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Music in Movement: Cultural Politics and Old and New Social Movements

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After a period of interdisciplinary openness, contemporary sociology has only recently rediscovered culture. This is especially true of political sociology, where institutional and network analyses, as well as rational choice models, have dominated. This article will offer another approach by focusing on the role of music and the visual arts in relation to the formation of collective identity, collective memory and collective action. Drawing on my own research on the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the memory of slavery in the formation of African-American identity, and its opposite, the place of white power music in contemporary neo-fascist movements, I will outline a model of culture as more than a mobilization resource and of the arts as political mediators.

KEY WORDS: social movements; representation; performance.

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR: CULTURE AND POLITICS

The study of collective behavior has traditionally included the study of subcultures and social movements as central elements. This was so from the beginning when the research field emerged in the disciplinary borderlands between sociology and psychology in the periods just before and after World War II. Using a scale of rationality, the collective behaviorist placed crowd behavior at the most irrational end of a continuum and social movements at the most rational. The middle ground was left for various cults and subcultures, including those identified with youth. The idea that young people were a distinctive social category with their own culture was just taking form.[2] The basic insight of this school was that people

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[2]Social science discovered youth culture in the post-war period, when expanding economies in North America permitted increased consumption and a longer gap between childhood and working life. Early concerns focused on social control and often linked youth culture and ethnicity, such as the

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acted differently in groups and that individually based psychological explanations were thus of little help in understanding, much less predicting, collective behavior. Besides a questionable notion of rationality, a weakness of this school was its rather negative assumptions about the subcultures and social movements they identified and studied in relation to established social institutions. At best, forms of collective behavior were viewed as alarm clocks—expressions of social tension which ought to be taken seriously by the authorities—and at worse as basic threats to established norms and institutions. That forms of collective behavior could be experiments in social learning which might even aid in the process of social integration and renew democratic institutions was not on the agenda. The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s challenged the assumptions upon which the collective behaviorist school was based, claiming the renewal of democracy as a central guiding principle, and a new era in the study of collective behavior was ushered in.[3] Social movements, and subcultures, especially those associated with youth, were seen in a much more positive light, at best as positive stages in social development mapping out nonestablished routes to adulthood, at worst as the unfortunate extremes of youthful idealism and alienation.

More recently, variants of what has come to be called the Resource Mobilization (RSM) and Political Process (PP) perspectives dominate the social scientific study of collective behavior, just as variants of rational choice theory predominate the study of political behavior.[4] A set of underlying assumptions concerning the individual and collective grounds of action unites these two perspectives. Human action is modeled as self-interested and calculative, instrumental and strategic in interaction, concerned with winning out over others in contests over scarce resources or, in more cognitive terms, in defining the situation. From this perspective, collective forms of action, like social movements, are explained and understood as contests between organized groups making contentious and competing claims within a well-ordered institutional framework, a political opportunity structure. Winners are those who make the most of their resources, including the cognitive

"zoot suit" riots in Los Angeles and the influence of jazz and other forms of race music on white youths. For the most part, youth was conceptualized as a problem from both a societal and individual perspective—a troublesome period.

[3]A generational analysis of the methodological assumptions regarding the study of social movements and subcultures is waiting to be done. A number of contemporary social scientists in this area of research were themselves political activists in their youth, and this has surely influenced the way these phenomena are conceptualized and researched. This does not seem to have been the case for the previous generation. The rise of neo-traditionalist and neo-fascist movements in recent times has also shaken some of the preconceptions of the current academic generation.

If there is one social group that is overrepresented in social movements, it is youth, particularly students. There are many explanations for this: the free time to explore identity, the reflection which schooling may encourage, youthful idealism, and so on.

[4]RSM is used as a composite to cover various schools of thought. The latest developments reveal a convergence between the institutional approach of earlier RSM, the more contextual "political process" school, and European based approaches. This has meant a softening of an underlying "structuralism" and more sensitivity towards cultural approaches (see McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow 2001).

frames at their disposal. Forms of cultural expression and cultural artifacts, if they are considered at all, are weapons in these conflicts of power either as tools in changing material structures or the frames of meaning through which they are understood. From the perspective of youthful idealism or searching rebellion, such views are bound to appear narrow, if not downright cynical.

