

# The sound of hate: exploring the use of hatecore song lyrics as a recruiting strategy by the White Power Movement

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## Abstract

This study uses grounded theory to examine “hatecore” song lyrics used as a communication strategy to spread skinhead ideology. Results indicate that lyrics portray ethnic and religious minorities, and homosexuals as inferior and subhuman. Jews, the government and whites who oppose skinhead ideology are described as part of the problem. They are also used to recruit disenfranchised whites to the movement by defining them as disempowered and losing influence as “others” gain it as well as through positive messages of white racial pride. As with other social movements, results indicate that *power* plays a central role in defining *the problem* facing disenfranchised whites, the *cause*, and prescribing *solutions* found in hatecore song lyrics.

**Keywords:** Strategic Communications. Social Movement. Hatecore Music. Racist Skinheads. Power.

## Introduction

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2010), right-wing extremism has grown in recent years igniting an explosion of activism across the United States. The

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Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) contends, the increase in right-wing anger by pockets of white America has been caused by “racial changes in the population demographics, soaring public debt and the terrible economy... and an array of initiatives by the relatively liberal Obama Administration that are seen as ‘socialist’ or even ‘fascist’” (SPLC, 2010, p.41). As these concerns grow and as whites fear becoming a minority in the United States, other fears over the erosion of white privilege and power has created an environment where racist movements are gaining strength as institutionalized White Power erodes (BECKER; JIPSON; KATZ, 2001), leading to an increasing number of whites joining racist organizations as they see their dominant position in society as fading. By the year 2011 right wing hate groups had reached an all time high of 1,018 in the United States (SPLC, 2013).

One extremist group that has been growing are racist skinheads. Racist skinheads are transient groups and often difficult to track, but according to the SPLC, in 2007, there were 90 skinhead groups in the United States operating in 26 states, up from 78 in 2006 (2008). By 2008, the SPLC reports that number had risen again to 98 (2009). By 2009, the SPLC reports the number had once again increased to 122 groups operating in 33 states (2010), and a number were “arrested in alleged plots to assassinate the nation’s first black president” (2010, p.42).

Skinhead groups are typically made up of young white males, bound together through a culture of White Power music, violence and hatred of minorities and homosexuals (Blee, 1998). Recruitment campaigns by skinhead groups often occur at White Power music festivals, where large numbers of young whites gather to listen to “hatecore music” (Resistance, 2009). The hatecore music at these shows appeals to “young people’s propensity to rebel” and makes these shows a valuable communication strategy for recruitment (BOSTDORFF, 2004, p.354).

Individuals who become involved in white extremist groups like the Skinhead Movement often do so in response to efforts to promote tolerance and diversity at the expense of white privileges (Schafer, 2002). Blazak continues that this occurs because as so-

ciety corrects previous “power imbalances that have given certain categories privilege, straight, White men will feel threatened. No one likes to lose privileges of power” (2001, p.998). In addition to the erosion of white dominance in society, economic, political and social struggles can also lead to an increase in racist activities. Competitions for power and jobs, and threats to culture, lead to increased hostility, and in the United States this historically has led to increased participation in racist movements (MALOTT; CARROLL-MIRANDA, 2003). Bostdorff adds that recent research has found that “many men today, especially white, heterosexual, working class men, feel a greater sense of powerlessness” and a “feeling of being under siege,” from “social changes such as the wider acceptance of interracial marriage, non-Christian religions, and homosexuality” which drives the need to join organizations like the skinheads (2004, p.350).

This study builds on previous research by Martinez and Selepak (2013) that examined Skinhead song lyrics by the hatecore group the Angry Aryans. The study by Martinez and Selepak (2013) investigated the extent to which the song lyrics by the single band, the Angry Aryans, reinforced the ideas of white superiority, recruited new members to the Skinhead Movement, advocated violence, and examined skinhead perceptions’ of the fate of their movement. The current study builds on that research through an international examination of skinhead song lyrics of the top selling hatecore albums from the racist music Web site, Resistance Records.

