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Neo-Nazi Music Subculture

Steven Windisch and Pete Simi

Introduction

The U.S. white supremacist movement is comprised of multiple overlapping groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, Christian Identity, racist skinheads, Posse Comitatus, and segments of the antigovernment militia, patriot, and sovereign citizen movements (Blee, 2002; Simi, 2010).

White supremacists are not defined by a formal cohesive structure but, rather, are characterized by numerous groups and individuals scattered throughout the U.S. and abroad. Although there are differences among the various branches in the white supremacist movement, they typically agree on several core tenets (Burris, Smith and Strahm, 2000). One of the most pervasive is the belief that the Aryan race is being polluted by race mixing and multiculturalism. In this way, white supremacists see themselves as victims of a world that is on the threshold of racial conflict (Blee, 2002).

Many white supremacists believe a racial conflict will develop into a war between whites and nonwhites. The idea of a future racial holy war (“RAHOWA”) unites Aryans around genocidal fantasies against Jews, African Americans, Hispanics, homosexuals, and anyone who stands in opposition to their advancement (Michael, 2006). In addition, white supremacists also

endorse conservative beliefs and traditional male-dominant heterosexual families and oppose homosexuality (Simi and Futrell, 2015).

A review of the history of white supremacist movements reveals their leaders have relied extensively on media technologies to spread the movement's unifying ideologies, including numerous print mediums, films, radio broadcasts, audio recorded speeches, and music as well as the internet (McVeigh, 2009). These forms of propaganda include emotion-laden information targeted at a particular audience, which is designed to utilize significant influence in terms of both beliefs and practices (see McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011; Victoroff, 2005; Hoffman, 2006). Propaganda creates a narrative intended to resonate with target audiences to achieve various goals including persuading individuals to initiate and sustain organizational commitment (Payne, 2009; Ellul, 1969).

Over time, the white supremacist movement has experienced success in film and print. For instance, D. W. Griffith filmed the silent movie *Birth of a Nation*, which portrays the Ku Klux Klan as a heroic force against Reconstruction following the Civil War. During its initial showing in 1915, *Birth of a Nation* grossed an estimated \$10 million in revenue (McVeigh, 2009; Ridgeway, 1990). In terms of print, white supremacists have historically relied on fliers and leaflets to inform the public about their beliefs and to help recruit new members (Aho, 1990), although white supremacists also rely on full-length novels to distribute propaganda. For example, *The Turner Diaries* is one of the most well-known and popular of these novels within white supremacist social networks. *The Turner Diaries* depicts a future race war between whites and nonwhites, which concludes with a violent revolution against the federal government. *The Turner Diaries* remains a major piece of literature among members of white supremacist groups

and has been a source of influence among various violent plots committed on behalf of the larger movement (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2004).

While different types of media have been essential in the formation and growth of the white supremacist movement, the focus of the current chapter is on the white power music scene. Music has contributed to the circulation of extremist beliefs in recent years (Futrell, Simi, and Gottschalk, 2006). Dyck (2016) defines “white power music” as *any music produced and distributed by individuals who are actively trying to advance what they view as a white power or pro-white racist agenda* (p. 3). Throughout this chapter, we examine several dimensions of white power music including its use in the recruitment process as well as its international popularity and financial contribution to the broader white supremacist movement. We highlight how white power music functions as a unifying experience for white supremacists across the globe. For these individuals, music creates a real-world physical “scene” where activists can gather to express hostility toward the powerful and share in their collective Aryan identity.

Recently, there has been a renewed focus regarding the “scene” concept, especially as it relates to music (Peterson, 1997). Research in this area is beginning to map more precisely the music scene’s conceptual meaning and empirical aspects (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006; Dyck, 2016). By music scene, we mean the elements of a social movement’s culture that are explicitly organized around music that participants regard as important for supporting movement ideals and activist identities (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). A music scene is an interactive experience that draws participants into a collective understanding of identity, politics, and a way of life (Dyck, 2016).