Contemporary social scientists are not alone in their assumptions concerning human behavior. Many political activists appear to agree. W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), for example, who, in addition to being an important sociologist, was for most of his long life a leader of the African-American struggle for civil rights, believed that the role of arts was to represent the best possible image of blacks in order to counter the negative image portrayed in the dominant popular culture. Du Bois not only argued for this theory of representation, he wrote plays and novels, along with critical reviews, designed according to these principles.[5] Du Bois' instrumentalist views on the role of culture were shared (although on a less idealistic basis) by much younger colleagues in the 1960s, who cared more about the money generated through concerts given by popular singers than the music they produced. A performer's popularity and thus monetary potential, in other words, was often considered more important than the content or meaning of his or her work (Ward 1998, p. 309). This restrictive view of the arts was challenged by other activists, as well as artists and intellectuals, who viewed the arts more in terms of creativity, expressive freedom and commitment.

Within the contemporary academic discourse, RSM and rational choice models of individual and collective behavior have been similarly challenged for their conceptualizations of politics and culture. This challenge has come both from within and from without the academic discourse, by new subcultures and forms of social movement. Rather than viewing the motivations that engage actors in social movements and other forms of collective action through this restrictive prism, I would include an expressive/symbolic dimension, adding the notion of exemplary action to the others, viewing social movements as spaces/opportunities for political and cultural experimentation and learning. I would also extend the notion of politics to include more invisible aspects, like those based in collective memories and, more superficially and fleetingly, in networks formed through (sub)cultural symbols and tastes. With this wider, more flexible view of culture and politics, the arts can function as political mediators without intention or conscious effort, as unintended consequence, or even despite the intentions of their creators or producers. Let me illustrate this through the use of music in two social movements, the American Civil Rights movement and contemporary racist and anti-racist movements. The conception of culture I will use for this exercise is modified from Raymond Williams (1977), who models a national culture along three levels or dimensions: residual, which I will expand to include various subcultures, traditional

[5] Ward (1998) provides similar points of view concerning leaders of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s.

and otherwise; emergent, where I place the cultures created by social movements; and dominant.[6]

While I am critical of the underlying assumptions of RSM and Political Process perspectives, I find the notion of a political opportunity structure to be a useful tool in the analysis of the culture politics of social movements. I will use that concept and its components—the state, mass media, allies and countermovements (Karpantschof 2001)—to address an essential question: Under what conditions can or do residual/sub cultures become emergent forces for social change?

"WE SHALL OVERCOME" AND OTHER CULTURAL POLITICS

The American Civil Rights movement offers a particularly rich example of the meaning and use of music, as well as of the complex relationship between culture and politics. This movement, whose origins can be traced back to the end and failure of Reconstruction in the late 1870s, has been called a singing movement. Music as cultural artifact—and especially as collective performance, but also as received text and recording—was important in a variety of ways (on the distinction between musical text and performance, see Frith 1996). Music re-membered a collective through linking past, present and future. As Du Bois makes clear in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), even the relatively distant observer can share in the collective memory articulated through song. Writing as a Northerner and college-educated intellectual, Du Bois revealed that he experienced a great sense of emphatic belonging when he first heard the "sorrow songs" that emerged out of slavery. Each chapter of *Souls*, one of the most widely read nonfiction books ever written by an African American, begins with musical notes as a way of placing the author within a long tradition of resistance which most often expressed itself aesthetically and intersubjectively, rather than outwardly. The latter, of course, while not impossible and unknown, would have been even-more violently repressed. The cultural forms developed by blacks in the United States are noteworthy for their multidimensionality and coded meanings. What is significant here is the sense of solidarity, of identification with a group that will never meet face-to-face—an imagined community—that Du Bois experiences. This identification was, at least in part, inspired and set in motion through music rooted in the collective singing of an oral culture which, in Du Bois' case, was experienced far from these origins in a highly stylized concert format.[7]

[6]Current debate concerns whether or not "subculture" is too restrictive a notion and should be replaced by "life style," which would be less restrictive (for a summary see Bennett 2000). This adjustment seems appropriate regarding music-related groupings, as some of the performers involved are well beyond the age usually associated with youth.

[7]Du Bois graduated from Fisk University in 1888, where he managed the glee club after having been rejected as a singer. The Fisk Jubilee Singers had toured the United States and parts of Europe in the 1870s, performing spirituals in the manner of art music, before the kings and queens of Europe, as Du Bois proudly recounts in *Souls*.

