

“Come Hear our Merry Song”:
Shifts in the Sound of Contemporary Swedish Radical
Nationalism

By

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This dissertation by Benjamin Raphael Teitelbaum is accepted in its present form
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Curriculum Vitae

Benjamin Raphael Teitelbaum was born in Evergreen, Colorado in 1983. He began studying the nyckelharpa and Swedish folk music when he was 15, and began traveling to Sweden frequently, studying Swedish, and studying genealogy at the same time. After graduating from Jefferson County Open High School in 2001, Teitelbaum studied nyckelharpa at the Eric Sahlström Institute in Tobo, Sweden. In 2002 he returned to the U.S. to pursue a bachelor's degree in nyckelharpa performance at Bethany College in Lindsborg ("Little Sweden U.S.A"), Kansas. He earned this degree—the first of its kind awarded outside of Sweden—in 2007. During the 2004-2005 academic year, Teitelbaum left Bethany to study in the Department of Folk Music at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm. While at Bethany, he met the love of his life, Kajsa Källqvist, and the two married in Vårvik, Sweden in 2007. That same year, he entered Brown University's graduate program in music. While at Brown he took courses at Harvard University through the exchange scholar program. He spent his summers touring as a performer, writing, and doing fieldwork in both Scandinavia and Azerbaijan. He began his dissertation fieldwork in fall 2010. Teitelbaum started a full-time position as Instructor and Head of Nordic Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder in fall 2012 and remains in that position today.

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Chapter 1 – A New Scene is Born

“Vi är också ett folk!” These were the words on a banner blazing the path for a procession of 16, 17, and 18 year-olds in central Gothenburg on April 10, 2011. The marchers were members of the youth organization of the Sweden Democrats—an anti-immigrant, anti-Islam political party. The youth organization’s biggest profiles were marching that day: William Hahne, Gustav Kasselstrand, Alexandra Brunell, and Chang Frick. As the 100 or so youths advanced down the avenue from Götaplatsen towards Kungsplatsen, somewhere between 600 and 700 counterdemonstrators from various socialist, communist, and immigrant organizations stood in their way. A police force nearly two hundred strong could not shield the young Sweden Democrats, nor observers like myself, from a barrage of tomatoes, eggs, fireworks, and glass bottles radiating from the protesters. Happy to have been struck only with eggs and not bottles, I followed the marchers and counterdemonstrators to Kungsplatsen square. Once at the square, the Sweden Democrats commenced with a short program featuring speeches by party leaders, as well as guests from other nationalist organizations in Germany and Italy. Though the speeches were amplified through a portable sound system, I couldn’t hear a word of them: A chorus of whistles, rattlers, blow horns, and screams surrounded me, easily drowning out all of the sounds coming from the nationalists. In fact, from the time the youth marchers arrived, and until they left in their police-escorted buses, I didn’t hear them say anything. The only statement they managed to communicate to me was that written on the front of their banner. “Vi är också ett folk!” “We are also a people!”

I left Gothenburg that day convinced that seeing the words on that banner warranted the stress of covering the event. That phrase, “We are also a people!,” neatly summarized a conceptual tendency that shapes organized opposition to immigration and globalization in contemporary Sweden. It is an ideology in which Swedes, and in some cases whites more generally, are conceived of as being oppressed, as victims of an injustice, and where methods of political action are fashioned accordingly. The cry, “We are also a people!,” implies a society that recognizes the existence of some peoples, but fails to acknowledge others. Void of obvious chauvinism, the phrase aims to speak in the voice of those denied the recognition that society rightfully extends to other peoples: It seeks to complete the spread of a universal principle acknowledging and respecting difference. It seeks equality.

This conceptual and argumentative model is not limited to the Sweden Democrats. Rather, it spreads throughout an ideological scene in contemporary Scandinavia that scholars and journalists call right-wing extremism, radical rightism, or organized racism, but which today often calls itself nationalism. It is by no means a unified scene. Self-identified nationalists in Sweden may be militant neo-Nazis, white nationalists, ethnic separatists, neo-fascist intellectuals, or ultra social conservatives like the Sweden Democrats. These groups hold contradictory stances on Jews, Islam, feminism, and methods of political action. They also disagree as to the nature of the population they claim to fight for—the national people—and whether that people should in the first instance be seen as Swedish, Scandinavian, Nordic, Aryan, European, or white, and whether its essential features are inherited

biologically or learned culturally. But all believe this variously conceived people faces an existential threat due to immigration and globalization, all envision dramatic changes to society on its behalf, and nearly all face pronounced social and political opposition for their beliefs and actions.

The rhetoric exhibited in public statements like “We are also a people!” derives from a broader effort on part of activists to normalize their cause in the eyes of the public. Swedish radical nationalism grew during the late 1980s and early 1990s when organized opposition to immigration, racial intermarriage, and an alleged global Jewish conspiracy rallied and expanded around a transnational, oppositional youth subculture: neo-Nazi skinheadism. Chanting slogans like “Nigger mob? No thanks! [blattepack – nej tack]” or “White power – Jew slaughter [vit makt – jude slakt]” these nationalists donned bomber jackets, combat boots, swastika tattoos, and close-cropped hairstyles. Given their rhetoric, their dress, and their frequent involvement in highly publicized beatings and murders, late-twentieth-century Swedish nationalists were often synonymous in the public eye with hooliganism, chauvinism, ignorance, and violence.

Although skinhead culture brought 1990s radical nationalism unprecedented recruiting and economic gains, it also left many in the scene with broken families, legal problems, and substance abuse habits. Further, the rising enthusiasm in the scene, evidenced by the proliferation of nationalist organizations and participation in public and private nationalist events, had not translated into appreciable political gains. Internal calls for reform, though always present, found greater reception towards the end of the 1990s. Growing numbers of nationalists from political

parties and activist organizations advocated a shift away from hate rhetoric, chauvinism, violence, and in some cases, from skinheadism altogether.

The New Nationalism that emerged from reform efforts towards the beginning of the twenty-first century drew inspiration from various sources, from white nationalist intellectuals in the United States, contemporary and historic ultraconservative philosophers throughout Europe, and even leftist thinkers like Antonio Gramsci and members of the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School. As of today, it has manifest in different ways, and to differing extents, throughout Sweden's nationalist scene. However, it most often contains a pair of broad goals, what I call New Nationalism's double imperative: One the one hand, those looking to reform hooligan 1990s skinheadism emphasized the need for a non-deviant nationalism. Organized opposition to immigration and globalization, according to this doctrine, should embody unremarkable language, political methods, and cultural attributes. On the other hand, reformists argued for a renewed commitment to national or sub-national distinctiveness rather than transnational subcultures or nostalgic imaginations of WWII Germany. Ideal nationalists should not sport close-cropped hairstyles and combat boots, nor should they adorn their bodies or their propaganda with references to Adolf Hitler: instead, they should be exceptionally Swedish.

The New Nationalism thus issues contradictory attitudes towards difference, with one side of the agenda advocating adherence to mainstream values and behavior, and the other aspiring to embody and project unique characteristics of national peoples. Statements like "We are also a people," that which I witnessed on

the Sweden Democrats' banner in Gothenburg, reflect this double imperative. There, the "We are also..." attempts to align nationalists with widely-held sentiments, and the "people" signals a community qualitatively distinct from others. The scope of reformism and its attendant inner tensions stretches beyond public rhetoric, however, encompassing various mediums vital to nationalist activism and thought. This dissertation investigates the impact of New Nationalism on one such medium—on an expressive form that has for decades shaped the ways opponents of immigration and globalization in Europe organized, expanded, fundraised, and identified.

By the late 1990s, Swedes had become some of the largest producers of nationalist music in the western world. Sweden's nationalist music industry contained two broad and sometimes overlapping categories of music: white power and a genre largely specific to Sweden, Viking rock.¹ Both categories share similar instrumental features—with loud, charging, punk or heavy metal accompaniments and screamed vocals. But whereas white power lyrics are unequivocal in their calls for white racial solidarity, their demonization of ethnic minorities, and their visions of violent revolution, Viking rock lyrics typically skirt talk of race and minorities, and dwell instead on romantic scenes from Scandinavia's military past. Whether it was white power punk or Viking rock, radical nationalist music reached its widest levels of consumption toward the end of the twentieth century, cultivating an audience that proportionally might have been larger than that found in any other western country. In 1997, a study of listening habits among 6-12 grade students

¹ Not to be confused with Viking metal or other similar genres cultivated outside of explicit nationalist political activism.

throughout the country revealed that 12.2% youth overall listened to “white power music” (a term which likely included Viking rock for most respondents) sometimes or often. That number was 15.3% when limited to boys overall, and 18.9% when limited to boys in grades 10-12 (Lange, Lööw, Bruchfeld, and Hedlund 1997).

Swedish white power and Viking rock music experienced a decline, or outright “fall” (Lagerlöf 2012) following the 1990s. Multiple factors lead to waning consumption and production of these genres. Just as online music downloading strained profits at major multi-national record companies, so too did it render radical nationalist rock less economically sustainable for music producers. Further, Swedish police began enforcing hate speech laws more rigorously so as to hinder the staging of large-scale concerts. But inside the nationalist scene, the growing faction of activists who called for an end to hooliganism were also less and less willing to support a music culture saturated with pounding sounds and violent lyrics, a culture home to shaved, tattooed, boot-stomping young men. Reformist nationalists wrote critical letters to music magazines, they pressured festivals, record labels, and concert organizers to purge neo-Nazi skinhead music from their operations, they formed new political organizations, and expelled ideologically or culturally deviant members from existing groups.

The decline of white power and Viking rock appeared to be the decline of the nationalist music industry altogether. There have never been as many artists, record labels, or festivals as there were in the 1990s. Similarly, music would never serve the central recruiting and unifying function that it once did: it would never form the

same basis for nationalist gatherings, for raising income, or for attracting youths to the scene.

Swedish radical nationalists, however, did not stop producing, consuming, or talking about music as white power and Viking rock receded. Rather, as I show in the following study, music remained deeply entangled with nationalist activism and thought beyond the turn of the twenty-first century—during a time when organized opposition to immigration in Sweden would achieve its most striking political successes and internal transformations. Understanding how the New Nationalism impacts music and vice versa is the goal of my study here.

This dissertation explores Swedish radical nationalists' musical practices following the weakening of white power and Viking rock. I argue that insiders' musical practices after the turn of the twenty-first century illuminate and respond to the New Nationalism's double imperative of suppressing deviance in some contexts, and enhancing it in others. In this study, I explore nationalists' burgeoning interest in producing and celebrating music genres beyond punk and metal. I examine the rise of anti-immigrant, white nationalist rap and reggae in Sweden, nationalists' strengthening investment in traditional Swedish folk music, and the emergence and popularity of nationalist light pop, or "freedom pop." I investigate the ways nationalists use musical sound and words set to musical sound to articulate and stylize understanding of themselves as victims. My discussion also analyzes the ways activists relate their musical practices to their politics, showing how some use music to demonstrate their uniformity with the mainstream, their commitment to universal causes, or their devotion to Swedishness, while others

engage the art form to escape their declared ideological programs—to find a release from the identity and lifestyle they assign themselves. I show that contemporary nationalists' ideological convictions continue to inform their musical behaviors and vice versa, and that nationalists continue using music to express and understand who they are and what they fought for.

Encountering Nationalism

I watched the election results live on television, sitting in the living room of my wife's family farm in rural western Sweden. Despite its sizable underground radical nationalist scene, Sweden had been up until that point one of the few European countries without a genuine nationalist or anti-immigrant party in its parliament. But on September 19, 2010, the Sweden Democrats garnered 5.7% of the national vote—enough to win them 20 seats in parliament.² Though many Swedes were shocked by the unprecedented success of a party they regarded as unabashedly racist, those of us at the farm were somewhat numbed to the news. Our minds were elsewhere. We had spent most of that day as we had spent the previous days—driving back and forth to a hospital in the city of Uddevalla, visiting my dear father-in-law who, with what felt like little warning, would succumb to cancer 16 days later.

The worsening of his condition coincided with what was supposed to be the beginning of my year of doctoral fieldwork. I had planned to study a topic dealing with Swedish folk music, and I was well prepared to do this. Sweden, Swedish culture, and Swedish folk music had been my passions since I was in middle school.

² Available online, accessed October 14, 2012, <http://www.val.se/val/val2010/slutresultat/R/riike/index.html>

It was at that time that I became intensely interested in researching the history of my maternal grandmother's Swedish family. I also began to play a folk instrument, the nyckelharpa, that I believed (erroneously) was played by my great, great grandfather from Forshaga, Sweden.

It was then, in middle school, when I decided I was Swedish. The reasons for this still elude me: It may have been because of the deep love and regard I felt for my Swedish grandmother, it may have been because the Jewish side of my background—more apparent in my name and, I have always felt, my physical appearance—seemed less socially advantageous as a somewhat jockish teenager in the suburbs of Denver, Colorado. I would devote most of my energies to studying Sweden and Swedish music, from my years in an alternative, self-directed learning high school, through post-secondary schooling at the Eric Sahlström Institute for Swedish Folk Music, The Royal College of Music, Stockholm, and Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas—"Little Sweden, USA." With little reflection, I had also planned to write a dissertation on Sweden and Swedish folk music at Brown University.

The developments that played out in front of us on the television that evening at the farm would soon intersect with my planned fieldwork topic, however. A media frenzy ensued following the election as journalists and other commentators sought to make sense of the Sweden Democrats, their policies, and the reasons behind their electoral advance. This newfound attention provided party members a platform to present a new image of themselves, and they did this in part by specifying their cultural policy. The Sweden Democrats sought to strip funding for multiculturalism and cultural elitism—for the promotion of foreign expressive

culture, provocative visual arts, and opera companies with public money. And while ending these projects, the party proposed increased funding for traditional Swedish culture, including traditional Swedish folk music.

My reaction resembled that of many other folk musicians: Since when did the Sweden Democrats care about folk music? I had a vague notion of who the party was prior to the election, and to the extent I associated them with music, it was with Viking rock or white power music. The only encounter I had with party members came some years earlier when I saw two boys with shaved heads putting up decals for the party on a light post in the city of Skövde, and those two looked nothing like the urban, relatively affluent, earthy types that tend to populate Sweden's folk music scene.

The party's new emphasis on Swedish folk music sparked my curiosity: To what extent was the party as a whole—including its grassroots—interested in Swedish folk music? Were any of these individuals active folk musicians or dancers? How long had they been interested, and what types of music do they consider folk music? What do they think about the politically left-leaning character of Sweden's folk music community? Initially, I decided to address these questions through my existing research program, thinking I would include a chapter on nationalism in a broader study of folk music in contemporary Sweden. However, as I began investigating the Sweden Democrats and making contact with party members, it appeared to me that their interest in folk music was part of a larger development impacting, not only their party, but also many organizations in Sweden that identified as nationalist. They were using music, not simply as a tool to refine their

public image, but also to send a message to other nationalists. I gradually shifted my focus away from Sweden's folk music community, and turned my attention instead towards studying the role of music in contemporary Swedish radical nationalism.

Topics and Terms Defined

I face multiple challenges as I delimit, define, and name my topic. Chief among these is my task to isolate and describe the population, ideology, and music I study. Insider and outsider commentators speak about an intellectual, social, and cultural movement first emerging in 1980s Sweden called "the national movement [den nationella rörelsen]." This name, in turn, derives from Nazi sympathizers in WWII Sweden. Multiple groups today consider themselves part of this movement, including the militant neo-Nazi Swedish Resistance Movement [Svenska Motståndsrörelsen], the white nationalist Party of the Swedes [Svenskarnas Parti], the ethnopluralist National Democrats [Nationaldemokraterna], and virtually all nationalist music labels. These forces tend to share a commitment to race or ethnonationalism as well as anti-Semitism, and broadly speaking, all are open to cooperation with each other.

The term, "the national movement" is insufficient for my needs, however. My study encompasses groups who identify as part of the national movement as well as other groups who do not, like the relatively moderate Sweden Democrats and adherents of a French-inspired intellectual school called identitarianism. Though all may identify as nationalists more broadly, differences between the Sweden Democrats, identitarians, and those who place themselves in "the national movement" can at times be pronounced. There have been frequent, occasionally violent disputes among these groups over methods of political action, relationships

with Jews and Muslims, or the nature of Swedish identity. Most of the nationalist political parties that hold seats in parliaments throughout Europe vehemently deny any connection with neo-Nazism or race ideology. National Socialist organizations, on the other hand, often consider non-race-conscious agendas to be fundamentally different from, even directly at odds with their own. Parties calling for assimilation of immigrants present a more urgent threat to the national movement than do mainstream groups who advocate multiculturalism. Scholars have had a tendency to place the Sweden Democrats within the national movement (see Larsson 2001; Hamrud 2011:3). But to do so is to disregard the thinking of insiders—of both Sweden Democrats and other nationalists—as well as the link between the phrase “the national movement” and 1930s and 1940s Swedish Nazism.

Still, there are perspectives through which grouping all of these actors under the same heading make sense. Swedish political scientists Mats Deland, Fredrik Hertzberg, and Thomas Hvitfeldt offer us some clues as to why this may be. They claim that whereas most political ideologies and propaganda campaigns divide society into “we” and “them,” nationalists of all kinds in Sweden tend to treat these categories as “the people” and “[domestic] foreigners” respectively. Most blame cultural and political elites for the rise of foreigners and foreign influence in the country, and oppose transnational political and economic forces like the EU and global capitalism. And most generally oppose feminism, though more moderate groups may endorse what they call “difference feminism” (2010:6-12).³

³ Note that the authors use the term right-wing extremist instead of nationalist in their discussion. I motivate my use of the term nationalism below.

Various sociocultural features span the internal boundaries of this population as well. Organizations are overwhelmingly male, and participants of all stripes often consume a similar body of media and literature. National Socialists and social conservatives alike may read translated writings by European New Right thinkers like Alain de Benoist and Tomislav Sunic, the ethnopluralist National Democrats' newspaper *Nationell Idag* (National Today), and they may be found together in online nationalist discussion forums like Flashback.org and Nordisk.nu. These actors share a distinct discursive practice, and are generally the only people in Sweden who identify as nationalists. Further, scholars speculate that many may listen to similar music (ibid:6).

I call this population “the nationalist scene.” This term escapes the limiting connotations of term “the nationalist movement,” as well as its allusions to the existence of a coordinated, shared cause among these groups. I use the word scene, not in Irwin’s sense as “a central leisure activity, a set of special symbols and meanings, relative availability, and action” (1977:30), but more specifically as a site—real or virtual—where a bounded group of social actors interact with each other. Scenes may be sites for cooperation, as well as competition and conflict. The commonalities among nationalists listed above help establish the boundaries of this scene. However, the nationalist scene is best conceived of as an arena, not where social actors join forces in pursuit of a common goal, but rather as one where these individuals share concern for a cluster of issues and questions, as well as terminology and occasionally expressive culture. Members of the nationalist scene typically struggle against each other over topics as foundational as the definition of

nationalism. For an example of such struggle, we can look to a message that was sent to me by Mattias Karlsson, leading reformist Sweden Democrat, in reaction to an interview I gave in Sweden's largest evening paper, *Aftonbladet*. I was interviewed about terrorist Anders Behring Breivik's regard for Swedish nationalist singer Saga, whose music I described as "nationalist pop." Karlsson wrote:

I don't know if you were quoted correctly in today's *Aftonbladet*, but if you were, I must question the use of the term 'nationalist pop' to describe Saga. From what I can see, she is an outspoken Nazi who sings white power music. I don't know what in the world that has to do with nationalism. Nazism is an anti-nationalist ideology (electronic message, August 7, 2011).⁴

Referring to the Third Reich's imperialism—its disregard for the national sovereignty of others—Karlsson here seeks to expel neo-Nazi voices from the category nationalist. Self-identifying nationalists from other regions of the scene also advance definitions of nationalism that affirmed their own claim to the title and reject the claims of others—often the Sweden Democrats.

The nationalist scene is thus organized around common interest and experience, rather than a common agenda. With this distinction I seek to distance myself from those commentators like Henrik Arnstad (2013) who would suggest there is little fundamental difference between the parliamentarian Sweden Democrats and historical Nazis. Indeed, musical practices and discourses provide a window through which to examine both similarities and differences among self-identified nationalists in Sweden.

⁴"Vet inte om du är korrekt citerad i dagens Aftonbladet, men om så skulle vara fallet så måste jag ifrågasätta begreppet 'nationalistpop' för att beskriva Saga. Efter vad jag kunnat se är hon en uttalad nazist som sjunger vit makt musik. Förstår inte vad detta överhuvudtaget har med nationalism att göra. Nazismen är ju en antinationalistisk ideologi."

I use the term “radical nationalism” to describe the political and ideological profile of the field of parties, organizations, and individuals encompassed in the nationalist scene. What unites these actors, in the most general sense, is their aim to effect dramatic changes to society for the promotion of a variously conceived national people. I believe this profile can be better summarized as “radical nationalist” than with the term most commonly used by outside commentators: “right-wing extremist.”

Whereas nationalist groups in other parts of the Western world may welcome association with political rightism, Swedish nationalists seldom feel closer to rightists than leftists in their own country. Some features of the movement appear rightist: Much nationalist rhetoric often longs for the past, to times when Sweden was allegedly more culturally or ethnically homogenous. The will to return society to one of its earlier forms could be seen as a hallmark of rightism via conservatism. Additionally, the lineage of most nationalist parties active today can be traced via Nordiska Rikspartiet [The Nordic Reich Party] to the Swedish National League [Sveriges Nationella Förbund]—Sweden’s most prominent Nazi party during the war era. The Swedish National League in turn emerged from the youth wing of the dominant right-wing party of the time, the Allmänna Valmanspartiet [today the Moderates] (Lööv 1998). Thus, today’s nationalists could view themselves as part of a tradition of rightism. However, free-market liberalism, rather than social conservatism, opposition to immigration, or opposition to the EU, defines rightism in mainstream Swedish politics today. Conversely, nearly all nationalist political parties and organizations in Sweden reject economic liberalism and advocate a

robust welfare state—a stance in line with Swedish social democracy, and one that further prevents them from identifying with rightism beyond Sweden.

Like “right-wing,” “extremism” also seems a word ill suited to describe the nationalist scene as a whole. In his masterful conceptual history of extremism, German political scientist Uwe Backes maps centuries of attempts to define the term, and ultimately embraces an understanding of “extremism” emerging from the Aristotelian tradition. According to that tradition, extremism aspires to monism over pluralism, egotistical interest over a common goal, a despotic state instead of a legal state, and outside determination over self-determination. Backes concludes, “[i]n the light of the outstanding importance of the Aristotelian heritage concerning the history of occidental constitutionalism, determining ‘extremism’ as the antithesis of the constitutional state seems to suggest itself” (2010:182). And he goes on to say, “In the social psychological realm, [extremism] can be interpreted as a consequence of ambiguity intolerance, refusal to accept the heterogeneity and ambiguity of the world” (ibid:184). Were we to use the term extremism in this sense to describe Swedish nationalists, we would be calling them essentially anti-democratic and uncompromising. We might also be declaring ourselves privy to an ultimate reality—some particular form of heterogeneity and ambiguity inherent to the human condition—of which participants in the nationalist scene are ignorant. While some nationalist organizations are openly anti-democratic, others assert that they support democracy, and most see themselves as fierce advocates of free speech.

Radicalism is not an obviously better term than extremism. Throughout the history of political science, the two terms were often treated as synonymous, and efforts to distinguish radicalism from extremism seldom took hold in scholarly language. For example, during the 1970s, German researchers Hans D. Klingemann and Franz U. Pappi claimed that radicalism rejected democratic methods (and embraced violence), whereas extremism simply rejected democratic values. Antwerp political scientist Cas Mudde offered the mirror of the Klingemann/Pappi definition: radicalism accepted democratic processes while espousing anti-democratic values, but extremism rejected both process and values (Backes 2010:163-166). Though neither Mudde's nor Klingemann's and Pappi's definitions proved successful, Mudde's did tap into a broader trend in scholarly discourse whereby radicalism was at times seen as referring to general dramatic distance from the mainstream, and not as specifically un-democratic as extremism. For example, French theologian Franz Keller, wrote that both extremism and radicalism seek foundational changes to society, but whereas radicalism can accept compromise and gradual change, extremism "only offers the alternative 'all-or-nothing' and, since it is impossible to immediately reach the goal completely, it feels relieved of the arduous step-by-step changing of conditions. Extremism is the flight from the burdensome responsibility of creative activity" (cited in Backes 2010:112). In sum, even though the term radicalism is sometimes reserved for violent, anti-democratic politics, it has a tradition of describing the more general will towards deep structural reforms in society. Indeed, this seems to have been the term's original meaning when it emerged in late-eighteenth-century England and North

America (see *ibid* 2010:8), and it is what I intend when I use it here. Whereas radicalism is major change, extremism, when it occurs in democratic societies, is a particular kind of major change, change that scholars like Mudde contend is brought about in a particular fashion.

Radical nationalism is by no means a perfect descriptor for Sweden's nationalist scene. National borders can be of secondary importance to contemporary neo-Nazi and white nationalist movements who at times prioritize the boundaries of a white or Nordic race over those of specific nation states. Additionally, identitarian forces emphasize both pan-European and local ethnic identities over those of the nation. Some moderate activists also distance themselves from the label nationalist because they dislike its association with Nazism. Such individuals may prefer alternate terms like conservative, reactionary, or pro-Swedish. Concurrently, radicalism is often equated with leftism in scholarly and popular circles, and makes some nationalists hesitant to self-apply the term. Despite these shortcomings, the term "radical nationalism" remains attractive because it avoids problematic distinctions between right and left, encompasses both democratic and anti-democratic methods of political engagement, and captures the scene's commitment to a variously conceived national people in the face of globalizing social, political, and cultural forces.