## Literature review

Skinheads began as a social movement in the United Kingdom in the late 1960s in response to economic conditions, worker exploitation, and the culture of hippies (BLAZAK, 2001; MALOTT; CARROLL-MIRANDA, 2003). According to Eyerman (2002), skinheads emerged as part of the English punk music scene, which began at a time of conservative political reaction to the liberal social movements of the day and an economic crisis in the United

Kingdom. By the end of the 1970s, racist rock music in the United Kingdom became connected to extreme right political parties and a force to build a broader white power movement (CORTE; EDWARDS, 2008).

The Skinhead Movement idealized working class communities and opposed the “moral decay and commercialization of the dominant culture” (EYERMAN, 2002, p.456). Shaved heads and aggressive behavior came to symbolize skinhead opposition to the hippie movement, which was perceived as not contributing to society (EYERMAN, 2002; HAENFLER, 2004). Skinheads embraced the working-class uniform of “heavy boots, close-cropped hair, Levi jeans, plain shirts, and braces (suspenders)” (HAENFLER, 2004, p.411). For racist groups like skinheads, music, clothing, style, ritual and performance are essential to recruit new members and maintain commitment from current members (BLEE, 2007). According to Haenfler, these reflect a social movement’s reaction to the mainstream culture (2004). These cultural features and collective behavior create a sense of community necessary to convince members and potential members their ideas are valid in order to create a successful movement around those ideas (BLEE, 2007).

In the United States, skinheads and skinhead music, appeared in reaction to the American punk scene, but it was not until the mid-1980s when they began to be recruited by racist organizations including the White Aryan Resistance (WAR) founded by Tom Metzger in 1983 (BLAZAK, 2001; BECKER et al. 2001). By the late 1980s, hundreds of acts of violence were attributed to skinhead groups (BLAZAK, 2001). Although skinheads use violence and intimidation to gain power over their opponents and induce fear in their enemies (BLEE, 1998), they also engage in various other activities and tactics to combat what they perceive is a corrupted culture where whites are being oppressed.

Skinheads maintain relatively small numbers, and therefore most are involved in recruiting activities. Members distribute flyers at local schools and rock clubs, and stage violent confrontations at music shows to raise visibility (BLAZAK, 2001). White Power

music and concerts have become a powerful tool within the Skinhead Movement to recruit and project the group's power to others.

### Skinhead Social Movements

Social movements and collective action occur when groups perceive unjust inequality directed towards them, preventing them access to resources, and become motivated to confront those responsible, often with anger (VAN ZOMEREN et al., 2008). According to Whitsel, researchers use post-World War II social movement theories to hypothesize the causes of fascist-style groups and extremist movements (2001, p.97). The causes of extremist movements include a “group’s psychological estrangement from the enviroing social order,” status displacement where a group’s “perceived dispossession leads to extremist activism,” and “declines in the country’s economic cycle” (WHITSEL, 2001, p.97).

Blee argues that most research today on social movements have focused on groups with a progressive agenda or a desire to advance social equality (2007). Extremist organizations, as a form of social movement, however, advance a non-progressive agenda and are often overlooked within social movement research. But, extremist social movements have had a tremendous impact on history, and according to Becker et al., white racialist movements “have been and continue to become active social forces in American society” (2001, p.428).

In the Skinhead Movement, members view themselves as soldiers in a race war (MALOTT; CARROLL-MIRANDA, 2003). Within the skinhead movement, violence is a political and racial strategy, used as a dramatic organizing framework for action (BLEE, 1998). American skinhead ideology is based on white supremacy and the belief in an inevitable race war in the United States, which will end with an all-white homeland (BLAZAK, 2001; BLEE, 1998; WHITSEL, 2001). To accomplish this goal, skinheads believe America, or at least part of America for an all-white homeland, must be ethnically cleansed of all enemies including non-whites and white race traitors (BLAZAK, 2001).