More generally, one can say that music and other forms of cultural expression can articulate as well as fuse a group, offering a sense of group belonging and collectivity as well as strength in trying situations, such as confronting violent resistance and repressive authority. Through song, a collective, such as a movement, can objectify itself and its history, making itself visible to others, as well as creating and establishing a sense of continuity. At the same time, such cultural expressions, texts and other material artifacts permit the presentation of the collective's view of events free from the censorship of the dominant culture. Finally, music and art can serve as a basis for recruitment and support, economic as well as moral, passive as well as active.

The song "We Shall Overcome," sometimes referred to as the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement, provides an illustrative example. Originating in what Du Bois called the "sorrow songs" of slaves, the words are ambiguous and the meaning as shifting as the performance style. As with all forms of expression created under conditions of domination, American black music is, as noted, multidimensional, with several levels of meaning to be heard and uncovered. While outwardly religious, "I Will Overcome" and "I'll Be All Right," two gospel songs from which "We Shall Overcome" can be traced, could contain coded political messages, even as they were written down and sold as sheet music and sung in churches and parlors at the turn of the last century. Before this, sung collectively by gatherings of slaves, they carried a message of hope and redemption with both sacred and secular connotations. But as the "I" demonstrates, the site of this redemption was the individual, as dominant Protestant theology dictates. The song moved from ambiguous (as far as politics is concerned) cultural to explicitly political expression when it was adopted and adapted by the black Food and Tobacco Workers Union in the 1930s–40s. It was in this context that the "I" became "We." Sung at rallies and marches, it welded together a collective while linking it to a long historical tradition of dignity and struggle. As "We Will Overcome," it became part of a more universalistic protest repertoire associated with labor struggles.

World War II put an end to trade union radicalism in the United States, and the singing stopped. "We Will Overcome" was preserved by trade union sympathizers and song collectors at the Highlander Center outside Knoxville, Tennessee and other enclaves of left wing music culture. It was here that the folk singer and composer Pete Seeger learned to sing it; it was he who initiated the change from "Will" to "Shall," either because it sounded better or evinced a more proper English.[8] As far as I can uncover, the song was not yet recorded for commercial sale. The earliest recording I have found is by Joe Glazer, a trade union activist and troubadour, in 1950, although there exists a home recording of "We Will Overcome" by Fred Hellerman from 1948 (contained in the boxed set *Songs for Political Action*, which also contains a choral version of "We Shall Overcome"

[8]Seeger's name is listed as a composer of the song in its recorded versions. This credit authorizes him to grant the right to use the song commercially.

performed by the Jewish Young Folksingers from 1952). It is an individual performance, not collective singing, even though in the Glazer version the lead singer is backed up by a group. The politics here are contained in the memory and the message, not in the "we" created through collective singing. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white person on a Montgomery, Alabama bus in December 1955 ignited a new wave of civil rights confrontations in the United States. The boycott which followed catapulted a young minister by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr. into the role of movement intellectual. While many young people were involved in the early stages, especially in the attempts at school desegregation, the Civil Rights movement became a youth movement in 1960 when its church-based organizational leadership and legalistic strategy of social change was challenged by college and high school youth leading direct-action sit-ins at lunch counters. As part of this generational shift, these actions revitalized the cultural traditions of the movement, as popular culture began to play a more central role. "We Shall Overcome" and other church-based music, like gospel, were complemented and altered by sounds and rhythms taken from popular culture.[9] In his account of "We Shall Overcome"'s history, Pete Seeger states, "In Tennessee in 1960 Guy [Carawan of the Highlander Center] taught it to black students. They didn't hesitate an instant. They gave it the Motown Beat" (Seeger interview in Wigginton 1991, p. 227).

NEW MOVEMENTS/NEW MEDIA/NEW MUSIC

What has become increasingly important is the mass mediated representation of cultural artifacts which permits their mass distribution while at the same time separating them from their distinctive cultural contexts and traditions. With the aid of relatively cheap recording and listening devices as well as television, video and film, "We Shall Overcome" has become a global symbol of political struggle.[10] Research on memory and forgetting across generations reveals that individuals tend to remember what is recorded and represented, especially through visual means. Television and film have shaped memories of the 1960s, for example, even

[9]Regarding gospel and civil protest, Heilbut (1985, p. 297) writes, "... all during the fifties, when nobody in rhythm and blues and very few in pop music even bothered to discuss civil rights, [gospel singers] Dorothy Love and Reverend June Cheeks never forgot the conditions back home ... And they spoke about lynchings and bombed schools and segregated facilities. Other gospel singers may not be so blunt, but their singing is always filled with the stuff of their lives. What other music so expresses these bedrock responses? ... Gospel is simply the only music sung by people in terrible conditions *about* those conditions, in an attempt to get out of them."