Though activists in the nationalist scene engage with many types of music in many ways, I will devote the bulk of my attention to understanding what Thomas Turino calls "musical nationalism." Turino defines musical nationalism as "musical styles, activities, and discourses that are explicitly part of nationalist political

movements and programs” (2000:13-14). He formulated this definition by shifting focus from particular styles of music and towards the ways music is used. He thus distinguishes his musical nationalism from musicological uses of the term that typically describe genres of European art music that borrow from rural folk styles. According to Turino’s definition, any style of music can function as musical nationalism depending on how it is used in political movements. Here, and in the following study, musical nationalism is regarded as a practice.

Research Model

My study is based on over two years of fieldwork. I spent nearly two thirds of my time between August 1, 2010 and August 1, 2012 in Sweden. My research consisted of four broad tasks: (1) Listening to and watching all Swedish nationalist music and music video productions made within the last twenty years, (2) surveying nationalist online media, (3) observing online discussion forums, and (4) conducting face-to-face ethnographic fieldwork. It was also the most time consuming: While in Sweden, I moved almost daily between Swedish cities with particularly active nationalist communities, cities including Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Lund, Västerås, Eskilstuna, Linköping, and Umeå. Additionally, I made short trips to the surrounding Nordic countries, often Oslo and Copenhagen, to gain context for the material I collected in Sweden. My activities during each visit varied, though they often included interviewing and spending time informally with insiders, as well as attending concerts, festivals, rallies, demonstrations, or other events.

As is the case throughout Europe and the United States, radical nationalists in Sweden maintain an unusually large Internet presence. Accordingly, online discussion forums, blogs, and news media were the main venues where I gained

information about nationalist gatherings and contacted potential informants. The primary online forums/social networking sites I followed were Nordisk.nu, Frihet.nu (closed), Flashback.com, Facebook.com, and Youtube.com. I would often track events and contact insiders through online nationalist media sites, most often through Nationell.nu, but also through party-affiliated news sites like Patriot.nu (now Nordfront.se) and NationellIdag.se. I also consulted the many personal blogs nationalists produce, including those tied to the influential blog portal, Motpol.nu.

Seeking insight into all prominent factions of Swedish radical nationalism, I assembled a broad base of informants, covering most major political parties and organizations, including the Sweden Democrats [Sverigedemokraterna], the National Democrats [Nationaldemokraterna], National Today [Nationell Idag], Nordic Youth [Nordisk Ungdom], The Organization of National Youth [Förbundet Nationell Ungdom], The Party of the Swedes [Svenskarnas Parti], Midgård Records, Motpol.nu, The Skåne Party [Skånepartiet], Nordisk.nu, The Swedish Resistance Movement [Svenska Motståndsrörelsen], as well as a large number of unaffiliated, so-called “free nationalists” [fria nationalister].⁵ My contact with these groups was varied. Most of my informants were associated with the Sweden Democrats, the National Democrats, Nordic Youth, and Motpol.nu. Contact with the Party of the Swedes and The Swedish Resistance Movement was comparatively much more sparse and strained. And though I have attempted to cover all the major organizations in the nationalist scene, breadth was not my only objective.

⁵As well as members of the Swedish Resistance Movement’s international organization, Nordfront.

Prominent Figures

“[W]ith the hope that it includes individuals.” Early ethnomusicologist Alan P. Merriam penned this inscription on an article of his that he gave to my former professor at Brown, Jeff Todd Titon. At the time—the summer of 1977—Titon was teaching alongside Merriam at Indiana University. During that summer, the two had been discussing the merits of an ethnomusicology focused on groups versus one that sought knowledge of groups by studying individuals (Titon 1997:253). Titon advocated the latter position, and when I spoke with him over thirty years later about the episode, he thought, despite the intentions expressed in the inscription, that Merriam’s scholarship remained blind to the importance of individuals in musical and social behavior.

I too intend for my study to “include individuals,” and I hope that I am more successful in this cause than Merriam was. Though my discussion traces and analyzes broader organizational turnover, policy shifts, and musical trends, charismatic individuals shape nationalist music making, and imbue nationalist music with meaning peculiar to their own experiences, values, and ambitions. Accordingly, I give added attention to a number of individuals in this study: Headlining female singer Saga, blogger and musician Solguru, culture journalist and activist Vávra Suk, and, most of all, leading Sweden Democrat politician Mattias Karlsson.

Mattias Karlsson currently serves as a member of parliament for the Sweden Democrats. He is also the party’s representative on the Committee for Cultural Affairs, and is senior spokesperson on cultural issues. An author of the most recent party principle programs, Karlsson is largely responsible for a recent shift in the

Sweden Democrat's cultural policy, a shift from emphasizing the importance of the High Nordic to instead championing Swedish folk culture, including Swedish folk music. This shift is detailed in Chapter 4. In addition to his parliamentary activism, he is co-founder of Gimle, an officially party-unaffiliated organization that promotes Nordic culture by holding yearly festivals with traditional dance, music, and foods, and by running a web page with information, interviews, and audiovisual materials on folk culture. Karlsson grew up during a period of intense ethnic conflict and ethnic mobilization among Sweden's youth, and he claims to have had a nationalist awakening in secondary school, gaining a newfound Swedish pride with inspiration from Viking-rock band Ultima Thule. Declaring himself a nationalist at a young age, Karlsson would navigate the ideological fault lines of the movement to later become one of the foremost advocates for radical cultural nationalism.

I detail Karlsson's past and present throughout the course of this study, beginning at the end of this chapter. By focusing on Karlsson and his life, I follow trends in contemporary scholarly and popular literature on the Sweden Democrats. Books on the party by anti-racist activists Mikael Ekman and Daniel Poohl (2010), journalist Niklas Orrenius (2010), and Danish author Mikael Jalving (2011), for example, all devote what may seem to be disproportionate amounts of attention to him given that he is only one out of a handful of prominent party members. There are multiple reasons for the considerable journalistic and scholarly focus on Karlsson. His thought and initiative drove major changes to the party's structure, policy, and public presentation—changes that hastened, if not enabled, its electoral successes. Though his is not a household name in Sweden like party-leader Jimmie

Åkesson, Karlsson's reputation as unofficial chief ideologue and strategist contributes to understandings that he is a hidden force steering the inner workings of the Sweden Democrats, much like some American political commentators regarded former George W. Bush presidential advisor Karl Rove the true orchestrator of the Bush Administration. Additionally, while commentators often find other party members aggressive and combative during interviews, Karlsson is relatively soft-spoken and contemplative in tone, and is therefore a more appealing informant than some of his colleagues.

I also gravitated towards Karlsson for these reasons. His contributions to the Sweden Democrats' current ideological profile—its cultural and musical policy in particular—are considerable. My interviews with party members suggest that he is one of the most respected and influential figures in the organization. And while my interactions with Sweden Democrats have on the whole been cordial and productive, I found him especially welcoming and especially thoughtful. This is not to say that the verbal combativeness apparent in some of his colleagues is entirely absent in him. His occasional quick, sharp glares or sudden, piecing responses to disagreeable suggestions may seek to anticipate what he sees as a never-failing pattern of unfair and misrepresentative reporting on himself and his party. Or, similarly, they could be products of a defensive posture nurtured by years of violent conflicts, from street fights with immigrant gangs during his youth, to, as an adult, frequently ending up on the receiving end of pepper-spray and iron bars in the hands of anti-fascist activists. Regardless, the subtle edge in his personality likely

propels his intellectual curiosity, as well as his parliamentary and extra parliamentary activism.

My presentation of Karlsson's life, as well as my presentation of Saga's, rests between two genres of biographical writing identified by Jeff Todd Titon: the life story and the personal history. Titon describes the life story—a person's telling of the story of their life—as a distinct genre of verbal performance. During the telling of a life story, the listener may make small indications of continued interest, such as a nod or the occasional small comment. But that listener does not attempt to steer the course or content of the story by asking questions: The story is the teller's creation from beginning to end. The scholar's representation of life stories therefore ought to involve presenting these stories in as whole a form as possible; presenting them as the performances they are. Just as the teller had control over the shape of the story in conversation, so too should that authority be preserved as the story is transferred to paper and placed in the context of an essay (Titon 1980).

The personal history, on the other hand, is “a written account of a person's life based on spoken conversations and interviews” (ibid:284). Unlike the life story, here the scholar controls flow and content in presenting the informant's life. The personal history can masquerade as a type of autobiography because of its apparent grounding in the informant's own communication. But it is the scholar who asks the questions, selects relevant material, and occasionally paraphrases the informant's statements (ibid).

Karlsson, Saga, and others gave a number of life stories during my interviews and conversations with them. Seldom did these tellings attempt to encompass their

entire lives. Rather, they most often gave extended descriptions of events, experiences, and transitions they regarded as especially formative of the people they are. I intervened minimally during these stories. At other times, I led the conversation with guided lines of questioning and frequent interjections. I include material from both forms of conversation in my written presentation of Karlsson's and Saga's backgrounds. I of course decided what material to include, in what order it will be presented, how their language should be translated to English, and if and when to paraphrase: This dissertation contains no life story in Tilton's sense. But I try to leave my informants' longer, more self-contained narratives intact, and in general to allow them to describe their own history and thoughts as often as possible. If the life story is the work of the informant, and the personal history the work of the scholar, then I hope my presentations of Karlsson's and Saga's lives represent a collaboration between informant and scholar.

Methodology and Risk Management

When approaching a potential informant, face-to-face or online, I always introduced myself as a PhD student from Brown University conducting research for my dissertation. I explained that I was studying music and contemporary nationalism in Sweden,⁶ and that I am not connected to any organization or institution other than Brown. Additionally, I always introduced myself using my full name.

This research posed and continues to pose high risk to both my informants and myself. For this reason, I have given special consideration to issues of risk when

⁶ I did not describe my project as a study of "radical nationalism" on these occasions. My use of the word "radical" requires clarification, and it was often inconvenient and counterproductive to provide that explanation when first making contact.

conducting fieldwork and writing. Of the many groups I have had contact with, at least one, The Swedish Resistance Movement, is classified as a criminal organization by Sweden's security police. Law enforcement authorities link this and similar groups to dozens of violent assaults on ethnic and religious minorities, homosexuals, and anti-fascist activists during the past decades. Further, insiders are known to subject one another to violent retaliation for failing to follow official ideological and behavioral codes. Less militant, parliamentary political parties like the Party of the Swedes and the National Democrats rarely inflict violence on others or themselves. But groups and individuals connected with these parties do harass political and ideological opponents in ways that are nonetheless traumatizing, such as publishing opponents' addresses and personal information online, writing defamatory articles, egging and spray-painting houses, etc. Virtually all radical nationalist organizations, from the National Socialist Swedish Resistance Movement, to the most moderate parliamentary Sweden Democrats, publicize crimes committed by ethnic minorities. Such a practice is intended to highlight, and in most cases foment discord between ethnic groups in Sweden.

During the past decade, however, nationalists have often been the victims of violent crime. Activists from various communist, socialist, anarchist, and anti-fascist organizations often stage violent counterdemonstrations at public nationalist events. These activists have also infiltrated private events and attacked outspoken nationalists in their homes and workplaces. Indeed, the majority of nationalists I spoke with report having been assaulted. They describe being pelted with cobblestones, tear gassed, or being beaten with iron pipes. One had a swastika

knifed into his forehead, and another suffered a gang attack that police would later classify as an attempted murder. In addition to the risk of physical harm, nationalists in Sweden also face pronounced social stigmatization for their views. Private and public-sector employees have been fired because of their participation in nationalist political parties and organizations; friendships and families have been broken.

One need not be a member of a political organization, nor an ethnic, religious, or sexual minority, to be implicated in this contentious exchange. Otherwise unmarked, everyday citizens who make public statements about immigration, integration, or nationalism experience harassment. High school teachers who condemn nationalist political parties in their classrooms, restaurant owners who refuse to serve activists, or musicians and artists who object to being treated as symbols of nationalism, face various forms of intimidation and public ridicule.

In sum, virtually all of my informants engage in activities that put them in harm's way. And because here, risk closely parallels one's visibility in the debate, my research may potentially augment the danger to those I study. I call attention to my informants and their ideas by soliciting interviews and by publishing research that cites their words and actions. By doing this, I increase the likelihood that they will be identified and targeted by ideological opponents, inside and outside of the nationalist scene.

I too have been subject to multiple risks as a student of these communities. My darker skin, eyes, and hair announce the fact that my ethnic background is not completely Swedish. Further, my last name is Jewish, and some of my informants

knew this without me having to tell them. My ethnic background in general, and my Jewish name in particular, make me a direct threat to some, suspicious to others, and a potential liability to any member of more radical political groups who cooperates with me. The majority of those individuals I approached in person were receptive and friendly. Some were suspicious and dismissive, and a small number were hostile. But the threat did not end if insiders welcomed me. My association with these groups also made me a target of less discriminate attacks by anti-fascist and other leftwing activists. I was struck with flying eggs, firecrackers, and glass bottles while observing various nationalist public demonstrations, and a pipe bomb was discovered near the site of a nationalist seminar I attended. Finally, there continues to be a threat to my personal and professional relationships should friends, family, and colleagues mistake my academic interest for political sympathy.

Managing risks to my informants and myself has required careful consideration and a rigid commitment to various protective measures. As I mentioned above, social actors' vulnerability increases as their personal information is disseminated and publicized. Accordingly, I have attempted to minimize the potential for harm to my informants by scrutinizing and limiting the amount of personal information I spread. Using pseudonyms or listing sources as "anonymous" in my writing is an obvious and effective means to this end. In most cases, however, nationalists already use a pseudonym. This is true even for the most public nationalists we will encounter, like some leading politicians in the Sweden Democrats. Accordingly, I often apply a pseudonym to a pseudonym. I have given all of my informants the option of anonymity, though I have chosen to remove their

names myself in a few cases. I have also used discretion when deciding whether to include other personal information like place of residence/birth, employment, age, physical appearance, organizational affiliations, hobbies and interests, etc. At times, the effort to protect my informants' identity has had to begin before I started writing. Certain individuals could suffer reprisals from other nationalists if it becomes known that they have participated in my study. In such cases, informants and I agreed to arrange private interviews, and to never greet or acknowledge one another in any other context.

Ultimately, minimizing risk to those I study is a collaborative endeavor. My informants bear a responsibility to help me identify potentially problematic consequences of their participation, and to follow through on safety and anonymity agreements we reach. I have tried to support them by explaining who I am and what I am doing, and by being careful to discuss risks at the beginning of our work together. Additionally, I have asked all informants to review sections of my writing where I describe or quote them, requesting that they give special consideration to material that might make them identifiable. Experts on themselves and their social contexts, my informants are my most valuable resource as I strive to minimize the risks they face due to my research.

These protective measures are not all-encompassing. I often cite Internet chat-room posts and blogs, and have seldom had the ability to consult the authors about potential risks. And those informants who I am able to consult with may not review my writing thoroughly enough.

Ethics

At a bare minimum, 'we' and 'they' must accept, even if only contingently, that each side is willing and able to accept the other's representations of her or himself (Graves and Shields 1991:146).

Most ethnomusicologists and anthropologists hold that our scholarship will be more accurate, and that our fieldwork and writing will have been conducted more ethically, when we maintain respectful, collaborative relationships with those we study. Scholars adopt these principles in an effort to prevent, not only tendencies towards ethnocentrism in writing, but also the type of exploitative research that marred early twentieth-century anthropology—particularly in the United States. My project appears ill suited to the ethical research programs advocated by contemporary ethnomusicologists and anthropologists. The people I study, it would seem, face little threat of colonialist-inspired mistreatment at the hands of fieldworkers. These are white Scandinavians, members of a preponderant racial, ethnic, and cultural majority in their respective societies; possessors, allegedly, of the very structural privilege that some ethical agendas in our disciplines aspire to cripple. Understanding these actors' relationship to privilege, understanding the issues facing them as research subjects, and determining my responsibilities to them as a scholar have been daunting tasks.

Official and unofficial position statements on ethics, while often exhibiting a number of shared characteristics, vary. A policy of "do-no-harm" saturates most formal and informal ethical codes. This sentiment was included when the American Anthropological Association first drafted a collection of statements on ethics in research in 1971. There they wrote, "In research, anthropologists' paramount responsibility is to those they study. When there is a conflict of interest, these

individuals must come first.”⁷ It is a sentence that has remained essentially intact throughout multiple revisions (Fluehr-Lobban 2003), one that Lassiter declares is the “ethical and moral commitment [that] transcends all else” (2005:91).

The Society for Ethnomusicology, in its official position statement on ethics, takes this policy a small step further, calling upon scholars to pursue “cultivation of relationships based on informed consent, rights of privacy and confidentiality, and mutual respect,” and to show “sensitivity to other cultures’ and individuals’ ethical values.”⁸ While not specifying what “showing sensitivity means,” the statement seeks the establishment of a degree of empathy between scholar and informant.

Viewed in this light, the Society’s statement alludes to another body of thought on ethics: the ethics of care. Betty Sichel describes this principle as one that emphasizes the qualities of “nurturance, care, [and] compassion” (1991:90; see also Ryan 1995). The ethics of care seeks relationships consisting of emotional commitments, an interest and personal concern for informants that stretches beyond a program of non-interference or unspecified respect. Along these lines, Denzin sees the absence of an explicit ethics of caring in official ethical statements as having “relegated emotionality and intuition to a secondary position in the ethical, decision making process” (1997:273; see also Christians 200:148).

The lack of such official acknowledgement has not stopped scholars from talking about the ethics of caring, nor the closely related fieldwork program known as the “friendship-model” (Pelto and Pelto 1973; Cooley 2003; Titon 2008). As the name implies, this approach advocates the establishment of friendships between

⁷ Available online, accessed October 2, 2012, <http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/ethstmnt.htm>

⁸ Available online, accessed October 2, 2012, <http://www.ethnomusicology.org/?EthicsStatement>.

informant and fieldworker. However, this model is motivated by reasons as much epistemological as ethical. Beaudry argues, for example, that the relationship between scholars and those they study needs to include friendships in order to “ensure the depth and truth of our understanding” (2008:244).

While some stress the importance of caring for those we study, others may also advocate a practice of reciprocity, a practice of giving back to and helping our informants. This principle has some high status backing. The American Anthropological Association’s code of ethics states that scholars have an “obligation to reciprocate with people studied in appropriate ways,” and attempt to cultivate “working relationship[s] that can be beneficial to all parties involved.”⁹ Similarly, ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufman Shelemay, referring to scholars involvement in the transmission of knowledge, offers a number of guidelines ethnomusicologists ought to follow, including the following:

We are obliged to use our knowledge and power, should they be conceived as such, in the best interests of the people with whom we work (2008:153).

Agendas of reciprocity can manifest through the ethos of caring or the “friendship model,” where scholars give back to informants through their concern and compassion. Alternately, we may engage on behalf of those we study through explicit political activism (see Cook 2003, Hale 2006). But perhaps the most basic model for reciprocating is to provide informants a degree of autonomy in shaping the way they are presented—to allow our research subjects to be more than subjects; to render them our collaborators.

⁹Available online, accessed October 2, 2012,
<http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>.

These sentiments surrounded me during my years of training as a graduate student. The do-no-harm policy was implicit in all the contemporary ethnomusicological studies I read, the conference papers I listened to, and virtually all seminar discussions I participated in. The same can be said for the agendas of reciprocity and collaboration described above. What I found most striking, however, was that the ethos of caring also seemed to pervade the field.¹⁰ Such was apparent, in different ways, in works by my mentors at Brown. Kiri Miller describes her emotional connection to the Sacred Harp community, noting that, early on, she was moved to tears through her experiences singing (2008:24). Marc Perlman writes with admiration for his three main informants, calling them “remarkable men” (2004:xiii). And Jeff Todd Titon indicates, not only that he formed friendships with those he studied, but also that he loved these people (1988:21, 462). And while Titon’s expressions are less common in ethnomusicological writing, they were relatively prevalent in many informal, verbal exchanges I had with other scholars. Frequently, I heard more senior colleagues describe their deep sense of appreciation, and sometimes love, for the society, community, or individuals they studied.

As a result of these experiences, I grew to expect that I too would form a deep emotional attachment with the community I studied—regardless of who that community would be—that I would become their friend, and that I might even love them. At times, this expectation felt rather like an obligation. Though no mentor I

¹⁰ Which is not to say that there are no voices critical of this and related approaches. Hellier-Tinoco criticizes the friendship model as being overly strategic and potentially exploitative (2003:24). She also challenges the assumptions behind the ethics of care, arguing that during fieldwork, “it is often they [our informants] who take care of, and care for, us [scholars]” (ibid:25).

worked with, nor any scholar I read, had commanded me to feel this way, it nonetheless seemed apparent that expressions of love and emotional communion with our informants constituted informal avenues towards legitimization in our field.

It was an imperative, however self-imposed, that I resented. I have never liked the idea of compulsory friendship, let alone love. My aversion to such attitudes was likely one factor driving me to study radical nationalists: Skinheads, anti-Semites, anti-Muslim activists, neo-Nazis—who would expect me to love these people? And while choosing this topic stood to absolve me of any duty to commit emotionally to people I did not yet know, it also positioned me to reject more established and formalized ethical principles in the field. All of the ideologues I group under the heading “radical nationalist” advocate policies that would, to greater and lesser extents, render large portions of Sweden’s population second-class citizens. Some cultivate holocaust denial among youths, and some promote acts of violence against ethnic and religious minorities and political opponents. Additionally, certain groups pursue a cultural program that might stifle creative energy in Sweden and enlist folk music, a tradition I have devoted much of my adult life to, in the cause of cultural and ethnic ultraconservatism. What would ethically sound collaboration with these forces look like? How could reciprocity in this instance be anything other than immoral and unethical? By “showing respect” must I endorse their claims to victimhood? How should I show sensitivity for those worldviews that would paint me, on account of my Jewish heritage, as a threat to those I study and the people they fight for?

Despite my disinclination towards prevailing ethical approaches in my field, I was even less enthusiastic about the research practices exhibited in other studies of radical nationalism. If ethnomusicology seems to be inching towards adopting a dogma of love, scholars of radical nationalism seem content with actively challenging and undermining those they study. This is especially true in Sweden, where the bulk of those writing about radical nationalism are self-declared activist anti-racists, such as Daniel Poohl, David Lagerlöf, Anna-Lena Lodenius, Per Wikström, Alexander Bengtsson, Lisa Bjurwald, Maria Blomquist, Mats Deland, Mattias Wåg, as well as late crime novelist Stieg Larsson. These individuals have conducted their work in explicit opposition to the people they study. It is not surprising, therefore, that few of these studies are based on anything resembling standard ethnography. With a few exceptions, most notably early works by Heléne Lööv, as well as early works by Anna-Lena Lodenius, scholars have not had sustained, direct, and transparent contact with active radical nationalists during the research and writing process. Various methods have been used to circumvent standard ethnography. For over two months in 2001, Daniel Poohl infiltrated the National Democrats posing as a nationalist, and even traveled with a party delegation to Prague before exiting the organization and turning large amounts of damning video footage over to Swedish Television. Similarly, Mattias Wåg based his research (2010) on a large collection of hacked e-mails between nationalist leaders. In few other fields of inquiry, I imagine, would the academic community tolerate such relationships between scholars and the people they study. Rarely have

researchers said so much about living people with whom they have such little, or such strained, contact.

I wanted this study to be different. Recognizing that many of the research guidelines espoused by ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have epistemological as well as ethical import, I aspired to make this study more like a standard ethnography than not. I aimed to conduct my research having disclosed all pertinent information about myself to those I studied. Further, I would give them some control over how they were represented in my work, providing them ample opportunity to review all interview citations, and avoiding the use of terminology they object to. This, I hoped, would be one of the only collaborative ethnographies of Swedish radical nationalism. My material would come from face-to-face conversations, observations of concerts and other events, and the sort of “deep hanging out” that nourishes long-term relationships and enables ethnography’s explanatory power.

At the time of writing, I believe I have achieved much of this goal. Every individual who is quoted in this dissertation from an interview has had opportunity to review his or her quote(s). Some have commented on and helped shape entire chapters. Such collaboration, vital to the accuracy of my claims, would be largely unavailable to me were I to adopt a research and writing model based on deceiving and insulting those I study. Similarly, while taking into account the limits of objective knowledge and unbiased presentation, I believe my tone throughout this work is far less evaluative and politically motivated than that found in related studies. This approach, I believe, has helped me gain greater access to the radical

nationalist scene, to individuals who are otherwise especially suspicious of outside researchers.

Such contact led to some unexpected and unintended consequences. Today, I consider as friends a handful of the people we will hear from in the following pages, and this despite the often pronounced differences in our worldviews. Whether or not I wanted to conduct research through a “friendship model,” this was the model I ended up with. Having spent hundreds of hours speaking to and observing some of these people, it felt almost inevitable that I would come to feel a sense of personal interest and concern for some of them. I learned to know and enjoy their families and friends (nationalist and non-nationalist), and I came to hear of their personal struggles, none of which are mentioned in this study. It was still during this contact that I gained insight into the questions that guide this study. I gained insight into who these people were, why they were nationalists, and how they thought about music.

As shocked as I am by the relationships I have formed with my informants, I am equally surprised by the regard for nationalist music I developed throughout the course of my research. Here too, my experiences in the field appear remarkably unremarkable when compared with those of other ethnomusicologists. Just as most scholars report becoming assimilated into the music culture they study, nationalist music has become an expressive language that I have embraced. It’s bizarre, I know. The lyrics to this music espouse views antithetical to my own, and the performances lack the musical and poetic craft I typically seek as a listener. But rarely have I listened to music feeling that I so fully grasped internal and coded references in the

lyrics, feeling that I knew so much about the person singing the words and what they wanted to have said. It rendered the music highly communicative for me—and that sensation at times superseded my reactions to the music’s political message.

