria, children or adolescents may be diagnosed with conduct disorder (CD) as indicated in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual-5 (Barry et al., 2013). Conduct problems can be differentiated from participation in delinquency as minor levels of delinquency are considered normative (Elliott, Huizinga, and Morse. 1986; Moffitt 1993/1997; Moffitt and Silva, 1988) whereas conduct problems suggest a more robust and potentially enduring pattern of behavior.

use the life-course framework to explore intersections between early childhood experiences including trauma and later stages of development (Cullen, 2011; Giordano, 2010). This trend is an important antidote to what Cullen (2011) describes as “adolescent-limited criminology” or the tendency to focus on adolescence at the exclusion of other phases of the life course (Cullen, 2011; see also Sampson, 2000).

Part of why trauma exerts long-term, indirect influence is tied to the emotional consequences of these experiences. Trauma is often a highly emotive experience resulting in anger and depression, two key emotion states linked to delinquency and criminality (Agnew, 1992; Agnew et al., 2002; Broidy, 2001; DeCoster and Heimer, 2001; Loeber and Keenan, 1994). Equally important to identifying the link between negative emotion states and delinquency is identifying the source of these negative emotions. As Giordano, Schroeder, and Cernkovich (2007, p. 1610) argued, “the family is likely to be an important site for the initial development of an angry repertoire and over time an angry self” (see also Patterson, 1982). The family is also the site where a child is at risk to experience trauma and victimization (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 2006; Widom, Dumont, and Czaja, 2007).

**Sequential Model of Violent Extremism.** The framework we present (see Appendix C) can be considered a stage model (Ebaugh, 1988); however, the stages do not necessarily unfold in a linear fashion nor are these stages completely distinct from each other (Altier, Thoroughgood, and Horgan, 2014). A variety of traditions informed the development of this model. First, we drew from earlier sequential models of delinquency (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955) where individuals respond to environmental stress with increasing despair and further maladjusted behavior creating “self-fulfilling prophecies” (Merton, 1948; see also Willis, 1977) that serve to exacerbate the accumulation of disadvantage. More recent work such as Agnew’s general strain theory (1992/1997) also emphasizes the sequential nature of the progression toward delinquent behavior and the larger social and psychological dimensions of this process, while Sampson and Laub’s (1993/2003) age-graded theory of crime emphasizes the accumulation of disadvantage over time leading to the onset of offending behavior.

We also rely on a long tradition of symbolic interactionist research that emphasizes understanding how social processes unfold over time and the importance of self-concept formation as the intersection between “agentic moves” (Giordano et al., 2002) and external forces shaping social experiences (Athens, 1992; Blumer, 1969; Cooley, 1902; Matsueda, 1992; Mead, 1938). Giordano and colleagues’ work (2002/2007), in particular, highlight the importance of emotion and cognition in terms of helping explain persistence and desistance of criminal offending.

Any single traumatic experience can be a type of adversity that may result in a variety of negative outcomes (Fox et al., 2015). As these experiences accumulate, children exposed to them become increasingly susceptible to developmental disruptions across multiple domains. Childhood trauma, the correspondent negative emotion and cognitive states produced by these events, and emerging adolescent conduct problems prior to violent extremism can be viewed as forms of priming events that, while not directly related to violent extremism, provide parallel experiences overlapping in content and form with violent extremism. Participation in violent extremism includes exposure to a wide range of “reactive emotions” (Jasper, 1998) such as hate, anger, and frustration (Simi and Futrell, 2010), all of which are consistent with subjects’ earlier negative emotion states linked to childhood trauma. Violent extremism also elicits “vitalizing emotions” (Taylor, 2000) that produce positive feelings such as pride and pleasure. Earlier experiences with trauma and conduct problems are cumulative and over time help transition the person from relative stability to instability, and thus the extremist group may be an attractive strategy to cope with these problems, in part, by providing positive feelings to counter-balance negative affect.

We do not propose that violent extremism results directly from trauma; rather, we view violent extremism through the lens of causal complexity (Ragin, 2002) where any outcome can be understood as resulting from varying combinations of conditions. Our model does not describe all individuals who become involved in extremism. In fact, based on the analysis we find the model fits slightly more than one-half of the subjects in the sample (n=27) with some variation of additional fit for the remaining

subjects. For example, in some cases a person who joined a violent white supremacist group may have reported a history of conduct problems during adolescence but did not report any childhood trauma. Alternatively, a person who reported both childhood trauma and adolescent conduct problems may have reported joining a violent white supremacist group simultaneously or prior to the emergence of conduct problems. We rely on the 27 cases that fit the model as specified in terms of the sequential dimensions to present the qualitative findings in the results section.

Although we rely on an age-graded sequential model to explain one pathway to violent extremism, we do not specify all of the dynamics related to the process of entry.<sup>14</sup> Thus our model is necessarily incomplete; however, we do address several important dimensions not explored in previous research. In the following sections, we present segments from the life history narratives to illustrate how traumatic experiences catalyze a sequential process of cumulative disadvantage that results in VE.<sup>15,16</sup> The trauma model includes three primary dimensions: 1) different types of childhood trauma experienced, 2) subsequent onset of conduct problems during adolescence, and 3) non-ideological motivations and circumstances leading to extremist participation. We organize the excerpts from various life histories

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<sup>14</sup> For example, we do not address how particular types of social ties and social spaces structure differential opportunities for access to extremist networks. In addition, our model does not include how family socialization such as exposure to racist and/or anti-Semitic attitudes may predispose a person toward eventual extremist participation by creating some type of latent ideological “recognition” (Hall, 1996) mobilized later in life when the person is introduced more formally to extremist networks.

<sup>15</sup> More than half of the subjects (59%) reported being the victim of either childhood sexual abuse and/or physical abuse, while 46% reported being neglected as a child.<sup>15</sup> The elevated rates of trauma experiences are comparable with previous studies of youth supervised in juvenile justice settings (see Hovee et al., 2014). Interview subjects also reported a range of other adverse environmental conditions to include: parental incarceration (29%); parental abandonment (31%); and family substance abuse (49%). Each of these factors represents different types of stressors that can potentially disrupt the normal development of a young person’s life (Murray, Farrington, and Sekol, 2012; Parke and Clarke-Stewart, 2003). We also examined a series of mental health related factors. Almost two-thirds (62%) of the interview subjects reported attempting suicide and/or seriously considering suicide while 57% of our sample reported experiencing mental health problems either preceding or during their extremist involvement. Finally, a majority of subjects reported a family history of mental health problems (59%). The data indicate a range of adjustment problems and high-risk behaviors among our subjects in our sample prior to VE. In terms of substance use, 72% of the subjects reported having problems with alcohol and/or illegal drugs. More specifically, 64% of the subjects reported experimenting with illegal drugs and/or alcohol prior to age 16. Early experimentation with alcohol and illegal drugs is typically an indication of a more general high-risk lifestyle and predicts a variety of unhealthy outcomes (Calvert, Bucholz, and Steger-May, 2010; Ellickson, Tucker, and Klein, 2003). In terms of educational experiences, 58% of subjects reported truancy, while 54% of the subjects reported academic failure (i.e., expulsion from school or dropping out). Problems with truancy and academic performance are one of the strongest predictors of delinquent and criminal behavior (Huizinga and Jakob-Chien, 1998; Savolainen et al., 2012). Like the elevated rates of child maltreatment, the above figures reflect levels of adjustment problems and high-risk behavior that far exceed typical rates of these behaviors found in the general population.

<sup>16</sup> The elevated rates of mental health problems found in our sample of former extremists is comparable to earlier findings in a sample of current white supremacists (Simi, 2008; Gruenewald, Chermak, and Freilich, 2013). Thus, we think it is unlikely that our findings solely reflect the fact that our sample consists of former extremists whose backgrounds may differ substantially from individuals who do not exit extremism. Future research should more fully address this question by incorporating a comparative sample of active and former extremists.

according to the different stages of the model. The narrative data is not meant as a formal test but rather to illustrate empirical and conceptual categories.

***Early experiences with trauma as environmental adversity.*** As indicated, a large portion of the sample reported experiencing some type of childhood trauma. In the examples below, subjects discuss specific childhood experiences with trauma. We draw attention to the emotional and cognitive impact previous studies have already identified. The first case, Kathy, involves a former member of the Aryan Nations who is now 47 years old. Kathy became active in extremist groups in late-adolescence and spent more than 20 years involved. During the interview she was asked to describe her early family life, and her response included a description of one particular incident of severe marital conflict that occurred between her parents when Kathy was 13.

“I remember my mom coming home late from work. We were like, ‘Where have you been?’ She’s like, ‘I’ve been in the hospital.’ She said that she met my dad at the bar with some other lady. She got in a fight with the lady and said that my dad held her down or something. He betrayed my mom pretty bad. What happened was that they drove off. The girl backed over my mom with the car and hit my mom with the car. My mom flipped and hit her head. She got in her car, tried to chase them but then passed out while she’d driving the car. She got a head injury. I was plotting to find that lady and go beat her up. From Friday to Monday when my dad didn’t come home the whole week, my mom was suicidal. I had to sleep in her bed with her to watch her. I was mad at her for doing that” (June 17, 2014).

Kathy explained this incident was indicative of a larger pattern of family conflict that characterized her childhood upbringing. Her chaotic family life included a suicidal parent, and the “role reversal” (Kenny and Donaldson, 1991) she experienced after becoming a custodial supervisor for her mother resulted in feelings of anger, resentment, and uncertainty. Kathy’s unstable home life preceded adolescent experimentation with drugs and alcohol, truancy, and teenage pregnancy. In turn, all of these adolescent problems preceded her eventual involvement in VE. Traumatic childhood events such as the one described above are formative and are an important part of a larger “chain of events” that may predispose a person toward delinquent and criminal trajectories (Leverentz, 2006). Clearly, experiencing an unstable family environment does not guarantee involvement in VE or any other criminality, but that

also does not mean that these early experiences are unimportant nor should they be ignored (Cullen, 2011).

The second example of childhood trauma involves Will, a former member of the National Alliance, now in his mid-40's, who described a particularly intense instance of child abuse.

“There was one point when I was, like, 5 years old and my mom hooked me up like a dog in the bathtub and made me eat dog food and then proceeded to beat me like a dog with a whip...Yeah, that happened regularly, but only when my dad wasn't home. As soon as my dad come home, he'd hear it from the neighbors, what had happened, then he'd beat her. Then, it start all over again...Once I figured that I could run away I was gone at least I tried but I got caught in some barbed wire. If it hadn't been for the barbed wire, I'd have been gone. We were living on a farm and I couldn't squeeze through the barbed wire, I got caught. Otherwise, I would have been gone.” (July 22, 2013).

Will's experience with this type of abuse coupled with neglect left him feeling vulnerable and powerless, two common consequences of trauma (Finkelhor and Browne, 1985). His narrative depicted an unsuccessful effort to leave his abusive home environment which he also explained reinforced feeling “trapped.” As his narrative unfolded, Will explained that by the age of 12 he found a sense of escape by hanging out at a local music venue that featured punk rock shows. At the music venue, Will reported he met much older members of a violent punk street gang who took Will “under their wing” and groomed him for membership. Eventually, Will transitioned from a punk street gang to a violent white supremacist group.

Next, Clint, who is now in his mid-40's, discussed the sexual abuse he experienced as a child. He reported the experience was the catalyst for his initial feelings of intense anger which ultimately motivated the development of a violent self-image.

“I had a pretty traumatic childhood for other reasons. When I was 10 the people behind us had an 18-year-old son. He was our babysitter for a while. I won't go into any details of that. That was kind of the root of my anger and hate. At that point, I was damaged, pissed off, hated the world” (June 10, 2013).

During the interview, Clint consistently expressed the idea that the initial seeds of his anger and hatred stemmed from his sexual abuse. He also explained that over time as his anger and hatred grew, he

became increasingly violent. In addition to the trauma of sexual abuse, Clint also discussed the domestic violence he witnessed among his parents prior to their divorce, which he viewed as a contributing factor to his own involvement in violence:

“They split up when I was nine. I have vivid memories of a couple of times, them fist-fighting in the hallway. There was a lot of physical stuff...I started fighting pretty young. That was a direct result of my dad’s aggression, and the [sexual] abuse” (June 10, 2013).

Clint’s understanding of how he became a violent extremist relies largely on how he sees his past experiences with sexual victimization and witnessing domestic violence. His narrative frames these experiences in terms of their emotional and cognitive consequences and influence generating a violent disposition.

***Conduct problems during adolescence.*** The second dimension of the sequence we discovered in the narratives involves conduct problems during adolescence. In the first case, Brent, a 45-year old former member of the American Front, describes an incident of “calculated retaliation” (Jacobs, 2004) and “ultra-violence” (Athens, 1992) that occurred during his teenage years.

I had this chick there that I liked and I was in love with. My buddy Chad had said something so she walked off with some other dude. There were some other punk rockers out there. She went off with some skinny dude that I didn't even know. I was depressed....Some big old 25-year-old dude. I'm like a 16-year-old kid. He fucking whipped my ass pretty good. He had, he was all, everything I hated. So we jump in the car. I'm sitting there, me and my buddy Chad. I'm thinking. I see this dude sitting there and so I just backed the vehicle and hit him. I pulled forward and backed up on him again. I got him good...

Brent also explained that during adolescence he began committing home invasions to steal money and/or drugs. Brent’s adolescent conduct problems proceeded from a childhood that involved trauma such as sexual abuse and finding his father’s dead body. Within a year of the vehicular assault, Brent became a member of the American Front.

In the next case, Brenda describes an early onset using alcohol and illegal drugs and then eventually dropping out of high school. Her conduct problems all preceded her involvement in extremism and became increasingly more severe over time.

I started drinking at 12.... It is hard to even remember. It's kind of a big blur. When I did go to school I was always severely hung over. At such a young age where all the drug use really blurred a lot of my memories. I did them so heavy and so much, I drank so much at that age...From high school I dropped out. That is when I was I think I was 15. (July 5, 2013).

Eventually this escalation process of substance use led to her entanglement in an abusive romantic relationship with a much older male leader of a local VE group. Brenda's involvement in VE ultimately culminated in her witnessing a brutal murder committed by members of her VE group. Both her VE and adolescent conduct problems were preceded by parental abandonment during her early childhood.

These examples highlight the importance of a sequential process where adolescent conduct problems precede extremist involvement. This finding underscores the prevalence and influence of individual-level risk factors in the life histories of violent extremists prior to group involvement. Rather than an "average person" who becomes influenced by the group dynamics that characterize violent extremism, our data suggest substantial risk factors were present prior to becoming involved in violent extremism. This finding does not diminish the importance of group dynamics or ideology, nor does it mean that all individuals who become extremists possess these same types of risk factors. In the next section, we present data regarding extremist groups as a general support system that attract individuals with specific non-ideological needs (e.g., shelter) and who are already involved in various types of criminality including violent offending.

***Non-ideological functions of extremist participation.*** Based on the analysis of our sample, we suggest the importance of ideology primarily follows rather than precedes entry (see also Blee, 2002). We propose because entry is part of a general social learning process individuals typically experience a learning curve that involves becoming increasingly familiar with different aspects of a specific extremist ideology (Mead, 1938; Sutherland, 1939).<sup>17</sup> For example, Clint reported that ideology did not prompt his initial entry into extremism:

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<sup>17</sup> See Giordano et al. (2015) for an interesting application of learning processes to desistance from intimate partner violence.



“It was a lot more about just being bad. Then I kind of developed, after being around it a lot, probably more after getting involved with the World Church of the Creator and starting to read that propaganda; then I started to become more attuned to it politically” (June 10, 2013).