[10]This raises the issue of the reception of songs and texts. Does a song like "We Shall Overcome" become devoid of meaning when it is mechanically reproduced and commercially sold, a commodity which can then be put to whatever use its buyer chooses? In this case, the answer is no. The song has become so embedded with meaning that it conditions its reception. This can be contrasted with a song of similar origin, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," which is currently used, complete with obscene gestures, by rugby players and fans. While they have similar origins, one became embodied with meaning in a way the other did not, allowing it to be more free-floating.

for those who lived through it. The selected images, as well as the process that has produced such images and thus collective memory, have led some to speak of imagined memory (Huyssen 2000) that goes into producing imagined communities such as nations or even ethnic groups.

Until fairly recently, marginal groups and subcultures have had rather limited access to the means of representation through which to influence collective memory; their efforts at creating collective identity have depended on "real" as opposed to "imagined" communities. Being there—direct experience—is central to the experience of collectivity and the process of constructing collective identity. New technologies such as the cassette, video and compact disc, and even the telephone answering machine have made a significant difference for such groups, as one can now more easily and cheaply "do it yourself" (DIY).[11] In fact, DIY is one of the ideological cornerstones of the dynamic and growing punk music subculture out of which white power and its opposite, anti-racist, music have developed (Hamm 1993). But the development of the Internet has revolutionized social and cultural movements. Through the Net, widely dispersed individuals can find one another, and movements can coordinate their meetings and other activities. For underground and illegal organizations, such as white power groups, the Net has permitted the sale and distribution of compact discs, newsletters and magazines, as well as identifying symbolic items such as T-shirts, buttons and so forth. This has become a multimillion-dollar industry in Sweden, which is a world leader in the distribution of white power compact discs, sold primarily through the Net.[12]

Even with these new possibilities, face-to-face contact is the most important to white power movements. Thus, live performance and collective listening to recordings and viewing videos are important in promoting collective experience and grounding collective identity. Music is central to getting the message out, to recruiting, but collective experience is the core of collective identification/identity formation. In fact, the historical analysis of nationalist movements suggests that collective experience and will formation may be more the product of less explicit means than text-based ideological messages. George Mosse (1975, p. 9) speaks of a politics of attitude, rather than systematic ideology, in referring to the history

[11]A leader of the underground "White Power" movement in Sweden pointed to the value of the telephone answering machine in recruiting new members. Before music became so central, one of the key recruiting instruments of this movement had been a sticker with a small message pasted on walls, which brought many curious inquiries to the central office. This required that the telephone be manned day and night. The telephone answering machine solved this manpower problem.

[12]The Internet and e-mail have really revolutionized the networking and recruiting efforts of these movements by facilitating communication and selling records that are otherwise hard to obtain. The home pages are very advanced, enabling contact that would have been very difficult to make and maintain earlier. Meetings can be held and actions coordinated over great distances and without danger. Home pages can also be easily moved from country to country, if they should be made illegal, without affecting access. Sweden and Great Britain are two of the top countries in distribution of white power music.

of German nationalist movements. Mosse also calls attention to the importance of myth and its operationalization through symbols, rituals and rites, rather than history, in any coherent, narrative sense. George Revill (2000) makes a similar point regarding the role of music in nationalism.

Recordings are important in opening initial psychological and social contact with a wider group. Recordings make possible participation without apparent commitment, especially when they are easily available on the Internet, either downloaded directly or purchased through mail order. They can thus be listened to anonymously. This first step opens the door for more contact, and for more committed participation. This is a type of music meant for group reception and performance, for singing and shouting along, which creates strong emotional links between the individual and the group. It is the live performance at concerts that is the core of emotional attachment and collective identity formation. Here collective experience, listening with the whole (individual and collective) body is more important than the cognitive experience of the text, at least in the opening stages, but probably all along the way. The music encourages bodily movement and contact, and collective exprience. In this it is like most other forms of music; however, as even the most superficial observation will confirm, there is an aggressive undertone which separates it from other musical genres.[13]