I remain concerned for the ethical and moral consequences of my approach. By eschewing outward criticism of these forces, by attempting to present this as an ethnography like any other, I may be suggesting that this is a population like any other, with views like any other: I may be helping to advance false equivalencies. Further, I might be propagandizing for radical nationalists. Solutions to this problem continue to elude me, but I do not think that adopting the language of other scholars and journalists would be beneficial. What would my readers learn were I to label every person, idea, or song in the following study “racist?” Using these terms, I imagine, would only discourage readers’ curiosity and desire to seek a greater understanding of this population: Labels like “racism” are typically products of, rather than invitations to, analysis.¹¹

Literature Review

My research ventures into multiple scholarly fields: general studies of radical nationalism in and beyond Scandinavia; radical nationalist music; Swedish folk, death metal, neo folk, hip hop, and reggae; whiteness; and multiculturalism. General studies of contemporary parliamentary nationalism have for decades focused on the scene in France. This focus is largely due to the early successes of the French political party Front National in the 1980s and the influence of the New Right intellectual movements throughout European nationalist circles. Noteworthy

¹¹ My thinking regarding these topics evolved greatly through conversations with my friend Patrick Sutton.

English-language studies of France include Sternhell (1986), Mitra (1988) Ignazi and Ysmal (1992) Marcus (1995) and Minkenberg (1997). The rise of nationalist parties in Italy, Britain, Belgium, and Austria throughout the 1990s prompted a wave of scholarship treating radical nationalism in each of these locales (Husbands 1992; Diamanti 1996; Wodak Pelinka 2002), and as a pan-European phenomenon (Kitschelt 1995; Merkl and Weinberg 1997; Ter Wal 2000; Gibson 2002; Ignazi 2003; Rydgren 2005; Mudde 2007). Swedish nationalist political parties, due to the fact they did not experience major electoral success until 2010, were largely absent from these discussions, and until recently, the few studies by academics of the Swedish scene sought to understand and contextualize its failures (Rydgren 2002; Norris 2005; Green-Pedersen and Odmalm 2008).

To date, most academic studies of nationalist political parties have been conducted by political scientists and typically explore phenomena like voter demographics, campaigning strategies, and ideological shifts. Research dealing with the social and cultural aspects of these communities has tended to come from journalists rather than scholars (recent examples from Sweden include Ekman and Poohl 2010; Orrenius 2010; Uvell and Carlsen 2010). Thus, with some exceptions (e.g. DeClair 1999), there is little scholarly work bringing the techniques of rigorous ethnographic research to bear on the personal ambitions, struggles, strategies, and experiences of individuals in nationalist parliamentary organizations—despite calls for such data (Goodwin 2006).

The same cannot be said of research on other factions of contemporary nationalism. For as we shift our gaze from the parliamentary to the anti-democratic,

the subcultural, and the militant, the disciplinary home of relevant scholarship moves from political science to anthropology, folklore, and the social sciences. Most of this scholarship focuses on neo-Nazism or race-based youth gangs. Some studies aim to understand the broader causes, nature, and trajectories of extra-parliamentary nationalist groups (Hill 1988; Ridgeway 1990; Dobrats and Shanks-Meile 1997). Others investigated particular topics like gender (Ware 1996; Blee 2002; Givens 2004), the Internet (Eatwell 1996; Schafer 2002; Copsey 2003; Deland, Hertzberg, and Hvitfeld 2010), sexuality (Healy 1996), and even music (Futrell, Simi, and Gottschalk 2006). Sweden and Scandinavia have a larger presence in studies of extra-parliamentary than parliamentary nationalism. A number of works explore Scandinavian nationalist youth culture (Lundström 1995; Bjørge 2000), and full-length works like LaRouche (1982), Löow (1998), and Fangen (2001) examine neo-Nazism in the region. As stated earlier, only a handful of these studies use ethnographic methods, and of those, few follow the ethical and methodological guidelines now standard in ethnographic research.

As with studies of the scene in general, most research of radical nationalist music is not based upon extended ethnographic fieldwork. Accordingly, the body of research on the subject rarely address questions central to contemporary ethnomusicological inquiry. Seldom, for instance, do scholars ask how music impacts nationalists' understandings of themselves or what meanings individual insiders attach to musical sounds and lyrics. Likewise, these studies tend to look past the conflicts and contradictions within radical nationalist musical practice and its relationship to political causes. Love's statement, backed later by Turner-Graham

(2012:101), that music “has given skinheads and many other extremists around the world a common language and a unifying ideology” (2009:5), is itself a product of this surface-level inquiry.

Scholarship on the music of European radical nationalist movements tends to focus on metal, punk, and related subgenres—and this despite scholars’ growing awareness of stylistic diversification in the scene (Mareš and Smolík 2012:73). Studies like Baacke, Thier, Gruninger, and Lindemann (1994) and Back (2002) deal with Oi! punk and the rise of white power music in Germany and England. To date, Lööw (1998) and Larsson and Ekman (2001) are the only full-length studies I am aware of that devote significant space to nationalist music in Sweden. And like the previously mentioned works, these studies of Sweden also focus on Oi!, white power punk, and similar genres.

Les Back, in one of the few studies that breaks with the exclusive focus on metal and punk, traces the close relationship between reggae and white chauvinist skinheads in Britain (2000; see also Mercer 1990, 1994; Marshall 1991; and Griffiths 1995). However, this relationship was never carried to the extent that it has been in Sweden, where nationalists use reggae to advocate their cause. In similar fashion, scholars of rap and hip hop have explored whites’ appropriation and use of these genres in identity formation (Middleton and Beebe 2002; Yousman 2003; Kitwana 2005), as well as these genres’ ability to symbolize various place identities outside of the United States (Sernhede 2002; Keeler 2009; Templeton 2007). However, I know of no studies examining the rise of nationalist hip hop and rap in Sweden.

Music scholars and social scientists have investigated white nationalists' and neo-Nazis' embrace of black metal and death metal (Goodriche-Clarke 2002; Gardell 2003; Spracklen 2010). Shekhovtsov, in one of the only academic studies of the genres, also looked at the importance of neo folk and folk metal in the development of new types of radical nationalist expression (2009). Other studies (Beckwith 2002; Purcell 2003), though not focused on metal's link to outspoken white nationalism, do examine the genre's association with white identity.

Scholars have studied the relationship between folk music and race-conscious ultraconservatism. This relationship has been observed in various settings, including the United States (Roy 2010; La Chapelle 2011), Germany (Meyer 1993; Bohlman 2002; Sweers 2004), and the Balkans (Thomas 1999; Kronja 2004; Hudson 2003). With the exception of a recent article by David Kaminsky (2012), the body of scholarship on Swedish folk music addresses only the genre's past and potential for future association with cultural chauvinism. Roempke (1980) and Ling (1980) chronicle Swedish folk music's link with Nazism during the 1920s and 1930s. Despite the steep decline in nationalist interest in folk music following WWII, Ling grew uncomfortable with the self-romanticizing rhetoric he encountered among 1970s musicians and scholars, and warned that such language might prompt nationalist forces to revive their interest in the genre (1979). Over twenty years after Ling's admonishment, Kaminsky (2005) and Lundberg, Malm, and Ronström (2000) reported on conceptual and musical techniques musicians were employing to mark their distance from radical nationalism. Thus, scholarship on Swedish folk

music bears traces of the rising potential for contemporary nationalist interest in the genre, though that interest would not come to a head until 2010.

The literature on multiculturalism and whiteness offers insights that help contextualize the identity claims we will encounter in this study. In his landmark essay *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (1992) Charles Taylor argues that liberal democracies have reached a point where failing to adequately recognize cultural difference is regarded as an act of oppression. Inadequate recognition occurs in two ways: misrecognition and non-recognition. While misrecognition—often in form of the dissemination of negative stereotypes—receives a thorough exposition in Taylor’s discussion, he shies from examining non-recognition in any depth, from examining its root causes, its common victims, and its impact. And it is precisely the charge of non-recognition that Swedish nationalists level against society at large, that elites refuse to acknowledge the existence of a distinct Swedish people and culture.

Taylor’s thoughts evoke what other scholars have regarded as an imperative to display difference that predominates in multiculturalist societies. Lundberg, Malm, and Ronström argue that the ability to project and receive confirmation of difference in such societies is vital to a group’s existence in a social and even financial sense. Unrecognized groups are uncompetitive in the fight for public space, political influence, and financial support (2000). Multiculturalism thus produces a state of affairs where uniqueness is vital to visibility, visibility is vital to recognition, and recognition is vital to existence; it is a market of difference.

Few academic studies thoroughly examine the role of the cultural majority—the so-called unmarked majority—in these markets of difference. Sociologist Ashley Doane’s article (1997) is an exception to this trend. Her study, like those that built from it (e.g. Gallagher 2000; Sacks and Lindholm 2002; Kauffman 2006; Cornell and Hartmann 2007) focuses on the benefits of the majority’s invisibility. In different ways, these scholars claim that majorities’ privileged position spares them from the competition for resources and the imperative to foreground difference that goes with it.

One of the predominant observations in the field of whiteness studies is the “unraced” or “unethnic” character of white identity (Carby 1992; hooks 1992; Hill 1994; Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993, 2001; Nayak 2002; Gallagher 2003; Baum 2006). A central claim in these works, and in whiteness studies in general, is that to be white is to see oneself as not having a race or an ethnic identity. As with the above works that focus on majority groups more generally, whiteness scholars tend to emphasize the benefits of being racially unmarked.¹² The unraced nature of this identity renders whiteness normative: As Dyer put it, “Other people are raced, we are just people” (1997:1). But like the studies on majority groups mentioned above, scholars of whiteness tend not to consider the possibility that social actors might experience this lack of ethnic or racial identity as limiting.

The combined insights of multiculturalism and whiteness studies help render nationalists’ cries of oppression, as well as the avenues through which they claim to

¹² Some scholars argue that the labels “white” and “majority” are so conflated, that even majorities of non-European ancestry call themselves white (see Dominguez 1986; Weismantel 2001; Bonnett 2002).

seek justice, more legible. Nationalists have injected themselves into a struggle where their status as members of a white majority group hinders them from marshaling a compelling claim to difference. However, according to the logic of multiculturalism, their failures afford them the right to claim they are oppressed and existentially threatened.

Having outlined my topic, my research methodology and ethical concerns, I now turn to providing a brief history of radical nationalism in contemporary Sweden.

Historical Overview

Scholars of contemporary radical nationalism often frame today's scene as part of a tradition stemming from 1930s and 1940s Nazism. This tendency holds true for music scholars as well (see Shekhovtsov and Jackson 2012). The organizations and individuals who would first constitute "the national movement [den nationella rörelsen]" in 1980s Sweden had limited connections to the 1930s and 1940s National Socialism in Sweden and Germany. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, radical nationalists themselves would attempt to forge such a connection, often by reproducing fight songs written by early National Socialists. Those few personal and organizational connections that did exist came primarily through the Nordic Reich Party [Nordiska rikspartiet]. Göran Oredsson founded the Nordic Reich Party in 1956 as an officially National Socialist organization. Oredsson's goal with this party was to awaken and consolidate those Nazis in Sweden who had been disillusioned and scattered after the fall of Hitler in Germany.

During the war era, Sweden had two broad camps of fascists, each organized around a charismatic leader: Sven Olof Lindholm and Per Engdahl. Lindholm and

Engdahl were once fellow members of the militant group, Sweden's Fascist Combat Organization [Sveriges Fascistiska Kamporganisation]—one of a dozen fascist groups that emerged during 1920s Sweden. The majority of these organizations drew ideological and tactical inspiration from Italy, but by the end of the decade, they were switching their focus to a fascist movement closer to home: German National Socialism. The same was true of the Combat Organization, which changed its name to Sweden's National Socialist People's Party [Sveriges Nationalsocialistiska Folkparti] in 1929, reflecting its increasing cooperation with Germany (Berggren 2002:399).

Sven Olof Lindholm was one of the Swedish fascists who grew to favor Germany and National Socialism. However, due to personal conflicts, he was thrown out of the umbrella Nazi political party, the Swedish National Socialist Party in 1933. Lindholm, however, immediately founded a new Nazi party, the National Socialist Labor Party [Nationalsocialistiska Arbetarepartiet]. And whereas other organizations would dissolve because of continued personal conflicts and organizational problems, Lindholm's party lived on. With an estimated 12,000 members in 1934, it was the largest Nazi party in Sweden heading into the Second World War.

Per Engdahl was one of the few dissenters during the early shift to German-style fascism. He left the Combat Organization when it embraced National Socialism, and created a string of fascist organizations—most of them functioning like think-tanks— including Swedish Opposition [Svensk opposition]. After the war, Engdahl

founded the New Swedish Movement [Nysvenska Rörelsen] which exists today and is centered in Malmö (ibid:400-403).

Neither Engdahl nor Lindholm joined the Nordic Reich Party at its founding in 1956. Likewise, most party members and participants in their organizations left public fascist political action. Following the war, no organization that declared Nazism as its political ideology—that marched “under the banner of the swastika” (Löow 1998:23)—could hope to be politically viable. Despite the absence of high-status Swedish Nazis, the Nordic Reich Party forged important symbolic contacts with 1930s National Socialism, and these contacts came not through Göran Oredsson, but through his future wife Vera. Vera Oredsson (born Schimanski) was born in Berlin in 1928 to a father who was active in the Sturmabteilung—the original paramilitary force of the German Nazi party—and a Swedish mother. She came to Sweden in 1945 and soon thereafter married Sven Olof Lindholm. The two eventually split, and in 1960, Vera joined the Nordic Reich Party, marrying its founder Göran two years later (Löow 2004:169-173).

Whereas fascist and National Socialist groups emerged and disappeared periodically during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the Nordic Reich Party persisted. Throughout these decades, they maintained a fervent anti-Semitic, anti-democratic platform. They participated in elections—never winning many votes—but they also maintained their own militant street force, the Reich’s Action Groups [Riksaktionsgrupperna].

At the start of the 1980s, a new group emerged to challenge the Nordic Reich Party’s position as the largest, most stable radical nationalist organization. That

group, Keep Sweden Swedish [Bevara Sverige Svensk], had their first public demonstration in 1980. They were not a political party, but instead a campaign organization, one bent on spreading information to the public (Löow 1998:27). Keep Sweden Swedish and the Nordic Reich Party were rivals, and they frequently accused the other of being unserious and undisciplined (Ekman and Poohl 2010:25, Löow 1998:28). Further, the Nordic Reich Party issued the same attack against this emerging organization as they had against Per Engdahl's New Swedish Movement—that they were Zionists in disguise bent on undermining National Socialism and the resurgence of the Nordic race. The surface antagonism between these groups belied the fact that many members of Keep Sweden Swedish—including leading figures like Leif Zelion and Niels Mandell—were former members of the Nordic Reich Party.

Officially, Keep Sweden Swedish was not a National Socialist organization. However, their positions were initially almost identical to those of the Nordic Reich Party. While the latter spoke more often of a Jewish threat to Sweden, both organizations, particularly their grass roots, could be described as anti-Semitic. Moreover, the early 1980s national movement was generally united in its tendency to use the language and symbolism of 1930s and 40s Nazism to lash out at the rise of new domestic Others.

The national movement grew in step with the population of non-Western immigrants and refugees in Sweden. Harald Runblom describes three, occasionally overlapping waves of immigration to Scandinavia during the twentieth century. These waves differed from each other based on who was immigrating, why they immigrated, and to what extent they aimed to integrate with Swedish society. The

initial wave, lasting from ca. 1943-1947, consisted mainly of migrants from neighboring countries fleeing wartime turmoil. Those arriving to the region in the immediate aftermath of WWII were often seeking short-term shelter, and many were able to return to their homelands within the following decade. Following the war, an influx of guest workers came to the region to bolster a growing industrial infrastructure. This second wave lasted from ca. 1946-1972. Here, migration accelerated between Nordic countries—especially from Finland to Sweden—but it also began to draw from extra-Nordic regions, from southern and eastern Europe as well as western Asia. The third wave, beginning in ca. 1972, and lasting through the 1990s, consisted mainly of refugees. Political refugee immigration to Scandinavia had existed in the preceding decades, most notably from countries in Soviet-dominated East Europe, like Poland and Hungary. But during the early 1970s, this immigration expanded, and increasingly originated in more distant, sometimes Third World countries. Natural disasters, internal political tensions, and regional military conflicts drove immigration from Yugoslavia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Chile, and Turkey to Scandinavia (Runblom 1995:293-306).

Throughout these waves, Sweden was the primary target for migrants. Its political neutrality during WWII made it the obvious destination for those escaping conflict in Denmark, Norway, Finland, and the Baltic countries. In part because of this neutrality, Sweden also experienced the greatest economic boom among the Scandinavian countries following the war. The country's sudden post war industrial expansion accordingly attracted more guest workers than did neighboring economies. And finally, Sweden's economic profile, along with a series of 1960s and

1970s reforms aimed at loosening its immigration policy, made it a particularly attractive destination for refugees.

Immigrants' ideal role in Swedish society shifted throughout these decades. Although policies resembling assimilationism or multiculturalism reigned during and before the first half of the twentieth century, multiculturalism grew to be the chosen approach—at least in official settings—when refugees began constituting a larger portion of the country's immigrants. In 1974 Sweden revised its constitution [grundlag] to reflect this new orientation. Though the word “multicultural [mångkulturell]” never appeared, the new constitution called for a society that would officially recognize and even encourage cultural difference. Starting in 1974, cultural identity in Sweden would be built on “valfrihet [freedom of choice in forging cultural loyalties],” “jämlighet [equality],” and “samverkan [partnership].”

As years went on, Sweden's government would gradually strengthen this position in the constitution, changing it from one that sought to permit minorities to form their own cultural allegiances, to one that aimed to steer that process. In 2002, the document was altered to state, “Ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities' ability to preserve and develop their own culture and social life should be promoted.”¹³ Eight years later, in fall 2010, this statement was updated and made more binding, changing only the end of the statement from “...should be promoted [bör främjas]” to “...shall be promoted [ska främjas]” (Chapter 1 3§). The strengthening of constitutional multiculturalism in Sweden took place despite

¹³“Etniska, språkliga och religiösa minoriteteters möjligheter att behålla och utveckla ett eget kultur- och samfundsliv bör främjas.”

turnover in the political sphere—throughout periods of left wing and right-wing rule. As Ålund and Schierup claim, “stable consensus (in terms of right-left politics) on the importance of multicultural rights [...] is probably unique to Sweden” (1991:4).

Although official language is unequivocal in its commitment to the politics of cultural recognition, the extent to which multicultural policies were implemented varies. One example of multiculturalism in practice involves language instruction. Starting in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Sweden began introducing a program called mother tongue education (*modersmålsundervisning* or *hemspråksundervisning*). Here, if a child has at least one parent whose first language is not Swedish, that child has the right to training in that foreign language throughout primary and secondary school (Opper 1983). Parents have a choice as to whether or not to exercise that right. One of many guest worker-era policies that was repurposed for multiculturalist agendas, mother tongue education first emerged for children of Finnish speakers—many of their parents guest workers to Sweden. The Finnish government lobbied for the policy with the hope that, by maintaining their cultural ties to Finland, emigrants would repatriate when economic condition became more favorable (Hill 1996). As the country embraced official multiculturalism, this program was expanded, not with an agenda of enabling future repatriation, but with a new conviction that linguistic minorities should be supported in maintaining their difference.

Though programs like mother tongue education appear to enact the ideology of multiculturalism, various immigrant groups and activists felt that official rhetoric

most often failed to translate into concrete action. For instance, public “multicultural consultant” Rasoul Nejadmehr claims that Swedish society has for decades advanced a policy of assimilationism under the guise of a euphemism: “integration” (Interview, Rasoul Nejadmehr, 1/21/2011).

Regardless of how the situation looked on the ground, political elites’ rhetoric remained committed to multiculturalism and generous refugee policies during the last decades of the twentieth century. This commitment, and the strengthening of the multiculturalist language in the constitution, became all the more striking in 2010, given that other European leaders, from Angela Merkel, to David Cameron, to Nicolas Sarkozy, were then abandoning the ideology.

But Swedish political elites occasionally broke from this tendency of praising immigration and multiculturalism. A notable example of this was Social Democrat Sverker Åström. In a famous op-ed published 08/21/1990 in Sweden’s largest morning paper, *Dagens Nyheter*, Åström argued that Sweden should be free to make decisions about accepting refugees based on whether those migrants will serve Sweden (and not whether Sweden can serve them). Additionally, he suggested that there could be instances where refugees’ culture is so different from the Swedish that any form of integration is unrealistic. Åström’s words may seem unremarkable to readers from the United States. But he broke with the mainstream political discourse that had for over a decade often managed to skirt such stances. Further, his op-ed drew attention not just for its content, but also for its timing.

Following a period of growth and steadily increasing living standards, Sweden’s economy fell into a crisis during the early 1990s. The burst of the 1980s

real estate bubble, combined with international recession and rising interest rates, sent unemployment skyrocketing. The growth of unemployment, and the subsequent increase of state expenditures and decrease in revenues, placed major strain on the country's welfare system—the famed “Swedish model.” Likewise, the government's efforts to buy almost 25% of bank assets increased the national debt dramatically (Bergmark and Palme 2003:109-111). Wages dropped during the decade, and are yet to fully recover.

Leading politicians, such as Social Democrat and future Prime Minister Göran Persson, responded to the crisis by employing patriotic language, suggesting that the solution to Sweden's problem was a return to its core Lutheran values of careful spending and responsibility (Andersson 2009:237). But others focused, not on the virtues of Swedishness, but on the allegedly destructive impact of immigration. Contemporary developments provided fodder for such claims: The stream of non-Nordic immigrants continued to expand during the 1990s. The country received nearly 70,000 non-Nordic immigrants—many of them refugees—in 1994 alone (Bergmark and Palme 2003). However, though poorer native Swedes were affected by the economic downturn, immigrants suffered the most (Edin and Åslund 2002).

Scholars Åslund and Schierup (1991:9, 1993) and Pred (2000) argue that expressions like Åström's op-ed legitimized the notion that the economic crisis derived from immigration. There was a groundswell supporting this sentiment in the Swedish populace and it would eventually express itself in the voting booth. The right-wing populist party New Democracy (Ny Demokrati) won 25 seats in the national parliament in 1991. New Democracy had a primary agenda of reshaping the

tax code and a secondary focus on criticizing refugee policies, a focus that would nonetheless grow throughout the party's short-lived tenure in parliament (Ekman and Poohl 2010:95-98).

It was also at this time when radical nationalist forces exploded onto the Swedish cultural and social landscape. The Nordic Reich Party continued its activities with relatively little growth or shrinkage. But a kaleidoscope of small groups, typically National Socialist and organized around a charismatic leader—like “The Wolf [Vargen]” in Säffle or Mats Nilsson in Rottne—rose up throughout the country. These groups, or groupuscules, tended to fight against each other as much as they did their sworn political opponents, and intergroup violence and substance abuse were frequent.¹⁴

In parallel with the rise of groupuscules, Keep Sweden Swedish continued to grow during the 1980s. This expansion was enabled in part by the organization's ability to harness a new, radical nationalist subculture imported to Sweden from Great Britain: skinheadism. Skinhead style had been in Sweden since the 1970s. And in contrast to Great Britain where this scene encompassed widely divergent political forces, virtually all Swedish skinheads were anti-immigrant. Keep Sweden Swedish reached out to this subculture through music, signing a contract in 1984 to produce an album of a new punk band called Ultima Thule (“Highest North” in Latin). Ultima Thule has been playing together—at first under the name Ugly Spots—since 1982. Their music fit the standard punk format, using an ensemble of a trap set, bass, one to two guitars, and vocals. Their lyrics spoke of Sweden's virtues and historic

¹⁴ This same pattern of conflict among radical nationalist groupuscules surfaced in many European countries (Bale 2002:27).

military exploits, as well as the corruption of politicians in the present. Additionally, they would sometimes incorporate very basic elements of Swedish folk music in their songs. They called their style Viking rock.¹⁵

As Keep Sweden Swedish sought to cultivate a grass roots movement through music, they also set their sights on something that had eluded all nationalist groups since the Second World War: elected office. Throughout the 1980s, leaders in the organization grew increasingly enthusiastic about expanding their role from that of a propaganda organization to a political party. They made this change in 1986, joining forces with an anti-immigrant, tax populism party called the Progress Party [Framstegspartiet]. At first, the new party would be called the Sweden Party [Sverigepartiet]. However, two years later, in 1988, in the wake of some minor administrative turnover, the party changed its name to the Sweden Democrats [Sverigedemokraterna]—the same name the party would use when they finally entered Sweden's national parliament 22 years later. Initially, the party maintained contact with the rest of the national movement. Anders Klarström, party leader from 1989 to 1995, was a former member of the Nordic Reich Party. Gradually, however, starting from the early days of Keep Sweden Swedish and accelerating at the end of the 1990s, the organization would redefine itself, ejecting outspoken race nationalists and anti-Semites (Matsson 2009).

Just as music assisted in the initial growth of Keep Sweden Swedish, so too would it help calm infighting and unite the fractious terrain of National Socialist groupuscules in Sweden. The magazine *Storm*—one of the first radical nationalist

¹⁵ Available online, accessed 10/15/2012, http://www.ultimathule.se/?page_id=5.

magazines available in print rather than photo copied, handwritten pages—emerged during the late 1980s and early 1990s. *Storm* had an unusually broad readership, drawing subscribers from diverse organizations, parties, and groupuscules. The magazine quickly became a platform for a new umbrella group, White Aryan Resistance (Vitt ariskt motstånd). The latter was a loose organization, one that demanded neither membership fees nor any specific form of participation. White Aryan Resistance aimed to unite smaller organizations, stop infighting, and prepare for a coming race war. The group was inspired by a similar organization of the same name in the United States (Lööv 1998:83), and often celebrated militant American white nationalists like Robert Jay Matthews and later, David Lane.