Clint’s description emphasizes the point that while ideology is important, its primary relevance emerges following entry as opposed to preceding it. Other participants identified involvement in extremist groups to be the result of serendipitous events (see Copes, Hochstetler, and Cherbonneau, 2012; Jacobs, 2010), a desire to improve one’s reputation, to “be bad,” and to acquire shelter. Jeremy, a 42-year-old former member of Volksfront, spoke about how his involvement in various types of anti-social behavior eventually bled serendipitously into involvement in an extremist group.

“Steve got this big house and we lived there, and that is kind of where I first started running with like these guys who sold weed and they were like meth heads and shit like that...[I was] about 13 or 14. Then these guys [a racist skinhead group] okay, these guys were really violent. I mean they were known for doing crazy and fucking people up...Well this whole meth thing it was all like lower southeast Portland and you know as far as the skinhead shit we were thugs and so we just started running with them too because all of us were pretty much in the same circle...” (October 16, 2012).

Jeremy’s description highlights several important issues. First, the early age of exposure to older, more criminally experienced individuals provides an important source of influence in terms of social learning (Harding, 2009; Warr, 2002). The exposure to these older peers resembles mentoring relationships (Dishion, McCord and Poulin, 1999) where older individuals show younger individuals “the ropes.” Jeremy also characterized the extremist group he belonged to as a group of violent “thugs” with substance use problems who used the collective as an outlet for anger and frustration, which is also consistent with our focus on the importance of non-ideological factors in terms of becoming a violent extremist.

Other non-ideological functions of extremist participation include improving one’s reputation. For example, Greg told us:

“It wasn’t really the ideology at least not at first....A lot of it for me was just making a name for myself, that’s all I ever really wanted was just to make a name for myself. At some point in that area of time was when I just realized was what I wanted to do was basically end up getting into it

with somebody. Hopefully I'd end up dying, something like that. I just didn't care and I was just depressed. It was like if I die, I don't give a shit. That's why I got into so much trouble" (November 14, 2013).

Last, James describes how he found refuge from homelessness in an extremist group.

"Yeah after my parents died I didn't have anywhere to go and this kid who was already a skinhead let me live in his garage for the summer. When that happened I started meeting the guys who were in his crew and that's how I got started in the group" (January 9, 2015).

The circumstances surrounding his decision to join the extremist group underscores that a perceived lack of viable alternatives may strongly influence the decision-making process (Lofland and Stark, 1965).

James' choice to live in his friend's garage was driven, at least in part, by an instrumental need to find shelter (Hagan and McCarthy, 1997).

**Summary Case Description.** We conclude this section with a description of a single case in order to illustrate each aspect of the sequential model. David, a former white supremacist now 28, discussed his earliest memories from childhood (approximately 4 or 5 years of age) involving different aspects of domestic violence and child abuse.

"I can recall him [step-father] being like a buddy, even after he raped my mom, beat her. He came out and he put his hand on my head and rubbed my hair, kind of patted my head, like I remember the feeling, or something like that, and just being like, stuck. And feeling like don't touch me...Oh yeah, there's lots of memory after memory after memory about physical violence and stuff. Some of the things being kicked in the face, kicked in the ribs, held up against the wall by the throat, thrown down stairs, bounced off walls, on and on, right?" (April 15, 2012).

David's recollection illustrates the paralyzing capacity of trauma. David discussed how he felt "stuck" after his stepfather sexually assaulted his mother. Children who witness and experience "violent subjugation" (Athens, 1992) are likely to experience feelings of helplessness, anger, and frustration and begin to view the world as a cruel place where only the "strongest survive." In addition to witnessing violence and experiencing abuse, over time David's mother's mental health deteriorated which culminated in the incident described below when he was 11:

"[Later] she [his mother] had tried to kill my brothers and my sister and my cousin and all the pets in a sacrifice by lighting the house on fire as she danced around the fire outside naked to the point

where her legs were black with frostbite. So when the house is burning down, kids are almost going to die, my uncle comes and phones the police..." (April 15, 2012).

David's intensive and long-term experience with trauma, however, did not automatically result in his entry into violent extremism. Instead, David's chaotic home life eventually led to his placement in a treatment facility after he attempted suicide at the age of 14. Following his time in the mental health facility, David became homeless and was living on the streets. During his time living on the streets, David was involved in regular "street fighting" but his violence was not motivated by any particular ideology. While he was homeless, David was befriended by members of a violent extremist group who offered shelter and support including encouragement and reinforcement of his violent behavior.

"Then me and Roger [leader of an extremist group] started hanging out on the street. He was drinking a lot, we had lots of heartfelt conversations. He actually taught me how to roll people [rob people] effectively and this sort of thing...I was on the streets, this was how I got off the streets... I had a role; I got invited into a small cell of guys who worked under a larger organization that had like a hundred and some members. It was this tiered system." (April 16, 2012).

As David began spending more time with members of this group, he eventually became a member himself. In time, David embraced white supremacist ideology, and his violent offending expanded to include victims selected based on racial/ethnic characteristics and sexual orientation. David's description highlights the role of "criminal mentors" and how his initial bond to Roger and the group involved non-ideological factors. Although David eventually became highly committed to white supremacist ideology, the process developed over time after extremist entry.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** We had several primary goals in this paper. First, while violent extremism has recently begun to receive greater attention among criminologists (Agnew, 2010; Freilich et al., 2014; LaFree and Dugan, 2004), less attention has been paid to understanding how non-ideological factors influence the process of joining an extremist group and the onset of violent offending. The focus on these issues highlights the continuities between violent extremism and generic violence. This study

also highlights the utility of a life-course criminological approach to studying violent extremism while also expanding the theoretical scope of life-course criminology.

Second, we emphasized that former VEs' narratives highlighted the importance of childhood trauma as a series of destabilizing experiences that generate cumulative disadvantage. The criminological relevance of trauma is less about any particular single event producing some type of "break down," but rather an understanding of trauma as conditioning experiences that create adversities or disadvantages along with various other factors that incrementally increase a person's susceptibility to negative outcomes including violent offending. In addition, few criminological studies have examined the qualitative dimensions of childhood trauma and adolescent conduct problems as part of an age-graded process. Our focus on childhood trauma helps expand life-course criminology and simultaneously mitigate against the tendency toward adolescent-limited approaches within criminology more broadly.

Third, following Widom's (2014) argument regarding violent offenders more broadly, we also emphasize the heterogeneous nature of violent extremism.<sup>18</sup> Violent extremism involves a variety of pathways and manifests itself along a broad continuum. Within any extremist subculture a variety of orientations exist including both bandits ("common criminals") and revolutionaries ("terrorists"). In many ways, the distinction between common criminality and violent extremism is illusory. Common interpersonal criminality often involves an aspect of terror at least for the victim, and violent extremism, by definition, involves unlawful behavior. In addition, at any one time, an extremist may simultaneously engage in both common criminality and terrorism. Finally, an extremist may evolve from one to the other over time (i.e., a person starts as non-ideological criminal and becomes ideological and vice versa). The violent extremists in our sample overlap considerably in terms of individual background factors such as child maltreatment and high levels of other risk factors with members of conventional street gangs and

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<sup>18</sup> Even with the same type of violent extremist (e.g., white supremacist), there is substantial heterogeneity (Simi et al. 2008).

“ordinary” violent offenders. In this respect, our findings depart from previous claims that there is little overlap between violent extremists and non-ideological criminal offenders (Silke, 2008).

Lastly, in terms of policy implications, early interventions designed for at-risk youth and gang members should inform how we think about and apply countering violent extremism (CVE) initiatives. There has been substantial lessons learned in the area of at-risk youth and gang interventions (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 2004; Hawkins et al., 2005; Hill et al., 1999; Howell, 1998; Lipsey, 2009; McGarrell et al., 2009; O’Shea, 2007; Papachristos, Mears, and Fagan, 2007; Thornberry et al., 2003), and there is no reason to unnecessarily “reinvent the wheel.” There are a number of individual, family, and community-level approaches that can be adopted to help address violent extremism, but only after systematic empirical evaluations will we know how well these interventions translate to different populations of VE. Nonetheless, existing interventions offer an important starting place, and the substantial commonalities we find in the backgrounds of former violent white supremacists and more generic violent offenders suggests that generalized programming may play an important role in CVE efforts.

Future research should explore how these findings compare to other types of extremists. More specifically, future research should compare the findings from this North American-based sample of former white supremacists with similar samples from various European countries and also compare results from this sample with other types of extremists such as former violent jihadis and left-wing extremists. Finally, future research should focus on whether gender and/or socio-economic status impact the processes we identified.

#### **Report 4: Why Radicalization Fails: Barriers to Mass Casualty Violence**

In 1969 Travis Hirschi published *Causes of Delinquency* which assessed the status of existing criminological theory and also outlined his own version of social bond theory. Hirschi argued, among other things, that criminological theory should focus more on asking “*why don’t we do it*” rather than the more common question “*why do they do it?*” (Hirschi 1969: 34). In this respect, Hirschi advocated for a

focus on the constraints or barriers that prevent or reduce the likelihood of crime. The importance of this twist in thinking is the emphasis on the elements of the social fabric, which compel conformity rather than deviation by limiting certain types of human behavior.

Relying on Hirschi, we examine a process of violent radicalization where the expected end point is an act of mass casualty violence (MCV). For purposes of the current study, MCV can be distinguished from more common types of interpersonal violence along two dimensions (Rutherford et al. 2007; Tilly 2003). First, as compared to interpersonal violence, which is characterized by close physical proximity between the perpetrator and victim (s), MCV typically involves a greater physical distance between the perpetrator and the victim (Black 2004; Senechal de la Roche 1996). Second, MCV typically involves the potential for large numbers of fatalities whereas interpersonal violence is much more likely to result in fewer victims (Arnold et al. 2004; Quillen 2002). Bombings and shooting rampages are common examples of MCV while interpersonal violence includes acts such as fistfights and stabbings<sup>19</sup>.

Terrorism, which can be defined as “acts of violence by non-state actors, perpetrated against civilian populations, intended to cause fear, in order to achieve a political objective” (Lafree, Morris and Dugan 2010: 624), is one of the most notable type of MCV. Because terrorism is typically distinguished by the actors’ ideological motivation, much of the terrorism research focuses on considering extremist ideologies as the underpinnings of this type of violence. Broadly speaking, an extremist ideology refers to any set of beliefs that challenge the legitimacy of the state and/or authorize the use of unlawful behavior to achieve political and/or religious goals (Borum 2011a). Clearly, the definition of extremism is highly subjective and subject to a host of contextual factors.

Despite a large number of definitions, radicalization generally refers *to the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs*; whereas, action pathways (or action scripts) refer to the *process of*

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<sup>19</sup> Clearly, suicide bombings are an exception (see Bloom 2007). Throughout the paper, we use the term mass casualty violence and terrorism interchangeably.

*engaging in terrorism or violent extremist actions* (Borum 2011b: 9). As Randy Borum (2011b: 9) argues, we need to differentiate “radicalization” from “action pathways” because most people with radical beliefs do not engage in terrorism (see also, McCauley and Moskalenko 2011). As part of the process, scholars often either implicitly or explicitly view MCV as the end point of the action pathway process. In light of the distinction between radical ideas and action, the current study focuses on obstacles that hinder the development of action pathways toward MCV among individuals who endorse radical beliefs.

Although substantial effort has been devoted to investigating the radicalization process and developing theories to explain how and why this process occurs, few scholars have examined the obstacles that hinder the progression from extremist ideas to violent extremism. In order to address this gap, the current study examines a sample of US white supremacist extremists. While none of the individuals committed an act of MCV, the majority of our sample pursued action pathways that involved other types of violent extremist action such as interpersonal violence motivated by ideology. The sample represents substantial variation in terms of violent extremism with several individuals who remained nonviolent extremists to individuals who radicalized to the point of committing an act of MCV but for various reasons did not execute the attack. As such, our paper focuses on the barriers that inhibit individuals from completing the action pathway process. More specifically, we present empirical findings derived from life history interviews, which illustrate different types of barriers and each barrier’s unique contribution to hindering MCV. The barriers we identified include a combination of illicit interests (e.g., illegal drug lifestyle) and involvement and commitment to pro-social or conventional activities and goals such as parenthood that compete with the action pathway leading to MCV. Finally, we discuss how our findings could be used as part of initiatives aimed at countering violent extremism (CVE).

### **Black Swans and the Rarity of Terror Incidents**

A large number of studies acknowledge the low base rate of terror incidents (LaFree and Dugan 2004; LaFree, Morris and Dugan 2010). In 2013, there were 11,999 terror incidents across the entire

globe resulting in 22,178 fatalities (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2015), while in the United States alone, during that same year, there were 664,210 robberies, 1,092,090 aggravated assaults, and 14,196 homicides (Truman and Langton 2015). These figures suggest how powerful the “terrorism discourse” (Altheide 2006; Bartolucci and Gallo 2015) and “culture of counterterrorism” (Mythen and Walklate 2006) have become across Western societies where the fear of terror is consistently ranked as a top priority among the general public.

Despite the wide recognition among academics of the rarity of terrorism, surprisingly few studies offer explanations of the conditions or factors that help constrain actors who share extremist beliefs from committing a greater number of these incidents. Part of the answer for this rarity lies in the external environment including the various informal and formal social control strategies employed such as target hardening techniques (see Clarke 1992; Freilich and Chermak 2009). Findings from environmental criminology offer important insight about the conditions that reduce the likelihood of MCV. These studies examine the ways private citizens and agents of formal social control use specific strategies to manipulate the environment in order to reduce different types of vulnerabilities and/or minimize opportunities for violent attacks (Clarke and Newman 2007). More specifically, prior research has proposed that vulnerability and expected loss are associated with various target characteristics such as the degree of exposure and ease of approach by potential terrorists (Clarke and Newman 2006). As such, the focus of these studies emphasizes how conditions external to radical individuals and groups operate as constraints in terms of MCV. One area that deserves greater attention, however, is the internal mechanisms that characterize the radicalization process and how certain internal processes may also constrain further radicalization and thus reduce the likelihood of MCV.

### **The Current Status of Radicalization Studies**

In recent years, radicalization has become a household term among the general public and media. Academics have spent substantial time investigating the empirical dimensions of the process and have



developed various theories to explain *how* and *why* radicalization occurs (Sageman 2004; McCauley and Moskalenko 2011; della Porta 1995; Silber and Bhatt 2007; Moghaddam 2005). Studies have examined the ambiguous nature of radicalization (Neumann 2013); degree of consensus in meaning among academics (Sedgwick 2010); and the methodological strength of radicalization research (Neumann and Kelinmann 2013). Although many scholars suggest radicalization is not a linear process but rather occurs in fits and starts, there has been little effort to understand these fits or explain more broadly why radicalization does not typically progress to the point where a person (s) commits an act of MCV.

One of the most vexing issues in the study of terrorism has been the absence of appropriate comparison groups such as nonviolent extremists and violent extremists who have not participated in MCV (Schmid 2014). In this sense, our sample represents an important step forward in terms of focusing on “negative cases” (Emigh 1997) which can provide important insight into the dynamics of radicalization. Most radicalization studies rely on “positive cases” or individuals and groups who radicalized to the point of committing MCV (Schmid 2014).

Previous models of radicalization characterize the process as narrowing from a broader base of ideological adherents to a smaller base of individuals who are actually willing to commit acts of terror. For example, McCauley and Moskalenko (2011) present a dual pyramid model of radicalization with one pyramid illustrating the process of radicalizing attitudes and the other representing the process of radicalizing action. Their model is important, in part, because they are careful to distinguish between beliefs and action, which are not necessarily consistent with each other. In addition, McCauley and Moskalenko (2011) highlight the reactive character that underscores the radicalization process. That is, by focusing on the extremists *and* the situations they occupy, terrorism research is better able to understand the active and reactive nature of violent extremist actions.