It is also true that live performances have a financial side, as well as providing status and subcultural capital for those who perform and for those who attend. Concerts sell records and introduce performers, which is important, but such collective performances, where the distinctions between players and listeners breaks down and all are performers, are more vital for creating group solidarity than for any status they may provide. These are not concerts in the ordinary sense—for one thing they are illegal, thus adding to their emotional value. All who participate are co-conspirators, creating an even stronger bond with the experience of the music. This emotionally loaded experience will be talked about, remembered and embodied as powerfully emotional, thus linking the individual to the collective. It is here also that the ritualistic as well as the more cognitive elements are more clearly drawn in. Songs as collective performance become texts, as words are linked to ideology and present experience to the past and to the future. Songs are usually introduced with short, highly ideological statements and ended with a series of collective gestures, a raised and pointed right arm, and the shouting of slogans. This ritualized performance/text links the individual to a symbolic past, as the experience links the individual to a movement, a movement with a history, its own story, its own heroes and habitus.

[13]Attali (1985, p. 6) argues, "All music, any organization of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality. It is what links a power center to its subjects, and thus, more generally, it is an attribute of power in all its forms." This may be true, but it seems equally true that some forms of music are better suited than others to create a sense of community. George Revill (2000) cites Attali in his attempt to locate the material, sonic qualities of music in creating nationalist sentiments.

WHITE POWER (VIT MAKT) MUSIC IN SWEDEN

White power music consists of many musical styles: country music, folk music, Viking music, black metal or hard-core rock, with some overlap with punk. Imported from England and the U.S. to Sweden in the late 1970s, these roots remain in its imagery and style. While only a minor part of the youth subculture, it has grown to the extent that there were over 5,000 participants at a recent illegal concert.[14] According to a recent study by the Swedish Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ 1999), Sweden is one of the world leaders in the production of white power music. In a growing market, in May 1999 there were 322 Swedish-produced CDs on sale over the Internet. There are 27 Swedish bands who have released CDs. In addition to increased demand, two factors lie behind this recent rise: 1) Production was taken over by people with the marketing skills to reach wider audiences, and 2) the production of CDs has become both simpler and cheaper.

There are about 1,500–2,000 core activists in the movement, but many more sympathizers. The core activist group is made up of males, usually fathers and heads of households with small children, between the ages of 25 and 35. The supporters are younger, single males, but with an apparent growing female contingent. According to a recent study (Lööw 1998) this core group has devised a strategy of buying small farmhouses to locate collectives and schools for new members, and a tactic which encourages more self-contained and relatively autonomous organizations (BRÅ 1999).

Early musical themes were "Keep Sweden Swedish and Free of Communism," and the first recordings were distributed via cassette and records from England, where the band Screwdriver made the crossover from punk to oi (Hamm 1993). Screwdriver played in Stockholm in 1985 and inspired Swedish bands, many of whom would perform at the Rock Against Communism festival in Uppsala in 1988. In 1995, a tribute concert for Ian Stuart, the deceased lead singer of Screwdriver, was held in Karlstad in which a number of bands from Sweden, Germany of Norway participated, playing before an audience estimated at 500. This international participation, and the British and American roots of the music, contributed to the use of English in song texts. As in the dominant music culture, much of Swedish white power music is currently performed in English.

Anti-communist and "Keep Sweden Swedish" themes were soon linked to the Nazi past, with Swedish as well as German roots. The link to Germany is indicated, for example, by the name Dirlewanger chosen by one Swedish group. This is taken from Oskar Dirlewanger, leader of an SS commando group (Lodenius and Larsson 1991, p. 310), while their CD cover photo makes a clear linkage to the American South, as the group members are pictured in bib overalls armed with shotguns as

[14]Most information on the activities of this group are provided by the activists on the opposite side of the political fence, the extreme left. There are a few brave journalists and a handful of social scientists who also track their activities.

they lean threateningly on the back of an American car in an anonymous rural setting.

The musical experience, especially at concerts, is important for the entire subculture. This is an experience where, as previously mentioned, text is, at this point at least, less important than the physical, bodily experience. As we move toward the extremes, however, text becomes more important. Since it is often difficult to hear the text, it is offered on the Internet and learned beforehand. The concerts re-member the groups and give a physical sense of belonging to a movement, to a collective. This ritualized aspect is complemented by a lesson in ideology. Live performances at concerts have a highly didactic function. As a recent report (BRÅ 1999) based on observations of videos reveals, the singer and the song have replaced the agitator and the demagogic speaker that characterized previous movements.