White Aryan Resistance had all but disintegrated by 1993, and the same happened to *Storm* two years later. However, these initiatives' early successes showed that some form of unification was possible among hardline, militant nationalists. In 1995, just as *Storm* declined, a new magazine would rise up: *Nordland*. This publication reflected and perpetuated a growing force for unification in the scene, for whereas *Storm*'s writings focused on militarism, political opponents, and historical Nazism, *Nordland* was a music magazine. Despite this focus on music, *Nordland* became the most prominent race nationalist magazine in 1990s Sweden. Before its collapse, *Storm* had sensed the power of a music-focused publication, and they began producing such a magazine in 1993 under the name *Blood and Honor* (Blod och ära). However, this magazine fell with *Storm*, only to resurface towards the end of the decade.

Part of what made *Nordland* so durable was the diversity of its activities. Prior to producing the magazine, *Nordland* had its own record label under the name 88 Musik. Later this label would adopt the name of the magazine. They produced prominent Swedish white power acts like Division S, Svastika, Triskelon, and Pluton Svea. Additionally, *Nordland* organized concerts that drew upwards of 1000 people, thereby making them some of the largest radical nationalist gatherings of the time (Wåg 2010).

Multiple white power record companies emerged throughout the 1990s, including Ragnarock and Svea Musik, and later Nordvind and Midgård. Together, Viking rock and white power music were allowing radical nationalists to recruit new members and raise funds more efficiently and—given that alternative means of fundraising often included bank robberies—more safely than ever before (Corte and Edwards 2008:16).

Radical nationalist music during the 1990s, though relatively homogeneous compared to later years, still featured major differences in lyrical content. These differences surfaced in the divide between white power and Viking rock, and they in turn followed political, and occasionally social boundaries. For an example of the common lyrical content of white power music, we can turn to famed 1990s white power band Odium (“Hate” in Latin). The group produced one album on Ragnarock Records in 1995 before breaking up. Despite their small output, their songs were popular, and have been covered by multiple acts from the 1990s until the present. Odium’s music, such as their song “Our Honor is Loyalty [Vår ära heter trohet],” is

also highly representative of the genre. The song's title is taken from the motto of the Hitler's SS force.

Our Swedish kingdom stands ablaze,
Zionism swallows our country.
And when darkness slowly falls,
Svensson¹⁶ stands there, just looking on.
Dark forces encircle us,
many give up without a fight.
But our eternal loyalty lifts our spirits,
an eternal loyalty to our fatherland.

(chorus:) With our loyalty there is hope,
there is a banner flying at the top,
there is a pride in our country and our race.
(chorus)

Black-clad troops march on all cities,
NS (National Socialist) groups are sitting in parliament.
The constitution is changed so that Sweden shall be free,
from the ghosts of Zion we will be rid.
Leaders hold speeches on the streets;
never again will there be an election.
Now we have power – we took it by force,
now we will reign for eternity!

(chorus)
(chorus).¹⁷

Songs like these are unequivocal in their opposition to Jewish, or “Zionist” forces, their affirmation of race nationalism, and their vision for a violent revolution that provides National Socialists absolute power in Sweden.

¹⁶ Here “Svensson” is used to refer to a generic, ethnic Swedish male.

¹⁷ Vårt svenska rike står i brand, sionismen slukar vårt land. Och när mörkret sakta faller på, då står Svensson och ser på. Mörka makter omringar oss, många ger upp utan att slåss. Men vår eviga trohet höjer vårt mod, en evig trohet till vår fosterjord. Med vår trohet finns det ett hopp, det finns en fana som vajar i topp. Det finns en stolthet för vårt land och vår ras. Med vår trohet finns det ett hopp, det finns en fana som vajar i topp. Det finns en stolthet för vårt land och vår ras. Mot alla städer tågar svartklädda trupper, i riksdagshuset sitter NS-grupper. Grundlagar ändras för att Sverige ska bli fritt, med Sions spöke ska vi bli kvitt. På gatorna håller ledarna tal, aldrig mer ska det hållas några val. Nu har vi makten vi tog den genom strid, nu ska vi härska i evig tid.

Viking rock and white power music have nearly identical instrumental accompaniment. However, the following example, Ultima Thule's song "My Country (Mitt Land)" from 1992, illustrates the two genres' differences in lyrical content:

Carried over the fields, through the forest.
Sign of our kingdom's soil.
Banner, beautiful yellow and blue.
Forever proud, in the wind you fly.

Rushing river, great tundra.
Places, carved in stone.
Hand on the heart, my friend.
For Sweden's best, we live on.

(chorus:) My country, my country,
my dear fatherland.
My country, my country,
my dear fatherland.

We play and we sing for our country.
Proud and without shame.
Sweden, our place in the world.
Sweden, our place in the North.

(chorus)

A world of ice and snow.
Summer time with sprouting seeds.
Steady yearning for power and gold.
See a land, of treasures full.

Banner blue and yellow we forever are.
Hand in hand for our fatherland.
The thought comes, and it stays.
A kingdom that enchants your soul.

(chorus).¹⁸

¹⁸Buren över ängar genom skog. Tecken för vårt rikets jord. Fana vacker gul och blå. Evig stolt för vind du slå. Brusande älv, mäktiga fjäll. Trakter där ristat står i håll. Handen på hjärtat min vän. För Sveriges väl vi lever än. Mitt land, mitt land, mitt kära fosterland. Mitt land, mitt land, mitt kära fosterland. Vi spelar och vi sjunger för vårt land. Stolt och utan skam. Sverige vår plats på jorden. Sverige vår plats i nord. Mitt land, mitt land, mitt kära fosterland. Mitt land, mitt land, mitt kära fosterland. En värld av is och snö. Sommartid med groende frö. Stilla längtan efter makt och guld. Se en trakt av skatter full. Fana gul och blå vi evigt är. Hand i hand för vårt fosterland. Tanken blir till

The text does not mention any ethnic or religious minority, nor does it speak of race or ethnicity, nor is there any obvious incitement to or celebration of violence. Instead, the song tells of Sweden's virtues. As the band itself would put it, these are patriotic, rather than racist lyrics. Indeed, the differences in lyrical themes between Ultima Thule and groups like Odium are great enough that Corte and Edwards' attempt to classify the Viking rock band as "white power" (2008:14) must be rejected.

But despite what might seem to outsiders as incredibly banal and harmless lyrics, groups like Ultima Thule still intended to antagonize mainstream sensibilities. They were always dogged by allegations of racism. In the first instance, such allegations were based on the group's history of being sponsored by Keep Sweden Swedish, for having appeared on compilation albums and played festivals with Swedish and international white power acts like Skrewdriver, Brutal Attack, Svastika and White Aggression [Vit Aggression]. When the band opened their own music and clothing store in Nyköping in 1994, they sold music by well-known Swedish white power groups. And finally, they and their fans identified as skinheads.

The controversy surrounding the band was occasionally reflected in the lyrics, such as when they sing, "Proud and without shame" in the example above. Here, and perhaps in their punk accompaniment, the group acknowledges that their message is controversial and provocative. Given the thoroughly wholesome nature

och blir där kvar. Ett rike som din själ betar. Mitt land, mitt land. Mitt kära fosterland. Mitt land, mitt land. Mitt kära fosterland.

of all other lyrics, they seem intent on framing criticisms against their music as unjustified: The lyrics to “My Country” make it seem as though Ultima Thule is being criticized for loving their country.

Young boys formed the backbone of the nationalist scene during the 1990s, and they still do today. Mattias Karlsson was one of those young boys, and his early experiences provide a window into the kaleidoscope of ideologues, subcultures, and musics raging during the 1990s. For that reason, I will end this chapter with an overview of Karlsson and his early life.

The Meatball Patriot

Mattias Karlsson is tall and blond, with a build somewhat like that of an American football player. Though he has lived in the southern-most province of Skåne for most of his adult life, the gentle, empty “r” of the dialect from his native province of Småland still marks his speech. He was born in 1977 and grew up in the small town of Rottne in Småland. Dotted with lakes, the region’s soaring views and open landscapes contrast with the otherwise dark, densely forested terrain in Småland. Though rural, Rottne can hardly be described as economically depressed: The town’s employment rates, like those for surrounding municipalities, have long surpassed national averages. Further, Rottne’s population grew throughout the past 50 years, from 623 people in 1960, to 2,224 in 2005,¹⁹ countering national and international trends towards urbanization.

His family has lived in the area for generations, and associations between place, family, and identity pervade his account of his past. He describes his early upbringing as “traditional,” one marked by outdoor activities like fishing and hiking,

¹⁹Statistics Sweden Report. 2009. “Localities, 1960-2005.”

close contact with his cousins, parents, and maternal grandparents, and celebration of both standard and obscure Swedish holidays. His family was not especially religious, though his father is Christian, likewise his future wife Gabriella. Karlsson claims his family members were conscious and proud of their Swedish identity and heritage, and participated in various types of Swedish folk culture, including folk music. He describes folk music as a sidelined, yet constant feature of his early life. Though not a musician himself, various family members played instruments and danced. His father played fiddle and flute, and his grandfather played accordion, and he says that older members in his family danced common Swedish folk dances like schottis, polska, and hambo (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, December 3, 2010).

Reflecting on this early period, Karlsson sees implications relevant to his current political activism. Because of his upbringing in Rottne, he claims,

I know that there is a Swedish culture. I know how it feels to grow up in a homogeneous society, where everyone has the same identity. And when people say, 'it's never been like that, Sweden has always been multicultural, that's all just imaginary,' I know they're lying (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, February 11, 2011).²⁰

Today he speaks of his early experiences as constituting a near idyllic existence where family, tradition, and a unifying cultural identity were paramount. It was a paradise that later appeared to him a paradise lost, a lifestyle and society that he now seeks to regain for himself, his children, and for Sweden.

²⁰Det gör framförallt att jag går inte på det där, jag vet att det finns en svensk kultur. Jag vet hur det känns att växa upp i ett homogent samhälle där alla har samma identitet. Och när man säger att, 'så har det aldrig varit, Sverige har alltid varit mångkulturellt, och det där är bara hjärnsnöke' och sådant, så vet jag att de ljuger.

At age 16, Karlsson enrolled at Katedralskolan in Växjö, a nearby city that, at the time, had a population of ca. 47,000.²¹ Växjö was less than a 20-minute drive from his home in Rottne, yet the environment he found in Växjö was neither “traditional,” “homogenous,” nor safe.

MK: The school itself didn't have a lot of problems. But there were problems at nearby schools. But above all else it had to do with that we were in Växjö's downtown a lot, that we started being able to go into discotheques, and there weren't many places to choose from, there were maybe two you could go in as a 16-year-old. And there were a lot of conflicts and problems there. More than anything, this 'kickers' culture, as it was called then.

BT: Kickers?

MK: It had to do with – a hip hop gang, so to say – whose only goal was to beat people up in the coolest way possible. They never drank anything, you know. And 90% of them were immigrants then, and a few lone Swedes, so-called wiggers. There was a racist undercurrent in it too, [they] spoke condescendingly about being a 'Svenne,'²² 'Fucking Svenne,' 'Svenne Whore,' 'Svenne Queer,' 'Svenne Pussy,' etc. That was what many others and I had to put up with pretty often. (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, March 31, 2011).²³

The kickers subculture Karlsson speaks of spread throughout Sweden during the 1980s and 1990s, embracing hip hop graffiti, music, and clothing as years passed. Inspired in part by the 1987 short film “Stockholmsnatt” by Staffan Hildebrand, kickers distinguished themselves from the myriad other contemporaneous hip hop movements in Scandinavia through their interest in martial arts and their propensity towards violence. Even among groups like Stockholm soccer hooligans,

²¹Statistics Sweden Report. 2009. “Localities, 1960-2005.”

²²“Svenne” is a semi-derogatory term for an ethnic Swede.

²³MK: Skolan i sig var det inte särskilt mycket problem på, men det fanns problem på omkringliggande skolor. Framförallt så innebar det att man vistades mycket i Växjö centrum, att man också började få komma in på diskotek och så. Det fanns inte så många ställen att välja på, det kanske var två som man kunde gå på som 16-åring, och där var det mycket motsättningar och problem, framförallt den här kickerskulturen, som den kallades då. BT: Kickers? MK: Det gick ut på att de, hiphopgängen s.a.s, hade som enda syfte att sparka ner folk på ett så coolt sätt som möjligt. De drack liksom aldrig någonting. 90% av dem var invandrare, och några enstaka svenskar, så kallade wiggers. Det fanns en rasistisk underton i det där också, att man pratade nedlåtande om att vara 'Svenne,' 'Svenne jävel,' 'Svenne hora,' 'Svenne bög,' 'Svenne fitta,' osv. Det var det som jag och många andra fick ta ganska ofta.

kickers gangs maintain reputations for exceptional ruthlessness (Nilsson and Åstrand 2007:13; see also van Offer 2000:56). Karlsson claims that the kickers gangs in Växjö, despite having a few Swedish members in their ranks, directed most of their violence towards ethnic Swedes. He described one such episode:

We were on our way home from a night club, and walked past McDonald's – that was almost always where it happened. The immigrants, or the kickers gang – it wasn't only immigrants, maybe 10% Swedes – they screamed something at one of my friends, 'fucking Svenne,' or something like that. And he stood up and said something back, because he was drunk, and then it hit, then ten guys just jumped on him, and started to hit him. And then two friends and I ran up and tried to help, to pull them away, and then we ended up in fights too. And then there was this guy, a Swedish guy – among these ten there was one, maybe two Swedes – who took up a knife and tried to cut my friend in the stomach. Then he put his hand up to try to protect himself, and the knife went into his hand here [traces a line between fingers and down palm] and divided the hand in two, so that it was hanging in two parts. [...] I remember this because we got to testify during the trial in court, but they [the kickers] had spoken amongst themselves - they were seven or eight people - and said that it was my friend who had been aggressive and the guy feared for his life, so he took up the knife to defend himself. So he was only sentenced to fines. It was attempted murder as I see it, he tried to cut him in the stomach. [...] I can think of 15 or 20 such incidents, not with weapons, but nonetheless violent incidents that I was involved in during these years. And then you also hear a lot about - almost all Swedish guys my age ended up with similar stuff. Perhaps not knife attacks specifically, but everyone had been beaten up by one of these gangs sometime, or been threatened or scared into submission (ibid).²⁴

²⁴Vi var på väg hem från ett diskotek och gick förbi McDonald's, det var alltid där det hände nästan. Invandrarna eller kickersgäng--det var inte bara invandrare, kanske 10% svenskar. Då skrek de någonting till en kompis till mig, jävla Svenne, eller någonting i den stilen, och så stannade han upp, och sa någonting tillbaka, för han var full och så där, och så smällde det till. Det kom tio man som bara flög på honom, och började slå på honom, och då sprang jag och två andra kompisar [fram] och försökte hjälpa till och slita bort dem, och så hamnade vi också i slagsmål. Sedan var det en kille, en svensk kille - bland de här tio så var det en eller två svenskar - som tog upp en kniv och försökte hugga min kompis i magen. Då fick han upp handen och försökte skydda sig, så kniven gick in i handen så här (points to palm and draws finger down) och delade handen på mitten, så att den hängde i två delar [...] Det kommer jag ihåg för att jag fick vittna under rättegången, men de hade snackat ihop sig. De var sju, åtta stycken, och sa att det var min kompis som hade varit aggressiv, och att killen hade fruktat för sitt liv, så han hade tagit upp en kniv för att försvara sig själv. Han blev bara dömd till dagsböter. Som jag ser det så var det ett mordförsök, han försökte hugga [min kompis] i magen. [...] Jag kan tänka på ca 15-20 sådana incidenter, inte med vapen, men våldsincidenter i alla fall som jag var inblandade i under de här åren. Och sedan hörde man mycket också, nästan alla

“Immigrant gangs” successes in intimidating ethnic Swedes illuminated a broader, more troubling issue:

There was an inner solidarity among immigrant gangs that in many instances built upon ethnicity and identity, where they stood up and helped each other. It would be like, there would be a fight, and someone who didn't have anything to do with the issue would jump in and help some who they barely knew because they belonged to the same nationality. Swedes didn't do that at all. That got me thinking, how is it that tons of different groups, Somalis, Kosovo Albanians, Bosnians, Chileans – that they stick together and help each other, but we don't? (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, March 31, 2011).²⁵

For Karlsson, the lack of a similar inner solidarity among ethnic Swedes left him vulnerable to physical attacks and harassment. This lack of solidarity, in his mind, often grew from the fact that young Swedes were ashamed of themselves and their culture: Without a sense of pride, Swedish youth struggled to mobilize on their own, finding it easier instead to enter into anti-Swedish immigrant subcultures as second-class citizens. During his younger years, Karlsson himself lacked pride in being Swedish:

I'm speaking unconsciously, I had been carrying a feeling of inferiority. Because maybe, without being that conscious of it, I had still taken up that, that we Swedes are different from other people because of the fact that our culture, our way of living, our society, our history was so little, and grey, and boring, and meaningless, and weak, and so on (ibid).²⁶

svenska killar i min ålder hade råkat ut för liknande saker. Kanske inte just knivhuggningar, men alla hade fått stryk av de här gängen vid något tillfälle, eller blivit hotade eller skrämda till underkastelse. ²⁵Det [fanns] en solidaritet bland invandragängerna som i många fall byggde på etnicitet och identitet, där de ställde upp och hjälpte varandra. Det kunde vara så att blev det något bråk, så kunde någon som inte hade alls med saken att göra hoppa in och hjälpa någon som de bara kände väldigt ytligt för att de tillhörde samma nationalitet. Så gjorde inte svenskar överhuvudtaget. Det fick mig börja fundera lite över hur det kan komma sig att [olika] folkgrupper som somalier, kosovoalbaner, bosnier och chilener alltid hänger ihop och hjälper varandra och så där, men att vi inte gör det? [...]. ²⁶Jag pratar omedvetet, jag hade gått och burit på någon form av mindrevärdekänsla. För kanske, utan att vara så värst medveten om det så hade jag ändå snappat upp att vi svenskar skilde oss från andra folk genom vår kultur och vårt sätt att vara. Vårt samhälle och vår historia var så liten och grå, tråkig, betydelselös och mesig och så där.

Karlsson had “taken up” non-pride from society at large, specifically from Sweden’s Social Democratic governing and cultural elite. According to him, these forces were attempting to extinguish Swedish identity in an effort to ease the country’s transition to a multicultural society, and this agenda left few areas of Swedish society untouched.

You heard talk, more and more, and there were debates in newspapers about these things, like that people were no longer singing the national anthem at school graduations, you couldn’t raise the Swedish flag, you couldn’t have a t-shirt with a Swedish flag on it [...] Even my grandparents, who are deep down Social Democrats, they also had a very strong Swedish identity, it was common sense for them, something that they valued a lot. They didn’t understand things like, that you couldn’t sing ‘Den Blomster Tid Nu Kommer’ [classic Swedish summer hymn] (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, February 12, 2011).²⁷

But though confusion and objection to these developments transcended social and generational lines, Karlsson saw them as having particular significance for those in his own situation.

And above all I saw that, many young guys, my age, with my class background, my geographic background, had the same experiences that I was having. There was something that united us. You would hear the same thing, we were talking more and more. We became united fairly quickly over our negative experiences with immigrant gangs, this frustration regarding the fact that, now Swedishness was something that the state was now actively trying to counteract, or attempts to express pride in Swedish identity (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, March 31, 2011).²⁸

²⁷Det började pratas mer och mer om, och debatterades i tidningar om sådana här saker, vilket resulterade i att man slutade sjunga nationalsången på skolavslutningar, man fick inte hissa svenska flaggan, man fick inte ha en tröja med svenska flaggan på. [...] Även mina morföräldrar som är, i grund och botten socialdemokrater, hade också en väldigt stark svensk identitet, för dem var det liksom självklart, något som de värdesatte mycket. De förstod inte sådana saker som att man inte fick sjunga nationalsången, eller Den Blomstertid Nu Kommer.

²⁸Och framförallt så såg jag att väldigt många unga killar i min ålder och med min klass och geografiska bakgrund hade samma upplevelser som jag. Det blev något som förenade oss. Man hörde samma sak, det började pratas mer och mer. Vi samlades ihop ganska snabbt, de negativa erfarenheterna av invandragängen, och den här frustrationen över att det svenska numera var någonting som man aktivt motarbetade från staten, [men också] försök att ge uttryck [för vår] stolthet över den svenska identiteten.

According to this account, though ethnic Swedish youths needed to join forces for their own social and physical welfare, a broader social agenda undermined the requisite pride for such solidarity.

Music, particularly flagship Viking rock band Ultima Thule, provided Karlsson and many of his counterparts an avenue to counteract these forces and forge a defiant Swedish pride. He was exposed to Ultima Thule prior to his move to Växjö, but he originally associated the group with extremism and hate rhetoric. However, he would come to regard this reputation as a product of elite efforts to defame Swedish solidarity.

MT: I had friends who listened to Ultima Thule in ninth grade in middle school. But I was pretty skeptical. First I was fully against it and thought it was terrible that they would play that Nazi music – that was what I had heard on TV and radio. But then, slowly but surely, I started to think that it was pretty fascinating, the topics they sang about, though the music wasn't great.

BT: What topics?

MK: It could be anything, really. They described different epochs in Sweden's history. It could be anything from them doing their own punk versions of Swedish children's songs, summer songs, to singing about more classic topics, like old Nordic mythology, Sweden's age as great power, the Carolean soldiers, things like that. But what was constant was that it signaled pride in being Swedish, that is, it signaled that this was something special, something cool that we should be damn protective of. It was almost revolutionary.

BT: For you?

MK: For most, at least those in my generation. [...] Because I had this image that, whatever was Swedish was pretty tame, and colorless, and nerdy. Then I ended up in a situation of conflict, and that sharpened all of this. That is, it made all of this more important and a bigger part of my life. That was right when I started school in Växjö when I was 16 (ibid).²⁹

²⁹MK: Jag hade vänner som lyssnade till Ultima Thule i nian på högstadiet. Men jag var ganska skeptisk, först var jag direkt emot det och tyckte att det var fruktansvärt att de kunde spela sådan nazistmusik. Sådant hade jag hört från tv och radio. Men sedan, sakta men säkert så började jag tycka att det var ganska fascinerande ämnen som de sjöng om, musiken var ingen vidare egentligen. BT: Vad då för ämnen? MK: Det var ju allt möjligt egentligen, de skildrade ju olika epoker i Sveriges historia. Det kan vara allt ifrån att de gör deras egna punkiga varianter av svenska barnvisor och sommarvisor, till att man sjunger om mer klassiska ämnen som fornnordisk mytologi, stormaktstiden och karolinerna och sådana saker. Men det som var genomgående var att man

Regardless of when he transitioned from skepticism to appreciation, the pride inspired by Ultima Thule's music gave Karlsson a rallying point against intimidation and mockery in Växjö. Lyrics to the band's songs spoke of a Swedish people and identity unlike those fueling Karlsson's inferiority complex. Here, the Swedish was not little, grey, boring, meaningless, and weak, but rather something that exuded both beauty and power.

And suddenly I felt that, I too can be as proud as anyone else, even those countries in Europe that you stand around talking about, France and Italy and so on. That I don't need to go around feeling some inferiority complex compared to those or other, immigrant cultures, South America - you always hear that it is so fiery and exciting and fascinating and 'woo' (ibid).³⁰

But while at times Karlsson claims the band introduced him to new ideas, other times he frames their music as having energized a preexisting, but latent love of the Swedish.

It was like a catalyst then, in this process of identity formation, it accelerated the process I had already begun. It really awakened my interest in history. I started to look up what it was that they [Ultima Thule] were singing about, and read books, and found things in our history that I thought were really great. And I thought, why haven't I ever learned about this earlier? Everyone should know about that. And then it was in a way revolutionary too – the whole thing that you could actually sing that you were proud of Swedish history, of Swedish culture, and of being Swedish. And sing about – to express the feelings towards Sweden's natural beauty. Because I have always had that with me, I always knew a lot about the forest

signalerade en stolthet över att vara svensk, dvs. att man markerar att det här är någonting fint, någonting häftigt som vi ska vara jävligt rädda om. Och det var nästan revolutionerande. BT: För dig? MK: För de flesta tror jag, i alla fall i min generation. [...] För jag hade också bilden av att det som var svenskt var ganska tamt, färglöst och töntigt och så. Sedan blev det mer att jag kom in i ett konfliktperspektiv på ett sätt, och det skapade en skärpa och gjorde att det blev viktigare och en större del av mitt liv. Det var när jag var 16 och började skolan i Växjö.

³⁰Helt plötsligt så kände jag att jag kan ju var lika stolt som någon annan, även som de här länderna som man pratar om i Europa, som Frankrike och Italien. Jag behöver inte känna något mindervärdeskomplex i förhållande till dem eller andra invandrarkulturer och sånt. [Som i] sydamerika t. ex, det har man alltid hört att det är så eldigt och spännande och fascinerande, och woo, så där.

and land and such, and fished a lot with my maternal grandfather and friends, so I always had a special place for Sweden's landscape especially that in Småland. That is also something that they put words to, and it becomes quite emotionally powerful. That's how I, like many other Swedes, strongly link my national pride with nature, maybe that's where it started (ibid).³¹

Further, while media called the band racist, Karlsson found such accusations hollow.