Informed by existing models of radicalization, we propose that it is helpful to begin asking the following questions: What limits the larger pool of extremists who embrace an ideology but do not

translate these beliefs into action? What types of conditions serve as barriers in the action pathway process? And, finally, how can the identification of these barriers help inform counterterrorism measures? Similar to Hirschi (1969), these questions flip the traditional approach, which tends to focus on mechanisms towards MCV, by asking, “Why don’t more radicals commit MCV?”

To answer these questions, we focus on identifying various self-limiting properties internal to the radicalization process, which serve to inhibit extremists from committing large-scale acts of terrorism. These self-limiting properties can be thought of as barriers. For the purposes of the current study, barriers are social and psychology circumstances that prevent progression or access to a desired endpoint. Although many behaviors, both violent and non-violent, involve barriers, the current paper will focus on barriers to MCV. Barriers are not necessarily segues to disengagement and/or deradicalization; instead, an extremist may continue involvement without fully radicalizing to the point of readiness to commit MCV. In other cases, a barrier may serve to promote disengagement. In either scenario, however, the consistent characteristic is encountering a constraint on further escalation. Although the following barriers inhibits the likelihood of MCV, each barrier does so in a relatively unique way.

Based on our analysis, we identified four types of barriers: (1) sorting mechanisms away from MCV; (2) changes in focus/availability; (3) disillusionment and (4) moral apprehension. An extremist may experience one of these barriers during their membership in a VEO and that may be enough to disrupt the action pathway process and, thus, reduce the likelihood of MCV or the extremist may experience multiple barriers either simultaneously or sequentially. We do not see these barriers as unfolding in a linear fashion but rather a person may experience barriers in a wide range of sequences. In the following sections, we discuss each type of barrier and then conclude with a brief discussion of how these findings could help inform strategies to CVE.

**Types of Barriers to Mass Casualty Violence**

The barriers we present are not mutually exclusive from one another as a large portion of our sample (n=21) encountered multiple barriers over the course of their involvement in violent extremism. Specifically, we identified 13 participants who experienced one barrier; 13 who experienced two barriers; 7 who experienced three barriers; and finally, 1 participant reported experiencing all four barriers. In the following sections, we examine each barrier in greater detail. Table 10 presents each type of barrier as well as the sub-barriers identified within this report.

*Table 10. Barriers to Mass Casualty Violence*

Type of Barrier	Sub-Barrier
Sorting Mechanisms Away from MCV	1. Mass Casualty Violence as Counter-Productive 2. Preferences for Interpersonal Violence
Change in Focus and Availability	3. Drugs and Alcohol 4. Personal Obligations
Disillusionment	5. Hypocrisy 6. In-fighting
Moral Apprehension	7. Failure to Employ Moral Disengagement

**Barrier One: Sorting Mechanisms Away from MCV**

The first barrier is a sorting mechanism, which includes two different types of preferences that constrain MCV: organizational and subcultural. In the section below, we elaborate on how each type of preference serves as a barrier and we also provide empirical illustrations for each one.

*Mass Casualty Violence as Counter-Productive*

The first preference is the organizational perspective that MCV is counter-productive. Although most participants joined a white supremacist group that endorsed MCV, six participants (18%) joined groups that condemned large-scale acts of violence. To begin, extremist organizations are highly diverse

with competing orientations even within the same general movement or political milieu (Gerlach 1971). Some extremist organizations do not view MCV as an effective political strategy but rather believe MCV will have a negative impact on their social image and political effectiveness (Asal and Rethemeyer 2008; Asal et al. 2009; Chermak, Freilich and Suttmeoller 2013). In these cases, the organization considers large-scale acts of violence as senseless and counter-productive to the movement's goal of white power.

The organization's reluctance regarding MCV may be related to either pragmatic and/or moral reasons. The most important feature of this barrier is that the organization establishes parameters that serve to constrain individuals by prohibiting certain types of violent behavior. As a result of these organizational constraints, individual trajectories are directed away from MCV. Instead, the organization encourages individuals to coordinate political marches, recruitment efforts and other non-violent political strategies. The following participant explains how within this type of organizational context, MCV was defined as detrimental to the cause. Jake indicated how the organization he was affiliated with selectively recruited certain types of individuals and actively discouraged violence, and, MCV, in particular:

We were trying to build a movement of thinkers and workers and people who were fair and honest. That was looked down upon really...Because if someone is going to take your name and their going to go out there and commit acts of violence, (a) it's going to cause problems with the feds and (b) it's going to get the common white person that you want to listen to you turned off. You're not going to go anywhere with it, so we didn't want people like that. (Jake, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, April 7, 2013)

You couldn't talk about it [mass casualty violence]. You couldn't insinuate it. That was the only time that you was promised to be physically harmed, is if you went out and did something that brought a bad name on the organization. They actually thought that it was going to make a difference politically... They were wanting to make a difference politically, and any kind of negative publicity would hinder that. (Ben, Knights of Yahweh, February 9, 2013).

From this perspective, MCV attracts unwanted attention from law enforcement and could also hinder recruitment efforts. The organization Jake belonged to deliberately attempted to avoid enlisting individuals predisposed toward MCV and following a person's entry communicated disapproval for MCV.

This organization emphasized recruiting certain types of individuals while restricting certain types of political tactics.

Jake's example also highlights the extent to which some extremist organizations fear the negative social image that accompanies MCV. Contrary to extremist organizations that view MCV as a recruiting tool and a means to enhance public image (Ligon, Harms and Derrick 2015), some extremist organizations view negative publicity as a distraction from organizational goals. Despite reservations about MCV, most of the individuals in our sample were involved in other types of violence such as predatory attacks motivated by ideology, interpersonal disputes, and instrumentally motivated violence related to economic incentives. In the next section, we consider how interpersonal violence is preferred over MCV.

#### *Preferences for Interpersonal Violence*

The preference for interpersonal violence is the second dimension of the sorting barrier. Individuals entering extremism do not begin this process as a blank slate but rather become extremists with existing preferences that include both ideological and/or tactical ones. For example, persons entering white supremacist groups have typically already internalized strong anti-black beliefs but have much less clearly defined views regarding Jewish people (Blee 2002). More broadly, a person entering extremism may prefer certain types of political tactics (e.g., public marches) while discounting other strategies (e.g., leafleting). The same can also be said about tactics involving violence. The likelihood of committing MCV partly depends on tactical preferences to achieve political goals (Crenshaw 1998).

MCV is typically a detached experience. While some extremists like Timothy McVeigh (the Oklahoma bomber) and Eric Rudolph (the Olympic Park bomber) preferred to coordinate large scale attacks, other extremists may prefer interpersonal violence. In our sample, eleven participants (31%) were identified as possessing preferences for interpersonal violence which served to constrain radicalization toward MCV. Yet, individual preferences are only part of the story. Extremists are typically

embedded within social networks distinguished by specific cultural values, norms, and practices (Simi and Futrell 2010). Although extremist culture is not exclusively violent, much of this world is focused on the promotion of violence. Yet, the type of violence promoted varies within extremist cultures. For extremists more closely tied to the streets, their violence resembles conventional gang conflicts (Sanders 1994; Jankowski 1991). In this sense, individual and subcultural preferences are deeply reciprocal (Anderson 1999; Ball-Rokeach 1973; Cohen and Nisbett 1994; Hochstetler, Copes and Forsyth 2014; Jacobs 2004; Papachristos 2009; Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967). Subcultural norms are an important source of influence supporting the use of violence to resolve conflict (Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967). Nonetheless, merely examining whether a particular subculture promotes violence may neglect the specific types of violence a culture promotes while simultaneously discouraging other types of violence.

In our sample, we found a substantial number of the individuals who described conforming to a combination of individual preferences and subcultural norms surrounding the use of interpersonal street violence. For these individuals, interpersonal violence reinforced their self-image as a “bad ass” or “honorable warrior” (Katz 1988; Butterfield 1995). They described interpersonal violence as a masculine endeavor (Messerschmidt 1993), whereas, shooting or bombing people from a distance was considered dishonorable and unfair. As the following participants explained, compared to street fighting, using a gun expresses a lack of masculinity and physical prowess.

That's how I felt about it [using a gun]...I just felt like it was such a pussy thing... There was a couple times I got into it with people where I thought they were going to have a gun, but it was almost like a cocky thing to me that I was like, this dude is going to have a gun, let me beat the fuck out of him with brass knuckles to prove a point. (Scott, Northern Hammerskin, September 1, 2013)

I was always more of a fist and boots kind of a guy but some of the people were open to whatever was at hand... We always thought that to resort to guns like in the way the gang bangers do was always kind of a pussy thing to do. It is little more manly to get in there and duke it out. There was just definitely a rush in beating somebody's head in. I don't know like a primal thing. (Chase, Aryan Terror Brigade, November 1, 2013)

Both of these statements suggest a “street code” (see Anderson 1999) that glorifies fist fighting over other types of violence (Copes, Hochstetler and Forsythe 2013).

The following statement underscores how the perception of intimacy related to interpersonal violence also served as an attraction for some of the subjects:

I guess what makes us more of a threat is that we are personal. We’re not going to shoot you from 50 feet away. We’re going to look you in the eyes. We’re going to fucking feel your life drain in our hands. We’re not some pussies... It’s not like we’re doing drive-bys and gang shootings, it’s like an execution. We know who killed you. We know who fucked you up. We know who fucking maimed you. To me that’s what got [me] off. (Stanley, United Society of Aryan Skinheads, July 7, 2014)

Stanley’s statement also illustrates the enjoyment violence provides to some individuals. In this sense, the perpetrator derived physical and/or sexual pleasure from violent acts. Part of this pleasure is directly connected to observing the consequences that result from the violent encounters including hurting and killing others. Several of our participants discussed the sensual qualities of interpersonal violence as distinct from less personal types of violence (Katz 1988). These individuals claimed to prefer interpersonal violence because they enjoyed the intimacy that is associated with this type of violence.

Whether the organization considered MCV as counter-productive or the individual and subculture preferred interpersonal violence, the unifying characteristic is that both discouraged the consideration of MCV as a viable political strategy. In each type of sorting mechanism, extremists conform to either organizational or subcultural norms that channel their behavior away from MCV. While organizational norms tends to constrain violence altogether, subcultural norms tend to promote certain types of violence that does not include MCV.

The idea that a subculture of violence actually constrains MCV may seem counterintuitive. A certain portion of violent extremists involved in street-level violence may become further radicalized by their experiences with this type of violence sometimes referred to as a “taste for blood” (May 1974). We, however, did not find this in our sample. In fact, the person in our sample who came closest to committing an act of MCV had no history of violence either during his time as an extremist or prior to his

involvement in extremism. Despite the lack of participation in MCV, many subjects reported being “open” to the idea during their time of involvement. In other words, it does not appear that MCV was ever an option among subjects in this sample. As such, it appears those individuals who were open to MCV experienced counter-balancing conditions that constrained their proclivities toward MCV. Organizational orientations and subcultural preferences, however, are not the only factors that may constrain MCV from occurring. In the next section, we discuss how changes in focus and availability influence a person’s willingness to commit an act of MCV.

### **Barrier Two: Change in Focus and Availability**

The next type of barrier involves different ways that an extremists’ focus and availability constrain further progression toward MCV. As part of this, we identified two different types of constraints that influence focus and availability: drugs/alcohol lifestyle, and personal obligations. By focus, we mean central organizing activities that structure a person’s life while availability simply refers to the physical time a person has to involve themselves in different activities.

#### *Drugs and Alcohol*

The first type of constraint in terms of focus and availability is the use of drugs and alcohol. Out of the 34 participants, twelve (35%) were identified as shifting their focus away from planning an act of MCV toward drugs and alcohol. Previous studies highlight high rates of alcohol use among the far-right (Hamm 1993; Bubolz and Simi 2015), and while ideologically prohibited, street drugs are also common (Bjørgero 1997; Bubolz and Simi 2015; Simi, Smith and Reeser 2008; Hall and Burkey 2008). The excessive use of illegal drugs and alcohol serves as a barrier to MCV in two primary ways.

First, drugs and alcohol may become an individual’s central point of focus for her/his lifestyle. Over time, the focus on drugs and alcohol may reduce the relative importance of extremist politics. For some extremists, the excessive consumption of drugs and alcohol comes to overshadow the ideological component of their involvement, and therefore, reduces an individual’s willingness to commit MCV. For



example, the following participants describe how drugs and alcohol became the central focus of their lives gaining salience over their commitment to extremist violence.

I told them, 'Look you know, everything's been great and everything else but I'm just going to let you guys know that I am using coke and as it turns out, I really like it better than your movement.' (Jeremy, WAR, November 9, 2013)

I just liked being high better than anything, more than anything. (Harry, Las Vegas Skinheads, June 8, 2013).

I tell everybody methamphetamines saved my life. Yeah, it saved my fucking life. It got me thinking, "Where is this shit? When is it going to get here? Who has the shit?" I just did not give a fuck anymore. (Jack, Skinhead Dogs, June 8, 2013)

I mean almost all the violence was alcohol related. No one was sober, went down the street, and beat people up. They were usually drunk at a party, walking somewhere and then something happens. (Sebastian, Hammerskin Nation, May 26, 2014).

Most skinhead violence is alcohol fueled. It is like we always drank Jägermeister, that's skinhead crack. It's going to make you do stuff that you wouldn't normally go out and do... The shit that was planned, we were sober. The shit that was spontaneous, we were drunk. (Freddie, Midland Hammerskins, May 31, 2014).

Second, excessive use of drugs and alcohol may disrupt the cognitive skills necessary to plan an act of MCV, which typically requires a certain degree of executive functioning. During the consumption of drugs and alcohol, extremists may discuss ideas related to political violence but once sober these attacks rarely come to fruition. Excessive substance use may prevent brainstorming discussions from moving to reasoned proposals that involve detailed planning. At the same time, the use of drugs and alcohol may encourage types of violence that are more spontaneous and require less planning such as "gay bashing" or "bum rolling." For instance, previous research indicates that street violence is often spontaneous with little coordination or planning involved (Feeny 1986; Felson and Massoglia 2012; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Gruninger and Hess 1984; Vigil 2003; Wright and Decker 1997).

Each of the participants above illustrate how substance use reduced the importance of extremist participation and politics. Instead of coordinating and planning acts of MCV, these participants spent

their time buying and consuming illicit drugs. For these individuals, drugs and alcohol gained a higher level of salience in their hierarchy of identities as compared to extremism (Schwartz and Stryker 1970; Burke 1980). In these cases, substance use functioned to obstruct MCV by refocusing the extremists' attention on matters other than extremist violence. As our data suggest, drugs and alcohol interrupt the indoctrination of members and strategic efforts to coordinate acts of MCV. This occurs because the excessive consumption of drugs and alcohol occupies time that could be spent planning and coordinating MCV. In addition, our sample indicates they were more likely to commit spontaneous acts of violence while under the influence of illegal drugs and alcohol.

The irony of this finding is that individuals who became immersed in a drug lifestyle, and, thus, constrained in terms of MCV simultaneously became more involved in various forms of criminality (e.g., burglaries, robberies, drug distribution etc.). While the change in availability and focus created an obstacle to MCV, these individuals often experienced heightened involvement in generic criminality. This finding suggests that reductions in violent extremism may not coincide with reductions in criminal activity more broadly, which has important implications in terms of disengagement and desistance. In the next section, we examine another type of activity that occupies a considerable amount of time and focus that serves as a distraction for MCV.