In general, scenes support a highly symbolic belief system centered on linguistic and behavioral codes. While these spaces provide an atmosphere for attendees to participate in a

symbolic experience, they are also available in a variety of ways for less committed activists to express a collective identity (Gaines, 1994; Irwin, 1977). In terms of the current chapter, a movement music scene includes those instances in which activists rely on music to promote a collective identity and express collective grievances. Music scenes are developed through the formation of alliances and partnerships that are centered on musical styles and a shared “sense of purpose” (Straw, 1991, p. 273). In addition, a music scene depends on shared beliefs about the nature, value, and authenticity of music-oriented movement occasions (Grazian, 2004).

The crowds that gather in the white power music scene participate in collective rituals that help bond them to the Aryan race. White power music shows are typically exclusive events that establish boundaries between who is “in” and “out” and, thus, define the social group. The activities and ceremonies organized around music can “produce a sense of community” (Straw, 1991, p. 373) that is expressive, stimulating, thrilling, and affirming (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). Music is a unifying pillar across the white supremacist movement. White supremacists use music to express religious grievances, publicize movement activities, and strengthen commitments across the globe, and music is one of the most persistent means of racist expression among Aryans (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). Performers and listeners of white power music view it as a form of political activism (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006) that helps them stay firmly committed to their cause by reminding them why they fight for Aryan supremacy. The white power music scene attracts a range of participants from the highly committed to the simply curious (Fox, 1987). For those who are highly committed, the music scene provides experiences that reinforce their activism and provides a sense of pleasure that these individuals may not find elsewhere. In the next section, we start this discussion by

introducing the genesis of white power music in Europe's punk rock scene throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Punk Music and the Birth of the Global White Power Music Scene

The most popular style of music among white supremacists is referred to as “Oi! punk rock,” which is comprised of heavy guitar riffs, hard drumming, and vocals that mimic fast-paced chants. Punk rock is viewed as a “do-it-yourself” (DIY) style of rock and roll. At their core, punk rockers were known for their music that rejected mainstream values and expressed hostility toward upper- and middle-class standards. Often, punk lyrics were embedded with themes of nihilism, narcissism, anarchy, and violence (Dyck, 2016; Hebdige, 1979). Instead of emphasizing working-class heritage, punk music emphasized anger with the upper-class society and hostile treatment from the government and media. These themes fit well with the white supremacists' concern for the decline of the working class and distrust toward governmental officials (Blee, 2002). Despite the punks' tendency to emphasize hostility and violence, the majority of bands associated with early punk rock music were not white supremacists, and very few of the bands' members were skinheads who had affiliations with national socialist organizations (Dyck, 2016).

Although skinheads existed during the 1960s, these groups remained relatively small and locally focused on neighborhood issues. One of the most notable characteristics of these early skinheads was their lack of mobility and growth (Hamm, 1994). In fact, many of these skinhead groups had all but dissolved by the time punks emerged in the mid-1970s. This second wave of

skinheads developed as an alternative of the anti-middle-class discourse. Rather than circulating themes of anarchism and nihilism, many punk rockers drifted toward racist politics and antigovernment rhetoric. Largely due to the floundering British economy, working-class skinheads experienced financial difficulties, which stimulated their involvement with ultra-right-wing and neo-Nazi political groups (Dyck, 2016). Although punks' rejection of all conventional behavior and norms would eventually create rifts with skinheads, some aspects of the punk style contributed to the regeneration of the skinhead "style" (Hebdige, 1979).

In fact, punks were among the first to establish a connection with Nazi imagery and clothing attire. In an effort to adopt styles that maximize shock value, some punks developed an interest in 1930s Nazi Germany and displayed swastikas on T-shirts and armbands in public (Hebdige, 1979). There is some debate among academics as to whether the affiliation with Nazism primarily reflected a desire for shock appeal or the surfacing of racist elements within the scene (Dyck, 2016). Regardless, the punk scene developed an underground network of printed news sources, called "fanzines," which the skinheads would eventually adopt in order to keep members informed of changes throughout the scene and propagate their ideological belief system (Cotter, 1999, p. 116).