He specifies,

I started actually listening to the lyrics, and I wasn't doing that at first. [...] I was very suspicious for quite a while because I thought, yeah, there are certainly worse songs considering that they [the band] are so controversial, so it is just that I haven't heard them yet. But since then I listened through every record they've released, and I haven't found anything that could be interpreted as racist or something, and I saw that it deals first and foremost with identity and national pride, and not negative – not aimed at someone else. So then I grew more receptive, and started to like the music, and I liked punk, and they are very similar, musically (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, 03/31/2011).³²

Indeed, what he saw as widespread mischaracterizations of Ultima Thule provided him additional evidence that elites were waging a dishonest campaign against all forms of Swedish pride. Having grown comfortable with the group's lyrical content, embracing Ultima Thule as a whole was intuitive. Karlsson was at the time a fan of

³¹Den här identitetsprocessen blev som en katalyst. Den skyndade på den mentala processen som jag redan då hade inlett. Det gjorde att mitt intresse för historia väcktes. Jag började kolla upp vad det var de sjöng om, läste i böcker och hittade olika delar i vår historia som jag tyckte var häftiga, och undrade varför jag aldrig hade fått lära mig om detta förr, [sådant som] alla borde veta. Sedan var det på något sätt revolutionerande att man kunde sjunga om att man var stolt över svensk historia och svensk kultur, att vara svensk och få sätta ord på känslorna inför den svenska naturen. Det har jag alltid haft med mig. Jag visste alltid så mycket om skog och mark och så där, och har fiskat mycket med morfar och mina kompisar, så jag har alltid haft en speciell känsla inför det svenska landskapet, speciellt det småländska. Det är också någonting som de sätter ord på och det blir väldigt emotionellt starkt då. Så jag, liksom många svenskar, kopplar starkt ihop min nationella stolthet med naturen, det var kanske där det började.

³²Jag började faktiskt lyssna på texterna, och det gjorde jag inte först [...] jag var misstänksam väldigt länge för jag tänkte att det finns säkert värre låtar eftersom de är så kontroversiella, så det är nog bara så att jag inte har hört dem än. Men sedan jag lyssnat igenom alla skivorna som de gett ut, och inte hittade någonting som skulle kunna tolkas som rasistiskt, så insåg jag att det i första hand handlar om identitet och nationell stolthet och sådana saker och inget negativt riktat mot någon annan. Så blev jag mer positiv, och började gilla musiken och jag gillade punken, och de ligger väldigt nära, musikaliskt.

vintage punk bands like The Sex Pistols and The Ramones—groups whose musical style closely parallels that of Ultima Thule.

His experiences listening to Ultima Thule's music gave him not only a newfound appreciation for his cultural heritage; they also led him to an emerging sociopolitical subculture. During high school, Karlsson began identifying as a nationalist, and, following the moves of many other self-identifying nationalists his age, started associating with the skinhead movement, though he would never consider himself a full-fledged "skin." Skinheadism, with its gangs, specialized music, deviant dress, and reputation for violence, aimed to challenge groups like the kickers for street control and social capital. Karlsson became involved in the movement right as it was at its peak. It was during his years in high school when Ultima Thule began selling record numbers of albums. He estimates that there were nearly 70 skinheads in his hometown of Rottne alone. But the movement was by no means a united front. As he explains,

It divided fairly quickly into what was called NS skins – those who became Nazis quite simply and who were violent and pretty messed up – and those who were called Thule skins – who listened to Ultima Thule and just said that they were patriots and that they didn't have any problem with immigrants, said that as long as they adjust to our culture they are welcome, etc. But we must have the right to be proud of the fact that we are Swedes, etc. [...] [NS Skins] were very organized. Also, the others weren't skins, most of them had hair. What united everybody was that we all had bomber jackets, maybe with a Sweden flag on the jacket (ibid).³³

³³Sedan så delade det upp sig ganska snabbt i det som kom att kallas NS skins, sådana som blev nazister helt enkelt och som var väldigt våldsamma och rätt sjuka i huvudet. Saden fans de som kallades för Thule skins, lyssnade på Ultima Thule och sa att de bara var patrioter och inte hade någonting emot invandrare så länge de anpassade sig till vår kultur[...] Men vi måste få vara stolta över att vi är svenskar osv. [...] De (NS skins) var väldigt organiserade. De andra var inga skins heller, för de allra flesta hade hår. Det som förenade var att alla hade bombarjackor. Kanske någon Sverigeflagga på jackan. [...]

He further saw the split between NS and Thule skins as paralleling other social boundaries:

It really became a question of class. The trashiest, 'trash proletariat' tended to be Nazis, and a lot of drugs and alcohol, and violence. Many of them completely destroyed their lives, fell apart, became criminals. Whereas this Thule side, that was more the middle class, children of the working class, I think that the overwhelming majority of them live completely normal lives today (ibid).³⁴

Karlsson sympathized and associated with groups he considered non-racist, Thule skins. He never shaved his head, though he did wear a bomber jacket. In addition to run-ins with Växjö kickers gangs, Thule skins and NS skins also had an antagonistic relationship with each other. His most vivid memory of conflict with NS skins took place in not in Växjö, but home in Rottne. There, Karlsson came into contact with Mats Nilsson—a nationally known neo-Nazi linked to bank robberies and murders throughout Sweden. Karlsson recalls,

He was older than me, so I had never really hung out with him. But he tried to convert me a number of times, because I came across as one of the most outspoken advocates of a non-racist nationalism. So he invited me home a few times, and was going to convince me that I was on the wrong track, and he forced me to read Mein Kampf. And we discussed it, and I saw at all of these different places that this was completely sick. And further, it was pretty obvious to me that Nazism is actually anti-nationalist. Hitler makes it very clear that nations have no worth at all – it is survival of the fittest. Those who have the ability to conquer nations and oppress a people have a moral right to do so. It is completely against the foundational idea behind nationalism, which advocates ideas about peoples' rights, etc. And it became clear to me that, nationalists during the Second World War, they were the Norwegian resistance fighters, and the Polish, and the French, and the Danes. [...] [Nilsson] gave up, and called me a 'meatball patriot' (ibid).³⁵

³⁴Det blev ju mycket en klassfråga. De trasigaste, trasproletariatet var mycket nazister och det var väldigt mycket droger, alkohol och våld. Många av dem förstörde sina liv fullständigt, gick ner sig och blev kriminella. Medan den här Thulesidan var mer medelklass och arbetarklassens barn, jag tror att de allra flesta idag lever fullständigt normala liv.

³⁵Han var äldre än jag, så jag umgicks aldrig med honom på det sättet. Men han försökte omvända mig några gånger, eftersom jag framstod som en av de mest, uttalade förespråkarna för en icke-racistisk nationalism. Han bjöd hem mig ett par gånger, och försökte övertyga mig att jag var på fel

With the term “meatball patriot,” Nilsson mocked Karlsson for championing a Swedish nationalism based on culture rather than race or ethnicity, for fighting for Swedish meatballs rather than Swedish blood. Karlsson occasionally self-applies the term today.

Though he rejected race ideology, Karlsson grew intensely critical of immigration and multiculturalism. Anonymous classmates claim that he voiced anti-immigration views as early as middle school.³⁶ He, however, says his passion for the issue ignited later in Växjö. He held immigration and lack of assimilationist policy responsible for the major social divisions he encountered as a high school student. Indeed, he would later consider the broader skinhead movement a symptom of, rather than a solution to, this divisiveness, a movement, in that sense, equal to hip hop and Rastafarian trends (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, February 11, 2011). And as he matured, he began seeking out opportunities to advance his views through parliamentary political engagement.

Initially, his political and social orientation shocked his family. Karlsson’s parents and grandparents were working class, and their politics were staunchly leftist. As he recalls,

The few discussions we had at home dealt with only one choice, whether to support the Social Democrats or the Left Party. [Those parties] wanted a

spår samt tvingade mig att läsa Mein Kampf. Vi diskuterade boken och jag insåg vid flera olika tillfällen att det här är helt sjukt Dessutom blev det väldigt uppenbart för mig att nazism är anti-nationalistiskt. Hitler gör ju väldigt tydligt att nationer inte har något värde över huvudtaget - det är de starka som har rätt. Den som har möjlighet att erövra nationer och förtrycka ett folk har moraliskt rätt att göra det. Det går helt emot grundtanken med nationalism, som har lett fram till idéer om folkrätt och så där. Och det började också gå upp för mig att nationalisterna under andra världskriget, det var ju de norska motståndskämparna, och de polska, de franska, de danska. [...] Ja, sedan gav han upp. Han kallar mig för köttbullepatriot.

³⁶In article “De Fyras Gäng [The Gang of Four],” Aftonbladet, 01/05/2011.

more just and equitable society, while the right wanted the rich to be richer and the poor to be poorer. That was the image I got at home, that was the only point of contention to speak of (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, March 31, 2011).³⁷

His family was unsympathetic both to his grievances and to his proposed method for solving them.

They were pretty negative from the start, and even my extended family, my grandmother and grandfather who I am close with. Grandma said, 'You haven't gone and become one of those Sweden Demonstrators?' Fights, skinheads - that was the picture they had, you know. So we had a lot of interesting discussions at home, they tried to get me to reconsider, they thought I was too radical. But it was more that, as I see it, they were naïve. 'These problems, they are temporary and they will go away,' and it wasn't as bad as I was making it out to be. They also had a hard time understanding that you could actually be badly beaten because you were a Swede, even if you hadn't done anything (ibid).³⁸

Looking beyond skinheadism for a more upstanding avenue to pursue anti-immigration politics, Karlsson turned to the Växjö chapter of the Sweden Democrats.

Conclusion

Karlsson's subsequent journey into the Sweden Democrats, as well as his later efforts to reform that party, is described throughout the following chapters. As we will see, his account of the process by which he became a nationalist parallels such accounts by other insiders—including those with markedly different notions of

³⁷[D]e få diskussioner vi hade hemma gick alla ut på att det bara finns ett alternativ, socialdemokratin eller vänsterpartiet. De ville ha ett mer rättvist och jämlikt samhälle, medan högern ville att de rika skulle bli rikare och de fattiga fattigare. Det var den bilden jag fick hemifrån, det var den enda politiska konfliktlinje som fanns.

³⁸BT: Vad tyckte dina föräldrar? MK: De var ganska negativa i början. Och även min övriga släkt, min mormor och morfar, som jag har haft rätt nära förhållanden med. Mormor sa, 'Du har inte gått och blivit en sådan där Sverigedemonstrant?' Bråk och skinnskallar, det var den bilden man hade. Så vi hade väldigt mycket diskussioner hemma, de försökte få mig att tänka om, de tyckte att jag var för radikal. [...]Men det var mer som att, de var ganska, som jag upplever det, naiva. [...] De här problemen ... de var bara tillfälliga och skulle övergå, och det var inte så illa som jag försökte utmåla det som. De hade också svårt att ta till sig det här att man faktiskt kunde bli ganska illa slagen bara för att man var svensk, utan att man hade gjort någonting och så där.

Swedishness and the National People. Music mediated and shaped many individuals' embrace of nationalism. Likewise, it would be in part through music that Karlsson and others would attempt to reform the nationalist scene. Reform, however, meant different things to different nationalists and, accordingly, the role that music would play in reform manifested in different ways. Understanding this variance and the consequences it had for musical practice in the nationalist scene is the topic of the following chapter.

Chapter 2 – “Love Your Identity”: Sounds of Reform

If a country becomes multicultural for real, that means that many culturally distinct peoples shall coexist. Then, apparently, I must have the right to belong to a people too, even if I am Swedish, not just to be some frame identity that everyone else has unlimited right to define. In that case it means that all groups in the country have an ethnicity, except for me...³⁹

Blogger, author, activist, and musician, Solguru wrote the above statement in October 2009 during an online discussion with anti-racist writer, Fatou Bakotou Touray. The two debated the rise of non-European immigration to Sweden, multiculturalism, and the ways these phenomena might impact Swedish identity and traditions. Solguru’s contributions to the debate did not focus on demonizing minority groups or advocating rights exclusive to his own ethnicity. Rather, his focus was on the prospect of injustice. He argued that, in the face of encroaching cultural and ethnic diversity, Swedes were being asked to deny their existence as a distinct population. This charge, he claims, occurs alongside formal and informal celebration of immigrant groups’ distinctiveness. But whereas scholars of white identities (e.g. Doane 1997; Gallagher 2000; Sacks and Lindholm 2002; Kauffman 2006; Cornell and Hartmann 2007) might interpret the Swedish majority’s alleged unmarkedness as a token of its structural privilege, Solguru instead sees a regime of criminal inequality. He continues,

³⁹ “Om ett land blir mångkulturellt i egentlig mening, innebär det att många kulturellt skilda folkgrupper ska samexistera. Då måste jag rimligen ha rätten att tillhöra en folkgrupp även jag, även om jag är svensk, inte bara vara någon sorts ramidentitet vilken alla har obegränsad rätt att definiera. I så fall innebär det att alla grupper i landet har en etnicitet, utom jag.” Available online, accessed April 19, 2011, <http://tonarsmorsa.se/2009/10/06/svar-pa-en-kommentar-om-rasism-och-mangkultur/>.

Denying groups their historical identity has historically been a prelude for their extermination as a group – You see that when Israel says that ‘there is no such thing as Palestinians,’ you see it when China orchestrates mass immigration to Tibet and claims that Tibetans were always Chinese, and for that matter when certain types of anti-Semites try to show that Jews are not a people but are instead some metaphysical evil. And in the same way that Tibet will not be some paradise when the Chinese have bred and oppressed away [Tibetans’] ‘unmodern culture and religion,’ Sweden will not become a paradise for all peoples just because the Swedes, of all peoples, have been dissolved.⁴⁰

Solguru’s statement was circulated and praised throughout the wider nationalist online world, appearing in blog posts, discussion forums, and articles.

Today, nearly all nationalist groups in Sweden have adopted this conceptual and argumentative model—albeit in different ways and to differing extents. This steady and expansive shift away from stigmatized value systems and language, and towards mainstream discourses, is part of an ongoing effort among nationalists to divorce their scene from subculturalism and delinquency. Here, activists embrace sensibilities prevailing among the larger non-nationalist public, often the multiculturalist notion that all have right to recognized difference, and that there is an inherent value in social diversity. In this sense, nationalists’ emerging conceptual model can be seen as a radical incarnation of a broader phenomenon whereby social actors campaigning on behalf of a majority group adopt the ideologies and discourses that minorities use for political mobilization and influence, a tendency that Richard Dyer, referring specifically to racial politics, calls “me-too-ism” (1997).

⁴⁰ “Att förneka grupper deras historiska identitet är ett urgammalt förspel till deras utplåning som grupp - det ser man när Israel talar om att ‘det inte finns några palestinier’, det ser man när Kina orkestrerar massinvandring till Tibet och menar att Tibetaner alltid varit kineser, och för den delen när en viss typ av antisemiter försöker visa att judar inte är något folkslag utan någon sorts metafysisk ondska. Och precis lika lite som Tibet kommer att bli något paradiset när kineserna slutligen har avlat och förtryckt bort deras ‘omoderna kultur och religion’, kommer Sverige att bli ett paradiset för att just svenskarna, av alla folkgrupper, upplöses.” Ibid.

Swedish radical nationalists, however, did not invent this way of thinking and communicating. In France, Britain, and the United States, activists for majority white populations have for decades described themselves as agents of Self-love fighting on behalf of oppressed, threatened peoples. Scholarly and journalistic commentary has described such phenomena with the terms “heterophilia” and “neoracism” (Taguieff 2001 [1987]), “the New Racism” (Gordon and Klug 1986; Berbrier 1998, 2000), and “differential racism” (Balibar 2002). In an effort to stay close to insider terminology, and in recognition of the of the wide-ranging influence this thinking has had throughout Sweden’s radical nationalist scene, I instead use the term “New Nationalism.”

The New Nationalism has also shifted insiders’ understandings and use of music. Most nationalist music has been inseparable from, and in some senses constituted, the subculture of delinquency that reformist voices denounced. In distancing themselves from chauvinism, hooliganism, and hate, activists have contributed greatly to the decline of white power and freedom rock in radical nationalist Sweden. Further, while white power music may seem particularly ill-suited for the New Nationalism, this emerging orientation’s general aversion to behaviors, ideas, and expressive forms that separate nationalists from the mainstream would seem to prohibit the development of any kind of distinct, nationalist music.

Although reformism has marginalized what was previously the dominant nationalist music genre, it has not ended nationalists’ production of or interest in music. Rather, the New Nationalism has enabled and been enabled by the creation of

new music projects and musical discourses. For that reason, before proceeding to detailed discussion of these topics, I devote this chapter to a broad survey of the various impulses to and incarnations of the New Nationalism in Sweden. I trace the history of victimization and anti-chauvinism discourses in the Swedish nationalist scene and the rise of reformism in the late 1990s and early 2000s. I then detail two related bodies of thought—American “right to difference” ideology, and the thinking of the European New Right—both of which merged to propel and formalize the New Nationalism in Sweden. Finally, I review the current ideological and social profile of the nationalist scene, showing that virtually all sectors of the scene have incorporated New Nationalist ideologies in their activism and rhetoric.

New Nationalism?

Various components of New Nationalist thinking are themselves not new. At its center, this approach calls for a form of racial, ethnic, or cultural separatism similar, for example, to separatist thought prominent among historical race nationalist groups like the Klu Klux Klan in the United States (see Berbrier 1998). Further, claims that the national people face some kind of existential threat have motivated nationalist movements throughout and beyond radical circles. Swedish activists during the latter half of the twentieth century have voiced even more specific claims prevailing among contemporary New Nationalists, including the claim that their separatism derives from a universal concern for the well being of all peoples.

During the early 1980s, discourses framing the Swedes as an endangered people careening towards extinction saturated the nationalist scene. Activists traced

this threat to immigration from non-European countries, the low birth rate among ethnic Swedes, and what they thought was a rising tide of interracial marriage. For example, the first issues of *BSS-Nytt*, the newspaper of the organization Keep Sweden Swedish, frequently ran articles advancing such themes. The second issue alone included articles titled “Is the white race’s decline also its fall [Är den vita rasens nedgång dess fall]?” “Are we white people doomed to disappear [Är vi vita folk dömda att gå under]?” and “Shall we be executed [Ska vi avlivas]?” (1982, no. 2). The same alarmist, endist rhetoric filled the pages of other 1980s nationalist papers like *Fria Ord* and *Patrioten*. Much of this early discourse nonetheless advanced a racial supremacist ideology, such as a 1984 article in *Patrioten* arguing for whites’ innate intellectual and cultural superiority.⁴¹

While talk of white genocide has been a constant feature of contemporary radical nationalist thought throughout Europe and North America (Perry 2004), Swedish activists also claimed that more local forces threatened and oppressed their people. In Chapter 1 we saw how individuals like Mattias Karlsson claimed that Sweden’s justice system disadvantaged them because they were Swedes and not immigrants. Most nationalists then and today reinforce such claims by referring to Sweden’s hate speech laws, which aim to protect minority groups, but which typically do not acknowledge hate speech against the majority Swedish population. Those nationalists who are convicted for hate speech often claim that they are victims of a totalitarian state’s encroachment on free expression (Lööv and Nilsson 2001).

⁴¹ “Finns det rasskillnader? Vita och Svarta” (*Patrioten*, 1984, no. 3)

Nationalists also regard hate speech laws, with their non-recognition of the Swedish majority, as one manifestation of a broader symptom whereby elite forces deny Swedes' status as a distinct or in any sense valuable ethnic or cultural group. Here, Swedish activists might appear to be borrowing a trope from the greater white activist intelligentsia, one fixated on the notion that hate crime laws and Affirmative Action-style quotas have rendered majority white populations not only underprivileged, but also unacknowledged as a people. However, nationalists in Sweden can also be seen as reacting to general features of Swedish society that are widely acknowledged outside of ultraconservative circles.

Social historians have for decades commented on Swedes' aversion to expressions of national pride. Orvar Löfgren traces this tendency not to 1960s leftism—as do many nationalists—but to the 1950s, a time when in the face of postwar economic booms, “old Sweden became a gigantic reeducation project” and all things new were idealized (1993:58).⁴² Then, rationalist values of utilitarianism and logic supplanted tendencies towards the ornate and the emotional. Beliefs deemed superstitious, nationalism and religion in particular, were increasingly marginalized in public behavior. If Sweden was to have a national identity, or a national character, it was to be one of anti-nationalism and social responsibility (Johansson 2001). By the 1960s, reflecting the extent to which these anti-nationalist trends permeated Swedish society, the label “un-Swedish [*osvenskt*]” began emerging as a compliment in conversation (Löfgren 2000:237).

⁴² Note that recent scholarship has cast doubt on Löfgren's claim that Swedish anti-nationalism is a phenomenon rooted in the 1950s. Berggren and Trägårdh, for example, suggest that this disinclination to national pride may have been common even in 1800s Sweden (2009).

The notion that Swedish mainstream society is allergic to notions of Swedish pride or Swedish ethnic or cultural distinctiveness continues to receive sensational reinforcement today. Nationalists from the Sweden Democrats to militant neo-Nazi circles have fixated on statements by leaders of Sweden's two primary, mainstream political parties: former Social Democrat party leader Mona Sahlin, and Moderate Party leader and current Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt. In 2002, when the magazine *Euroturk*—a magazine produced by and primarily for Turkish immigrants living in Sweden—asked Mona Sahlin to define Swedish culture, she responded,

I am often asked that question, but I can't think of what Swedish culture is. I think it's that, in part, that makes many Swedes jealous of immigrant groups: You have a culture, an identity, a history, something that binds you together. And what do we have? We have Midsummer and nerdy things like that (2002 no. 2).⁴³

Four years later, during a visit to the ethnically diverse town of Ronna to the south of Stockholm in 2006, sitting Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt told an assembly of immigrants that

the core of Swedishness [ursvenskt] is only barbarism. All other development has come from the outside (*Dagens Nyheter* November 15, 2006).⁴⁴

Nationalists today often refer to these twin quotes to argue that, though Sweden's reigning political elite may disagree on questions of taxes, healthcare, etc., they are all united in their contempt for the Swedish. It is often with these and earlier examples in mind that nationalists such as Torbjör Kastell celebrate parties like the

⁴³ "Jag har ofta fått den frågan men jag kan inte komma på vad svensk kultur är. Jag tror att det är lite det som gör många svenskar så avundsjuka på invandrargrupper. Ni har en kultur, en identitet, en historia, någonting som binder ihop er. Och vad har vi? Vi har midsommarafton och sådana 'töntiga' saker."

⁴⁴ "Ursvenskt är bara barbariet. Resten av utvecklingen har kommit utifrån."

Sweden Democrats as organizations “where you were allowed to be proud of your history” (cited in Larsson and Ekman 2001:174).⁴⁵

Just as discourses of victimization stretch throughout the contemporary nationalist scene’s past, so too do purportedly non-chauvinistic calls for separatism. The New Swedish Movement [Nysvenska rörelsen], which emerged as a pro-Germany fascist and anti-Semitic organization during the 1930s (see Chapter 1), began emphasizing, not only cultural nationalism, but also an internationalist, non-chauvinistic activism since the 1970s—an approach they called “mutual nationalism [samnationalism].” During the 1980s and 1990s, various activists similarly called for racial separatism, not on the grounds that one race was superior to another, but because they believed separatism was in the best interests of all groups. In 1983, Sven Davidsson—then president of the organization Keep Sweden Swedish—responded in the following way to the question, “Are you a racist?:”

Yes, in the positive sense. I would like to see races develop separately, according to their own situations (*BSS-Nytt* 1983, no. 4).⁴⁶

Comparable expressions even appeared in explicitly National Socialist circles during the 1990s. In a *Nordland* article, “Skinhead: A Race-Conscious Lifestyle [Skinhead: En Rasmedveten Livsstil],” author “Skinhead ‘84” writes,

The movement does not claim that our race is worth more than other races (like the mass media loves to claim), but knows that racial and cultural separation is necessary in order to save our civilization. That is the truth that no ‘anti-racist campaign’ in the world can hide, regardless of their budget (1995, no. 2).⁴⁷

⁴⁵ “ett parti där det var tillåtet att vara stolt över sin historia.”

⁴⁶ “Ja, i ordets positiva betydelse. Jag önskar att raserna skall utvecklas separat, efter egna förutsättningar.”

⁴⁷ “Rörelsen hävdar inte att vår ras är mer värd än andra raser (som massmedia gärna påstår), utan vet att det krävs en raslig och kulturell separation för att rädda vår civilization. Detta är sanningen som ingen ‘anti-rasistisk kampanj’ i världen kan dölja, oavsett budget.”

Other activists emphasized the tacit internationalist connotations of a non-chauvinistic separatist campaign. One example of this comes from a *Nordland* interview with Christopher Rangne—an activist in both White Aryan Resistance [Vitt Ariskt Motstånd] and the National Alliance [Nationella Alliansen]. During the interview, Rangne says,

When you go in and destroy the principle that a nation’s own inhabitants build a society for themselves, the consequences are devastating. We have seen how white imperialists have colonized Africa and Asia and forced the populations to live in a society that is foreign and frightening for them. Today we see how people from other continents—with the support of the same types of individuals, the same types of personalities that earlier colonized the foreign continents—are trying to force a foreign culture and social system on us. What is taking place today is nothing other than cultural and eco imperialism directed at the Swedish people. We are an anti-imperialist movement and we will fight against imperialism regardless of where it comes from and where it is directed (1996, no. 5).

In sum, contemporary radical nationalists have long advanced sentiments and analyses that constitute some of the ideological building blocks of the New Nationalism. Discourses of white Swedish victimhood and vulnerability were common in most organizations, and calls for a non-chauvinist, universal separatist cause were scattered throughout the scene. But in order for these positions to expand and develop, the reigning cultural and ideological status quo in the nationalist scene needed to fall.

Reformism

New Nationalism in Sweden emerged in response to broader attempts to reform the scene during the 1990s. “Reform” has meant different things to different nationalist organizations and activists. At times, activists speak of reform to

describe initiatives aimed at making organizations more efficient. Reform in such cases can refer to the institution of military-like order and training techniques in violent National Socialist organizations. Similarly, the term can describe attempts to focus nationalism on its own goals, an agenda that typically advocates the “Swedifying” of the nationalist scene by replacing foreign icons like Adolf Hitler with historical Swedish ultraconservative or National Socialist figures like Rudolf Kjellén, Sven Olof Lindholm, or Per Engldahl. Most commonly, however, when nationalists speak of reform, they refer to changes aimed at bringing the nationalist scene into closer contact and harmonization with mainstream behaviors, values, and cultural attributes. Such an agenda often emerged as a response to the perceived political and social failures of 1990s nationalism, where the mass mobilization of youths for the nationalist cause produced no appreciable electoral successes, and left thousands of activists imprisoned or mired in substance abuse and violence.