Links between visual imagery and music are important, however. This is also shown in the close connection between media, as these bands are tightly connected to journals and newspapers linked to the movement. Like the Internet, these mediate between supporters and between word and picture. Bands are introduced at concerts and through these papers, just like in the pop world. In the early issues of *Blood and Honor (Blod och Ära)* in 1993, the band Ultima Thule (called "oi music's ABBA" by an insider because of the melancholy piano or guitar intro leading to a hard rock cadence) was given the full treatment—reviews, interviews, and photos. At the same time three Swedish record companies, Ragnarrock Records, Svea Music and Last Resort Records, emerged to sell white power music. In 1993 *Blood and Honor* became *Nordland*, a distribution network which includes a magazine and a website. *Nordland* is currently one central link for distributing information and selling artifacts. There are now many others.

WHAT DOES THE MUSIC DO?

White power music carries memory, or so it seems, and provides collective experience—not exactly courage, but a sense of belonging to something greater than the individual, instilling a sort of strength. Unlike "We Shall Overcome," this music has no history, no rootedness, either in real events or in any cultural group, but certainly aims at giving the appearance of such. Rather, it is the creation of a subculture, one that seeks to invent tradition through linking itself with an imagined glorious past and, through that, with an older generation that might act as mentors. This is where the real political danger lies. The music itself is rather uniform, and in some rather tentative sense is a form common to a subculture that in political terms extends from the extreme right to the extreme left.[15]

[15] In *The Philosophy of Punk* Craig O'Hara (1999) traces the origins of the punk music subculture to an extreme sense of alienation from contemporary society. The function of subcultures, in his opinion, is to provide meaning and a sense of collective solidarity, even where, as in the current

These two extremes at some level reflect each other, as they track and confront each other, sometimes with very violent effect. The music is a blend of ska, punk and hard-core rock, a loud, fast and aggressive music. What distinguishes the extremes is not the music or the aggression, but symbols and ideology and, of course, the political implications. Along with the imagined past, these symbols are extracted from the commercial culture even as they are meant to symbolize its rejection. There is a moral exclusiveness in this defensive community.[16] Between these extremes is a large mass of people who enjoy the music and even attend the concerts but are uninterested in its explicit politics. They see the musical subculture as a rejection of the dominant culture, its values as well as its politics.

English punk emerged in a very distinctive social context, a time of conservative political reaction and economic crisis, and in a youth culture dominated by style and class-based groupings (Hebdige 1979; Hamm 1993). The influence of art schools and consumer culture is also apparent in the emphasis on the visual, as is the influence of black-based ska and other Caribbean styles on the music (Frith and Horne 1987). In the youth subculture there was reaction to the previous generation's political engagement and style, the hippies being a distinctive object of opposition. Shaved heads and an aggressive brashness were symbols of this opposition. These have been described as based on an image of an idealized worker (Hebdige 1979) and "an attempt to re-create through the mob the traditional working class community" (Clarke 1976, p. 99). Out of the antipolitical anarchism of punk, with symbols drawn from a collage of images including Nazism, there was an emphasis on rejection and alienation, of aggression, toughness, shaved heads, body piercing and tattoos.

Since the rejection of politics in the 1970s and 1980s, and in a quite different social and economic context, two extremely political sides have emerged in this music-based youth culture. Both sides advertise their beliefs by their appearance,

case, there are extreme divergences of political opinion. "Members of subcultures, regardless of how oppressed, have often succeeded in finding a solidarity and understanding amongst themselves that is lacking in mainstream society. Members seem to regain a sense of themselves and each other that had previously been lost, forgotten, or stolen. This is seen in the emergence of support groups based on shared experiences, beliefs, sex or race What subcultures can do is 'to imbue their members with some sense of higher purpose'" (O'Hara 1999, p. 23). O'Hara's chapter on skinheads traces the common origins of left and right, racist and anti-racist wings of the punk subculture. Hamm (1994) makes a similar assumption, tracing American variants of racist skinheads to roots in the English punk rock scene. These links are disputable and many find it offensive. Several recent works argue for the nonracist origins of skinheads and, even more strongly, for an inherent anti-racism in punk.