White race traitors are whites that do not support an all-white state or who marry and have children outside of their race.

To speed along the racial polarization of the United States, skinheads believe violence and terrorist attacks against minorities and representatives of the government are essential to start the race war (BLAZAK, 2001). In order to do so, skinheads often advocate violence and have rallied behind the slogan “RaHoWa” or Racial Holy War (ARENA; ARRIGO, 2005, p.492). As Adams and Roscigno argue, “Neo-Nazi organizations are generally distrustful of the government,” and “Through this delegitimization of the government, a call for revolution and the creation of a new, presumably ‘better,’ governing structure becomes a central goal and focus of action” (2005, p.771). Skinheads are taught the “United States is manipulated by foreign Jewish interests collectively known as the Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG)” (BLAZAK, 2001, p.989). ZOG is also described as a “purported Israeli-controlled American government” (LEVIN, 2002, p.962), and “an elite Jewish domination and control of the United States, especially through mass media news and entertainment” (DUFFY, 2003, p.297). Skinheads also take stands against cultural issues like abortion and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is threatening to the skinhead movement “because it promotes the notion of equality across cultural and racial borders” (ADAMS; ROSCIGNO, 2005, p.770).

Those attracted to the Skinhead Movement are often resentful of a changing society they perceive as against whites (BLAZAK, 2001). Skinheads perceive a “racist double standard” where whites are “‘made to feel guilty and hateful’ for loving their own people and culture” (DUFFY, 2003, p.296). Feelings of anger over missed or blocked opportunities, or being victimized or marginalized by society, and an unfair economic system leads to anti-social behavior where crime and violence are seen as a corrective action against perceived injustices (BLAZAK, 2001; DUFFY, 2003; VAN ZOMEREN et al., 2008). But, along with hostility and anger, racist groups also infuse in their members a sense of pride and power (BLEE, 2007).

## The Role of “Power”

Power as defined by Melkote and Steeves (2001) is a type of control over meaningful relationships. These relationships come in four forms, “power over (controlling power); power to (generate new possibilities without domination); power with (collective power, power created by group process); and power from within (spiritual strength that inspires and energizes others)” (MELKOTE; STEEVES, 2001, p.36). Thus, empowerment is the “building and exercise of power for social change,” and is defined by the process in which individuals and organizations gain control over social and economic conditions, participation in their communities, and control over their own stories and histories (MELKOTE; STEEVES, 2001, p.37). As Melkote and Steeves continue, a group’s empowerment comes through having a viable organization with which to achieve power, political mobilization, consciousness raising, and the ability to educate others of the problems and inequities in society (2001, p.201).

Social movements rooted in group empowerment, and the realization of a group objective, create a framework for interpreting the actions and interests of others (MARABLE, 1993). When segments of the population no longer believe the government and economic system can alleviate suffering, feel alienated and disenfranchised, and refuse to participate in the dominant culture of society, social movements begin (MALOTT; CARROLL-MIRANDA, 2003; SCHAFER, 2002; VAN ZOMEREN; POSTMES; SPEARS, 2008). Individuals become engaged in collective action and social movements when they believe it will accomplish their goals and influence society to redress perceived disadvantages and oppression within society (VAN ZOMEREN et al., 2008).

Organizations seeking power, however, have limited capabilities to communicate with members and potential members, because of government and corporate controlled media (MELKOTE; STEEVES, 2001). Social movements therefore must use new and alternative technologies, media outlets, and forms of communication such as the Internet, art, and music (ADAMS;

ROSCIGNO, 2005; DUFFY, 2003; EYERMAN, 2002). Corte and Edwards argue that while music, art, and film are given “a secondary status analytically compared to more tangible social and political movement productions like protests,” that they play an important role in cultivating a collective identity and building social movements (2008, p.5).