### *Personal Obligations*

The second type of constraint related to focus and availability involves the impact that various non-movement, personal obligations had on an individual's capacity to move forward in the action pathway process. The presence of personal obligations can be thought of as changes in "biographical availability" (see Lofland 1966; McAdam 1988) such as employment, marriage, and children. In all, thirteen participants (37%) were identified as experiencing a change in focus and availability, which constrained the likelihood of MCV and shifted their attention toward personal obligations (e.g., children, work). In these situations, the extremist experiences the obligations of everyday life which encourages a

“stake in conformity” (Toby 1957; also see Hirschi 1969; Sampson and Laub 1993). Personal obligations, such as marriage and children, create interdependent systems of attachment or “social bonds” that connect the person to conventional society (Hirschi 1969). These attachments alter a person’s routine activities, constrain unstructured socialization time and have the ability to alter one’s sense of self through cognitive transformation (Osgood and Anderson 2004; Giordano, Cernkovich and Rudolph 2002).

While there are multiple types of personal obligations that serve to constrain MCV, we found that children were the most common type of obligation in our sample. Eight subjects (23%) indicated their children prevented them from “doing anything” because they felt compelled to remain an active part of their children’s lives<sup>20</sup>. In these cases, becoming a parent did not directly result in disengagement but did reduce involvement in violent activities and their willingness to participate in MCV. For example,

When I had my kids, there was something in me that put up a barrier that said, “I want to do this thing, I want to have this belief, but I also don’t want my family to be involved in it.” I didn’t have that kind of rhetoric at home, I didn’t urge my kids to follow in my footsteps. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013)

That has always been the massive roadblock. My whole thing was, raising my kids and hopefully the world will be better so I wouldn't have to go fight. That was the main thing that prevented me from ever doing anything. (Jack, Skinhead Dogs, June 8, 2013)

It took up so much of my life that I had to step back from things for a little while. I got a fiancée with 5 kids together; two of her own and three of my own, so kind of just doing the family thing, my job and trying to get our finances straight. (Richard, White Aryan Resistance, September 21, 2013).

Kids mostly... It was really more about being prepared for when somebody or something else started it and teaching them... how to be prepared and what to think and none of us were really looking to instigate anything. Although, there was kind of period in time there where I myself was considering assassinating Bill Clinton... I kept it to myself and it never got passed thinking about it... Personally speaking my focus at that point was on my kids, and I think for most of the people

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<sup>20</sup> Not all instances of parenthood will produce an obstacle to radicalization as the recent terror attack in San Bernardino, CA demonstrates. For studies that examine how parenting may be used to sustain extremism see Simi, Futrell, and Bubolz, (2016). In terms of how extremists lead double lives see Simi and Futrell (2009).

that were up there it was the same thing. It was really more about that then and religious observance (Chase, Aryan Terror Brigade, November 1, 2013).

It just became less and less of a focus... It was when my son was born so that would have been 1990. Once the children are born that became less and less. (Toby, Blood and Honour, May 27, 2014).

These experiences underscore a “commitment to conventional lines of action” (Hirschi 1969: 162). That is, the extremist must consider the costs of committing an act of MCV and the risk associated with losing their investments in conventional behavior (Becker 1960; Hirschi, 1969). In the examples above, family responsibilities took precedent over their obligations to violent extremism.

Our findings regarding the second barrier are consistent with a series of criminological studies that investigate how the structure of an individual’s time is related to involvement in delinquency (Osgood and Anderson 2004; Osgood et al. 1996; Hirschi 1969). That is, greater amounts of unstructured socializing time, correspond with higher rates of delinquency. The defining characteristic of the second barrier is the availability of time and focus. That is, time spent focused on drinking or using drugs and personal obligations (e.g., children, spouses or work) is less time available to spend planning acts of MCV. In the next section, we examine how hypocrisy and in-fighting produces disillusionment, which acts as a third type of barrier to MCV.

### **Barrier Three: Disillusionment**

The third type of barrier, disillusionment, occurs when an extremist experiences disappointment that results from the discrepancy between expectations and actual experiences. We identified two different sources that generate disillusionment: hypocrisy and in-fighting within our sample.

#### *Hypocrisy and Disappointment*

In general, hypocrisy arises when a person observes a discrepancy between what individuals promote and what these individuals are actually doing. Within any social movement, these types of discrepancies are likely to emerge (Klandermans 2001; Jasper 1998). As an individual begins observing multiple instances of these discrepancies, the person may begin to experience a generalized

disappointment with the entire movement as opposed to single individuals. As part of this process, the person may begin to question the sincerity of other members (Bubolz and Simi 2015; Bjørge 2011; Horgan 2009; Bjørge and Horgan 2009; Alterman 1999). We found eight participants (24%) who reported observing hypocrisy and experiencing a general disappointment related to the broader movement or cause.

A common reason for entering extremism is the appeal of joining a higher moral cause predicated on virtues such as loyalty, kinship, and purity (Neumann 2008; Silber and Bhatt 2007; May 1974). For instance, there is a widespread subcultural norm within the white supremacist movement prohibiting illegal drug use. Despite this formal prohibition, however, in practice, drug use is common among white supremacists (Bubolz and Simi 2015; Hall and Burkey 2008). The discrepancy between the norms and practices surrounding drugs creates a sense of hypocrisy that may frustrate members who remain “true to the values” and, in turn, encourage them to question the legitimacy of the entire movement. In these situations, the individual’s attachment to the violent extremist group begins to weaken. As the following participant explained,

The way that everything happens in that scene, it's completely contradictory to what they say. They say one thing but we all act in a completely different way... Claiming we are working every day and supporting the family and doing this and doing that. All this stuff, it was all a joke, it was bullshit. We worked and everything else but we all drank like fish. We were all raging alcoholics and it just took a while. (Jeremy, WAR, November 9, 2013)

Over time, Jeremy came to recognize a growing number of discrepancies and experienced strong feelings in response to this growing recognition. The disconnection between the groups’ beliefs and members’ inaction lead to frustration and disillusionment. For example, Blake described his general realization that as a whole the movement lacked integrity because individual behavior was consistently at odds with the stated ideals and goals of kinship and loyalty:

It's a whole bunch of hypocrites, back stabbing, and the whole movement is kind of a joke... some of these dudes might fully believe it is "white pride, white power." You learn at some point, it's all just a joke. It's a fucking scam. (Blake, Aryan Strikeforce, July 17, 2014)

The above quotes illustrate the weak, and at times, absent leadership that seems to characterize a number of these groups. Specifically, these accounts reveal an absence of any central leadership, capable of providing a shared vision that shapes collective behavior and ultimately creates an impression that individuals are working together for a common goal (Ligon et al. 2013; Freilich, Chermak and Caspi 2009). In the absence of this shared vision conveyed by skilled leaders, internal inconsistencies and contradictions become extenuated more so than commonalities among adherents. In the next section, in-fighting among white supremacist groups or within their own group also illustrates contradictions within the movement that produces disillusionment.

### *In-fighting*

Another source of disillusionment originates from inner-group violence. Overall, fifteen participants (44%) were identified as experiencing inter-group violence or conflict. Earlier, we discussed how individuals possess preferences for interpersonal violence rather than MCV. In this section, we discuss how internal conflicts among different white supremacist groups and even within the same group are an important source of distraction and division. Repeated violence among white supremacists may cause the person to become fatigued, exhausted or feel “burned out” (Bjørge 2011; Ross and Gurr 1989). Participants indicated that disputes often stemmed from a variety of interpersonal conflicts. For example,

The in-fighting was another reason why I really got disenfranchised... It was awful. I couldn't relate to that. We'd go to a concert in Detroit. We would always end up with somebody fighting over a girlfriend or something else. I was like, “This isn't what I signed up for.” I thought, “Aren't we supposed to be in this together? We've already got enough enemies.” Then all of a sudden we're going to fight each other. (Chester, Volksfront, October 22, 2013)

One thing you encounter you know it if you've been here, infighting, what's infighting over? Power struggles, ladder climbers, popularity contests. It's all about popularity contests that's why these people can't get a fuckin' life... You know, we knew because we really believed in fighting a war right, how can we fight if they all fuckin' hate each other. What's going on here? Fuckin' KKK don't like the Nazis, and you guys don't like the KKK. (Jack, Skinhead Dogs, June 8, 2013).

I think a lot of it, at least with the skinhead thing, I wanted to stay away from it, because there was so much in-fighting. Eighty percent of it was fighting each other. I was kind of disillusioned with that in the first place. (Chase, Aryan Terror Brigade, November 1, 2013)

As one of our interviewees speculated, in-fighting may also distract extremists from externalizing their aggression and directing radical action to outgroup members.

That is another one of my special theories, so much in-fighting between the members in different groups, I think that's almost a buffer for some of the violence that perhaps would've gone outside of that whole group if it wasn't happening within the group. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013)

In the examples above, participants discussed factors that led them to become disillusioned with the movement. These individuals became disillusioned because they originally joined the movement to fight "racial enemies" but soon realized other white supremacist groups were the primary target of violence. In the final section, we examine the fourth type of barrier obstructing MCV. Within the fourth barrier, the extremist experiences moral apprehension regarding the idea of killing innocent individuals.

#### **Barrier Four: Moral Apprehension**

The fourth barrier to MCV, which we refer to as moral apprehension, may be the most difficult to move beyond. At this point, the extremist contemplates the logistics of committing an act of MCV, including the consequences associated with taking human life. In the process of considering these consequences of MCV, the extremist recognizes their actions could potentially hurt or kill "innocent" people, including children and the elderly. We identified one source of moral apprehension: failure to employ moral disengagement.

##### *Failure to Employ Moral Disengagement*

Although a large segment of our sample (n=30) were identified as violent extremists, nonetheless, eighteen participants (53%) reported experiencing moral apprehension. The recognition that killing innocent people is unacceptable suggests these individuals internalized aspects of broader more conventional societal moral standards. While these moral principles act as guides for prosocial

behavioral, the principles are governed by a dynamic process where “moral-censures” can be selectively disengaged in order to participate in antisocial behavior (Zimbardo 2007: 310). This self-censorship process is what Bandura (1986) referred to as *moral disengagement*. The process of moral disengagement allows VEs to commit violence by diffusing personal responsibility, dehumanizing victims, minimizing consequences, and using language that rationalizes their actions (e.g., “collateral damage”). The extensive violent histories among the majority of individuals in our sample suggest a clear capacity to harm other people, yet this ability did not necessarily translate into a willingness or capacity to inflict MCV.

The failure to employ moral disengagement techniques (Bandura 1986; Paciello et al. 2008) illustrates the cognitive difficulties extremists may experience while considering MCV as a viable political strategy. Extremists who fail to employ moral disengagement techniques are unable to justify the use of violence against their intended targets. Contrary to the common perception that extremists are “crazy” individuals determined to kill as many innocent bystanders as possible, our data suggest VEs struggle with the idea of taking another person’s life. When the participants are unable to justify the use of violence, a recalculation often occurs that limits the acceptability of MCV.

I knew this would have been the largest act of its kind in U.S. history. That's part of why I thought we were supposed to do it, because we knew that it would have an impact. I don't think I realized how huge until I actually got into the church with the bomb, and saw the people, and saw the damage that could occur. It hadn't hit me yet. But once it hit me, yeah, it hit me. Being that close, there was no denying my life changed at that point. In my heart, at that point, [my group] died. (Keith, Creativity Alliance, May 4, 2013)

Some of the participants described a more general unwillingness to cross a particular threshold for violence. For these participants, the psychological strain resulting from the shame and guilt of killing another person were too much of a psychological burden to justify MCV. As the following participant explains,

Even though I was violent and you know I hurt people left and right, myself, people around me... inside there was a certain line that I knew I wouldn't cross. One of them, I don't think, on my



angriest, most hateful day that I could murdered anyone... I think that would have been just too much. (Abby, Hammerskin Nation, August 1, 2013)

While Abby reports participating in extensive and serious violence, she claims she was unable to kill another person. In the following account, when asked why he did not do carry out an act of MCV Blake responded:

Like I said, I'm not ignorant; I acted ignorant; I'm not an unintelligent person. I do have a certain degree of intellect. I'm not a sociopath, so I understand I have a conscience. Usually if you're not fighting off a hangover you come to these moments and, "well I've never wanted to really kill someone. (Blake, Aryan Strikeforce, July 17, 2014)

Blake's comment underscores his view that MCV is committed by "sociopaths" or people without a conscience. From his perspective, a "normal" person would not be able to commit this type of violence and because Blake sees himself as normal, the idea of committing this type of violence is reprehensible. These comments highlight the importance of thresholds that individuals develop in terms of the type and severity of violence a person is willing to commit (Decker and Pyrooz 2011). Interestingly, Blake did report committing a large number of other acts of violence including an incident where he tried to hit another person with a truck he was driving. Blake's case underscores the point that moral apprehension related to MCV is not an indication of an unwillingness to commit violence but rather represents an interpretive code where certain types of violence are permissible and others are prohibited.

## Discussion and Conclusion

We began this paper by pointing out that most extremists do not commit acts of MCV. The empirical reality of this rarity requires explanation. In this paper, we focused on internal mechanisms that serve to constrain individuals from moving toward MCV. More specifically, the aim of this paper was twofold. First, we examined the factors that inhibit the action pathway process and prevent more extremists from committing acts of MCV. We developed an empirically informed conceptual model that focuses on four barriers that obstruct MCV.

The first barrier we discussed involves a sorting process. In this barrier, two types of preferences, organizational and subcultural, direct the extremist toward either non-violent political protest or interpersonal violence. Based on these preferences, the person is channeled in one of two directions neither of which directly involve MCV. In the second barrier, extremists find their time is focused in certain ways that constrain MCV. These time constraints serve as divergences from efforts required to plan an act of MCV. The third barrier, disillusionment, is characterized by disappointments that stem from perceived hypocrisy and prolonged in-fighting among members of white supremacist groups. Over time, the extremist begins to question the legitimacy of the movement's entire ideology. The fourth barrier, moral apprehension, involves the inability to justify the use of violence against victims perceived as innocent. In these cases, the extremist does not effectively employ moral disengagement strategies to execute an act of MCV.

Each of the barriers we identified addresses larger issues related to organizational and leadership characteristics. In the first barrier, leaders effectively communicate prohibitions against MCV that creates a barrier toward MCV. In the remaining barriers, however, a lack of effective leadership is unable to provide a shared vision among individual members of white supremacist groups. The lack of shared vision creates a vacuum of sorts where various changes in availability and focus such as involvement in a "partying lifestyle" and children constrain the likelihood of MCV. At the same time, the lack of shared vision results in a greater likelihood that individuals become disillusioned with the movement, which also constrains MCV. The final barrier, moral apprehension, also reflects the lack of a shared vision. The prevalence of moral apprehension among our subjects underscores that organizations were not effectively preparing individuals to participate in MCV.

While we relied on a sample of US domestic extremists to construct the model, efforts should be made to assess the model across a wide range of extremist ideologies to determine its applicability. In addition, future research should also address how these findings compare across a spectrum of different

types of ideological orientations. More specifically, future research should compare samples from various western and nonwestern societies.