In terms of music, the punk rock sound morphed from the Oi! styles of the 1960s and 1970s English working-class culture to a much more racially charged orientation. Its roots can be traced to the late-1970s British group called Skrewdriver, whose hard rock sound became a staple for white power music (Simi and Futrell, 2015; Goodrick-Clarke, 2002; Ware and Back, 2002). Their new, punk-derived form of skinhead music revolutionized the white power music scene in the late 1970s with a punk subgenre called street punk or Oi! (Dyck, 2016). Skrewdriver appealed to a growing number of American and European skinheads who were attracted to

extreme right-wing politics and white supremacist ideology during the 1980s. Today, Skrewdriver is sometimes referred to as the “godfather” of white power music (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006, p. 282). While Skrewdriver has since disbanded following the death of lead singer Ian Stuart Donaldson in 1993, the band continues to represent a focal point of Aryan kinship among white supremacists.

Quickly after emerging as a popular scene among British youth, the white power music scene expanded to neighboring countries. Over the last four decades, the white power music scene has developed into an international web of musicians and fans. Both local and international bands scattered throughout the world record music, release albums, and tour the world playing music. This growth began in the late 1970s and developed throughout the mid-1990s. For instance, between 1975 and 1980, Eastern European countries like the Ukraine, Belarus, and Greece experienced the arrival of white power music (Dyck, 2016). In a short period, these countries became homes to an energetic white power music scene characterized by bands that promote both national heritage and white supremacist beliefs. Both Russia and Poland emerged as international hosts for white power and neo-Nazi music scenes in the mid-1990s. Many of these scenes are still vibrant today (Dyck, 2016).

Similar developments occurred simultaneously in Western European countries. For instance, countries like France, Germany, Spain, and Italy are known for a white power music scene that mixes ideological elements of the white supremacist movement with aspects of nationalism and European fascism (Dyck, 2016). For a brief period, Sweden emerged as a major international white power music scene, but its size and popularity have rapidly diminished since the early 2000s (Dyck, 2016).

While the U.S. and Canada host the biggest white power music scenes in North and South America, countries such as Argentina and Brazil also cater to local white power bands. These scenes initially developed at the same time as white power music emerged in European countries throughout the 1980s. Unlike the European white power music scene that gradually laced neo-Nazi themes into their music, Latin American white power bands expressed clear neo-Nazi rhetoric from their inception. For instance, first appearing in Argentina in 1983, Comando Suicida (Spanish for “suicide command”) appeared on stage with overt neo-Nazi lyrics and racist imagery (Dyck, 2016). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, other white power skinhead bands had begun to appear in Argentina. Few of these groups, however, experienced the permanence of Comando Suicida. Nonetheless, these bands did contribute to a persistent white power music scene in Argentina that continues to exist today.

As this discussion illustrates, one of the strengths of the white power music scene is its ability to transcend national and international boundaries. In doing so, the white power music scene connects locales that otherwise would remain fragmented. In the next section, we examine the specific elements that characterize the white power music scene in the United States.

Overview of U.S. White Power Music Scene

Over the last two decades, one of the most consistent research findings regarding white supremacist extremism is the ease with which white power music acts as a vessel for the spread of the groups’ ideological belief system (Cotter, 1999; Dyck, 2016; Simi and Futrell, 2015). According to Dyck (2016), the term “white power music” refers to an overarching social system that includes both local and international scenes that span the world. Although many local white

power music scenes have little interaction with one another and often disagree about the future direction of the white supremacist movement, these music scenes provide the unifying dimension needed to sustain growth and longevity.

One strength of the white power music scene is its ability to cater to a variety of musical preferences. For instance, there are several different genres of white power music, ranging from standard rock and roll to Oi! punk rock (Eyerman, 2002). Other styles include national socialist death metal (NSDM), country and western as well as techno and Aryan folk. While there are many styles of white power music, white power rock is the most popular.