### The Music of the Skinhead Movement

Skinhead music is a combination of ska, punk and hard rock that is loud and aggressive (EYERMAN, 2002). Under the theory of representation, however, music can “counter the negative image portrayed in the dominant popular culture” (EYERMAN, 2002, p.445). Music is a framing device through which the ideals of the movement can be expressed as the music and lyrics act as an effective means to propagate the beliefs of the movement (CORTE; EDWARDS, 2008). The music is both personal and collective and reaches an audience’s emotions with “the potential to penetrate lives more deeply and steadily,” as “Lyrics can be memorized and sung” individually or collectively at concerts (CORTE; EDWARDS, 2008, p.9). White Power music therefore can plant the idea of white superiority and racial inferiority in the minds of those who listen and influence violent future interactions with those targeted in the messages and lyrics (DUFFY, 2003; SCHAFER, 2002).

Eyerman argues that music is central to getting the message out, recruiting, and creating a collective identity for skinheads (2002). Individuals participate in the ideology of the group by listening to the music live or listening anonymously on the Internet (EYERMAN, 2002). Skinhead music becomes the first step toward increased contact and more committed involvement, and with its style of group singing, shouting, and active participation, skinhead music creates strong emotional links between the individual and the group (EYERMAN, 2002).

Within the Skinhead Movement, face-to-face contact is important to create a collective experience, which can be achieved



through live performances of White Power music (SCHAFER, 2002). At skinhead shows, skinhead leaders present racist and ideological statements of the group's beliefs before and after shows and in between artists (CORTE; EDWARDS, 2008; EYERMAN, 2002). The music and performance attracts young people who might not be open to racist ideology but become desensitized to it from participating in the live events, including listening to the political speeches, through reciting the lyrics, and participating in the theatrics which can lead some to become more accepting of the racist messages presented (SCHAFER, 2002).

According to Schafer, "The desire to reach a younger audience and raise additional revenues was an impetus behind the National Alliance's decision to purchase Resistance Records in the winter of 1999-2000. Resistance Records... specializes in selling White Power music via the internet" (2002, p.78). In 2009 there were 24 Web sites that sold White Power music including Resistance Records located on the Web at [resistance.com](http://resistance.com) (The Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). In the spring of 2009, the Resistance Web site offered nearly 800 hate music albums (Resistance, 2009). According to Zhou et al. (2005), Resistance Records was estimated to have about one-million-dollars in revenue in 2001. Corte and Edwards (2008) argue that the profits made from selling White Power and hatecore music provide extremist groups with a revenue stream to pursue more traditional extremist group activities.

To investigate how hatecore music lyrics reinforce efforts to recruit disenfranchised whites to the Skinhead Movement and reinforce skinhead values, the following research questions were explored in this study:

- RQ1: How are minorities depicted in hatecore song lyrics?
- RQ2: To what extent do hatecore lyrics promote violence towards others?
- RQ3: Who is described in hatecore song lyrics as a threat to whites and the Movement?
- RQ4: How are whites encouraged to join the Skinhead Movement?
- RQ5: What is seen as the end result if the Skinhead Movement fails?
- RQ6: How is power manifested in hatecore song lyrics?

## Method

In this study, skinhead music, and specifically hatecore song lyrics, are examined because of their widespread use as a communication strategy to recruit and indoctrinate listeners with White supremacist rhetoric. In addition, skinhead songs were examined because of their widespread availability on the Internet including on You Tube.

## Sample

A total of 128 songs were examined in this study. The sample includes songs from albums listed on the Resistance Records Web site's Top Ten Hatecore albums for September 2009 and January 2010.

Typically, finding lyrics to songs by mainstream artists is not difficult. An Internet search for a song generally leads to multiple Web sites where lyrics can be found. This is not true for White Power music. As an example, neither the Angry Aryans homepage nor the Resistance Records site included lyrics, only album covers and mp3 samples (Resistance, 2009). Instead, the lyrics to the songs from the Angry Aryan albums "Racially Motivated Violence" and "Too White For You" were found on the Serbian Blood and Honour skinhead site (Serbian Blood and Honour, n.d.). Finding the lyrics on the eleven albums in the sample required an extensive search on the Internet using multiple Web sites.