The second aim of this paper involved a discussion of how this model could help inform strategies to counter violent extremism (CVE). One promising option would be the refinement of counter-messaging strategies. Current CVE initiatives that employ counter-messaging tactics often focus on challenging the accuracy of an extremist's ideology, which may unintentionally reinforce attachment to the ideology (Aly, Weimann-Saks and Weimann 2014). Instead, we suggest focusing on techniques to instill or enhance the various barriers illustrated above. In particular, counter-messages that rely on existing sources of disillusionment can do so without trying to convince an extremist that his/her ideology is inaccurate. As part of this approach, counter-messaging strategies could promote the extent of hypocrisy and "backstabbing" among extremist groups. In addition, messages could also highlight moral issues by emphasizing the "innocence" of potential victims. Finally, counter-messages could promote individual and organizational preferences toward non-violent political tactics by highlighting the efficacy of legal political activism over MCV.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Thematic Assessment Codebook

The thematic assessment codebook is divided into two broad areas. First, the introduction explains and outlines the thematic assessment database. Included in this section is a detailed analysis at the characteristics of the sample for this study. The goal is to illustrate the characteristics of the sample as clearly as possible. Finally, we define and discuss the important concepts of grounded theory.

Second, the codebook examines the sub-themes used in the thematic assessment database. This includes a basic description and definition for each sub-theme. The sub-themes are divided under the five broad themes or sheets encompassed in the database. These broad themes are socialization into violent extremism, entry into violent extremism, recruitment into violent extremism, subculture of violence, and barriers to radicalization.

### Navigating the Database

The thematic assessment database is divided into six separate sections. Each sheet includes one central theme, several sub-themes, examples of each sub-theme, anonymous names for each participant, any tables or figures employed in this study. For example, Sheet 1 contains the broad theme “Socialization Techniques into Violent Extremism” and several sub-themes such as “Linguistic Devices.”

Except for Sheet 6, the left most column of each sheet contains an anonymous name created for each participant used in this study. Also, to the right of each participant is an example of the sub-theme. For instance, Sheet 1 includes the word “Budweiser” next to name Blake and under the sub-theme Linguistic Devices. This means that “Budweiser” is an example of the Linguistic Devices sub-theme. A benefit of the grounded theory database is that you can click on any of these examples to bring up the full context of each participant’s accounts. Ultimately, the capability of viewing the participant’s accounts enhances the user’s ability to better understand each theme and sub-theme.

Finally, each sheet contains a table, a figure, or both. For reference purposes, the number of each figure or table corresponds with the sheet number it is located on. The table on Sheet 1, for example, is referred to as “Table 1.” The figure on Sheet 4 is referred to as “Figure 4,” and so on and so forth.

### **Sample Characteristics**

The current sample includes 34 total subjects. This includes 30 males and 4 females, ranging from 19 to 47 years of age. One subject was between 19 to 25 years of age; 5 subjects were between 26 to 35 years of age; 18 subjects were between 36 to 45 years of age; and 10 subjects were 46 years of age or older. In regards to socio-economic status, 15 subjects described themselves as middle class, 12 as working class, 4 as upper class, and 2 as lower class. In terms of group involvement, the sample included 8 subjects who founded a white supremacist group, while the other 26 subjects were either core or peripheral members. Finally, when examining the educational attainment of the sample, 6 subjects received less than a high school diploma; 7 received a high school diploma; 11 attended some college but did not graduate; 3 graduated from a 2-year college; 4 graduated from a 4-year college; and 2 attended graduate school.

### **Grounded Theory Analysis**

In order to better understand the radicalization process, the current study employed a modified grounded theory approach. One major benefit of the grounded theory approach is that it provided the research team with more theoretical flexibility with the broad topic of interest. In other words, grounded theory enables the researcher to explore the qualitative data in order to develop theories “grounded” within the data (Charmaz, 2006). For this research, in-depth life history data was analyzed and, as the researcher read each interview, specific themes and subthemes transpired from the data. In turn, the construction of these themes and subthemes worked towards the development of central categories or



“codes.” These core concepts ultimately were used to better understand the specific events in which surround the subjects’ lives prior to and during their initial involvement in violent extremism.

The coding process was highly methodical and required several important steps. First, each transcription was read in its entirety without codes to look for event themes. Second, each transcription was re-read and specific codes were developed whenever an event concerning socialization, entry, recruitment or violence emerged. This also involved the use of memos in order to connect potential themes and concepts and make sense of the data by constructing a theory that helps explain the processes being documented. Following Corbin and Strauss (2008), the process of “theoretical saturation” is reached when the data has been fully exhausted and no new themes or concepts emerge (p. 263).

The goal of the modified grounded theory approach was to develop a theoretical foundation that best fit the data. This strategy, more specifically, sought to analyze the various dimensions of the subjects’ lives such as family socialization prior to extremist participation; the various pathways that lead to violent extremism; recruitment strategies used by extremist members, and the subculture of violence within extremists groups. Together, this allowed for a more thorough understanding and better graph of the complex radicalization process into violent extremism.

## **DATABASE SUB-THEMES**

### **I. Family Socialization Prior to Participation in Violent Extremism**

#### a) Ideological Socialization Strategies

*Theme*

*Sheet 1.*

This theme contains specific usages of language that introduce radical ideologies, attitudes and behaviors prior to a person’s exposure to organized extremist groups.

Included in this larger sub-theme are the linguistic devices, blatant racism and subtle racism sub-themes.

i) Linguistic Devices

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 1.*

This sub-theme contains references to the use of indirect language in order to associate out-group members with negative characteristics or embody whites as having positive qualities.

ii) Blatant Racism

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 1.*

This sub-theme contains accounts of the use of direct actions or events to propagate racism or prejudice. These events or actions are often structured within one's immediate family.

iii) Subtle Racism

*Sub-theme*

*Sheet 1.*

This sub-theme includes techniques of socialization such as subtle gestures, remarks, or behaviors to normalize extremist beliefs.

## **II. Entry into Violent Extremism**

i) Searching for Acceptance/Belonging

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 2.*

This sub-theme contains references to the appeal of violent extremism that stems from the support, comradery, and dependability offered by members in the movement.

ii) The Thrill of the Forbidden

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 2.*

This sub-theme involves references to the appeal that stems from membership into a violent extremist movement. This appeal is often related to the both positive (e.g., toughness, badass image) and negative reactions from others (e.g., fear, annoyance).

### iii) Protection

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 2.*

This sub-theme contains accounts of the desire to enter into violent extremism for the protection and security from various environmental threats offered by different groups.

### iv) The Quest for Significance

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 2.*

This sub-theme involves the search to elevate ones' personal significance by aligning themselves with groups with similar ideologies that define the out-group as the enemy and their own causes as righteous and honorable.

## **III. Recruitment into Violent Extremism**

### i) Target Population

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 3.*

This sub-theme includes the specific recruitment of youths from broken families, angry or hateful youths, and youths who are still emotionally maturing.

### ii) The Role of White Power Music

*Sub-Theme*

*Sheet 3.*

The sub-theme contains references to the use and significance of white power music and its message as a recruitment tool and means of spreading racist and anti-Semitic beliefs.

### iii) Marketing Strategies

#### *Sub-Theme*

#### *Sheet 3.*

This sub-theme includes participant accounts of using different techniques such as stickers, fliers, or leaflets and face-to-face communication in order to interact with potential recruits.

## **IV. The Subculture of Violence Extremism**

### i) Code of the Streets

#### *Sub-Theme*

#### *Sheet 4.*

This sub-theme discusses the informal set of rules that dictate the behavior of violent extremist in interpersonal situations such as fighting and destroying property.

### ii) Emotional Experiences During a Fight

#### *Sub-Theme*

#### *Sheet 4.*

This sub-theme involves the feeling of empowerment and accomplishment during and after a fight.

### iii) Violence as a Rite of Passage

#### *Sub-Theme*

#### *Sheet 4.*

This sub-theme includes the use of violence as a sign of commitment to the movement or as a disciplinary strategy towards members of the group.

### iv) When Violence Goes Too Far

#### *Sub-Theme*

#### *Sheet 4.*

This sub-theme contains discussions of situations in which there is a threshold for the use of violence due to the status or circumstances surrounding the potential victim.

v) Disciplinary and Policing Strategies*Sub-Theme**Sheet 4.*

This sub-theme contains the use of violence in order to maintain order or discipline group members who challenge ideological beliefs or decides to leave the movement.

**Appendix B: Circumplex Model of Affect Codebook**

The *Circumplex Affect Codebook* includes numerous variables designed to capture emotional, cognitive and moral affective markers. Relying on previous emotional and affective research (Yik, Russell and Steiger, 2011; Russell, 1980; Posner, Russell and Peterson, 2005), we developed this codebook in order to provide greater specificity to violent extremist recruitment and radicalization processes. For instance, researchers coded each participants’ entry event for pleasant and unpleasant experiences as well as activation and deactivation throughout the event. In addition, each researcher thematically analyzed the participants’ entry event at a broad level by noting holistic, emergent reasons as to why the participant joined an extremist group (e.g., disillusionment with society; racial conflict or violence). Finally, researchers also examined cognitive and moral characteristics of the participant’s entry event such as anxiety, guilt, shame and pride.

**Event-Level Variables (Thematic Counts)**

Focus on the actual entry/turning point.

<b>Circumplex Affect Variables</b>	
<b>Pleasure</b>	content, happy, pleased, satisfied
<b>Activated Pleasure</b>	delighted, enthusiastic, euphoric, joyful, relieved
<b>Pleasant Activation</b>	active, alert, attentive, energetic, excited, vigorous, wide awake
<b>Activation</b>	aroused, hyperactivated, intense
<b>Unpleasant Activation</b>	anxious, concerned, jittery, nervous, stressed, worried
<b>Activated Displeasure</b>	agitated, annoyed, fearful, frustrated, hostile, irritated, scared, tense
<b>Displeasure</b>	dissatisfied, miserable, troubled, uncomfortable, unhappy
<b>Deactivated Displeasure</b>	blue, down, gloomy, melancholy, misery, sad, sorrow
<b>Unpleasant Deactivation</b>	apathetic, bored, disinterested, drowsy, dull, sluggish, tired
<b>Deactivation</b>	quiet, still
<b>Pleasant Deactivation</b>	at rest, calm, relaxed, tranquil
<b>Deactivated Pleasure</b>	at ease, peaceful, secure, serene, soothed

**Additional Affective Variables**

<b>Moral Emotions (Self-Focused)</b>	disappointment (with self), disgust (with self), embarrassment, guilt, hate (toward self), humiliation, love (toward self), pride, regret, remorse, resentment (toward self), self-forgiveness, self-respect, shame
<b>Moral Emotions (Other-Focused)</b>	contempt, disappointment (with others), disgust (with others), envy, forgiveness, hate (toward others), jealousy, love (toward others), resentment (toward others), respect

**Cognitive Variables**

<b>Future Orientation</b>	anticipation, aspiration, expectation, goal, hope, optimism, wish
<b>Uncertainty</b>	ambiguity, apprehension, confusion, distrust, doubt, hesitation, skepticism
<b>Isolation</b>	alone, betrayed, feeling lost, lack of affiliation, loneliness, loss, rejection
<b>Affiliation</b>	affection, belonging, camaraderie, companionship, compassion, connection, empathy, friendship, reconciliation, relationship, trust
<b>Insight</b>	discovery, epiphany, inspiration, realization, reflection, surprise, understanding
<b>Morality</b>	ethical, helpful, honest, honor, justice, virtue
<b>Immorality</b>	aggression, criminal, evil, illegal, unethical, violence

**Industrial-Organizational Variables**

<b>Turnover Intentions</b>	having interests about involvement, wanting in, wanting to join
<b>Push Factors (Risk Factors)</b> What is going on in your current environment that makes you want to leave?	aggression/hostility of others, close-mindedness, disillusionment, hypocrisy, lack of support, perceptions of injustice/unfairness, dissatisfaction (home, school etc.), exposure to negative diversity
<b>Pull Factors</b> What characteristics of the group make you want to join?	current members, promise of a better life, greater awareness of other ways of thinking (re: hate)

**Event-Level Controls**

<b>Word Count</b>	Total number of words in turning point event (not including the interviewer's comments and questions)
<b>Fluency</b>	Count of all event-level variables
<b>Flexibility</b>	Count of distinct event-level variables expressed (range: 0 - 25)
<b>Circumplex Affect Fluency</b>	Count of circumplex affect variable expressions

<b>Circumplex Affect Flexibility</b>		Count of distinct circumplex affect variables expressed (range: 0-12)							
<b>Categories of Turning Point Event</b> (0 = No, 1 = Yes)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disillusionment (e.g., social grievances with the society or the world)</li> <li>- Exposure to diversity (e.g., racial conflict or violence)</li> <li>- Incarceration (e.g., contact with extremist beliefs while in prison/jail)</li> <li>- Family (e.g., socialization or indoctrination from relatives)</li> <li>- Friend (e.g., search for belonging or acceptance)</li> <li>- Religion (e.g., religious seeking, quest for significance)</li> <li>- Entertainment (e.g., attracted by music, media, partying)</li> <li>- Work (e.g., exposure to extremist beliefs from co-workers)</li> <li>- Intimate relationship (e.g., exposure to extremist beliefs from non-friend, non-family relationships)</li> <li>- Drugs/alcohol (e.g., attracted by “perks” offered by the group)</li> <li>- Education (e.g., receiving education; educating others)</li> <li>- Violence (e.g., preference for interpersonal violence)</li> </ul>							
	<b>Distinctiveness of Turning Point Event</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>1</b></td> <td>Turning point lacks distinction (very nebulous/hazy/vague)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>2</b></td> <td rowspan="3">Turning point is somewhat distinct (focused around a central theme, but not necessarily one particular point in time)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>4</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>5</b></td> <td>Turning point is very distinct (attached to one event in time)</td> </tr> </table>	<b>1</b>	Turning point lacks distinction (very nebulous/hazy/vague)	<b>2</b>	Turning point is somewhat distinct (focused around a central theme, but not necessarily one particular point in time)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	Turning point lacks distinction (very nebulous/hazy/vague)								
<b>2</b>	Turning point is somewhat distinct (focused around a central theme, but not necessarily one particular point in time)								
<b>3</b>									
<b>4</b>									
<b>5</b>	Turning point is very distinct (attached to one event in time)								

**Person-Level Variables (Likert-Type Ratings)**

These include life before the entry/turning point (e.g., family life, school)

<b>Ideological Variables</b>		
<b>Level of Radicalization</b> (belief/cognitive)	<b>1</b>	Not at all radicalized ( <i>does not believe in the ideology</i> )
	<b>2</b>	Somewhat radicalized ( <i>partially believes in the ideology</i> )
	<b>3</b>	
	<b>4</b>	
	<b>5</b>	Completely radicalized ( <i>fervently believes in the ideology</i> )
<b>Level of Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	Not active ( <i>does not participate/engage in White Supremacist activities</i> )
	<b>1</b>	Active ( <i>participates/engages in White Supremacist activities</i> )
<b>Involvement in Movement Activities</b>  (e.g., might only have one friend but goes to a lot of concerts)	<b>1</b>	Very low ideological support ( <i>does not engage in any activities that are supportive of the White Supremacist ideology</i> )
	<b>2</b>	Moderate ideological support ( <i>sometimes engages in activities that support the White Supremacist ideology</i> )
	<b>3</b>	
	<b>4</b>	
	<b>5</b>	Very high ideological support ( <i>frequently engages in activities that support the White Supremacist ideology</i> )