Music provides listeners with a narrative for making sense of their social environment (Bennett and Peterson, 2004). White power music provides an image of a world in which the movement's values are broadly accepted among the individuals who participate within these symbolically meaningful events (Cotter, 1999; Simi and Futrell, 2015). In this sense, the white power music scene is an influential part of a wider movement culture in which activists routinely enact and express movement ideals in settings organized around music. These are not discrete one-time events but rather an interconnected web of situations that members experience as a relatively coherent lifestyle related to the broader movement.

In terms of the historical genesis of white power music, several of the first musicians emerged in the U.S. as a reaction to the American civil rights movement and the efforts to dismantle Jim Crow segregation (Dyck, 2016). The most notable artist, Clifford "Johnny Rebel" Trahan, wrote and recorded songs such as "Kajun Klu Klux Klan," "Nigger Hatin' Me," and "Move Them Niggers North." The Ku Klux Klan supported racist musicians like Trahan and helped to distribute records across U.S. Southern states in the early 1970s (Dyck, 2016). While the Southern-based hate country music scene dissolved in the late-1970s, the influence of racist

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Oi! punk rock surfaced in North America during the early 1980s, where it circulated among racially and politically charged white power skinheads.

Lead by bands such as Bound for Glory, Aggravated Assault, Bully Boys, Max Resist, and The Hooligans, white power music grew as a persistent form of racist expression. Other bands continued to emerge during the 1980s, but the most rapid growth occurred in the late 1990s (Simi and Futrell, 2015; Dyck, 2016), though Skrewdriver has remained the most notorious white power rock band (Goodrick-Clarke, 2002).

The lyrical content within white power music places a strong emphasis on maintaining Aryan values through nationalistic pride, political activism, racial loyalty, and kinship. White power music consistently expresses themes found in contemporary right-wing extremist rhetoric such as hypermasculinity, nationalistic pride, and racial superiority (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). For instance, white power lyrics convey ideas related to a coming race war between whites and minorities in which the Aryan race will reclaim world dominance. Various songs also address an alleged global Jewish conspiracy that seeks to eradicate the white race (Cotter, 1999).

In terms of violent lyrical content, themes of racist hatred aimed at African Americans, homosexuals, immigrants, and Jewish people are conveyed in song titles, album artwork, and band names. For example, “You Better Start Running,” “Murder Squad,” “Hate Filled Mind,” and “Asian Invasion” are some of the song titles created by bands such as Extreme Hatred, Angry Aryans, and Blue Eyed Devils (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014). While scholars have warned of the potential dangers of prolonged exposure to this form of racist propaganda and its connection to racial violence (Hamm, 1994), there is currently no clear evidence that links white power music and violence. Instead, what is clear is the central role music plays in promoting

white power ideals which, in some cases, helps galvanize a range of political action including extremist violence (Simi and Futrell, 2015).

In addition to promoting ideological themes, white power music is used to create social occasions in which white supremacists feel unified. In the next section, we examine how the white power music scene functions as a series of free spaces for white supremacists.

Free Spaces, Festivals, and Bar Shows

In general, free spaces allow adherents to enact their values in situations that minimize opposing opinions, create miniature versions of their ideal societies, and help facilitate white power identity formation (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Free spaces are environments in which activists can propagate beliefs that run counter to those of the mainstream without fear of opposition and ridicule. This aspect of music in social movements is particularly important to individuals like white power activists, for whom group membership bears a heavy social stigma in most Western countries (Simi and Futrell, 2009). Free spaces can also help current members teach prospective recruits about white power ideology without subjecting them to tedious lectures or speeches.

White supremacists unite in a variety of locations to listen to white power music. These settings include face-to-face environments such as concerts and festivals as well as virtual spaces such as chatrooms on internet websites (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Concerts and music festivals are the scene's primary face-to-face opportunities for participants to experience a level of camaraderie and fellowship that virtual participation is unable to provide. Multiday festivals, such as Aryan Fest and Hammerfest, however, are the largest and most elaborate dimension of the scene. At their height, these musical festivals attracted between 400 and 600 white

supremacists from local, national, and even international white power social networks (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006).