While these albums represent the top selling albums on the Resistance Web site in one genre - hatecore, they also represent a varied geographic array of bands. The Angry Aryans are from Detroit, Michigan, the Blue Eyed Devils are from Delaware, Tear-down is from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Force Fed Hate is from Haddam, Connecticut. In addition, while Nordic Thunder, Those Opposed, and the Insurgents are all American hatecore bands, Hate Society is a German hatecore band that sings about the White Power and Skinhead Movement in Germany and around the world. None of these bands can be found on major record labels, and as Corte and Edwards (2008) argue, by not being on

a major label demonstrates their opposition and resistance to the mainstream.

## Analysis

The genre “Hatecore music” was the unit of analysis in this study. The units of observation were each individual song. Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) grounded theory approach was used in order to unitize, categorize and analyze the song lyrics. Grounded theory provided a framework to identify emergent themes in the song lyrics and to address the central questions in this study (LINCOLN; GUBA, p.208). Grounded theory does not rely on a priori schemes for analysis. Instead, grounded theory suggests that only through a process guided by praxis and reflexivity, can emergent themes be identified after a level of saturation is achieved (LINCOLN; GUBA, 1995). Lyrics were therefore first examined for relevant themes prior to being analyzed and then broken down into individual messages and coded per research question. A similar method was used by Martinez and Selepak (2013) in a study of skinhead lyrics by the band the Angry Aryans.

## Results

Results for RQ1 may best be summed up in the song *Mud Man* by the Angry Aryans: “Ship out the gooks, deport all the blacks, Remove the parasites from our backs.” When minorities were specifically mentioned, hatecore lyrics was loaded with hatred, used racial slurs, and defined minorities using stereotypes. In *I Hate You*, the Blue Eyed Devils sing about blacks, “What the fuck have you done since freed from the noose – Not a fucking thing and there’s no excuse. Can’t stand on your own, welfares your crutch – And you have to question why I hate so much.”

But, blacks are not the only minority described with negative racial stereotypes. In *Occupation* by the Blue Eyed Devils, the band refers to Jews as “An infectious disease in every land they have been.” In *Islam (Religion of Whores)* the Angry Aryans refer to

the prophet Muhammad as a “shoe-shine boy” and end the song attacking Muslims and homosexuals.

Many of the lyrics also target those who take American jobs located in the United States or through outsourcing. In the song *Decline* by Force Fed Hate, the bad refers to illegal aliens from Mexico as “parasites”. In *It’s In the Air*, by Force Fed Hate, illegal immigrants are called “Cheap fucking labor from south of the border,” and claim there are already too many immigrants not assimilating to white American culture.

Results for RQ2 show that whites are encouraged to physically harm “others”. This violent rage is evident in the song *Back to the Good Ole’ Days*, the Insurgents sing, “You’re out of control nigger” and continues, “Whip you with a length of cord. Whack you with a two-by-four,” later adding, “Time to die nigger”.

In the song *Take Part of It*, the German band, Hate Society sings “It’s time to stand up and slay the red beast” when referring to communists, but also declares a “racial holy war” against “immigrants,” “foreigners,” and “Zionist lies,” and twice in the song sings, “All Jews are put in trains to leave to the east!,” which is a reference to concentration camps in Poland during World War II. In *Burning Cross*, Hate Society sings, “Now we get rid of you – We kill all the niggers now! Can’t you see our cross is burning? We kill all the niggers now!”, later continuing, “We kill all the turks now! Can’t you see our cross is burning? We kill all the turks now!”