<b>Social Proximity to Non-Members</b>  (e.g., friends that are non-whites, etc.)	1	No social proximity to non-members ( <i>not in contact with non-members</i> )
	2	
	3	Moderate social proximity to non-members ( <i>has a few friends or acquaintances who are non-members</i> )
	4	
	5	Very strong social proximity to non-members ( <i>stays in frequent contact with non-members</i> )
<b>Political Orientation</b>	1	Very conservative ( <i>is concerned about societal change</i> )
	2	
	3	Moderate or neutral ( <i>not strongly oriented toward the right or the left</i> )
	4	
	5	Very liberal ( <i>wants a variety of societal changes</i> )
<b>Religiosity</b>	1	Very low religiosity ( <i>not at all religious; does not show any signs of being religious; potentially anti-religious</i> )
	2	
	3	Moderate religiosity ( <i>somewhat religious; shows some signs of being religious, but not to a very large extent</i> )
	4	
	5	Very high religiosity ( <i>very religious; religion has had a strong impact; potentially a lifestyle</i> )
<b>Dysfunctional Behaviors</b>	0	Has not exhibited any dysfunctional behaviors before preentry ( <i>no hostility, drug use</i> )
	1	Has exhibited dysfunctional behaviors before preentry ( <i>hostility, drug use</i> )

**Cognitive Variables**

<b>Anxiety</b>	1	Expressed little, if any, anxiety prior to entry ( <i>rarely or never indicated feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, nervousness, etc.</i> )
	2	
	3	Expressed some anxiety prior to entry ( <i>sometimes indicated feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, nervousness, etc.; episodic</i> )
	4	
	5	Expressed a lot of anxiety prior to entry ( <i>frequently indicated feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, nervousness, etc.; generalized</i> )
<b>Guilt and Shame</b>	1	Expressed little, if any, guilt and shame prior to entry ( <i>rarely or never felt guilty or ashamed</i> )
	2	
	3	Expressed some guilt and shame prior to entry ( <i>sometimes felt guilty or ashamed; episodic</i> )
	4	

	5	Expressed a lot of guilt and shame prior to entry ( <i>frequently or constantly guilty or ashamed; generalized</i> )
<b>Persecution</b>  (e.g., directly related to race)	1	Never or rarely felt persecuted for general identity ( <i>no indication of persecution via hateful remarks, stereotyping, etc.</i> )
	2	
	3	Sometimes felt persecuted for general identity ( <i>some indication of persecution via hateful remarks, stereotyping, etc.</i> )
	4	
	5	Frequently felt persecuted for general identity ( <i>several instances of persecution via hateful remarks, stereotyping, etc.</i> )
<b>Reflection</b>	1	Very low reflection ( <i>is not really reflective, if at all, about joining the movement or its effect on current life status</i> )
	2	
	3	Moderate reflection ( <i>is somewhat reflective about joining the movement and how it impacted current life status</i> )
	4	
	5	Very high reflection ( <i>highly reflective about joining the movement and how it impacted current life status</i> )
<b>Educating Self</b>  (e.g., deliberation, reading books, talk to others <u>about the movement</u> )	1	Little to no emphasis on educating oneself ( <i>did not pursue any kind of formal or informal education; educating oneself is seemingly not important at all</i> )
	2	
	3	Some emphasis on educating oneself ( <i>pursued some sort of education for a while, but educating oneself is not very high priority</i> )
	4	
	5	Very strong emphasis on educating oneself ( <i>engaged in a lot of informal education; educating oneself is very important and of high priority</i> )
<b>Mentoring Relationship with Existing/Active Member</b>	1	Little to no emphasis on having a mentor ( <i>no indication that mentoring is a priority or has been received</i> )
	2	
	3	Some emphasis on having a mentor ( <i>received some mentoring, but was infrequent</i> )
	4	
	5	Very strong emphasis on having a mentor ( <i>very much, or frequently, had interactions with a mentor</i> )
<b>Educating Others About the Movement</b>	1	Little to no emphasis on teaching others in general ( <i>no indication that teaching others, in general, is a priority or has been done</i> )
	2	
	3	Some emphasis on teaching others in general ( <i>seems to enjoy or wants to teach others, but does so infrequently or on a very small scale</i> )

(e.g., educate friends)	4	Very strong emphasis on teaching others in general ( <i>very much enjoys teaching others; does so frequently; potentially large-/broad-scale teaching</i> )
	5	

**Risk Factor Variables**

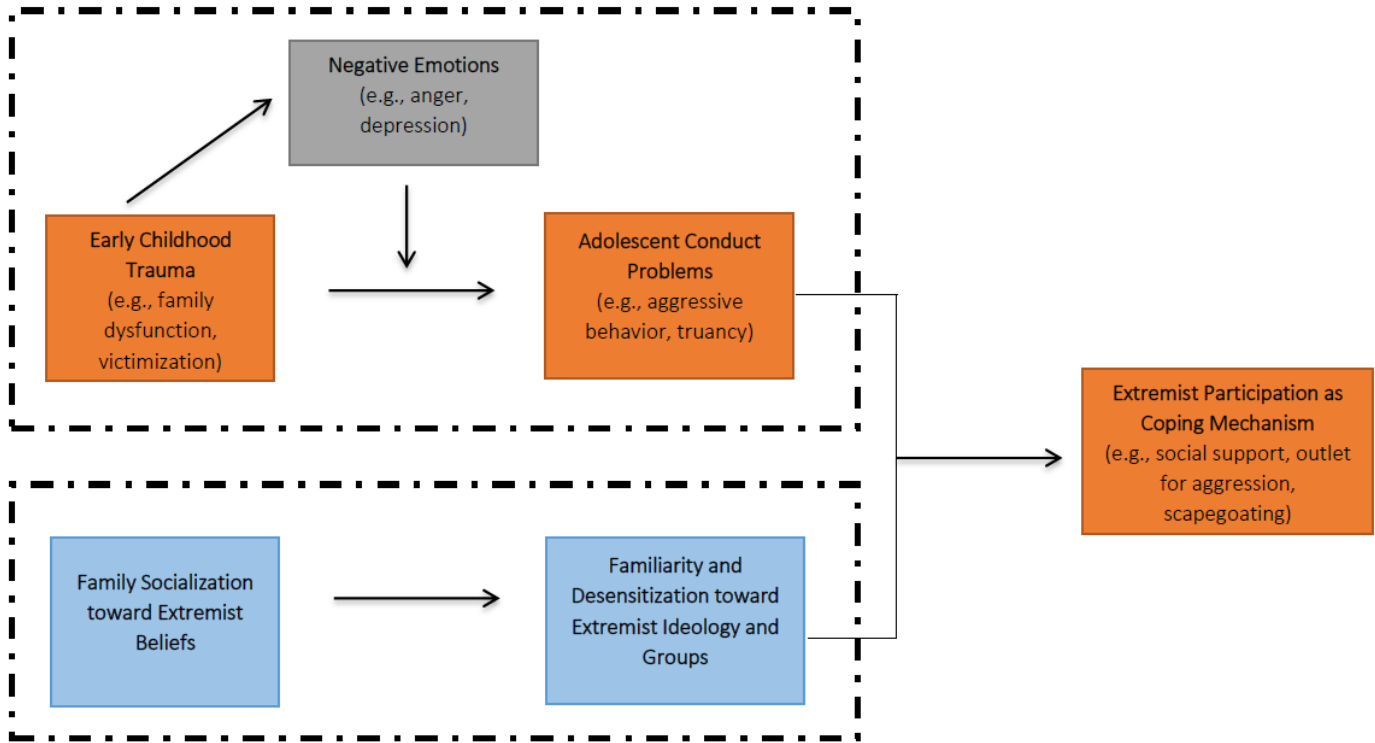
<b>Neighborhood Violence</b>	0	Has not witnessed neighborhood violence
	1	Has witnessed neighborhood violence
<b>Child physical abuse</b>	0	Has not reported child physical abuse
	1	Has reported child physical abuse
<b>Child emotional abuse</b>	0	Has not reported child emotional abuse
	1	Has reported child emotional abuse
<b>Child sexual abuse</b>	0	Has not reported child sexual abuse
	1	Has reported child sexual abuse
<b>Witness Domestic Violence</b>	0	Has not reported witnessing domestic violence
	1	Has reported witnessing domestic violence
<b>Parental Incarceration</b>	0	Has not reported parental incarceration
	1	Has reported one or both parents incarcerated
<b>Childhood neglect</b>	0	Has not reported childhood neglect
	1	Has reported childhood neglect
<b>Parent Substance Use Abuse</b>	0	Has not reported parental substance use
	1	Has reported parental substance use
<b>Parent Divorce</b>	0	Has not reported parental divorce
	1	Has reported parental divorce
<b>Parental Racism</b>	0	Has not reported parental racism
	1	Has reported parental racism

**Person-Level Controls**

<b>Word Count</b>		Total number of words in post-turning point event (not including Pete's)
<b>Age at Entry (Exact)</b>		#
<b>Age at Entry (Ordinal)</b>	1	< 20
	2	20 - 24
	3	25 - 29
	4	30 - 34
	5	> 34
<b>Current Age (as of Interview)</b>		#

<b>Years Since Entry</b>		<b># (or Current Age - Exact Age of Desistance)</b>
<b>Highest Level of Formal Education</b>	<b>1</b>	Some high school
	<b>2</b>	High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)
	<b>3</b>	Some college (including Associate's or Vocational degree)
	<b>4</b>	Bachelor's degree
	<b>5</b>	Any post-Bachelor's degree (e.g., M.A., M.S., Ph.D.)
<b>Previous Contemplations of Entry</b>	<b>1</b>	Did not seem to consider joining prior to turning point
	<b>2</b>	
	<b>3</b>	Briefly or sporadically considered joining prior to turning point
	<b>4</b>	
	<b>5</b>	Strongly and consistently considered joining prior to turning point
<b>Rehearsal of Life History</b>	<b>1</b>	Events have never been told to interested outside parties ( <i>media, interviewers</i> )
	<b>2</b>	
	<b>3</b>	Events have been told a few times to interested outside parties
	<b>4</b>	
	<b>5</b>	Events have been told countless times to interested outside parties
<b>Content Clarity (Transcription Quality)</b>	<b>1</b>	Content was rarely clear ( <i>multiple inaudibles per page; frequently confusing</i> )
	<b>2</b>	
	<b>3</b>	Content was sometimes clear ( <i>sporadic inaudibles; sometimes confusing</i> )
	<b>4</b>	
	<b>5</b>	Content was frequently clear ( <i>minimal inaudibles; easily comprehensible</i> )
<b>Narrative Incoherence (Interviewee's Narrative Quality)</b>	<b>1</b>	Narrative was rarely incoherent ( <i>well-structured; told in a very linear fashion</i> )
	<b>2</b>	
	<b>3</b>	Narrative was sometimes incoherent ( <i>sometimes strayed off the main narrative</i> )
	<b>4</b>	
	<b>5</b>	Narrative was frequently incoherent ( <i>frequent rambling/meandering</i> )

### Appendix C: Trauma Model of Extremist Participation



**Appendix D: Risk Factors and Recruitment Codebooks****RISK FACTOR CODEBOOK  
(Variables 1-31)**

Overall, the *Risk Factor Codebook (Variables 1-31)* contains numerous demographic variables such as age, gender, birthplace, educational background and religious beliefs during childhood. In addition to these descriptive variables, researchers also gathered information related to a number of risk factors such as parental drug abuse, physical or sexual abuse during childhood, participation in delinquent peer groups and history of mental illness. Researchers were also interested in information pertaining to the participant's family structure (e.g., childhood socio-economic status, marital status of parents, number of siblings), military background and history of criminal activities (e.g., property destruction, physical aggression, criminal record).

**Variable 1 - FAMEXTACT**

*Was the person's family involved in extremism?*

- 0 = No
- 1 = Parents
- 2 = Children
- 3 = Sibling
- 4 = Multiple Members (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 = Extended Family (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 = Step-family (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 98 = Not applicable
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 2 - FAMSOC**

*Did family socialization overlap with movement ideas during childhood?*

- 0 = No (if no, skip to question #3)
- 1 = Yes
- 98 = Not applicable
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 2b - WHOFAMSOC**

*Which family member(s) helped socialize movement ideas?*

- 0 = Mother

- 1 = Father
- 2 = Grandparent
- 3 = Sibling (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 = Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 98 = Not applicable
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 2c - TYPFAMSOC**

*What type of socialization occurred on behalf of family members?*

- 0 = Racism
- 1 = Anti-Semitism
- 2 = Homophobia
- 3 = Multiple/Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 98 = Not applicable
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 3 - - CHLDSES**

*Childhood SES (As per subject self-report)*

- 0 = Upper class
- 1 = Middle class
- 2 = Working class
- 3 = Lower class
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 3b - - CURRSES**

*Current SES (As per subject self-report)*

- 0 = Upper class
- 1 = Middle class
- 2 = Working class
- 3 = Lower class
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 4 - - ANNINC**

*Current annual income*

- 0 = Above \$100,000
- 1 = \$75,000-\$99,999
- 2 = \$50,000-\$74,999
- 3 = \$25,000-\$49,999
- 4 = Less than \$25,000

- 5 = Incarcerated
- 98 = Not applicable
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 5 - - EDULEV**

*Education level*

- 0 = Less than high school
- 1 = High school diploma or equivalency
- 2 = Some college
- 3 = 2-year college degree
- 4 = 4-year college degree
- 5 = Graduate school
- 6 = Trade or vocational school
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 5b - - ACAFAIL**

*Academic failure (K-12 yrs.)*

- 0 = None
- 1 = Expelled from school
- 2 = Dropped out of school
- 3 = Special education services
- 4 = Multiple (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 6 - - CURROCC**

*Current Occupation (if incarcerated then use last known employment prior to incarceration)*

- 0 = Professional and higher administrator (e.g., doctor, teacher, banker, government official)
- 1 = Clerical (e.g., clerk, office manager, secretary, bookkeeper)
- 2 = Sales (e.g., Sales manager, shop owner shop assistant, buyer, insurance agent)
- 3 = Service (e.g., restaurant owner, policeman, barber, janitor, military)
- 4 = Skilled worker (e.g., foreman, motor mechanic, printer, seamstress, tool maker, electrician)
- 5 = Unskilled (e.g., laborer, porter, unskilled factory worker)
- 6 = Farm (e.g., farmer, farm laborer, tractor driver)
- 7 = Unemployed
- 8 = Retired
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 7 - - CHRUNEMP**

*Chronic unemployment (chronic unemployment is when a person is unemployed more than 50% during his/her adult years)*

- 0 = No



1 = Yes  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 8 - - MARSTAT**

*Current marital status*

0 = Single  
1 = Married  
2 = Co-habiting  
3 = Engaged but not married  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 8b. - - PREVMARSTAT**

*Most recent previous marital status*

0 = Single  
1 = Married  
2 = Divorced  
3 = Widowed  
4 = Divorced more than once  
5 = Engaged but not married  
6 = Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 9 - - CHLD**

*Children*

0 = No  
1 = Yes  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 10 - - PARINVOL**

*Parental involvement (is the person involved in rearing his/her child)*

0 = No (If no, skip to 11)  
1 = Yes  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 10b -- ABUSIVE**

*Was the subject ever abusive towards a child of theirs (lifetime)?*

0 = Never abusive  
1 = Physically Abusive

- 2 = Verbally Abusive
- 3 = Sexually Abusive
- 4 = Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 98 = Not Applicable
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 10c -- INDOCTRINATION**

*Did the subject ever indoctrinate a child of theirs (did the person actively teach movement rituals, beliefs or values (lifetime))?*

- 0 = Never indoctrinated
- 1 = Used events to indoctrinate
- 2 = Used clothing to indoctrinate
- 3 = Used peer affiliations to indoctrinate
- 4 = Used music to indoctrinate
- 5 = Used videos to indoctrinate
- 6 = Used games to indoctrinate
- 7 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 = Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 98 = Not Applicable
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 11 -- CHLDREL**