Bar shows are also core events for the white power music scene and among the main occasions movement organizers use to unite white power activists. Bar shows are typically local events that draw different branches of white supremacists from the surrounding cities and local regions (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Small bar shows are the most frequently organized music events and typically draw anywhere from 50 to 100 white power members from a particular geographic locale. These events usually feature three or four bands and tend to draw a crowd of regulars. The smallest of these events attract between 20 and 30 people, whereas 150 to 200 activists might attend the larger bar shows from both the local scene and scenes outside the area (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Many white supremacists come from their own vibrant local scene and share information about their favorite bands, styles, and movement experiences. These events are often organized around popular white power bands that arrange music tours connecting several different cities. In some cases, a European or Australian band will travel to the U.S. (or a U.S. band will travel abroad) and perform at various shows, creating a modified version of a music tour.

In this sense, the local bar shows help establish network links between local and international dimensions of the white power scene. The benefit of linking various local scenes is that white supremacist organizers create opportunities for members in one local scene to experience live performances by bands celebrated in other geographical regions (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). Since these performers are often among the most popular across the entire white power music scene, many attendees will have listened to their recordings and discussed the meaning of lyrics with one another prior to attending the show.

During bar shows and concerts, organizers who promote white power music encourage a sense of purpose and camaraderie among activists (Simi and Futrell, 2015). The organizers often distribute movement propaganda while talking with potential recruits about their beliefs. In addition, these individuals stock the bar with white power CDs, stickers, band T-shirts, and white power literature (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Bands work alongside white power recruiters by selling merchandise to potential recruits and encouraging them to befriend current members in the movement (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Organizers often have difficulty finding venues that are willing to host white power music shows, as club owners are often sensitive to the stigma associated with white power music (Simi and Futrell, 2015). The bars that do not immediately reject the idea of hosting a white power concerts are likely to experience negative publicity and protests from civil rights organizations.

Whether it is a multiday music festival or a small bar concert, each setting brings a range of people together around white power music in order to foster a sense of purpose and belonging to a community whose members adhere to racial supremacy (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). The white power music scene is the epicenter for white supremacist ritual and collective unity, connecting groups across the county and globe. In the following section, we discuss the ritualistic dimensions of the white power music scene.

White Power Music Rituals

The use of ritualistic events organized around music is a common practice among social movements. Since Durkheim (1915), researchers have viewed rituals as deeply emotional events that express meaning about social relationships in relatively intense ways (Taylor and Whittier,

1995; Collins, 2004). Rituals have been examined as symbolic performances that express conflict (Goffman, 1959), 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 and Whittier, 1992). According to Sardiello (1994), when music is pitted in the backdrop of ritualistic contexts, social actors are able to interpret and define their social worlds.

White supremacists talk about feelings of unity and companionship as part of the typical experience at white power music shows. These feelings are amplified through movement rituals performed by band members and attendees (Simi and Futrell, 2015). In addition, music rituals allow participants to process the lyrics and musical sounds in a meaningful way. White supremacists attribute pride, pleasure, and solidarity to the music itself and the collective activities around music. In particular, live white power music shows reinforce activists’ racial pride and collective identity through various rituals. For example, white power skinheads commonly perform a semi-choreographed, boot-stomping dance that evokes power, violence, and militarism (Simi and Futrell, 2015). The dance usually involves 10 to 20 people stomping and rotating in a circular formation. Sometimes, one person moves to the center, crouching and stomping, circling in the opposite direction and growling or shouting at the other skinheads. The skinhead at the center will then run into the circled white supremacists in a feigned but very physical attempt to escape the circle. After several minutes, a new skinhead moves to the center, and the ritual continues in a repetitive fashion (Simi and Futrell, 2015). These dance rituals reflect an overall hypermasculine and communitarian spirit present at white power music shows.

Another common music ritual is referred to as “slam dancing.” This performance is less choreographed but no less ritualistic. The slam dance involves aggressive pushing and crashing

and acting out moves of a mock fight as part of a violent stylistic performance. Slam dancing sometimes escalates into actual brawls between two or more white supremacists, which the other dancers usually break up after a minute or two (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Less frequently, the brawls spread to the larger group and can escalate out of control. To an outsider, the fights can seem like a sign of conflict among white supremacists. In most instances, however, the fighting is another part of the ritualistic experience that white supremacists use to distinguish themselves as racial warriors (Simi and Futrell, 2015).