Hate Society demonstrates a desire for violence toward non-whites in Germany with lyrics in the song *One Day* that include, “immigration-scum, killing them make much fun!” The song *What’s Left* by Force Fed Hate, reiterates the point that the enemies of the skinhead movement are numerous, singing, “the deck is stacked,” but with the response that “When words lose their force you go to speak with your fist,” and contains the encouragement lyrics to other skinheads of “Prepare for war,” adding, “Don’t think I won’t kill in order to survive,” and “The animal attacks with its back to the wall”.

The most brutal and violent lyrics are reserved for songs about white race traitors. *Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice*,

known as SHARPs, are singled out in the Angry Aryans' song *Self Hate-Suicide* where they sing that "Niggers think you're a nazi and proceed to beat you up," adding "The rules to be a sharpskin go like this. Denounce your heritage, like the jew ass you kiss. Destroy your own race and honor the mud." In *Fence Sitter* by Nordic Thunder, the song also calls out SHARPs saying that others "Call you a racist, you run and hide. Respect niggers and praise Jews".

But, white women that engage in interracial relationships receive the brunt of the anger for being white traitors. The song *Extinction* by Teardown talks about whites race mixing saying they are "Breeding our extinction," and in response advocate to listeners: "Hunt them down. Kill them all." One of the most violent songs for its lyrics advocating violence toward white race traitors is *Nigger Loving Whore* by the Angry Aryans with the lyrics "Brass knuckles smash forward, crushing in her face," and continues "Your affection for a nigger makes me see red. Gonna take a baseball bat, cave in your fucked up head."

Results for RQ3 show that Jews and the "Zionist Occupational Government" are believed to be the underlying cause of black violence, drugs, homosexuality, and white oppression. In *Faggots (Give Rainbows a Bad Name)*, the Angry Aryans sings, "Homosexuality is sponsored by the jew." The song *Committed Revolutionary* by the Angry Aryans talks about the "Zionist occupation," adding the "Jewish scumbag Zionist will make sure you're never freed." In the song *Still Just a Nigger* by the Angry Aryans, blacks are described as being "A lackey for the jew".

Jews are seen as the sponsors of a conspiracy against whites, and a Jewish controlled media and government (ZOG) as the enemy to the Skinhead Movement. In the song *F.b.i.* the Blue Eyed Devils sing that the F.B.I. is the "Secret police of a Zionist state," and wants to "destroy our cause." In the song *Tear it Down*, the Blue Eyed Devils sing, "It's war against the government, legislation has taken its toll. Trash the Constitution, throw out the Bill of Rights. Force Fed Hate also seethes against the media and society's "very values with which I'm at war," saying that "The media's a tool, for brainwashing fools – It happens in the street,

in your church's and schools" in *Classless*. The Blue Eyed Devils also call on violence toward the criminal justice system, singing in *Imprisoned*, "I'll slice the filthy neck of every judge found. I'll take your dirty courts and blow them to the ground".

The results of RQ4, shows that hatecore skinhead lyrics attempt to persuade whites that joining the Skinhead Movement is in their best interest. Often lyrics act as a source of promotion of personal strength, advocating that skinheads fight for their freedoms. The song *White Victory* by the Blue Eyed Devils contains the lyrics, "The power to save our race rests solely in our hands." In *Rise*, the Blue Eyed Devils sing, "Withstand the pressure, from the ashes we will Rise, Rise, to kill, their lies." The song *White Minority* by the Angry Aryans explains to whites they need to stand up for their race and have "White Pride." Nordic Thunder sings in the song *Fence Sitter*, "When will you stand up and be a man? We gotta keep fighting to save our land. You've gotta stop hiding behind your guilt. And take back the country that we have built."

An additional and prominent theme throughout many of the songs was the encouraging of whites to act as lone wolves against the enemies of whites. The song *Retribution* by the Blue Eyed Devils contains the lyrics, "I will fight forever, even if I stand alone!" The song *Fucked* by the Blue Eyed Devils has the lyrics, "Concealed and cloaked between those I oppose. Consecrating my weapons with the blood of foes." In *Rise*, the Blue Eyed Devils sing, "An army of one, Stick to my gun." In the song *From Within*, Teardown sings, "Strike at their heart, a death blow. A wolf in disguise, gonna destroy their lies".