*Childhood religious preference*

- 0 = Protestant
- 1 = Catholic
- 2 = Jewish
- 3 = Mormon
- 4 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 = None
- 6 = Christian identity
- 7 = Odinism
- 8 = Christian (denomination unknown)
- 9 = Evangelical
- 99 = Unknown

**Variable 12 -- CURRREL**

*Current religious preference*

- 0 = Protestant
- 1 = Catholic
- 2 = Jewish
- 3 = Mormon

- 4 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
5 = None  
6 = Christian Identity  
7 = Odinism  
8 = Christian  
9 = Evangelist  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 13 - - MENHEA***History of mental illness*

- 0 = No  
1 = Yes (type) \_\_\_\_\_  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 14 - - MENHEAFAM***Family history of mental illness*

- 0 = No  
1 = Yes (type) \_\_\_\_\_  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 15 - - SUBABCUR***Substance abuse (current)*

- 0 = No (if no, skip to 16)  
1 = Yes  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 15b - - CUSUBTYP***Type of substance(s) used*

- 0 = Alcohol  
1 = Marijuana  
2 = Crack, rock  
3 = Cocaine-powdered  
4 = Stimulants (e.g. speed, crystal, ice, adderall)  
5 = Heroin  
6 = Hallucinogens like LSD  
7 = Multiple (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
8 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 16 - - SUBABHIS**

*Substance abuse (history)*

0 = No (if no, skip to 17)

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**Variable 16b - - HISSUBTYP***Type of substance(s) used*

0 = Alcohol

1 = Marijuana

2 = Crack, rock

3 = Cocaine-powdered

4 = Stimulants like speed, crystal, ice

5 = Heroin

6 = Hallucinogens like LSD

7 = Multiple (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 17 - - HISPHYAGG***History of physical aggression (during lifetime)*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**Variable 17b - - PHYAGGTYP***If yes, what type?*

0 = Bodily

1 = Property destruction

2 = Both

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 18 - - SUIIDIDEA***Suicidal ideation (ever in lifetime)*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**Variable 19 - - CHDADISS**

*Childhood & adolescent adjustment issues***19a - - GANGAFF***Gang affiliation*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**19b - - FIRSTRTR***Fire starter (includes any history of arson and/or a reported preference for starting fires as a child and/or adolescence)*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**19c - - RUNNER***Runner (run away)*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**19d - - PROPOFF***Property offenses*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**19e - - TRUANCY***Truancy*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**19f - - PROAUT***Problems with authority (based on subject's perception)*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**19g - - DELPEER***Delinquent peer group*

0 = No

1 = Yes  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 20 - - FAMHISTORY (20a-20i)**  
*Family history during childhood (ever present)*

**20a - - PHYABU**  
*Physical abuse*

0 = No  
1 = Yes  
99 = Unknown

**20b - - WITVIOL**  
*Witness to violence*

0 = No  
1 = Yes  
99 = Unknown

**20c - - TYPVIOUIT**  
*If a witness to violence, what type?*

0 = Domestic violence  
1 = Neighborhood violence (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
2 = Both  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**20d - - FAMCOACH**  
*Family coach (i.e. was there someone in the family who advocated for committing acts of violence?)*

0 = No  
1 = Yes  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**20e - - WHOCOACH**  
*Who did the coaching? - (If yes, who was the coach?)*

0 = Mother  
1 = Father  
2 = Grandparent  
3 = Sibling  
4 = Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
5 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**20f - - NEGLT**

*Neglect*

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes
- 99 = Unknown

**20g - - SEXABU***Sexual abuse*

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes
- 99 = Unknown

**20h - - PARMAR***Status of parents' marriage during childhood (0-18 years old)*

- 0 = Married
- 1 = Divorced/Separated
- 2 = Mother and/or Father Deceased
- 3 = Never Married
- 4 = Biological parents not together (reason unknown)
- 5 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 99 = Unknown

**20i - - ABAND***Child abandoned by mother and/or father*

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes
- 99 = Unknown

**INCARCERATION HISTORY (20j-20l):****20j - - FATINC***Father ever incarcerated*

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes
- 99 = Unknown

**20k - - MOTINC***Mother ever incarcerated*

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes
- 99 = Unknown

**20l - - SIBINC***Siblings ever incarcerated*

0 = No  
1 = Yes (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
99 = Unknown

**21 - - CRMCON**

*Criminal Conduct (Self-report of adult criminal offense committed 18 yrs. and older)*

0 = None  
1 = Property  
2 = Violent  
3 = Other (e.g. drug) (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
4 = Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
5 = Felony record (type unknown)  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 22A - - MILEXP**

*Military experience*

0 = No  
1 = Yes  
99 = Unknown

**22b - - MILBRA**

*Branch of service*

0 = Army  
1 = Navy  
2 = Air Force  
3 = Marine Corps  
4 = Coast Guard  
5 = National Guard  
6 = Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
7 = Foreign military  
8 = Combination of core U.S. branches (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**22c - - MILLEN**

*Length of service*

0 = Less than one year  
1 = 1 to 2 years  
2 = 2 to 3 years  
3 = More than 3 years  
96 = Discharge fitness



97 = Discharge for drug use  
98 = Not applicable (non-veteran)  
99 = Unknown

**22d - - MILLEAV**

*Reason for leaving*

0 = Honorable Discharge  
1 = Dishonorable Discharge  
2 = General discharge  
3 = Discharge for Fitness (Physically unable to perform)  
4 = Discharge for Drug Use  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**22e - - MILSPTR**

*Special military training*

0 = Paratrooper  
1 = Military police  
2 = Tech sergeant  
3 = Platoon leader  
4 = Vehicle gunner/sergeant  
5 = Security detail/sergeant  
6 = Small arms  
7 = Airborne  
8 = Ranger  
9 = Navy Seal  
10 = Green Beret  
11 = Sniper/assassin  
35 = No Special Training  
98 = Not applicable  
99 = Unknown

**Variable 23 - - BRTORD**

*Birth order (note: anyone not "oldest" or "youngest" should be coded as "middle.")*

0 = eldest  
1 = middle  
2 = youngest  
3 = multiple birth  
4 = only child  
99 = unknown

**Variable 24a – ACTTERR**

*Did the person commit an act of terrorism? \*An act of violence by a non-state actor, perpetrated against a civilian population, intended to cause fear in order to achieve a political objective*

0 = No

1 = Yes

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24b – CHARGTERR**

*Was the person charged with an act of terrorism?*

0 = No

1 = Yes

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24c FEDCHRG**

*Was the person indicted on a federal charge?*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24d – FEDTERR**

*Was the person convicted of a federal terrorism charge?*

0 = No

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24e – ACTTERRGRP**

*Was the individual involved with a group when an act of terrorism was committed?*

0 = No (if no, skip to #24g)

1 = Yes

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24f – TERRGRPNAME**

*If yes, which group(s) was the individual involved with when the act of terrorism was committed?*

Write in the name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 24g - LONETERR**

*Did the individual commit the act of terrorism with any other individuals or was it committed alone?*

0 = With Others

1 = Alone

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24h - ACTTERROTHGRP**

*Was the individual involved with any **other** right wing extremist groups prior to committing an act of terrorism?*

0 = No

1 = Yes

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24i - ACTTERRNUMBPRGRP**

*How many prior groups was the individual involved with before committing the act of terrorism (excludes the current group if belonged to one)?*

1 = 1 prior group

2 = 2 prior groups

3 = 3 prior groups

4 = 4 prior groups

5 = 5 prior groups

6 = More than 5 prior groups

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24j - ACTTERRORTIME**

*How much time elapsed between the group involvement that existed prior to the act of terrorism and the actual act itself?*

(Enter this number in months) \_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 24k - CASEOUT**

*Case Outcome*

0 = Acquitted (if no, skip to #25a)

1 = Convicted

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 24l - TIMEINCAR**

*If convicted for act of terror, total amount of time incarcerated*

(Please fill in the amount of time in units of months)\_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 25a - EVERINCRCTD**

*Was the individual ever incarcerated (during his/her lifetime excluding any incarceration for the act of terror)?*

0 = No (if no, skip to 28)

1 = Yes

99 = Unknown

**Variable 25b - TIMEINCAR**

*Total amount of time incarcerated*

(Please fill in the amount of time in units of months)\_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 25c - INCRCTNCASE**

*Incarcerated as a result of the federal case outcome*

0 = No

1 = Yes

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 27d - STILLINCAR**

*If yes, is the person still incarcerated?*

0 = No

1 = Yes

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 27e - YRRELEASE**

*If no, when was the person released?*

(Enter year) \_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 28 - WTNSPRO**

*Witness Protection Program as a Result of the Case Outcome*

0 = No

1 = Yes

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 29 - LIVING**

*Is the person currently alive or deceased? (Only applies for open-source coding)*

0 = Deceased

1 = Alive

99 = Unknown

**Variable 30 - BELIEFS**

*At the time of case outcome did the person accept or renounce extremist beliefs?*

0 = Renounces

1 = Accepts

98 = Not applicable

99 = Unknown

**Variable 31 - CURBELIEFS**

*Does the person currently accept or renounce extremist beliefs?*

0 = Renounces

1 = Accepts

99 = Unknown

## Recruitment Codebook (Variables 1-81)

Broadly speaking, the *Recruitment Codebook (Variables 1-81)* includes variables relating to our participants' initial contact with and entry into violent extremism. For instance, researchers gathered information pertaining to participants' age, location, length of recruitment and the use of extremist propaganda (e.g., literature, music, and internet) at the time of joining an extremist group. In addition to these variables, participants were also asked to provide information about each group they had contact with such as group names, level of involvement (e.g., founder, member), type of group (e.g., Klan, skinhead, neo-Nazis) as well as groups they were members of simultaneously.

### Variable 1 - - Interviewed

*Was the person interviewed by a member of the research team?*

0=No

1=Yes

2=Both

### Variable 2a - - Recruit Name (RCT NME)

*Enter Name*

### Variable 2b - - GENREC

*Gender of Recruited*

0=Female

1=Male

99=Unknown

### Variable 3 - - DOB

*Date of Birth*

**Variable 4 - - RWEGRPMEMB**

*Was the person an associate or member of a right wing extremist group?*

0=No

1=Yes

99=Unknown

**Variable 5a - - SIMULGRPS**

*Was the person an associate or member of multiple groups simultaneously?*

0=No

1=Yes

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 5b - - NUMBSIMULGRPS**

*How many numbers of simultaneous groups was the person an associate or member?*

1=1

2=2

3=3

4=4 or more

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 5c - - WHICHSIMULGRPS**

*Which groups was the person an associate or member of simultaneously?*

*Will code this as needed. For now please indicate which group numbers were simultaneous and it will be entered on an "as needed" basis.*

**Variable 5d - - AGECONTIDEAS**

*Age at initial contact with movement ideas*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

- 3=Adult (25-40)
- 4=Mid-life (41-55)
- 5=Retirement age (56 and older)
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown
- \*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

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## **Recruitment Questions for the Subject's Initial Involvement**

### **Variable 6a - - INVLVGRP1**

*Level of involvement for involvement for the first group*

- 0=Associate/Affiliate
- 1=Member
- 98=Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

### **Variable 6b - - GRPTYP**

*Type of group initially recruited into*

- 0=Klan
- 1=Christian Identity
- 2=National Socialist
- 3=Skinhead
- 4=Hybrid (Specify)
- 5=Militia/paramilitary
- 6 = Sovereign Citizen
- 98=Not applicable
- 99=Unknown (hard to define)

### **Variable 7 - - GRPNME**

*Name of group initially recruited into*

### **Variable 8 - - AGECONTGRP1**

*Age at initial contact with the individual's **first** group of involvement*

- 0=Childhood (0-12)



- 1=Adolescence (13-18)
- 2=Young adult (19-24)
- 3=Adult (25-40)
- 4=Mid-life (41-55)
- 5=Retirement age (56 and older)
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

### **Variable 9 - - AGEJOINGRP**

*Age at time of joining **first** group of involvement*

- 0=Childhood (0-12)
- 1=Adolescence (13-18)
- 2=Young adult (19-24)
- 3=Adult (25-40)
- 4=Mid-life (41-55)
- 5=Retirement age (56 and older)
- 98=Not applicable
- 99=unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

### **Variable 10 - - GEOLOC**

*Geographic Location where recruitment occurred for the individual's **first** group of involvement*  
City, State

### **Variable 11 - - SOCLOC**

*Social location for the individual's **first** group of involvement*

- 0=Home
- 1=School
- 2=Work
- 3=Church
- 4=Neighborhood
- 5=Prison/Jail
- 6=Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 12 - - RELABET**

*Relational contact between recruited and recruiter for the individual's **first** group of involvement*

- 0=Relative (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 1=Schoolmate
- 2=Co-worker
- 3=Inmate
- 4=Friends
- 5=Stranger
- 6=Mentor
- 7=Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 98=Not Applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 13 - - TYPREC**

*Type of recruitment for the individual's **first** group of involvement*

- 0=Direct - (Face-to-Face)
- 1=Indirect (Mediated)
- 2=Combo. Direct & Indirect
- 3=Self-Starter
- 98= Not applicable

**Variable 14 - - MEDIA**

*Media that was used during recruitment for the individual's **first** group of involvement*

- 0=Literature
- 1=Music
- 2=Televisual Material
- 3=Internet
- 4=Combination \_\_\_\_\_
- 98=Not applicable (direct)
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 15 - - CATEVENT**

*Can you identify a single catalyst event for the **first** group of involvement?*

0=No  
1=Yes  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 16 - - NUMBREC**

*Number of recruiters for recruitment in to individual's **first** group of involvement*

1=One  
2=Two  
3=Three or more  
4=Self-starter  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 17a - - AGEREC1**

*Age of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)  
1=Adolescence (13-18)  
2=Young adult (19-24)  
3=Adult (25-40)  
4=Mid-life (41-55)  
5=Retirement age (56 and older)  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99) \_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 17b - - AGEREC2**

*Age of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)  
1=Adolescence (13-18)  
2=Young adult (19-24)  
3=Adult (25-40)  
4=Mid-life (41-55)  
5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99) \_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 17c - - AGEREC3**

*Age of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99) \_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 17d - - AGEREC4**

*Age of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99) \_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 17e - - AGEREC5**

*Age of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99) \_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 18a - - GENDREC1**

*Gender of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 18b - - GENDREC2**

*Gender of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 18c - - GENDREC3**

*Gender of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 18d - - GENDREC4**

*Gender of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 18e - - GENDREC5**

*Gender of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 19a - - LENGREC**

*Length of recruitment for the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=7 days or less  
1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)  
2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)  
3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)  
4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)  
5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 19b - - LENGINVLV**

*Length of Involvement for the individual's **first** group of involvement*

0=7 days or less  
1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)  
2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)  
3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)  
4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)  
5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 20 - - LEVINVOL**

*Level of involvement for the individual's **first** group of involvement*

- 0=Founder
- 1=Leader (non-founder)
- 2=Member (non-core)
- 3=Non-member (but party to conspiracy)
- 4=Non-member (associated with group)
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 21 - - RECALONE**

*Was the person recruited by him/herself for the individual's **first** group of involvement?*

- 0=No (recruited with one or more other individuals)
- 1=Yes (recruited alone)
- 98= Not applicable`
- 99=Unknown

---

**Questions to Determine Additional Group Involvement**

**Variable 22 - - ADDGROUP**

*Did the individual have an additional group involvement other than the **first** group of involvement?*

- 0=No (If no, the survey can end)
- 1=Yes (If yes, continue with the survey instrument)
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 23 - - ADDNUMB**

*Additional number of group involvements*

- 1=1
- 2=2
- 3=3
- 4=4 or more
- 98=Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