In addition to aggressive dances, white supremacists perform ritual chants in which attendees in unison shout “Sieg Heil!” and “White power!” These chants are typically accompanied by Nazi salutes, which involve the straight extension of one’s arm at an upward angle towards the sky. Often, white supremacists combine their chants and dances with displays of white power symbols. While some activists wear tank tops, others go bare-chested to display racist tattoos and “battle scars.” Others wear jackets and T-shirts with white power patches that indicate their membership in local or national groups (Simi and Futrell, 2015). Attendees report the collective experience of shouting racist expressions is exhilarating and enhances their sense of racial unity (Simi and Futrell, 2015). According to Collins (2004), a shared focus of attention during performances can heighten participants’ “emotional energy,” thereby strengthening feelings of collective unity. Among its many functions, white power music also lends itself to recruitment efforts by introducing potential recruits to an antiestablishment subculture of violence. We now turn to the utility of the white power music scene for recruitment purposes.

White Power Music as a Recruitment Tool

The white power music scene is more than a source of entertainment for white supremacists. Music is a propaganda tool used to spread an alternative lifestyle and various ideological messages to a much wider audience (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). In fact, one of the greatest strengths of white power music is its ability to transcend national borders. White power music has an international presence that connects Aryans from a wide range of social, economic and political conditions (Cotter, 1999).

White power music is a transmission device, capable of spreading racist and anti-Semitic beliefs to potential white supremacist recruits (Schafer, Mullins and Box, 2014; Simi, Windisch and Sporer, 2016). In this way, white power music is an effective recruitment tool because it allows recruiters to infuse musical lyrics with radical beliefs. In some scenarios, potential recruits may hang around without pressure to participate in extremist activities, but prolonged exposure to white power music has the potential to lead to an increase in an individual's level of ideological indoctrination (Simi, Windisch and Sporer, 2016). The white power music scene is also an attractive atmosphere in which more generic peer influence such as camaraderie occurs within a particular ideological context (Schafer, Mullins and Box, 2014; Cotter, 1999).

White supremacists will often organize their recruitment efforts around the music scene. In a recent study, Simi and colleagues (2016) analyzed recruitment patterns among 45 former far-right extremists. This project focused on several dimensions including risk factors related to involvement, initial exposure to right-wing extremism, and the entry process. Findings from their study underscore the significance of white power music as an important part of what generates and sustains recruits. For instance,

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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.

(Chester, Volksfront, 10/22/13)

Skrewdriver music is what made it acceptable. It was about our country, it was nationalism. Everybody started taking to Skrewdriver. That was a big thing, to understand the lyrical content of the music.

(Jim, WAR Skin, 5/22/14)

As these participants suggest, white power music provides an avenue for current members to establish contact with potential recruits. In addition, music provides recruiters with an alternative way to educate new members about the group's ideological belief system by using music; a common form of culture prevalent across most, if not all, social systems (Bennett and Peterson, 2004).

How effective white power music actually is as a recruiting tool for white supremacist groups is still under investigation (Dyck, 2016). It is clear that white supremacist leaders anticipated that their involvement with the white power music industry would increase recruitment of new members into their organizations. In many cases, white supremacist members believe that white power music has contributed to their growth and longevity by establishing networks around the globe and creating revenue for the movement (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). In the next section, we discuss the white power music scene's ability to generate revenue for the larger white supremacist movement through record companies and merchandise sales available on internet websites.

Record Companies and the Internet

The goal of white power music is to create alternatives to mainstream music genres by producing music that articulates white supremacist beliefs (Simi and Futrell, 2015). These belief systems are linked to occasions and experiences in which white supremacist ideologies are promoted on both a national and international level. Many white supremacist gatherings include white power music produced by more than 100 U.S. and 200 international white power bands spread across more than 22 countries (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014). Although the white power music scene spans the globe, the music scene is relatively underground, although this varies considerably by country (Dyck, 2016). Historically, the availability of white power music was limited to bootleg cassette tapes; however, as the virtual dimension of the white power music scene grew, access became readily available (Simi and Futrell, 2015).