Skinheadism—the neo-Nazi variant in particular—has been the primary object of criticism for all reformists, it being allegedly undisciplined, anti-intellectual, foreign, deviant, and self-destructive. In some circles, the envisioned pathway towards legitimacy proceeded through an outright rejection of skinheadism. Such was the case for the nationalist party that, by the mid 1990s, had the greatest chance of achieving any semblance of electoral success: the Sweden Democrats. Though party members had been calling for a more upstanding nationalism ever since its predecessor organization Keep Sweden Swedish began publishing its newsletter in 1982, these calls expanded, and began receiving more high-profile endorsement during the 1990s. The 1995 election of former Center-

Party member Mikael Jansson as party leader accelerated this process. The same year that Jansson was elected, the party issued new rules for participants at public events, prohibiting use of alcohol, cigarettes, symbols connected with WWII, and the shouting of slogans other than those endorsed by the party (Ekman and Poohl 2010:112). At the party congress a year later, Stockholm politician Tomas Johansson offered a justification for this reformist agenda:

The average Swede does not want to be linked with beer-drenched kids sporting shaved heads, steel-toed boots, and screaming 'Seig Heil!' and 'out with them all,' which is the media's image of the Sweden Democrats. The Sweden Democrats' chances are not helped by the fact that the party's leaders have a hard time distancing themselves from a nostalgia for the 1930s that radiates in certain contexts (cited in Larsson and Ekman 2001:167).⁴⁸

Party members like Johansson issued such calls with a sense of urgency.

Skinheadism was at the time under the media's and government's microscope for strings of murders and assaults throughout the country. Further, public events and demonstrations organized by the Sweden Democrats, such as their annual Engelbrekt March [Engelbrektsmarschen] in honor of historical Swedish freedom fighter Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson, had attracted participants dressed in skinhead style. It is not clear whether or not these individuals belonged to the party. But Mikael Jansson's 1996 article in the party bulletin eventually allows for the fact that this might have been the case. Following the Engelbrekt March, he wrote,

The Sweden Democrats have gotten a bad reputation because certain 'Hollywood Nazis' and other people in uniform-like clothing joined the Engelbrekt March. [...] People with such weak convictions that they must

⁴⁸ "Den vanlige svensken vill inte bli förknippad med ölberusade ynglingar med rakade huvuden och stålhattförsedda kängor skrålande 'Sieg Heil' och 'Ut med packet,' vilken är massmedias bild av Sverigedemokraterna. Sverigedemokraternas chanser ökas inte av att partiets ledning har svårt att frigöra [sic] sig från en 1930-talsnostalgi som skymtar i olika sammanhang."

dress up in such a way that it makes the Sweden Democrats look ridiculous are requested to stay home [...] We will photograph and publish photos of people who perpetuate activities that harm the party (*SD-Bulletin* 1996, March).⁴⁹

This article, which was reprinted in issues of the bulletin until 1998, constituted nothing short of a new dress code to accompany the 1995 prohibition of alcohol, cigarettes, and Nazi symbolism at party gatherings. These attempts to dispel skinheadism were the most formal manifestations of the Sweden Democrats' effort to become, as journalist Pontus Mattsson put it, a real political party instead of a "subcultural interest group"⁵⁰ (2009:26).

Such reforms paralleled an additional shift towards explicit cultural nationalism over ethno or race nationalism. With the term cultural nationalism [kulturnationalism], the Sweden Democrats refer to a conception of the national people as defined by a body of beliefs, values, practices, and traditions. In contrast with ethno or race nationalisms, cultural nationalism asserts that any person, regardless of their ethnic background, can become Swedish by assimilating this body of beliefs, values, practices, and traditions. Cultural nationalism was strengthened during the Jansson administration in the hands of Johan Rinderheim, and the party gradually gave it the label, "open Swedishness [öppen svenskhet]." By publically rejecting the notion that one is only Swedish by blood, the Sweden

⁴⁹ "Sverigedemokraterna har fått dåligt rykte på grund av att vissa 'Hollywoodnazister' och andra personer i uniformsliknande klädsel anslutit sig till Engelbrektsmarschen. [...] Personer med så svag övertygelse att de måste klä ut sig på ett sådant sätt att de drar ett löjets skimmer och skam över Sverigedemokraterna ombedes stanna hemma [...] Vi kommer fotografera och publicera bilder av personer som bedriver partiskadlig verksamhet."

⁵⁰ "subkulturell intresseorganisation"

Democrats assured that some of the most radical activists in the nationalist scene would be less inclined to identify with them.⁵¹

In contrast with the Sweden Democrats, other sectors of the nationalist scene sought to reform, but nonetheless retain, neo-Nazi skinheadism. This was especially true for those organizations and collectivities that had explicitly profiled themselves as skinhead. The music magazine *Nordland*, which in its first issue in newsletter format called itself a Scandinavian “skinzine” (1992, no. 1-2), frequently became a site for discussion of reform among self-identified skinheads. A watershed moment came in 1995 when, after a series of murders committed by skinheads thrust the subculture into the media spotlight, *Nordland* editors published an article calling for the curbing of violence and delinquency in the scene, an article titled “Hate in the Right Direction [Rikta hatet rätt]:”

Through completely senseless acts of violence⁵², young people have totally demolished their own and their dependents’ future, brought great damage to the movement, and further erased many years of hard race-conscious activism. [...]

Considering all of these acts of violence, how could I convince a Swede that my views are true and healthy when he, at the same time, reads headlines screaming with messages about how ‘young people are led by malicious Nazis to attack innocent and defenseless people?’ How should I convince a Swede that it is important to join our cause when he, through the mass media’s guidance, only sees murderers and hooligans in that cause?

No, that won’t work. What we all must understand, and [understand] now, is that all these feelings that boil up inside of us must be channeled in a healthy and positive manner. Frustration, rage, and hate must be transformed into actions that are life-sustaining and that produce results. You don’t get that

⁵¹ Jens Rydgren, in his otherwise solid study, overlooks this ideological distinction and its importance within the nationalist scene when he declares the Sweden Democrats to be ethnopluralists (2006:109).

⁵² The violent acts referred to in this quote are not necessarily instances of nationalists assaulting minorities or political opponents. The author was likely also referring to acts of violence against other nationalists or innocent bystanders.

through infighting, meaningless street violence, and hooligan antics.
Constructive engagement is the only way (1995, no. 4).⁵³

The article then goes on to name activism on behalf of *Nordland* magazine—
distributing copies in public, for instance—as an example of such constructive
engagement.

The author(s) of “Hate in the Right Direction” were careful not to frame
skinheadism as being synonymous with violent hooliganism, this despite the fact
that the article opened with a quote from American activist Dr. William L. Pearce
decrying “undisciplined, drunken parties that have unfortunately become a
signature for a large part of the skinhead movement” (ibid).⁵⁴ Further, the author(s)
did not mention the violent lyrics in the music *Nordland* promoted.

The letters section in the following number of *Nordland* was filled with
positive responses to the article. Often these responses praised the article and
sought to extend the reformist message. Reader “Aila” writes,

It isn't about hate, but rather love for one's people. I don't feel any sort of
connection with a bunch of drunk skinheads that walk and scream 'Sieg Heil!'
and harass immigrants' (1996, no. 5).⁵⁵

Björn Björqvist—then a member of *Gotland Skins*, but one who would later become

⁵³ "[G]enom fullkomligt vettlösa våldsdåd har unga människor totalt demolerat sin egen och sina
anhörigas framtid, åsamkat rörelsen stor skada och dessutom raserat många års hårt rasmedvetet
arbete. [...] Med alla dessa våldshandlingar i åtanke, hur skulle jag kunna övertyga en svensk om det
sunda och riktiga i mina åsikter då hans blick samtidigt vilar på löpsedlar som vrålar ut budskap om
hur 'unga människor förletts av illasinnade nazister till att lemlästa oskyldiga och försvarslösa
människor'? Hur ska jag kunna övertyga en svensk om det riktiga i att ansluta sig till våra led då han
genom massmedias försorg, endast ser mördare och huliganer i dessa led? Nej, det håller inte. Vad
alla måste inse, och det nu, är att alla dessa känslor som väljer upp inom oss måste kanaliseras på ett
sund och positivt sätt. Det gäller att förvandla frustration, vrede och hat till livsbejakande och
resultatgivande handlingar. [...] Detta uppnås inte genom interna stridigheter, meningslöst gatuvåld
eller huliganfasoner. Konstruktiv verksamhet är den enda vägen."

⁵⁴ "odisciplinerade fyllekravaller som tyvärr har blivit varumärke för en stor del av
skinheadsrörelsen."

⁵⁵ "Det handlar inte om hat, utan om kärlek till sitt folk. Jag känner ingen som helst samhörighet med
en bunt akoholpåverkade skinheads som går och skriker 'Sieg Heil!' och ofredar invandrare."

a leading figure in National Socialist Front and the Party of the Swedes—accepted the magazine’s critique, but still rallied behind skinheadism:

The skinhead movement today has a reputation for being aggressive, mean, cowardly, always drunk. We need to get rid of that reputation. Swedish retirees should feel a sense of security when they see skins in town, not fear! (ibid).⁵⁶

Both of these readers envision a nationalism with a more loving, wholesome image. Further, they each condemn the scene’s violence and tendencies towards public drunkenness. Other readers, like “Tobbe,” took the opportunity to bluntly criticize nationalists for appearing unschooled and uninformed:

All nationalists need to start being very careful about speaking out in the press and on TV. But if it is necessary, avoid looking like a bunch of idiots (ibid).⁵⁷

Likewise, “Young patriots from Vallentuna (Unga patrioter från Vallentuna),” wrote,

We must unite and not turn to meaningless violence. Nobody wins with that—least of all we ourselves! We must unite in a serious organization so the press doesn’t paint us as a gang of morons without a single reasonable argument (ibid).⁵⁸

Internal criticism of neo-Nazi skinheadism expanded throughout the 1990s. Murders and violent crimes committed by activists continued to attract intense media attention. And most National Socialist organizations, from White Aryan Resistance and the National Alliance, to, later, National Socialist Front and *Nordland*

⁵⁶ "Skinheads rörelsen har idag ett rykte om sig att vara aggressiva, elaka, fega, och alltid berusade, detta rykte måste vi tvätta bort. Svenska pensionärer ska känna trygghet när de se skins på stan, inte rädsla!"

⁵⁷ "Alla nationella måste börja vara jävligt försiktiga med att framträda i press och TV. Men om det är nödvändigt så undvika att framstå som några tokstollar."

⁵⁸ "Vi måste ena oss och inte använda oss av meningslöst våld. Det vinner ingen på--allra minst vi! Vi måste ena oss i en seriös organisation som pressen inte målar upp som ett gäng dumskallar utan några som helst vettiga argument."

magazine, collapsed, often due to infighting or imprisonment of leaders. Those voices calling for a less aggressive, less supremacist nationalism found a larger platform for their ideas throughout these changes. And towards the end of the twentieth century, they would expand, and in some cases label, alternative ideologies and methodologies. Activists would do this in part by drawing inspiration from thinkers outside of Sweden, American and French intellectuals in particular.

Of Oppression, Justice, and Diversity

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, former Klu Klux Klan leader and prominent white activist David Duke led an effort to reform race nationalist circles in the United States. As was the case in Sweden, Duke's effort included calls for activists to abandon violence and decadent dress. But he also wanted to upend the status quo in nationalist circles by refashioning the way insiders depicted their cause in public rhetoric. Instead of expressing hatred for racial Others, he aimed to frame whites as being in need of the same political advocacy as other ethnic minorities. Further, given the fact that whites did not receive such advocacy, Duke described his white nationalism as a civil rights movement—a campaign to challenge, rather than maintain, asymmetrical power relations among races. Such an effort could be (and has been) characterized as a cause for universal consideration of all races' rights. But in the case of Duke and the circles surrounding him, it was rather presented as a cause based in an abundant concern and love for the Self, a positive movement easily contrasted with the hate-themed rhetoric Duke sought to dispel.

As part of this initiative, he founded the National Association for the Advancement of White People, or the NAAWP, in 1979. The organization's name

referred to the African American rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or the NAACP. Duke devised the organization and its name with the hope of evoking an understanding that, as sociologist Mitch Berbrier paraphrases, “whites are equivalent to other groups but are not so treated” (1998:439). In a 1980 recruitment letter for the organization, Duke writes,

Do you realize what a powerful weapon the NAAWP name is? It puts us in a perfect position to expose the hypocrisy of the minority racists dominating America, for if it is right and proper for blacks to work for their 'advancement' and their civil rights, how can they say it is wrong for white people to do the same thing? Of course, they can't without exposing their hypocritical stance to everyone concerned (cited in Berbrier 1998:439).

Officially, Duke’s campaign with the NAAWP was neither supremacist nor chauvinistic. Rather, he called for a separatism and political mobilization that whites deserved by virtue of being one racial group among many. Further, he makes this claim through, rather than against, prevailing liberal values—in this case the assumption that minority groups are justified in receiving targeted representation.

As Duke’s emphasis on white victimization and Self-love spread, another prominent American activist, Richard McCulloch, made a similar, more theorized attempt to reconcile racial separatism with mainstream sensibilities and values. McCulloch’s paramount publication is his book *The Racial Compact*, released in 1994. There, he claims that, in step with United Nations resolutions on biological and cultural diversity, global society should encourage racial diversity. It is a position that accepts, rather than contests, the inherent value of difference. His rhetoric and reasoning in *The Racial Compact* is encapsulated in what he calls the Racial Golden Rule:

The Racial Golden Rule asserts the right of every race to racial freedom through racial separation and independence. To secure racial freedom and separation it respects the requirement of every race for its own exclusive racial territory or homeland, its own independent and sovereign government. It declares for every race the freedom to follow its own path, to control its own life and existence, to determine its own course of development and to pursue its own happiness and evolutionary destiny. It is a declaration of racial independence, freedom and diversity, holding it to be self-evident that all races were created different, and have a right to be different, to be themselves, with equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of their own happiness.⁵⁹

For McCulloch, separatism is needed not because of one race's superiority, but because it would ensure all races' universal right to "life"—life here being synonymous with difference. Borrowing language from the United States Declaration of Independence, he presents his ideology as a logical outgrowth of broadly accepted standards and values in American society, the inherent virtue of diversity being one of them. Thus throughout the 1980s and 1990s, these two American activists, Duke and McCulloch, each formulated calls for activism that eschewed hate rhetoric, chauvinism, and Nazism, and which embraced established, mainstream rhetorical and conceptual tropes. Initially, the two diverged in their points of emphasis, with Duke pursuing a Self-loving, white-centric campaign, and McCulloch framing his ideals in universal terms such that they would apply to potentially any race on the planet. But as McCulloch developed his theories, thinkers on the other side of the Atlantic—the so-called New Right—had been espousing similar ideas and rhetoric for decades.

The European New Right

[H]umanity is irreducibly plural: diversity is part of its very essence. Thus, human life is necessarily rooted in a given context, prior to the way

⁵⁹ Available online, accessed October 24, 2011 <http://www.racialcompact.com/racialgoldenrule.html>

individuals and groups see the world, even critically, and to the way they formulate their aspirations and goals (De Benoist and Champetier:123-124).

Leading proponents of the European New Right trace the founding of their movement to 1968. Then, a group of French intellectuals surrounding philosopher Alain de Benoist formed the Groupement de recherché et d'études pour la civilization européenne (Research Group for the Study of European Civilization), or GRECE. As the name illustrates, the group viewed itself as an intellectual, scholarly organization rather than a political party. Still, the ideas of this organization have shaped the thinking of political parties and activist groups throughout Europe. In diverse settings, the allure of the New Right tends to stem from its ability to embed criticisms of immigration, multiculturalism, and interracialism within relatively sophisticated and wide-ranging critiques of modernity, critiques committed as much to scrutinizing economic systems, spiritualism, political models, and gender ideologies as ethnic politics. It is nonetheless the New Right's ethnic politics that dominates its reputation among its opponents (Sunic 2011 [2009]:62), and, in Sweden, among its supporters.

New Rightist thinkers like Alain de Benoist, Charles Champetier, and Tomislav Sunic call for political, social, and spiritual systems that will nurture cultural and ethnic diversity throughout the world. As De Benoist and Champetier put it in their "Manifesto for a European Renaissance,"⁶⁰ the school calls for a "pluriversum," a world where the "plurality and variety of races, ethnic groups, languages, customs, even religions [that] has characterized the development of

⁶⁰ The English version of this document was originally published under the title, "The French New Right in the Year 2000." This document is distinct from sometimes New Rightist Guillaume Faye's book, *Why We Fight: Manifesto of the European Resistance* (2011).

humanity since the very beginning” is to be welcomed, maintained, and cultivated (De Benoist and Champetier 1999:130-131). As concerns their own society, they seek the revival of what they consider to be expressly European behaviors, beliefs, political systems, and self-understandings steeped in native, local tradition; practices that shift organically while remaining true to their archaic essence. These essences, or as some New Rightists later called them, identities, are composed of many factors, including language, spiritualism, physical territory, and ethnicity, each sharing the feature that they are often inherited through familial and community lineages. New Rightists claim that these identities shift from region to region and nation to nation throughout Europe. But drawing from the work of Georges Dumézil dating from the 1930s, they also assert that all stem from a common form—or “structure” as conceived by Claude Lévi-Strauss—that once spread throughout the Indo-European world (see Torigian 1999:20). They were identities at once local and transcontinental for which the intermediary unit of the nation, a modernist construct, was largely irrelevant. For this reason, few ideologues associated with the New Right identify as nationalists.

These thinkers claim that the forces of equality stand opposed to their vision of a diverse Europe and a diverse world. Their use of the term “equality” refers less to the concept of equal access to political agency or to the notion of all humans’ equal value, but rather to the notion that all humans are identical to one another. Put another way, the New Right opposes all forces that would attempt to deny and erase humanity’s “irreducible plurality.” Such forces are necessarily imperialist, absolutist, and totalitarian, and, the New Right claims, they reign in Europe today.

As Michael Torigian aptly summarizes (1999), the New Right sees Europe as being in a state of alienation from itself, having in effect been ruled by foreign powers—the United States and Russia—since the onset of the world wars. These occupying political forces, and with them capitalism and communism, represent only the latest in a series of cases of foreign ideological and spiritual intrusion and corruption. American capitalism and Bolshevik communism replaced the regime of Christianity in Europe, itself a transplant to the continent from the Levant. The foreignness of these forces is not their only flaw, however. Rather, they enabled and drove a social transformation whose central impact has been to advance equality at the expense of difference: modernity.

With its individualization, its desacralization, its massification, its rationalization, and its universalization, modernity destroys older forms of community life and religious narratives, standardizes and organizes behavior and lifestyles, and asserts itself as absolute (De Benoist and Champetier 1999:118). Modernity, in other words, destroys the infrastructure for realizing and maintaining authentic identity and diversity, and thereby humans' ability to function socially. The instruments of this destruction, the instruments of modernity, appear varied, and are thereby seen as constituting some compensatory diversity or allowing for political and social contestation. However, the central oppositions that modernity advances, such as the political right-left dichotomy, have always been illusory. De Benoist and Champetier write,

despite their mutual hostility, liberalism and Marxism basically belong to the same universe and are both the heirs of Enlightenment thought: they share the same individualism, even the same universal egalitarianism, the same rationalism, the same primacy of economics, the same stress on the

emancipatory value of labor, the same faith in progress, the same idea of an end of history (ibid:121).

Modernity's foundational oppositions ultimately reduce to a replication and restatement of itself. Further, New Rightists assert that the conceptual matter shared by allegedly opposed forces like Marxism and capitalism—the key concepts of modernity—derives from Judeo-Christian thought. This religious tradition not only asserts its primacy above all other descriptions and prescriptions of human life, it further equalizes all humans in the pursuit of its goal at the end of history: communion with God. Marxism, capitalism, and modernity as a whole did not abolish this conceptual framework. Rather, they perpetuate it, maintaining its claims to absolute truth, and erecting the Earthly utopia, personal wealth, or the abstract notion of progress as ersatz for union with the divine.

Modernity—under Marxist, capitalist, Christian, or secular humanist regimes—forces its subjects to act as though they were all the same. This does not mean that society destroyed our natural allegiances and inherent differences. Rather, as Canadian professor Andrew Fraser argues, it has simply devised methods for diverting and delaying their expression. He writes, “To keep a lid on the simmering stew of racial, ethnic, and religious resentments, managerial multiculturalism depends entirely on steady economic growth” (2011:330). This shackling of our true nature does not come without a cost. As De Benoist and Champetier explain,

modern societies tend to bring together individuals who experience each other as strangers [...] In becoming more solitary, man also has become more vulnerable and more destitute. He has become disconnected from meaning, because he can no longer identify himself with a model, and because there is

no longer any way for him to understand his place in the social whole (1999:125).

These subjects cannot ignore the very real differences between themselves and their neighbors, differences that modernity's minions would deny exist, and they respond to this cognitive dissonance through traumatic social withdrawal. To compensate for this loss of purpose, modernity showcases progress—progress in economic terms, as Fraser argues, or in spiritual or political spheres. But beneath its veneer of structure, organization, and direction, modernity actually produces an encompassing aimlessness, what Tomislav Sunic calls “formless politics, formless life” and “formless values” (2011 [2009]:58), formless because it does not belong to any context, nor any people.

To remedy this situation, New Rightists seek to regain from the grips of modernity “social systems that used to ascribe individuals their place in a clearly understood social order” (De Benoist 2004:133). These thinkers see in the premodern era a hierarchical social model where the naturally occurring diversity in human life was respected, and thereby, where the process of realizing one's identity was not shrouded in mystery and anxiety. As such, those modernist systems that would deny and rebel against human diversity are not failing to advance to new heights of emancipation, as progressive, multiculturalist ideologues like Charles Taylor claim (1992). Instead, they are dismissing pluralistic worldviews that are archaic and natural, models that need to be renewed and fitted to contemporary needs rather than created anew.

New Rightists often present the pluriversum concept in expectedly universal terms, such that the virtues and need of such a society is framed as being equally

relevant to all peoples. In such cases, these intellectuals' calls for a Europe of local identities are part of a larger, global agenda. However, the universality of this thinking spurred an internal schism within the New Right initiated by former GRECE member, Guillaume Faye. Faye condemned De Benoist and others for relativizing the achievements, and even the superiority of European society. But De Benoist and Champetier have remained committed to a global cause, writing for example, "the right to difference is a principle which has significance only in terms of its generality. One is only justified in defending one's difference from others if one is also able to defend the difference of others" (1999:133-134). De Benoist and Champetier use this principle in their analyses of race and gender, where they call themselves "differential feminists" and "differential anti-racists" championing "the equal value of [men's and women's] distinct and unique natures" and "the irreducible plurality of the human species" (ibid:134, 136). They do this at the same time as they oppose ideologies that posit a racial hierarchy. Nazism, for the New Right, was an imperialist, modernist movement that asserted its cause as absolute and disrespected others' right to self-determination and difference.

The New Right has proposed a number of concrete solutions towards achieving their ideals. For example, in the spiritual realm, both European supremacist and global pluralist voices agree that one solution to modernity's homogenizing onslaught happens to be a quintessentially Indo-European body of thought: Paganism. New Right intellectuals advocated Norse, Celtic, and Hellenic Paganism on multiple grounds. Sunic claims that Paganism stands to compensate for Christianity's tendency, as described by Miller (1974), towards understanding the

world only within the dualistic logic of “either-or, true-false,” or “good-evil”; totalitarian assertions of unique access to ultimate truth that leave no room for beliefs and practices outside of those it proscribes (Sunic 2011 [2009]:111). Paganism similarly lacks the linear view of history found in Christianity—as well as capitalism, communism, and modernism—that directs humans’ focus to a promised resolution in the future. Such a fixed, forward looking glance renders all from one’s unique history irrelevant, aside from that which can be framed as contributing to the respective teleology. Channeling De Benoist, Sunic thus asserts that Christianity, capitalism, communism, and modernism all treat history as “at best, parenthetical, at worst an ugly episode or a ‘valley of tears’ which must one day be erased from the Earth and transcended in Paradise” (ibid:118).

Paganism, in contrast, favors a cyclical view of history that collapses the past, present, and future into one, and where agents may draw from each age according to their needs. It is a treatment of history, according to insiders, better suited to fostering authentic identity by rendering individuals’ and groups’ particular histories more accessible. Further, according to De Benoist, Paganism, by accepting an ever expanding number of gods, “not only accepts the plurality of the forms of worship that address them, but also, and especially, the plurality of mores, social and political systems, conceptions of the world for which these gods are so many sublimated expressions” (2004:110). In other words, whereas Judeo-Christianity and its contemporary incarnations eradicate difference, Paganism accommodates it.

While Paganism stands to support the New Right’s campaign in the spiritual realm, they seek to reestablish ethnic difference by undermining capitalism,

Marxism, and assimilationism. They hold capitalism responsible for the initial rise of immigrants in Europe. De Benoist and Champetier write, “The responsibility for current immigration lies primarily, not with the immigrants, but with the industrialized nations which have reduced man to the level of merchandise that can be relocated anywhere” (ibid:135). Further, the solution to the influx of immigrants is not to continue violating our innate differences through assimilationism, or to implement those Marxist-inspired doctrines that would strip society of any and all cultural allegiances. Rather, repatriation should be the first goal. And should that prove unattainable, they advocate a sort of multiculturalism in overdrive that would preserve and separate the individual cultures and identities within a given nation, a model that, “could, in the long run, lead to a disassociation of citizenship from nationality” (ibid).⁶¹

The New Right’s ethnic politics are thus buried within larger criticisms of contemporary society. As stated earlier, it is nonetheless their commentary on ethnicity that brought the New Right the bulk of its notoriety, positive and negative. And contrary to Tauguieff’s claims (1994:99-125) the school’s insistence on the importance of ethnicity in identity formation persists, not only implicitly through the implications of their proposed programs, but also, as quotes above show, explicitly in their formal presentations of their ideology.