---

**Recruitment Questions for the Individual's Second Group Involvement**

**Variable 24a - - INVLVGRP2**

Level of involvement for the ***second*** group of involvement

0=Associate/Affiliate

1=Member

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 24b - - GRPTYP2**

Type of group for ***second*** group involvement

0=Klan

1=Christian Identity

2=National Socialist

3=Skinhead

4=Hybrid (Specify)

5=Militia/paramilitary

6=Sovereign Citizen

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown (hard to define)

**Variable 25 - - GRPNME2**

Name of group for ***second*** group involvement

**Variable 26 - - AGECONTGRP2**

Age at initial contact with the individual's ***second*** group of involvement

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\* if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**



**Variable 27 - - AGEJOINGRP2**

*Age at time of joining group for the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Variable 28 - - GEOLOCGRP2**

*Geographic location where recruitment occurred for the individual's **second** group of involvement*  
City, State

**Variable 29 - - SOCLOCGRP2**

*Social location of initial contact for the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Home

1=School

2=Work

3=Church

4=Neighborhood

5=Prison/Jail

6=Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 30 - - RELABETGRP2**

*Relational contact between recruited and recruiter for the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Relative (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

1=Schoolmate

2=Co-worker

3=Inmate

4=Friends

- 5=Stranger
- 6=Mentor
- 7=Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- 98=Not Applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 31 - - TYPRECGRP2**

*Type of recruitment for the individual's **second** group of involvement*

- 0=Direct -(Face-to-Face)
- 1=Indirect (Mediated)
- 2=Combo. Direct & Indirect
- 3=Self-Starter
- 98= Not applicable

**Variable 32 - - MEDIAGRP2**

*Media that was used during recruitment for the individual's **second** group of involvement*

- 0=Literature
- 1=Music
- 2=Televisual Material
- 3=Internet
- 4=Combination (specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- 98=Not applicable (direct)
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 33 - - CATEVENTGRP2**

*Can you identify a single catalyst event for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement?*

- 0=No
- 1=Yes
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 34 - - NUMBRECGRP2**

*Number of recruiters for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

- 1=One

2=Two  
3=Three or more  
4=Self-starter  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 35a - - AGEREC1GRP2**

*Age of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)  
1=Adolescence (13-18)  
2=Young adult (19-24)  
3=Adult (25-40)  
4=Mid-life (41-55)  
5=Retirement age (56 and older)  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 35b - - AGEREC2GRP2**

*Age of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)  
1=Adolescence (13-18)  
2=Young adult (19-24)  
3=Adult (25-40)  
4=Mid-life (41-55)  
5=Retirement age (56 and older)  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 35c - - AGEREC3GRP2**

*Age of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)  
1=Adolescence (13-18)  
2=Young adult (19-24)  
3=Adult (25-40)  
4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 35d - - AGEREC4GRP2**

*Age of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 35e - - AGEREC5GRP2**

*Age of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 36a - - GENDREC1GRP2**

*Gender of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 36b - - GENDREC2GRP2**

*Gender of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 36c - - GENDREC3GRP2**

*Gender of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 36d - - GENDREC4GRP2**

*Gender of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 36e - - GENDREC5GRP2**

*Gender of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 37a - - LENGRECGRP2**

*Length of recruitment for the individual's **second** group of involvement*

0=7 days or less  
1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)  
2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)  
3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)  
4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)  
5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 37b - - LENGINVLVGRP2**

*Length of involvement for the individual's second group of involvement*

0=7 days or less  
1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)  
2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)  
3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)  
4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)  
5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 38 - - LEVINVOLGRP2**

*Level of involvement for the individual's second group of involvement*

0=Founder  
1=Leader (non-founder)  
2=Member (non-core)  
3=Non-member (but party to conspiracy)  
4=Non-member (associated with group)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 39 - - RECALONEGRP2**

*Was the person recruited by him/herself for the second group of Involvement?*

0=No (recruited with one or more other individuals)  
1=Yes (recruited alone)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

---

### **Recruitment Questions for the Individual's Third Group Involvement**

#### **Variable 40a - - INVLVGRP3**

*Level of involvement for the **third** group*

0=Associate/Affiliate

1=Member

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

#### **Variable 40b - - GRPTYP3**

*Type of group for **third** group involvement*

0=Klan

1=Christian Identity

2=National Socialist

3=Skinhead

4=Hybrid (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

5=Militia/paramilitary

6=Sovereign Citizen

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown (hard to define)

#### **Variable 41 - - GRPNME3**

*Name of group for **third** group involvement*

#### **Variable 42 - - AGECONTGRP3**

*Age at initial contact with the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

### **Variable 43 - - AGEJOINGRP3**

*Age at time of joining group for the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

### **Variable 44 - - GEOLOCGRP3**

*Geographic location where recruitment occurred for the individual's **third** group of involvement*

City, State

### **Variable 45 - - SOCLOCGRP3**

*Social location of initial contact for the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Home

1=School

2=Work

3=Church

4=Neighborhood

5=Prison/Jail

6=Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 46 - - RELABETGRP3**



*Relational contact between recruited and recruiter for the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Relative (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

1=Schoolmate

2=Co-worker

3=Inmate

4=Friends

5=Stranger

6=Mentor

7=Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

98=Not Applicable

99=Unknown

#### **Variable 47 - - TYPRECGRP3**

*Type of recruitment for the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Direct -(Face-to-Face)

1=Indirect (Mediated)

2=Combo. Direct & Indirect

3=Self-Starter

98= Not applicable

#### **Variable 48 - - MEDIAGRP3**

*Media that was used during recruitment for the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Literature

1=Music

2=Televisual Material

3=Internet

4=Combination (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

98=Not applicable (direct)

99=Unknown

#### **Variable 49 - - CATEVENTGRP3**

*Can you identify a single catalyst event for the individual's **third** group of involvement?*

0=No

1=Yes  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 50 - - NUMBRECGRP3**

*Number of recruiters for recruitment into the individual's third group of involvement*

1=One  
2=Two  
3=Three or more  
4=Self-starter  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 51a - - AGEREC1GRP 3**

*Age of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's third group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)  
1=Adolescence (13-18)  
2=Young adult (19-24)  
3=Adult (25-40)  
4=Mid-life (41-55)  
5=Retirement age (56 and older)  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 51b - - AGEREC2GRP3**

*Age of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's third group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)  
1=Adolescence (13-18)  
2=Young adult (19-24)  
3=Adult (25-40)  
4=Mid-life (41-55)  
5=Retirement age (56 and older)  
98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 51c - - AGEREC3GRP3**

*Age of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 51d - - AGEREC4GRP3**

*Age of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 51e - - AGEREC5GRP3**

*Age of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

### **Variable 52a - - GENDREC1GRP3**

*Gender of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 52b - - GENDREC2GRP3**

*Gender of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 52c - - GENDREC3GRP3**

*Gender of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 52d - - GENDREC4GRP3**

*Gender of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **third** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 52e - - GENDREC5GRP3**

*Gender of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's third group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 53a - - LENGRECGRP3**

*Length of recruitment for the individual's third group of involvement*

0=7 days or less

1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)

2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)

3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)

4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)

5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 53b - - LENGINVLVGRP3**

*Length of involvement for the individual's third group of involvement*

0=7 days or less

1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)

2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)

3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)

4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)

5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 54 - - LEVINVOLGRP3**

*Level of involvement for the individual's third group of involvement*

0=Founder  
1=Leader (non-founder)  
2=Member (non-core)  
3=Non-member (but party to conspiracy)  
4=Non-member (associated with group)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 55 - - RECALONEGRP3**

*Was the person recruited by him/herself for the **third** group of involvement?*

0=No (recruited with one or more other individuals)  
1=Yes (recruited alone)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

---

**Recruitment Questions for the Individual's Fourth Group Involvement****Variable 56a - - INVLVGRP4**

*Level of involvement for the **fourth** group*

0=Associate/Affiliate  
1=Member  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 56b - - GRPTYP4**

*Type of group for **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Klan  
1=Christian Identity  
2=National Socialist  
3=Skinhead  
4=Hybrid (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
5=Militia/paramilitary  
98=Not applicable

99=Unknown (hard to define)

**Variable 57 - - GRPNME4**

Name of group for ***fourth*** group involvement

**Variable 58 - - AGECONTGRP4**

Age at initial contact with the individual's ***fourth*** group of involvement

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 59 - - AGEJOINGRP4**

Age at time of joining group for the individual's ***fourth*** group of involvement

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 60 - - GEOLCGRP4**

Geographic Location where recruitment occurred for the individual's ***fourth*** group of involvement  
City, State

**Variable 61 - - SOCLOCGRP4**

*Social location of initial contact for the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Home

1=School

2=Work

3=Church

4=Neighborhood

5=Prison/Jail

6=Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 62 - - RELABETGRP4**

*Relational contact between recruited and recruiter for the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Relative (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

1=Schoolmate

2=Co-worker

3=Inmate

4=Friends

5=Stranger

6=Mentor

7=Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

98=Not Applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 63 - - TYPRECGRP4**

*Type of recruitment for the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Direct - (Face-to-Face)

1=Indirect (Mediated)

2=Combo. Direct & Indirect

98= Not applicable

**Variable 64 - - MEDIAGRP4**

*Media that was used during recruitment for the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*



- 0=Literature
- 1=Music
- 2=Televisual Material
- 3=Internet
- 4=Combination(specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- 98=Not applicable (direct)
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 65 - - CATEVENTGRP4**

*Can you identify a single catalyst event for the fourth group of involvement?*

- 0=No
- 1=Yes
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 66 - - NUMBRECGRP4**

*Number of recruiters for recruitment into the individual's fourth group of involvement*

- 1=One
- 2=Two
- 3=Three or more
- 4=Self-starter
- 98=Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 67a - - AGEREC1GRP4**

*Age of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's fourth group of involvement*

- 0=Childhood (0-12)
- 1=Adolescence (13-18)
- 2=Young adult (19-24)
- 3=Adult (25-40)
- 4=Mid-life (41-55)
- 5=Retirement age (56 and older)
- 98=Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 67b - - AGEREC2GRP4**

*Age of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 67c - - AGEREC3GRP4**

*Age of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_

**Variable 67d - - AGEREC4GRP4**

*Age of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

#### **Variable 67e - - AGEREC5GRP4**

*Age of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

#### **Variable 68a - - GENDREC1GRP4**

*Gender of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

#### **Variable 68b - - GENDREC2GRP4**

*Gender of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

#### **Variable 68c - - GENDREC3GRP4**

*Gender of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 68d - - GENDREC4GRP4**

*Gender of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 68e - - GENDREC5GRP4**

*Gender of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 69a - - LENGRECGRP4**

*Length of recruitment for the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

0=7 days or less  
1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)  
2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)  
3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)  
4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)  
5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)  
98= Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 69b - - LENGINVLVGRP4**

*Length of involvement for the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

- 0=7 days or less
- 1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)
- 2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)
- 3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)
- 4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)
- 5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 70 - - LEVINVOLGRP4**

*Level of involvement for the individual's **fourth** group of involvement*

- 0=Founder
- 1=Leader (non-founder)
- 2=Member (non-core)
- 3=Non-member (but party to conspiracy)
- 4=Non-member (associated with group)
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 71 - - RECALONEGRP4**

*Was the person recruited by him/herself for the **fourth** group of involvement?*

- 0=No (recruited with one or more other individuals)
- 1=Yes (recruited alone)
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

---

**Recruitment Questions for the Individual's Fifth Group Involvement****Variable 72a - - INVLVGRP5**

*Level of Involvement for the **fifth** group*

- 0=Associate/Affiliate
- 1=Member
- 98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 72b - - GRPTYP5**

*Type of group for **fifth** group involvement*

0=Klan

1=Christian Identity

2=National Socialist

3=Skinhead

4=Hybrid (Specify)

5=Militia/paramilitary

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown (hard to define)

**Variable 73 - - GRPNME5**

*Name of group for **fifth** group of involvement*

**Variable 74 - - AGECONTGRP5**

*Age at initial contact with the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Variable 75 - - AGEJOINGRP5**

*Age at time of joining group for the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

### **Variable 76 - - GEOLOCGRP5**

*Geographic location where recruitment occurred for the individual's fifth group of involvement*

City, State

### **Variable 77 - - SOCLOCGRP5**

*Social location of initial contact for the individual's fifth group of involvement*

0=Home

1=School

2=Work

3=Church

4=Neighborhood

5=Prison/Jail

6=Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

### **Variable 78 - - RELABETGRP5**

*Relational contact between recruited and recruiter for the individual's fifth group of involvement*

0=Relative (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

1=Schoolmate

2=Co-worker

3=Inmate

4=Friends

5=Stranger

6=Mentor

7=Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

98=Not Applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 79 - - TYPRECGRP5**

Type of recruitment for the individual's ***fifth*** group of involvement

- 0=Direct - (Face-to-Face)
- 1=Indirect (Mediated)
- 2=Combo. Direct & Indirect
- 3=Self-Starter
- 98= Not applicable

**Variable 80 - - MEDIAGRP5**

Media that was used during recruitment for the individual's ***fifth*** group of involvement

- 0=Literature
- 1=Music
- 2=Televisual Material
- 3=Internet
- 4=Combination (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 98=Not applicable (direct)
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 81 - - CATEVENTGRP5**

Can you identify a single catalyst event for the ***fifth*** group of involvement?

- 0=No
- 1=Yes
- 98= Not applicable
- 99=Unknown

**Variable 82 - - NUMBRECGRP5**

Number of recruiters for recruitment into the individual's ***fifth*** group of involvement

- 1=One
- 2=Two
- 3=Three or more
- 4=Self-starter
- 98=Not applicable
- 99=Unknown



**Variable 83a - - AGEREC1GRP5**

*Age of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 83b - - AGEREC2GRP5**

*Age of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 83c - - AGEREC3GRP5**

*Age of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 83d - - AGEREC4GRP5**

*Age of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 83e - - AGEREC5GRP5**

*Age of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Childhood (0-12)

1=Adolescence (13-18)

2=Young adult (19-24)

3=Adult (25-40)

4=Mid-life (41-55)

5=Retirement age (56 and older)

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**\*if exact year or timeframe is known record in ( )**

**Secondary (1-99)\_\_\_\_\_**

**Variable 84a - - GENDREC1GRP5**

*Gender of recruiter number one for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Female

1=Male

98=Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 84b - - GENDREC2GRP5**

*Gender of recruiter number two for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 84c - - GENDREC3GRP5**

*Gender of recruiter number three for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 84d - - GENDREC4GRP5**

*Gender of recruiter number four for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 84e - - GENDREC5GRP5**

*Gender of recruiter number five for recruitment into the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Female  
1=Male  
98=Not applicable  
99=Unknown

**Variable 85a - - LENGRECGRP5**

*Length of recruitment for the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=7 days or less  
1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)  
2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)  
3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)

4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)

5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 85b - - LENGINVLVGRP5**

*Length of involvement for the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=7 days or less

1=8 to 180 days (8 days to 6 months)

2=181 to 365 days (6 months to 1 year)

3=366 to 730 days (1 year to 2 years)

4=731 to 1825 days (2 years to 5 years)

5=1826 days or more (5 years or more)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 86 - - LEVINVOLGRP5**

*Level of involvement for the individual's **fifth** group of involvement*

0=Founder

1=Leader (non-founder)

2=Member (non-core)

3=Non-member (but party to conspiracy)

4=Non-member (associated with group)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown

**Variable 87 - - RECALONEGRP5**

*Was the person recruited by him/herself for the **fifth** group of involvement?*

0=No (recruited with one or more other individuals)

1=Yes (recruited alone)

98= Not applicable

99=Unknown