While figures vary over time, recent estimates indicate there are around 40 multimedia white power music companies based in North America (Simi and Futrell, 2015). The majority of these small, independent businesses are operated by two or three people selling and distributing white power music. There are, however, larger labels formally affiliated with various national organizations. These labels also sell merchandise, organize live concerts, and promote multiday festivals (Simi and Futrell, 2015). White supremacist recording companies organize and support music festivals by promoting the shows through their extensive internet presence.

Historically, the white supremacist movement relied on two relatively large music production companies: Resistance Records and Free Your Mind Productions (formally Panzerfaust). After being formed by several white power activists, Resistance Records was eventually purchased by the National Alliance. After Panzerfaust was founded, the record

company quickly began operating under the umbrella of the Hammerskin Nation (Dyck, 2016). Due to constitutional protections in the U.S., Resistance Records and Free Your Mind Productions were able to gain a level of permanence that European white power music companies were unable to achieve. At their height, Resistance Records and Free Your Mind Production served as a “retail clearinghouse” for white supremacists (Simi and Futrell, 2015, p. 82). In the first 18 months of operation, Resistance Records reported that it sold 50,000 CDs and turned a US\$300,000 profit (Dyck, 2016). These profits were largely the result of internet distribution networks designed to sell CDs, MP3s, and white power merchandise including books, videos, jewelry, posters, and clothing. In addition to selling merchandize, these websites also provided access to streaming radio, music reviews, and internet forums in which white power music fans and activists could exchange information and discuss new developments in the movement. The popularity of white power music provided white supremacist organizations with an important financial resource (Dyck, 2016).

While Resistance Records experienced a period of financial success, the company began deteriorating after William Pierce’s death in 2002. In the months following Pierce’s death, Resistance Records was turned over to Erich Gliebe. Despite early success, Gliebe lost control of Resistance Records and finally closed its doors in 2012. Panzerfaust Records experienced a similar fate. After initially developing strong ties with Hammerskin Nation, Volksfront, and White Revolution, Panzerfaust Records eventually folded due to legal difficulties and financial issues. The most harmful blow, however, emerged when Panzerfaust Records’ founder Anthony Pierpont was identified as “nonwhite” and a copy of his Mexican birth certificate was posted online (Simi and Futrell, 2015; Dyck, 2016). Although new management took control of Panzerfaust Records’ website and renamed it Free Your Mind Productions, the label closed in

2005). Although these two labels are now defunct, white power music is still accessible on various movement websites and has since moved into more mainstream multimedia platforms such as iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, YouTube, and iHeartRadio (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014).

Concluding Remarks

The current chapter focused on several issues. First, we sought to introduce the national and international dimensions of the white power music scene. In doing so, we discussed the global reach of the white power music scene across Europe as well as North and South America. In addition, we also illustrated the virtual dimension that characterize the international network of white power music. As part of this international network, white power record companies serve as revenue streams for the broader white supremacist movement.

Second, we stressed the social function of white power music. The white power music scene extends across both physical settings (e.g., bar shows, concerts, and multiday festivals) and virtual settings (e.g., websites, streaming radio, and chatrooms; Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). Face-to-face and virtual experiences nurture a collective identity among Aryans and reinforce their commitment to white supremacy. Recently, some efforts have been made to limit the trade of white power music, but these attempts have been largely unsuccessful. In most Western countries, with the exception of the U.S., white power music has been banned (Dyck, 2016). The largest producers in Europe have been raided several times, but customers can easily obtain this music on the internet.

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Caution should be taken when considering strategies to counter the appeal of white power music. Various strategies may have unintentional consequences. White power scenes generally and music-related occasions in particular may provide a release valve for violent tendencies. These spaces may cultivate social relationships that discourage some of the most violent action. Dismantling these spaces would likely lead to the splintering of white supremacist networks and the development of small, leaderless terror cells and/or violent lone actors.

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