New Rightist Methodology

As the New Right’s ideas penetrated and shaped the broader nationalist scene in Europe, however, they were also in close dialogue with the political left.

⁶¹ This latter solution seems to have gotten lost in Spektorowski’s description of de Benoist’s thoughts on immigration (see 2003:126).

Because of the school's opposition to Western imperialism and global capitalism, leftist ideologues have long flirted with the New Right, a trend reflected by the fact that the American journal *Telos* has occasionally provided a platform for the school's ideas. Such interest is mutual, and exchange with the left has shaped the New Right's ideal methods for political change as well as its rhetoric.

Though the New Right is, in its original conception, not a political party, it nonetheless aims to influence political decision-making. And in devising a method to pursue this aim, they embraced the thinking of their political opposite: neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci. The New Right envisioned an operational model based on Gramsci's notion of "culture struggle." Gramsci argued that any meaningful political change always proceeds from a shift in the cultural sphere, and thus, that any agenda to change the political status quo must begin its struggle in culture. As Alain de Benoist later put it, "[T]he French Revolution would not have been possible without the Enlightenment. Before any Lenin, there must always be a preceding Marx" (2011[2009]:19). The New Right would call this type of activism "metapolitics," a technique former GRECE member Guillaume Faye defines as "[t]he social diffusion of ideas and cultural values for the sake of provoking profound, long-term, political transformation" (2011:193).

New Rightists thus aimed to inject their messages in the cultural rather than the political realm, hoping that this would someday lead to real political change. Leading thinkers seldom provide details about the content of this cultural realm, though Tomislav Sunic indicates that, in the school's mind, it includes "popular myths and popular modern sensibilities," as well as institutions like lower education

and the media (Sunic 2011 [2009]:70-71). Speaking in general terms, however, New Rightists often suggest that virtually all arenas of social and cultural production, such as film, literature, art, theater, and music, are valid targets for their metapolitical campaign. This method stands in contrast with those radical nationalist approaches that emphasize a withdrawal from society and seclusion in subcultures. Here activists are to be as involved and represented in the public sphere as possible.

Ideal metapolitics typically takes one of two forms: Either activists seek to inject their message seamlessly into existing educational institutions and expressive and communicative outlets, or they aim to create their own realization of these institutions and outlets. For example, whereas those activists operating under the first approach would try to shape the content of public school curricula to better channel their views, those following the second approach would attempt to create a parallel educational system that satisfies the same needs as public schools, but is saturated with their message. And whereas the first approach attempts to nourish a groundswell of sentiment among a generally undifferentiated populace, the second aims to grow a parallel society to a size capable of wielding political influence. Regardless of which approach they employ, as Tamir Bar-On argues, the New Right's insistence on "the cultural or metapolitical realm as the most fundamental terrain of political contestation" is one of the few positions that remained constant throughout its history (Bar-On 2007:80).

A concept closely related to metapolitics in New Rightist thinking is that of "culture struggle." The concept of culture struggle—in most senses distinct from

that of Bismarkian *kulturkampf*—also draws inspiration from Gramscian notions about the importance of culture in enabling political change. But the term is used more frequently in those camps that oppose De Benoist’s universalism. Whereas the term metapolitics refers simply to the technique of injecting certain values into the cultural sphere, culture struggle, according to its foremost proponent, Guillaume Faye, describes more specifically, “the defense and creative assertion of threatened European cultures” against “Americanization, Islamization, Africanization” and “neo-primitivism” via “the school [...] the plastic arts, music, audio/visual, language, literature, etc.” Faye further juxtaposes this concept with those universalizing tendencies in the New Right that he opposes, writing, “Culture struggle doesn’t entail defending all cultures, only European culture, which it assumes is superior to all others” (2011:106-107).

Ethnopluralism

Just as the New Right’s ideal method of activism was shaped by leftist influences, so too did its rhetoric emerge through an exchange with left-wing thinking.⁶² The term some New Rightists use to describe their ethnic politics is “ethnopluralism.” Henning Eichberg, a German sociologist who today works at the University of Southern Denmark, coined the term in a 1973 paper criticizing the philosophical underpinnings of foreign developmental aid from European countries. He uses the word ethnopluralism to describe his vision for a new approach to foreign developmental aid that would not erase, but rather cultivate difference among other peoples. Ethnopluralism was a counter to ethnocentrism and Western

⁶² Spektorowski goes as far to claim that the school’s emphasis on a right to difference is itself borrowed conceptual material from the left (2003:115).

imperialism (Eichberg 1973, 2011:151-155) and today he recalls intending it to refer to cultural, rather than ethnic or racial pluralism (personal communication, Henning Eichberg, July 1, 2012). Words like race and ethnicity do not appear in his original paper. However, activists in later years would add inherited biological traits, and race, to the “ethno” of Eichberg’s term.

Though today Eichberg identifies with the left and the socialist cause, his political orientation was in the past more ambiguous. During his youth he was involved with both fascist and far left circles in Germany, and during the early 1970s, he became active in rightist youth and student movements—authoring the official platform for the group Aktion Neue Rechte (New Right Action). These movements were nationalist and, in the case of Aktion Neue Rechte, emerged from far right organizations like the National Democrat Party. But they also embraced leftism, rallying around nationalism as a means of resisting Western imperialism rather than a tool to confront domestic ethnic minorities.

This cause was also at the heart of Eichberg’s concept of ethnopluralism. And following his 1973 paper, he published a series of articles introducing the concept in the New Right journal *Junges Forum*, and may have discussed it in a brief letter correspondence with Alain de Benoist in the mid 1970s (personal communication, Henning Eichberg, July 1, 2012). Throughout the 1970s, Eichberg slowly cooled to the New Right, and eventually abandoned the scene entirely. His term, however, lived on, starting in New Right Germany and France, and later throughout European radical nationalism. De Benoist began applying the term to the French New Right’s preexisting ideology of the right to ethnic difference. Ethnopluralism for him was a

demand for ethnic separatism born, not out of assumed superiority of one ethnic group, but out of a mutual respect for otherness in the ethnic domain, and out of a sense of the inherent value found in the existence of a plurality of identity-forming ethnicities throughout the world. He nonetheless used the term infrequently, and does not use it today (personal communication, Alain de Benoist, July 15, 2012).

Ethnopluralism would undergo further modifications as it traveled beyond De Benoist and throughout the international New Right scene, especially in Germany. Leading voice of the German New Right, Pierre Krebs, for example, stressed the need for separate ethnic groups to have their own territory (1982)—an addition to ethnopluralism sometimes referred to as ethno-regionalism. And by the mid 1990s, anti-immigrant parties in Europe began voicing, if not the term itself, then the reasoning the New Right attached to it (Lee 1997:369), leading some scholarly commentators like Hans-Georg Betz to declare ethnopluralism “by far the most important and influential [N]ew [R]ight concept” (1999:309; see also Spektorowski 2002).

Ethnopluralism became an ideology that could be detached from the wider New Rightist criticism of modernity and equality. It is the New Right’s ethnic politics in isolated form. Adherence to the notion that all ethnic groups should, out of mutual respect, exist in separation, does not necessitate that one also embrace New Rightist readings of history, modernity, the nation, religion, or metapolitics. Those ideologues and activists who wanted to retain such readings would coalesce around a different term and conceptual branch: identitarianism.

Identitarianism

Self-identified identitarians use the term to describe a specific ideological and cultural scene.⁶³ Identitarian ideology is difficult to distinguish from standard New Rightism. Those differences that do exist between the two camps deal mainly with emphasis, and the somewhat paradoxical fact that, despite their stated commitment to metapolitics, identitarian circles throughout Europe collectively maintain a similar aesthetic in their promotional and expressive output. Identitarians throughout Europe, in other words, do not exhibit much diversity amongst themselves. The school's tendency towards exhibiting a particular expressive characteristic, and its emphasis on the immediate implementation of metapolitics, speak to the agenda of its foremost intellectual, Guillaume Faye. Faye further called for a more robust commitment to European culture than De Benoist was willing to admit in his "pluriversum," advocating a Eurocentric culture struggle as a means of resisting ethnopluralism which, he says, "demotes the significance of European culture" (2011:107). He notes, however, that the greatest threat to ethnopluralism—the utopian vision of a post-racial, melting pot society—is an exclusively Western ideal, such that its abolition in Europe would constitute its worldwide disappearance.⁶⁴ And in addition to his rejection of a global perspective, Faye also criticized the activism, or lack thereof in his mind, among the established New Right. In the words of Michael O'Mera, Faye denounced GRECE circles for privileging "the 'meta' in metapolitical at the expense of the 'political' which had the

⁶³ The term identitarian is also used by scholars to analyze identity politics (e.g. Johnson, Patten, and Betz 2005), though it should not be assumed to bear the same meaning in that context.

⁶⁴ Available online, accessed 07/01/2012, <http://www.toqonline.com/blog/from-dusk-to-dawn/>.

effect of making cultural/ideological engagement a substitute for, rather than an active facet of politics” (2011:12).

This use of the term identitarian [Fr. *identitaire*, Sw. *identitär*] likely came from Faye himself. As the name implies, identitarians stress the importance of reviving and developing the social infrastructure for producing authentic identity—the infrastructure that makes one’s identity self-evident. In their formulation and pursuit of this goal, these activists adopt the bulk of the New Right’s positions. They condemn modern society on the grounds that its political forms, its intellectual trends, and its spiritualism deprive its subjects of the means of establishing an identity, cultivating instead collectivities and lifestyles that cannot provide the sense of context and security that traditional society offered. Identitarians similarly oppose immigration and often call for various forms of ethnic separatism. Typically, however, such positions are framed as secondary to their more central objective: to raise their own and others’ consciousness of who they are.

Identitarian literature tends to center on celebrating the discovery of one’s identity rather than the criticism of others. Following thinkers like De Benoist, these activists often emphasize a fusion of local, regional, and pan-European identities, leaving national boundaries out of the equation. Identitarian ideals and aesthetics further exhibit a futurism not at odds with the thinking of De Benoist, but which nonetheless separates the ideological and activist field from the rest of the New Right through its prominence. Rather than focusing solely on the revival of ancient practices, identitarians typically envision a future society where science and

technology continue to advance at the same time as traditional belief systems reemerge. Guillaume Faye describes this vision as archeofuturism (2010).

The first groups calling themselves identitarians emerged in France, and include Jeunesses Identitaires founded 2002, and Bloc Identitaire founded 2003. The latter group gained notoriety for distributing soup to the homeless throughout France, and adding pork to deter Jews and Muslims. Shortly after the rise of these French organizations, identitarian groups began emerging throughout Europe, in Portugal, Italy, Serbia, Germany, Austria, England, and Ireland. During the past decade, however, the country with the largest identitarian scene outside of France has been Sweden.

Ethnopluralism and Identitarianism in Sweden

Importation and reconfiguration of these American and European ideological and political agendas propelled Swedish nationalists' efforts to reform their scene. Activists juxtaposed writings and communications from Duke and McCulloch, as well as both the ethnopluralist and identitarian branches of the European New Right, with the earlier paradigms of delinquent, anti-intellectual, violent National Socialism and skinheadism. American reformist ideals came to Swedish radical nationalism via David Duke's articles. During the 1990s, Swedish nationalist newspapers disseminated his calls for a more upstanding, less militant, and less hateful activism, and delegations from Sweden frequently attended his events in the United States (Wåg 2010; Interview, Vávra Suk July 14, 2011). But while Duke was and is celebrated in nearly all ethnonationalist circles, a prominent section of that scene turned to a different American activist, Richard McCulloch, as they attempted to found a new ideological program.

In 1999, Robert Almgren and Omar Filmersson founded Föreningen för Folkens Framtid (the Organization for the Peoples' Future). Both Almgren and Filmersson had worked as translators for white power music magazine Nordland. With their new organization, however, their sole objective was to translate and disseminate Richard McCulloch's writings, especially *The Racial Compact*, which they translated in 2000 (Sexton 2008:74-75). In the preface to their translations, they framed McCulloch's ideas as the reasonable alternative between two extremist poles, between chauvinistic and supremacist "immoral racism" on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a "race nihilism" that looks gleefully towards the outbreeding of all races.⁶⁵

Föreningen för Folkens Framtid ended their activities in 2001. The organization's closure was not an indication of the failure of McCulloch's ideas in Sweden's nationalist scene. Rather, as Rasmus Fleicher (2003) and Mattias Wåg (2010) point out, it coincides with the emergence of a major nationalist political party that would claim ethnopluralism as its ideology.

In 2001, various former members of the Sweden Democrats—having resigned or been expelled for ethnonationalism, anti-Semitism, or non-ideological interpersonal conflicts—formed the National Democrats [Nationaldemokraterna]. Though former Sweden Democrats composed the bulk of this new party, the National Democrats also recruited apostates and outcasts from the militant neo-Nazi organization, the Swedish Resistance Movement [Svenska Motståndsrörelsen]. Whereas individuals coming from the Sweden Democrats were deemed too extreme

⁶⁵ Available online, accessed 07/12/2012, www.preservationist-books.com.

for their former party, those coming from the Swedish Resistance Movement were often ejected because they did not appear fully committed to the National Socialist cause. Reflecting the twin ideological purges that produced the party, the National Democrats filled an ideological space in between the rigidly race-centered Swedish Resistance Movement, and the cultural nationalist Sweden Democrats. They would affirm a belief that the Swedish people was an ethnic community. But the party formally rejected supremacy and Social Darwinism. Instead, they sought to base their ideology on McCulloch's writings and his calls for the preservation of racial difference throughout the globe (personal communication, Vávra Suk, March 24, 2012).

Omar Filmersson—of Föreningen för Folkens Framtid—and former Sweden Democrat Vávra Suk wrote the National Democrats' party program. Though it never mentions him by name, the program holds closely to McCulloch's ideas and rhetoric (Fleischer 2003:20-21). The same holds true for early writings in the party's newspaper, *Nationell Idag*, founded 2002. In the first issue of the paper, National Democrats co-founder Tor Paulsson made his case for the party's ideological stance:

You don't save the panda bear because it is better than other animals. You save a species because it is a part of creation and has a place in the fantastic diversity of life. In the same way, every nationality and ethnic group has a moral right to live, to live freely and to create their own future without the risk of integration with another nationality. A principle of live and let live. (2002, no. 1).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ "Man räddar inte pandan för att den är bättre än andra djur. Man räddar en djurart för att den är en del av skapelsen och har en plats i livets fantastiska mångfald. På samma sätt har varje folk och etnisk grupp en moralisk rätt att leva, och leva fria och skapa sin egen framtid, utan att riskera integrering med andra folk. En princip av att leva och låta leva."

In the next issue, author Fredrik Bergman continued Paulsson's effort of linking the ideology to the cause of diversity, this time juxtaposing the virtuous "multicultural world" with the corrupting "multicultural society:"

[I]t is imperative to have a multicultural world, a world where every nationality has the right to recognize their national identity, and protect themselves against the multicultural society. Culture is above all else something valuable, exciting, and important. But above all else a multicultural world is a guarantee for world peace, as it maintains a high level of communication within the different nationalities. A secure and rich people, in both body and soul, does not pursue war with neighboring countries (2002, no. 2).⁶⁷

McCulloch's thinking is thus prevalent in the National Democrats' writing. However, this influence is almost never explicitly cited. Party ideologue Vávra Suk explains that the absence of direct reference to McCulloch has to do with the latter's choice of language:

McCulloch's terms are hard to translate to Swedish, because the word 'race' has another meaning in Sweden than in the USA. The word 'race' has a little wider meaning in English and there is nothing controversial in the concept. [...] In Sweden, 'race' [...] has a strong strongly negative connotation. It makes you think of skull-measuring and gas chambers. Were you to use that word, you would communicate the exact opposite of what we want – while we talk about all peoples' right to life, the word 'race' makes you think of genocide (electronic message, Vávra Suk, March 24, 2012).⁶⁸

Rather than celebrating McCulloch, or principles like "The Racial Golden Rule," the party uses the McCulloch-inspired heading "Right to Life" in their party program.

⁶⁷ "[Det är] nödvändigt med en mångkulturell värld, en värld där varje folk har rätt att bejaka sin nationella identitet, och försvara sig mot det mångkulturella samhället. Kultur är framförallt någonting värdefullt, spännande och viktigt. Men framför allt är en mångkulturell värld en garant för världsfreden, då den bibehåller en hög kommunikationsnivå inom de olika folken. Ett tryggt och rikt folk, både andligen och kroppsligen, för inget krig med ett grannland."

⁶⁸ "McCullochs termer är svåra att översätta till svenska, då ordet 'ras'/'race' har en annan betydelse i Sverige än i USA. Ordet 'race' har en lite vidare betydelse på engelska och det är inget kontroversiellt i begreppet. [...] I Sverige [har ras] en starkt negativ innebörd, den för tankarna till skallmätning och gaskammare. Skulle man använda det ordet förmedlar man precis den omvända bilden mot vad man vill uppnå - medan vi talar om alla folks rätt till liv så förmedlar ordet 'ras' tankar om folkmord."

Starting in 2006, they also began to use the term ethnopluralism to describe their ideology. But, somewhat in contrast to Suk's statement above, "Right to Life" and ethnopluralism appear to be more than just new names for McCulloch's thinking. The National Democrats are not a white nationalist organization—they are not a party working for the benefit of a politically unified white race. Rather, the party also remains committed to the nation, and with it cultural difference, as a target for political activism. In their first party program, they wrote,

We see the nation as the most basic, large entity through which the individual can feel a true sense of belonging based on shared culture with traditions and basic values, shared language, and shared ancestry. Every people has a right to its own country, independence to govern itself, and freedom to develop according to its own conditions without unwanted intrusion from others.⁶⁹

And when, in 2006, they began to self-apply the label "ethnopluralism," they did so fusing it with the nation-centered rhetoric they had first affirmed:

Within ethnopluralism, it is obvious that every nation has a right to its members' love and care. The nation is like a big family, and cannot function well if those who belong to it do not care about it. That you place much value on your own nation is no more strange than the fact that you like your own family most.⁷⁰

By maintaining a nation-centered approach alongside ethnopluralism, they part company with McCulloch, who emphasizes transnational racial communities.

⁶⁹ "Vi anser nationen vara den grundläggande största enhet med vilken människan kan känna en äkta samhörighet grundad på gemensam kultur med traditioner och grundläggande värderingar, gemensamt språk och gemensam härstamning. Varje folk har rätt till sitt eget land, oberoende att kunna bestämma över sig själv och frihet att utvecklas efter egna förutsättningar utan ovälkommen inblandning från andra." Available online, accessed July 25, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20020609134104/http://www.nationaldemokraterna.se/presentation/principprogram.asp>.

⁷⁰ "I etnopluralismen ingår det självklara att varje nation har rätt till sina medlemmars omsorg och kärlek. Nationen är som en stor familj och kan inte må bra om inte de som tillhör den inte bryr sig om den. Att man sätter stort värde på sin egen nation är inte konstigare än att man gillar sin egen familj mest." Available online, accessed 07/25/2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20060809162147/http://www.nd.se/mal/default.asp>.

McCulloch suggests that such tendencies derive from the contrasting sociopolitical situations in Europe and the United States. He says of the culture-race compound concept of ethnicity:

Obviously, this concept doesn't apply very well in the American context, but in the European context it is very important. The different native populations of Europe have ethnic differences that have little to do with race but much to do with cultural, national and linguistic identity and heritage, to which they are very attached and which are very much worth preserving, i.e., they should be regarded as valuable and important. They are an essential component of the human richness of Europe.

But these differences, such an important part of the human richness of Europe, barely exist in the Euro-American population. So while I support the 'ethnopluralist' preservation of the nationally and culturally distinct, if not always so racially distinct, native populations of Europe, I don't regard its national and cultural component as relevant to the Euro-American situation, where such national and cultural distinctions barely exist.

Within Europe let ethnopluralism reign. Let Sweden be Sweden, Norway be Norway, Scotland be Scotland, England be England, France be France, Germany be Germany, etc. I suppose that is the divine message delivered by Joan of Arc. But in the Euro-American population all these European populations have already been essentially united into one. The racial differences within America were always so great that they made the ethnic differences within the Euro-American population seem unimportant, and that has remained the dominant Euro-American attitude, with race being the only distinction rating any significant attention or concern (electronic message, Richard McCulloch, July 2, 2012).

The National Democrats' inclusion of the nation and national culture separates them, not only from McCulloch, but also from those New Rightist thinkers who see the nation as a modernist entity seldom corresponding to the boundaries of authentic ethnocultural communities.

References to the New Right are rare among the National Democrats. This is likely a reflection of the fact that, the ideological divergences mentioned above notwithstanding, the party borrows the New Rightist term ethnopluralism mainly in

order to present McCulloch's ideas—ideas that, more than those of Eichberg, Krebs, and De Benoist, inform the party's ideology. Other self-identified ethnopluralist groups in Sweden, however, profiled themselves as New Rightists. One example is the short-lived Swedish Heathen Front [Svensk Hednisk Front], which, after linking Alain de Benoist with ethnopluralism—their official ideology—also adopted a New Rightist criticism of Judeo-Christianity. Despite this, the hybrid nation-centered ethnopluralism of the National Democrats predominates in Sweden today. The party's ideology spread when, in 2009, a large faction of its youth organization broke off to form a new group, Nordic Youth [Nordisk Ungdom]. Despite their departure from their former mother party, Nordic Youth retained the National Democrats' ideological positions. And given the fact that the National Democrats appear on the brink of collapse, Nordic Youth is poised to be the leading, officially ethnopluralist organization in the contemporary nationalist scene (see Chapter 3).

Like official ethnopluralism, the identitarian scene in Sweden grew in part from a group of activists surrounding the 1990s white power music magazine *Nordland*. But though identitarian teachings were initially entertained in radical race nationalist skinheadism, they would gradually migrate from these circles, birthing a number of peculiar, ideologically hybrid initiatives along the way. As Mattias Wåg chronicles, writers at *Nordland* were, as early as 1997, envisioning a task for themselves that closely parallels the metapolitical programs of the New Right, as well as the reformist messages of American David Duke. Writers like Peter Andersson voiced their intentions to shape the values of Sweden's youth, such that, thereafter, nationalist political parties could reap electoral benefits (Wåg 2011:101).

Further, instead of cultivating a decadent subculture, *Nordland* writers began advocating the rise of a “new Nordic counterculture” (*Nordland* 12, 1998)⁷¹ that would contest mainstream sensibilities and teachings by forging its own comprehensive infrastructure for knowledge production. The magazine began creating a larger network of media outlets, subsidizing the publications *Framtid* [Future] in Gothenburg, *Gripen* [Touched] in Östergötland, and *Folktribunen* [The People’s Tribune] in Stockholm. The ideological underpinnings of these projects varied. Though *Nordland* itself celebrated contemporary and historic National Socialism, publications like *Framtid* and *Folktribunen* shunned such emphasis, adopting instead a more generic nationalist profile that opposed immigration, interracialism, and Zionism, but that typically lacked references to Hitler and skinheadism.

In 1998, together with the Stockholm group Nationell Ungdom [National Youth], *Folktribunen* founded the Swedish Resistance Movement [Svenska Motståndsrörelsen]. This new organization initially declared itself an extra-parliamentary nationalist group, and it adopted *Folktribunen* as its main news source. And when *Nordland* magazine itself ceased production in 1999—a result in part of Sweden’s tightening regulations on the distribution and performance of white power music—it, including some of its subsidiaries, joined the Swedish Resistance Movement too. With this shift, Peter Melander of *Nordland* and Daniel Friberg of *Framtid* began working for *Folktribunen*. They were joined in this position by a new activist, Lennart Berg.

⁷¹ “nynordisk motkultur.”

The entry of these latter individuals changed the Swedish Resistance Movement and its main news source. Melander, Friberg, and Berg were more polished in their language and presentation of racial politics than were previous writers at *Folktribunen*—even though the magazine had been a subsidiary of *Nordland*—and their entry into the magazine led to a marked refinement of *Folktribunen's* output. In addition, these individuals encouraged activists to eschew the incendiary language of 1980s and 1990s neo-Nazism for a more euphemized discourse, describing opponents as “anti-Swedish [svenskfiendlig]” or “politically correct” while calling themselves “patriots” or “those who think differently [deliktänkande].”

Together, these new editors at *Folktribunen*—Peter Melander, Daniel Friberg, and Lennart Berg—would come to constitute a faction that Mattias Wåg calls “the Nordland group” (2010). The label is somewhat a misnomer given that neither Friberg nor Berg ever worked at *Nordland*, despite Wåg’s claim to the contrary (see *ibid*:106). Nor did these latter two activists ever identify as National Socialists. But they would act as a unit pursuing a reformist agenda, first within the Swedish Resistance Movement, and later in the nationalist scene as a whole.

The new *Folktribunen* editors, with their reformist agenda, eventually came into conflict with the more orthodox National Socialist members of the Swedish Resistance Movement, including its leader Klas Lund. Following Lund’s subsequent expulsion of Daniel Friberg in 2001, Peter Melander and Lennart Berg, as well as Linköping activist Anders Lagerström also left the organization in protest, clearing the way for the Swedish Resistance Movement to radicalize and become what it is

today: the largest, most militant National Socialist organization in Sweden. As the Resistance Movement turned towards neo-Nazim, the excommunicated members—particularly Friberg, Berg, and Lagerström—began embracing the New Right and identitarianism.