[16]Early theorizing on skinheads and other violent youth subcultures has emphasized their working-class basis, and in conjunction the attempt to regenerate a sense of class community. Characteristic of working-class communities, according to Clarke (1976), was their defensiveness, communities based on exclusion and anxiety. Recent observations of Swedish neo-Nazi groups have also emphasized their tightly bound defensiveness, where groups are held together through strict conformity in terms of dress codes, reading material and music, creating a world of experience in isolation from the larger society.

wearing their politics on their respective sleeves, so to speak. Here fascist symbols and shaved heads are countered by their opposite, for example a red line running through a swastika, and an "X." An offshoot of anti-racist punk music known as "straightedge" (Wood 1999a) uses the latter.[17] This grouping is named not primarily for its anti-racism, but for its opposition to much of what the punk subculture stands for, namely sex, alcohol and drugs. Early groups bore such names as Minor Threat, Uniform Choice, Insted and Earth Crisis. In a song called "In Your Face," Slapshot sang the following:

> Kill anyone with a beer in their hand,
> 'Cause if you drink you're not a man.
> Straightedge, straightedge in your face,
> You don't belong in the human race (quoted in Wood 1999a, p.139).

Recent developments in this submovement have included radical and aggressive vegetarianism and support for gay rights.

An example of these new developments on the radical left is the Canadian group Propaghandi, who are also vehemently anti-fascist, as the song "The Only Good Fascist is a Very Dead Fascist" illustrates:

> Swastikas and Klan robes,
> Sexist, racist, homophobes.
> This one's for the master race,
> My brown power ass in your Nazi face.
> Kill them all!

The two extremes of this music subculture speak primarily to each other. In a sense they play off and reflect each other, each side advocating violent confrontation with the other in their lyrics. As O'Hara (1999, p. 58) puts it, "Skinheads in America have, by and large, become nothing but a youth trend. Their only threat is to the Punk community with whom there are still fights at larger concerts." However, there is more to it than this, especially in Europe. Each side also encourages confrontation with the society outside the confines of the subculture: The right wing calls for confrontation with "foreign elements" and with governments it deems sympathetic to them, the left for confrontation with the economic powers as well as with drug dealers, animal exploiters and so on. The left-oriented straightedge is its right wing counterpart in the attempts made to discipline and correct the deviant behavior of members. This can be seen in the song "Listen and Learn"

[17] Wood (1999a, p. 137) traces straightedge back to the early 1980s and a band called Minor Threat, whose lead singer replied to the question "What does it mean to be straightedge?" by saying, "I've got my head straight, my shit together, and I've got an edge on you." As far as symbols are concerned, straightedgers favor the "X," crossed baseball bats and crossed shovels, for example. These are displayed on caps, T-shirts and album covers.

by Svitjod, a Swedish group whose name is a code word for an ancient Nordic community:

> I ain't perfect, I've made mistakes,
> Sometimes drunk or blinded by hate,
> Acting like a fool, trying to be cool,
> Thinking with my heart instead of my head.
> It ain't worth to spend a minute of time
> Locked up in jail for a worthless crime.
> If you're gonna take action do something that counts,
> And be sure that you're ready to pay the cost.
> We must learn from our mistakes, and stop acting like fools!

There are, in other words, multiple levels of meaning here, as well as several audiences being addressed.

The music played and listened to by the entire subculture is essentially the same, as is its apparent affect. Wood (1999b, p. 135) describes a phenomenon called slamdancing at a hard core concert that has similarities throughout the subculture: "Slamdancing is a synchronized and systematic event. Typically, one faction of the audience packs itself against the front of the stage, where they can get a good view of the band. These youths generally sing along, keeping time to the music with a rhythmic nodding of their heads and by thrusting their fists into the air. Behind this crowd, one generally observes the slam pit. As the music bursts into intense speed, the pit dancers' movements become rapid and frenzied. Their motions appearing like a cross between a tribal dance and a military march, dancers move around the pit's circular perimeter, bouncing off one another's shoulders. Usually, a burst of speed is followed by a breakdown, which is a sudden switch to a slower tempo. During a breakdown, either the audience engages in angry-sounding chanting or the singer shouts ideological anthems and messages to the audience." At this point, the groups distinguish one another. Video recordings of white power concerts reveal similar behaviors, with the equivalent of the slam pit and its aggressive bodily contact. However, as previously noted, they also reveal the ritualist display of symbols and gestures taken from the fascist past which follow each musical/dance performance. The apparent chaos of the pit is immediately followed by this well-disciplined ritual performance.