The answer to RQ5 is clearly expressed in *Extinction is Forever* by the Angry Aryans with the lyrics, "Extinction is forever, that is nature's guarantee. We'll unify our masses or become a memory." Many of the songs examined express what could be considered nihilistic beliefs that the United States and whites may be doomed. These visions of the end of the white race can be found in a number of the songs often blaming the potential for white extinction as the goal of minorities, Jews, and the government. The song *Violence* by the Blue Eyed Devils insinuates that the government

and “system” are oppressors and that “Planned white extinction is their crime.” The song concludes the only way to prevent the government from destroying whites and white culture is to “Attack the oppressor, erase any doubt, Vent your frustration, it’s time to lash out,” The idea of a declining society, and of whites in American, is further articulated in the song *Strikeback* by Force Fed Hate, where they sing, “What it took our families generations to build – In another 20 years it will be all but killed”.

While many of the songs contain nihilistic visions of the extinction of the white race if whites do not join the skinhead movement, other lyrics promote a vision of pure white homelands. In *Onward We March*, Force Fed Hate sings, “I know we’ll preserve – For my race a new dawn is near. Free-from the filth – Free from disease. Free from the social strain – From sea to shining sea.” In the song *Swastika flies again* by Hate Society, the band sings, “Time has come and this will be our dream of liberty – A new world where the swastika flies again!” RQ 6 will be addressed in the following section.

## Discussion

The concept of power provides a useful heuristic to interpret how hatecore music reveals the complexity of these lyrics. They articulate a sense that skinheads are a powerful population, yet in a position of oppression. Music in general is a powerful lens to view social movements, because as Eyerman argues, “the singer and the song have replaced the agitator and the demagogic speaker that characterized previous movements” (2002, p.452).

In many respects, all social movements are based on fear and power, the fear of losing power or the fear associated with being forever powerless. The Skinhead Movement thrives on both forms of fear. Hatecore music incessantly expresses the beliefs that whites are losing power in society; that like with any resource, there is a limited amount of power available; if one person or group gains it another group must lose it (MARABLE, 1993; MELKOTE; STEVES, 2001), and hatecore lyrics articulate the notion that

what is good for minorities must be bad for whites (DUFFY, 2003). Corte and Edwards (2008) argue that while White Power and hatecore music focused on overt hate of immigrants, Jews, and minorities in general early on; the music has become reframed since the 1990s “to one of self-love and collective defence (sic) of the white race” (2008, p.6). They further suggest that the explicitly racist lyrics of early White Power and hatecore music “proved a counterproductive strategy for recruiting larger numbers and types of youth, as well as politically influencing public opinion” (2008, p.10).

Hatecore music demonstrates efforts to promote a group consciousness through song lyrics that center on collective experience as oppressed whites (DUFFY, 2003). Power relations depict white supremacists as both oppressed as well as an oppressive group. This is most evident in lyrics that support the “power over” dimension (MELKOTE; STEEVES, 2001). Hatecore music lyrics describe how whites are being controlled directly by a purported Jewish conspiracy and the Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG), and indirectly through the loss of jobs and opportunity to minorities as well as losing safety and stability in society. Their response to this threat is to exert control over all non-skinheads through violence, segregation, and to return American society to its past state of white dominance. Power in this case is a force working for and against skinheads.