CONCLUSION

Boundaries between culture and politics are not so easily drawn when one studies social movements, as the examples from the American Civil Rights and contemporary White Power movements reveal.[18] Regarding the former, both inside

[18]It can be pointed out that the "Black Power" phase of the American Civil Rights movement might make a more fair comparison to contemporary white power.

the movement and in American society at large, forms of cultural expression played an important political role. White teenagers listening to "black" music on local radio stations might well have contributed to changing attitudes toward racial integration, while music and other cultural forms were clearly important to internal articulation of the movement. Music is also central to contemporary racist movements. It forms a prime recruiting instrument and a major source of income for the Swedish movement and at the same time links this movement to a wider international network and also to an imagined past. Music—a cultural form—is thus crucial to the process of articulating and fusing the movement in a social and political sense.

Especially in its early phase, the music of the Civil Rights movement was rooted in older cultural traditions which it transformed to more directly political forms. As it engaged a younger generation, it took inspiration from popular culture as it reinvigorated and transformed these traditions, while in its later "Black Power" phase popular culture more or less took over. White power music began as an alternative to popular culture, as part of punk subculture. Mass mediated images, especially those of film and television, are central, providing images and inspiration for an imagined history.

Where the Civil Rights movement was a movement for social integration, greatly improving the functioning of America's democratic institutions, white power subculture expresses the opposite. What should be done? The threats to democracy are obvious on the extremes of this subculture, especially on the right, where the stated aim is to move beyond the confines of a youth subculture and to overturn the institutions of the larger society. While both extremes may share an opposition to what they term the moral decay and commercialism of the dominant culture, their remedies are very different. While neo-Nazi groups have been responsible for an increasing number of violent crimes in Sweden, the opposite side's aggressiveness is inner-directed and distinctively youthful. In response to the extreme right, Swedish newspapers, apparently acting on their own accord, published the pictures and short biographies of leading members of Swedish neo-fascist groups early in 2000. The risks were great, the effects unknown and largely unpredictable. This was an obvious tactical turn, from isolating and ignoring to public confrontation. Government policy had been to isolate these groups as much as possible and to deny them public visibility. There were some immediate results; members of a trade union brought formal proceedings to exclude one of those named from their union. One person, identified as founder of an Internet home page and a newsletter, publicly recanted and the page shut down. At the same time the inner circles have probably grown more tightly interconnected. But the movement continues as boldly as before.

Let me return to a question I raised earlier: Under what conditions can or do residual cultures or subcultures become powerful emergent cultures, part of social movements? The concept of a political opportunity structure, encompassing and

imposing a dominant culture (state, mass media), allies and countermovements, is a useful tool here. The residual way of life of Southern blacks in the United States was transformed into a powerful emergent social force as the long struggle for civil rights became a social movement. Changes in the dominant culture—the decision by the Supreme Court in 1954 which questioned the constitutionality of the segregated school system, the integrated, mass mediated popular music which conditioned the development of youth subculture with more open and tolerant racial attitudes—were important factors in this transformation, as were the changing attitudes of an older generation which had participated in the newly desegregated armed forces in the Korean War. An emerging movement found allies among white youths, perhaps affected by the newly integrated popular culture, in its struggle against aggressive racist countermovements like the KKK and the white citizens' councils. These white youths, of course, played only a minor role, as the Civil Rights movement had the support of many church and labor organization as well, but youth was a central, driving force in the transformation of the civil rights struggle into a social movement. White power remains a marginal subculture in Sweden. In his studies of Danish neo-Nazi groups, Karpantschof (1999, 2001) has argued that differences in national political opportunity structure are crucial in explaining the relative size and success of such groups. By his account, the powerful and aggressive opposition, which has met every attempt by Danish neo-Nazis to publicly demonstrate their beliefs, is a determining factor in limiting the latter's growth and thus its emergence as a social movement. A similar point can be made about Sweden. There is a significant difference between the two countries, however, and here another aspect of the political opportunity structure can be called upon in explanation. A commonly recognized aspect of Swedish political culture is the role of organized political parties, in absorbing and institutionalizing political protest. The role and relationship of the parties in other words, are central to any emergent collective action. While racist attitudes have found their way into the established political parties in Denmark, this has not been the case in Sweden. This helps explain why Swedish neo-Nazi groups are larger and more aggressive, as an underground subculture, than those in Denmark, where the established political discourse has translated their ideas into more acceptable political forms and language.

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