Skinheads want their own homeland (ARENA; ARRIGO, 2005, p.492). This desire of an all-white nation is reflected in the “power to approach,” where skinheads seek separatism from all minorities. This exclusionary power gives skinheads the ability for self-determination in a nation devoid of any minorities (BLAZAK, 2001; BLEE, 1998; WHITSEL, 2001). To achieve greater “power with” as an organizational structure, they must convince more whites to join their movement, as well as convince members dispersed across the globe to view themselves as a collective movement, or if nothing else to take up arms as lone wolves acting within the movement to achieve its goals. Skinhead music, with its White Pride lyrics, bridges geographical divisions



and serves as a communicative strategy to achieve this end. Just as the Civil Rights Movement had its religious theme “We Shall Overcome” the Skinhead Movement has the Angry Aryans’ battle cry “Let’s Start a Racial War” to motivate its members to action. There are few more powerful appeals than that found in the message of the song “We Shall Overcome,” with its overriding belief “of predestination and the inevitability that God’s chosen people will triumph” in the “restoration and establishment of a right and proper world” (DUFFY, 2003, p.309).

Despite the non-progressive agenda of the Skinhead Movement, it does share similar motivating factors with conventional social progressive movements. Whether it’s perceived or real, generally speaking, social movements often advocate for alleviating the suffering of and the empowerment of disenfranchised groups in society. However, “Unlike liberal social movements, which are often lauded as progressive initiatives responding to a variety of social injustices, conservative social movements are usually regarded as irrationally motivated exercises in intolerance” (ADAMS; ROSCIGNO, 2005, p.761). Hatecore music provides communication strategies, in the form of lyrical themes, that serve as a catalyst to help galvanize individual whites around common challenges and goals to thus form a social movement (MALOTT; CARROLL-MIRANDA, 2003; SCHAFER, 2002; VAN ZOMEREN, POSTMES, SPEARS, 2008). Corte and Edwards continue that White Power and hatecore music has reframed the Skinhead Movement as “advocates for an embattled, self-loving and proud race actively pursuing the legitimate goals of self-defence (sic) and self-preservation,” as the victims of a “double-standard imposed by politically correct multiculturalism” (2008, p.10). Music, therefore, becomes a strategy to combat perceived oppression and empower skinheads.

## Conclusion & future research

The lyrics found in the hatecore music harnesses the resentment felt by some whites angered over a changing, multiethnic,

and more open society of religious, sexual, and racial tolerance. The song lyrics offer minorities, the government, liberals, Jews, and white traitors as easy scapegoats to this anger. Accompanied with this anger, the lyrics provide the means for angered whites to fight back through both individual acts of violence, but more importantly, through a collective movement of violence.

The White Power movement is currently fractionalized and spread out into different organizations across the country. Even Racist Skinheads are separated into 36 different organizations across the United States (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). White Power music appears to be the one unifier for all skinheads and others involved in the White Power movement. The music allows members from different groups the ability to join together, put organizational differences aside, and recite the messages found in the song lyrics.

Future research should examine the music lyrics of other White Power genres to assess consistency with these findings. The effects of exposure to hatecore music should also be studied using other methodologies experimental designs. The presence of hatecore messages in other media such as on blogs and websites should also be explored. The unit of observation in future studies can also be expanded to include other skinhead communication strategies and discourse such as live music concerts, speeches, public events, print publications, social media and publicity materials.

In the United States, White Power and hatecore music continues to be legal under the First Amendment, and promoters of the music and of hatecore concerts “emphasize its rebelliousness and significance for the preservation of the white race” (CORTE; EDWARDS, 2008, p.12). Each day there is more evidence that skinheads are carrying out the violent pledges in the music and are becoming the brute force foot soldiers of the White Power movement. White Power and hatecore music have helped the Skinhead Movement embrace aspects of identity politics forged during the Civil Rights Era “to frame themselves as an embattled, persecuted, minority group at risk of extinction” (CORTE; EDWARDS, 2008, p.17). In simply listening to hatecore and internalizing the lyrics

and messages within the music, skinheads have the ability to both empower themselves and the Skinhead Movement, as holy warriors fighting off the extinction of their race as they repeat the Angry Aryan's message of "Extinction is Forever".

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