In 2001, Lagerström, Friberg, Berg, and Melander founded the Nordic Press [Nordiska Förlaget]. The Nordic Press declared two overriding goals: education and inspiration. Translating and marketing books would fulfill the first goal, while music distribution satisfied the second.⁷² In this sense, the Press' mission appears an extension of Friberg's and Melander's earlier goals—through their magazines *Framtid* and *Nordland* respectively—to use metapolitics to nurture cultural consciousnesses and thereby enable political advance. Their metapolitics was not of the kind that sought to penetrate existing avenues for cultural production. Rather, they aimed to provide nationalist alternatives to such infrastructure. This agenda is more obvious in their literary output than in their music. Their music did not differ dramatically from that released by other nationalist outlets in Sweden. One exception to this, however, is the three-CD, singer songwriter project *Svensk Ungdom*. Daniel Friberg's agency Alternative Media initiated the project to add variety and a softer, more refined contribution to nationalist music. The project passed from Alternative Media and to the Nordic Press. The second release in the series, "Frihetssånger [Freedom Songs]" remains one of the most popular nationalist albums in the contemporary scene.

⁷² Available online, accessed July 10, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20040810070901/http://www.nordiskaforlaget.se/info/>

Their literature offerings, in contrast, seem obviously geared towards replacing non-nationalist avenues of learning. We can see this in the category headings for their book selection—“Immigration Policy and Social Debate,” “Marxism, Feminism, Zionism,” “Modern History,” “Race and Ethnicity,” “Fiction,” “Western Philosophy and Ideology,” and “Older History and Mythology.”⁷³ These headings convey an ambition to establish a new, dynamic intellectual literature for the scene, a theoretical base that would allow activists to counter the paradigms reigning in mainstream academia. The Nordic Press would further this agenda in 2004 through the establishment of a lecture series (Wåg 2011:108).

Former *Folktribunen* writer Lennart Berg, together with Daniel Friberg, likewise founded the organization Swedish Media [Svensk Media] in 2003, and began producing an ethnonationalist newspaper in tabloid format. This newspaper was called *Folkets Nyheter* [The People’s News]. Because of its condensed size and combination of wide news reporting and opinion pieces, *Folkets Nyheter* was a novelty in the nationalist scene, comparable at the time only to the National Democrats’ newspaper *Nationell Idag*. Like the literature initiative at the Nordic Press, *Folkets Nyheter* aimed to replace mainstream sources of knowledge production. In their promotional statement they write,

By subscribing to *Folkets Nyheter*, you will, if you like, no longer need to read the established papers, no longer need to support them financially, no longer need to read between the lines to keep yourself updated as to what is happening around the world.⁷⁴

⁷³ “Invandringspolitik och samhällsdebatt,” “Marxism, feminism, sionism,” “Modern historia,” “Ras och etnicitet,” “Skönlitteratur,” “Västerländsk filosofi och ideology,” “Äldre historia och mytologi.” (ibid).

⁷⁴ “Genom att prenumerera på *Folkets Nyheter* kommer Du, om Du vill, att slippa att läsa de etablerade tidningarna, att slippa att stötta dem ekonomiskt, att slippa att läsa mellan raderna bara

In 2004, the Nordic Press acquired *Folkets Nyheter*, and together with their recently founded magazine *Nordisk Frihet* [Nordic Freedom], they started a new organization dedicated to a more comprehensive campaign of metapolitics: The Nordic League [Nordiska Förbundet]. The League presented its reading of contemporary society, the nationalist cause, and its objectives in the following statement on their website:

[T]oday it is doubtful to say that we Swedes have control over the development in what was one time our own society. And it does not look like it will be getting better in the future: We are approaching, briskly, the day when we are a minority in our own country and have definitely lost the possibility to reverse this development through pure parliamentary means.

It is fairly irrational to plan for a nationalist majority, or even advantage in the nearest parliamentary elections. And for every election that goes, the ethnically Swedish voting block shrinks. [...] For every election that passes, we approach the day when the demographic clock tolls and it is actually impossible for us to vote ourselves into power.

It is even more irrational to plan for a successful armed revolution or coup in the foreseeable future. No efforts in that direction have led anywhere. They have not done anything to improve our prospects for a real solution. Physical struggle that looks beyond the occasionally tangible fight over streets and town squares leads time and time again to an impasse.

Both the parliamentarian fight and the physical struggle must be seen as smaller parts or complements to a much broader ethnic and political pursuit.

Therefore, we need a wider-ranging, and more long-term approach, a long-term Nordic survival strategy. We need a strategy that moves forward and reinforces our positions in many different areas, that deals constructively with the here and now, but that, at the same time, has its sights on the horizon – that has its sight secured on our own Nordic, healthy, and viable society. [...] And the first and vital step in every survival strategy is education

för att Du vill hålla Dig uppdaterad med vad som händer i världen.” Available online, accessed July 11, 2012, http://sv.metapedia.org/wiki/Folkets_Nyheter

(folkbildning), to grow and spread knowledge, to grow and spread inspiration.⁷⁵

With their rejection of parliamentary politics and violent revolution, the Nordic League affirmed and called for an expansion of the methodology advanced by its component organizations. Here, they envision a strategy that carries and strengthens their cause in “many different areas”—i.e. multiple arenas of social behavior and communication. The goal is not just to improve life in the present, but also to inspire and establish an intellectual foundation capable of political mobilization.

Along with a renewed call for metapolitics, the content of the Nordic League’s initiatives began showing signs of shifting to a new source of ideological inspiration. Early on, the literature distributed by the Nordic Press and *Folkets Nyheter*, though rejecting incendiary hate rhetoric, still held to standard 1990s nationalist tendencies. Writings by historical National Socialists like Adolf Hitler were generally

⁷⁵ “Det är redan idag tveksamt att påstå att vi svenskar har kontroll över utvecklingen i vad som en gång var vårt eget samhälle. Och det ser inte ut att bli bättre i framtiden: Vi närmar oss med raska kliv den dagen då vi är en minoritet i vårt eget land och definitivt har förlorat möjligheten att vända utvecklingen med rent parlamentariska medel. Det ter sig tämligen verklighetsfrämmande att tänka sig en nationalistisk, parlamentarisk majoritet, eller ens dominans, inom de närmast kommande valen. [...] För varje val som passerar närmar vi oss den dag då den demografiska klockan klämtar och det är till och med teoretiskt omöjligt för oss att rösta oss till makten. Ännu mer verklighetsfrämmande ter sig tanken om en framgångsrik väpnad revolution eller statskupp inom överskådlig framtid. Inga ansträngningar i den riktningen har än så länge lett någonstans. De har inte gjort någonting för att förbättra våra möjligheter till en verklig förändring. Fysisk kamp som siktar bortom den ibland handgripliga striden om gator och torg leder gång på gång in i en återvändsgränd. Såväl den parlamentariska striden som den fysiska kampen måste betraktas som mindre delar av eller komplement till en betydligt bredare etnisk och politisk strävan. Därför behöver vi en vidsträcktare och mer långsiktig ansats, *en långsiktig nordisk överlevnadsstrategi*. Vi behöver en strategi som arbetar sig framåt och stärker våra positioner inom många olika områden, som handlar konstruktivt här och nu, men som samtidigt har blicken fäst mot horisonten – som har blicken fäst mot visionen om ett eget nordiskt, friskt och livskraftigt samhälle. [...] Och det första och nödvändiga steget för varje överlevnadsstrategi heter folkbildning, att odla och sprida kunskap, att odla och sprida inspiration.” Available online, accessed July 12, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20050204000700/http://nordiskaforbundet.se/forbundet.asp>

absent from these outlets, but criticism of Jews remained central in their publications and articles. The Press, for example, published translations of American books like David Duke's *Jewish Supremacism* and Kevin MacDonald's *The Culture of Critique*, and they sold a translation of Norman Finkelstein's *The Holocaust Industry*. This aggressive posture towards Jews suggested a phantom National Socialist ideological orientation, or otherwise non-descript white nationalism without any clearly differentiated, named theoretical context.

But the seeds of a shift were in one sense present from the Nordic Press' founding. The first books published by the Press were those by Richard McCulloch, including a Swedish translation of *The Racial Compact*; literature, in other words, that did not focus on the evils of other peoples, but on the universal right to difference. In a development somewhat paralleling that taken by the National Democrats, the Nordic League would eventually orient themselves along the lines of McCulloch's ideas, but assimilate those ideas into a named ideological school, the New Right. In contrast with the National Democrats, the Nordic League embraced, not ethnopluralism, but identitarianism, and with it, New Rightist analyses of contemporary society.

The Nordic League's adoption of identitarianism began to solidify when it established the blog portal Motpol.nu (motpol = "polar opposite") in July, 2006. Motpol.nu debuted as a politically unaffiliated blog portal, save purportedly shared "foundational values based on the defense of Nordic culture and tradition" (*Folkets Nyheter*, November 7, 2006),⁷⁶ and it maintains this declaration to the present.

⁷⁶ "värdegrund baserad på värnandet om nordisk kultur och tradition."

However, its most influential profiles—first the prolific and highly respected blogger “Oskorei,” and later blogger “Solguru”—eventually presented themselves as identitarian. Further, starting in 2008, the blog portal began sponsoring the seminar series Identitarian Ideas [Identitär Idé], which is today the only major annual identitarian gathering in Scandinavia. Likely for these reasons, insiders today tend to speak about Motpol.nu as an identitarian organization despite the fact that the portal has made no such declaration.

It is worth noting that, contrary to Wåg’s claim (2011:111), the debut of Motpol.nu was not the first time the League had spread the New Right’s ideas. In addition to a steady emphasis on metapolitics, thinkers affiliated with the League had been presenting New Rightist historical accounts prior to the blog portal’s construction. For example, Norwegian Tord Morsund in *Nordisk Frihet*, writes of the then current woes facing Europe and Scandinavia,

It is a process that goes further back than just a few decades, actually all the way back to the introduction of Christendom, whereupon ancestor worship, nature religions, and polytheism—which were in harmony with nature religions and ethnic characteristics—were replaced by a Semitic, universalist, global, and nature-hostile religion, which in its foundational thinking in the New Testament saw all people as identical. Throughout all of Europe, people therefore became more and more estranged from their forefathers’ original culture, and the same took place in the North (no. 4 2005/2006).⁷⁷

Morsund’s article thus channels a standard New Rightist history of Europe, where Christianity lies at the root of contemporary regimes of equality.

⁷⁷ “Detta är en process som går längre tillbaka än bara ett tiotal år, faktiskt ända tillbaka till införandet av kristendomen, varvid förfäderskult, naturreligion och polyteism som var i samklang med naturreligioner och etniska särdrag ersattes av en semitisk, universalistisk, global och naturfientlig religion, som i sin nytestamentliga grundtanke såg alla folk som lika. Över hela Europa blev därför människor mer och mer främmande för sina förfäders ursprungliga kultur, och detsamma skedde i Norden.”

Though its subsidiaries like Motpol.nu, *Folkets Nyheter*, and *Nordisk Frihet* remained ideologically unaffiliated, the Nordic League eventually declared itself identitarian. On August 30, 2008, the League published the booklet *Identitet & Metapolitik (Identity and Metapolitics)* that contained its “identitarian manifesto.” The understanding of identitarianism voiced in the 2008 publication closely follows, but does not fully replicate the thinking of Guillaume Faye. In their manifesto, the Nordic League defines identity as something determined by the following three factors:

Ethnicity – [...] the biological and social inheritance that [individuals] share with others in the identitarian society.

Culture – [...] a result of all of our forefathers’ creative energies, spiritual searching, and will to live as individuals and as a community. Culture develops in parallel with the tribe’s ability to respond to current and future challenges in dialogue with those [challenges] from the past, without losing its traditional foundation.

Geography and Nature – [...] the geographic surroundings and nature that [the person, the culture, and the identity] have settled for multiple generations. It is in the interplay with that nature that the identity gets its unique and local characteristic that separates it from other identities. Geography also includes the territory that the identitarian society inhabits and that it has a will to defend with its life for the survival of the community.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ “Etnicitet – [...] det biologiska och sociala arv som den gemensamt delar med andra inom det identitära samhället. Kultur – [...] resultatet av alla våra förfäders gemensamma skaparkraft, andliga sökanden och livsvilja som individer och som folkgemenskap. Kulturen utvecklas parallellt med folkstammens förmåga att svara på samtida och framtida utmaningar i dialog med det förgångna, utan att förlora sitt traditionella fundament. Geografi och natur – [...] den geografiska omgivning och natur som [Människan, kulturen och identiteten] har bosatt över flera generationer. Det är i samspelet med denna natur som identiteten får sin unika och lokala prägel som skiljer den från andra identiteter. Geografi omfattar också det territorium som det identitära samhället bebor och som det har viljan att försvara med sina liv för gemenskapens överlevnad.” Available online, accessed July 13, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20081222150832/http://www.nordiskaforbundet.se/artikel.asp?aID=110>.

With this definition in hand, the authors aim to regain a pre-modern social form where

the foundational identity [was] a given due to our position and function in society, the family, and our heritage, as well as the religion and culture we belonged to and practiced. Identity was, for most in the North, organically linked to what we were born into, and was for the most part unchanged during our lifetimes. [...] We never questioned our being or existence, but instead saw ourselves as a part of a greater whole, built of parts from what is local and personal like family, home region, and local tradition, to what is larger like the fatherland, European cultural tradition, tribe, king, and aristocracy, God or Gods.⁷⁹

This social form, with its ability to furnish unambiguous identities, has been replaced by a late-modern form in which

identity is instead something transient. Something that is dependent on time and place and is defined through political and ideological decisions, a global capitalist market, migration of masses of people and shifting subjective values. Identity has, in today's society, become something we choose according to fancy and taste based on current trends.⁸⁰

According to this manifesto, the threats facing identity are not inherently ethnic, racial, or cultural. These threats are, in the first instance, abstract, disembodied forces like “modernity” and economic models such as capitalism. Race and ethnicity are indispensable facets of identity, but they share equal space with “culture” and “geography and nature.” These Swedish activists, in step with identitarians throughout Europe, and in contrast with latter-day ethnopluralists,

⁷⁹ ”den grundläggande identiteten [var] given av vår position och funktion i samhället, familjen och vårt arv samt den religion och kultur vi tillhörde och utövade. Identiteten var för de flesta i Norden organiskt knuten till det vi föddes in i, och förblev i stort sett oförändrad under vår livstid. [...] Vi ifrågasatte inte vår varelse eller existens, utan såg oss själva som en del av en större helhet, uppbyggd av delar från det lokala och personliga som familj, hemort och lokala traditioner, till det större som fosterland, europeisk kulturtradition, folkstam, kung och aristokrati, Gud eller Gudar.” Ibid.

⁸⁰ ”identiteten är däremot någonting flyktigt. Någonting som är beroende av tid och rum och definieras utifrån politiska och ideologiska beslut, en global kapitalistisk marknad, migration av människomassor och skiftande subjektiva värderingar. Identiteten har i dagens samhälle blivit något vi väljer efter tycke och smak och baserat på aktuella trender.” Ibid

thus retain the basic historiography and account of the human condition advanced by the New Right. Further, they embrace leading identitarian thinker Guillaume Faye's attitudes toward tradition and the past. This is apparent when they describe culture as something that "develops in parallel with the tribe's ability to respond to current and future challenges in dialogue with those [challenges] from the past, without losing its traditional foundation." This vision for a culture that can shift to the needs of the present while maintaining what is essential from previous epochs derives from Faye's concept of archeofuturism—a concept the manifesto adopts explicitly at its conclusion. But in a divergence from Faye, this document makes no statement of European superiority. Rather, most of its language addresses the topic of identity in universal terms. This hesitation to espouse Eurocentrism may speak to the early influence of McCulloch's writings in the Nordic Press, or the rise of ethnopluralism elsewhere in the nationalist scene.

The Nordic League continued to expand, following the metapolitical program it and its subsidiaries had outlined. The League would initiate two large online projects that, together with Motpol.nu, would outlive the Nordic Press, *Folkets Nyheter*, *Nordisk Frihet*, and the League itself. The first of these projects was the Wikipedia-styled online encyclopedia Metapedia.org, which officially opened on October 24, 2006. Like Wikipedia.org, Metapedia.org contains articles—occasionally grouped into larger series or portals—written by volunteer editors. In an interview in *Folkets Nyheter*, the project's founder, Daniel Friberg (under the pseudonym "Martin Brandt"), described the motivation behind the project:

I and a few friends were discussing how important it is for the nationalist culture struggle that we present our own interpretations of concepts,

phenomena, and historic events for a broader public. It is especially important these days, since many concepts are distorted and have lost their original meaning, which you can see as an outcome of our political opponents' successful culture struggle [...] Just look at how the Frankfurt School and their ideological heirs have succeeded in declaring as sick and stigmatizing what previously were completely natural values by introducing concepts like [...] 'xenophobia,' 'homophobia,' and so on (2006, no. 10).⁸¹

Metapedia.org was thus conceived based on a New Rightist/Gramscian reading of political history and program for change. The site would aim to defend and revive attitudes and interpretations disallowed in public discourse. As such, the goal of the online encyclopedia would not be to make its own rendition of every article on Wikipedia, but rather to focus only on those topics deemed crucial in shaping discussion of key nationalist concerns (ibid). The site includes articles on topics ranging from nationalist organizations, music groups, and personalities, to multiculturalism, immigration policy, Islam, and World War II.

⁸¹ "Jag och ett par kamrater diskuterade hur viktigt det är för den nationella kulturkampen att kunna presentera våra egna tolkningar av begrepp, företeelser och historiska skeenden för en bredare allmänhet. I synnerhet är det viktigt i dessa tider, då många begrepp förvrängts och förlorat sin ursprungliga mening, vilket man kan se som en följd av våra politiska motståndares framgångsrika kulturkamp [...] Se bara hur Frankfurtskolan och deras ideologiska arvtagare lyckats sjukdomsförklara och stigmatisera tidigare fullt naturliga värderingar genom att lansera begrepp som [...] 'främlingsfientlighet', 'homofobi' och så vidare."



Example 1. Article, “The Holocaust™” on English-language Metapedia.org web site. The trademark symbol is intended to draw attention to the ways Jews allegedly use the Holocaust for financial and political gain. Available online, accessed July 15, 2012, http://en.metapedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust%E2%84%A2.

Metapedia.org quickly spread throughout Europe and North America, acquiring pages in English, German, Spanish, French, Romanian, Estonian, Croatian, Slovenian, Greek, Czech, Portuguese, Norwegian, Danish, and Dutch. Adam Klein calls the site “white nationalist” or “white power” (2010:93, 147). But such overriding classifications fail to register the rhetorical strategies and ideological positions that vary from article to article, and especially between languages. For example, the English and Hungarian versions of Metapedia.org are far more open in their criticism of Jews than the Swedish version. The English page even features a small star-of-David icon next to the name of every Jewish individual, which in turn links to a page on Judaism.

Shortly following the debut of Motpol.nu and Metapedia.org, the Nordic League founded an online community page called Nordisk.nu (= Nordic), which markets itself as a “portal for Nordic identity, culture, and tradition.” The page was

opened on April 18, 2007, and its aim was to provide a nationalist alternative to social networking sites. Participants on the site create user accounts, selecting a screen name and filling out a profile. They can then make their own webpage and blog, view access-restricted material like photo and graphics galleries and online games, and participate in discussion threads. Threads are not all devoted to politics and activism; some deal with helping other users with their homework, sharing home and garden maintenance tips, and discussing cars. A thread titled “Birka” (after the ancient Viking-era trade post outside of present day Stockholm) functions as a sort of Ebay.com—an arena for users to buy, sell, and trade goods. Given these features, the site seems aimed at isolating users from non-nationalist online communities. But the most popular discussion threads focus on politics, the mainstream media, and music. Nordisk.nu even includes a streaming MP3 radio player, offering songs in the following genres: Neo-folk, electronica, metal, folk music, classical music, smooth favorites, rock, hip hop, Viking rock, and resistance rock. Most, but not all of the music is produced by nationalists and nationalist record labels.

As Motpol.nu, Metapedia.org, and Nordisk.nu grew, the Nordic League’s other projects began to collapse. The magazine *Nordisk Frihet* ceased production in 2007, as did the tabloid *Folkets Nyheter* a year later. The League’s annual festival, Nordiska Festivalen (Nordic Festival), was also held for the last time in 2008, allegedly with an audience of only 150 (Wåg 2011:124). And finally, in 2010, both the Nordic Press and the Nordic League itself ended their operations, leaving their surviving initiatives to carry on independently. The Press’ mission seems to have been

partially replaced by the online retailer and publisher Arktos.com, which debuted in 2010—the same year the Nordic League collapsed. This outfit has taken an even harder turn towards the New Right and identitarianism, naming itself an “anti-modernist” organization, and publishing translations of major New Rightist thinkers throughout North America and Eurasia. Though its productions are based in Great Britain, and though individuals from throughout Europe compose its editorial board, Daniel Friberg—former member of the *Folktribunen* editorial board, co-founder of the Nordic League, and founder of Nordisk.nu, Motpol.nu, and Metapedia.org—is also CEO at Arktos.com (Personal communication, Daniel Friberg, August 4, 2012).

One factor distinguishes those Nordic League initiatives that succeeded from those that failed: Motpol.nu, Metapedia.org, and Nordisk.nu are all exclusively online, digital projects, whereas the League’s other initiatives depended at least partially on mail orders or congregating in the non-virtual world. In this sense, the failure of roughly half of the Nordic League’s projects can be traced to the broader, international trend among nationalists to move their activities online (Eatwell 1996; Schafer 2002; Copsey 2003; Deland, Hertzberg, and Hvitfeldt 2010). In step with these trends, the Nordic League’s online initiatives have not only survived; they are flourishing. Motpol.nu is frequently named as a source of inspiration and motivation in my interviews with activists from throughout the radical nationalist scene. Metapedia.org’s various language sites throughout the world continue to grow. As of July 15, 2012, the four largest languages are Hungarian (131,433 articles), German

(32,911 articles), English (16,609 articles), and Swedish (9,215 articles).⁸² And Nordisk.nu claims that, as of January 22, 2011, they had reached 20,000 registered users.⁸³ As such, the site has been and remains the premier online venue for nationalists to interact, publicize events, and exchange ideas.⁸⁴

The Question of Unification

The lines differentiating the various ideological fields in the nationalist scene seem apparent and uncomplicated. By framing identity as the target of protective activism, the Nordic League's identitarianism appears to replicate the conceptual framework prevailing among other nationalist organizations and schools of thought. It appears that "identity" is to identitarians as "the white race" is to National Socialists or white nationalists, as "ethnicity" is to ethnopluralists, and as "culture" is to cultural nationalists. All of these schools treat one aspect of the national people as essential and threatened. Some promotional material, for example, reinforces the notion that identitarians simply exchange the concept of "identity" for "race." Such can be seen when comparing web banners for the Nordic League's Nordisk.nu and the American white nationalist organization Stormfront.org, each shown in Example 2.

⁸² Available online, accessed July 15, 2012, <http://www.metapedia.org>.

⁸³ Available online, accessed July 15, 2012, <http://sv.metapedia.org/wiki/Nordisk.nu>

⁸⁴ Note that many nationalists also communicate through the extensive non-nationalist discussion forum, flashback.org.



Example 2. English-language advertisements for the American white nationalist online forum Stormfront.org (left) and the Nordic League's online form, Nordisk.nu (right). Available online, accessed July 13, 2012, <http://sv.metapedia.org/wiki/Nordisk.nu>, and www.stromfront.org

The four broad ideological fields in the nationalist scene—National Socialists, ethnopluralists, identitarians, and cultural nationalists—also seem to have adopted clearly defined positions toward each other. National Socialists criticize ethnopluralists' and, secondarily, identitarians' relativizing of the white/Aryan race, for making that race only one among many that needs respect and protection. Such organizations may also condemn identitarians for using the methodology of political and racial opponents, like Antonio Gramsci or the Frankfurt School, and for exhibiting an intellectualist remove from parliamentary or street activism. Ethnopluralists, in turn, reject Nazism for seeking to impose a hierarchy among ethnic groups, for disregarding all groups' equal right to life and difference. While voicing this latter charge, identitarians—following the New Right—also condemn National Socialism as a modernist construct, an imperial force seeking to impose a single social form on all the world's peoples. Identitarians also tend to criticize ethnopluralists on account of the latter's openness to the nation-state. Cultural

nationalists reject all of the above categories, since they supposedly rest on the proposition that the national people is defined (at least in part) by inherited biological traits. Cultural nationalists may additionally attack Nazism for being an anti-nationalist ideology, an ideology founded on one nation's supposed license to envelop others.

However, many of the above distinctions—both the appearance of a single conceptual framework throughout the nationalist scene, and the formulaic oppositions between the various factions—shatter upon closer inspection. Throughout the past decade, alliances between these factions have emerged, shifted, evaporated, and reemerged without any apparent logic or direction. Groups have in some cases adopted operational models so different that they no longer seem to be in dialogue with each other. At the same time, expressive forms and discourses originating in one wing of the scene have spread to nearly all others. Today, as the nationalist scene appears more fractured and polarized than ever, virtually all of its actors are unified in their adoption of rhetoric and ideas from the New Nationalism. Indeed, attendees at the seminar *Identitarian Ideas* in Stockholm on July 28, 2012 included high profile activists linked with the National Democrats, the Swedish Defense League, the Party of the Swedes, former members of the Swedish Resistance Movement, Nordic Youth, as well as active and recently expelled Sweden Democrats—in other words, individuals linked to nearly every major organization in the nationalist scene.

Historically, individuals' reasons for belonging to one camp may have little to do with political philosophy. For example, leading Motpol.nu blogger Oskorei, in his

famous July 29, 2007 posting “Därför Identitär (Therefore Identitarian),” describes his own embrace of identitarianism as dealing with semantics as much as ideology. He praises identitarianism for its embrace of local and pan-national identities, its measured interest in race, and its confounding of the right-left dichotomy. He also perceives the label “identitarian” as an alternative to “nationalist” [nationell], the latter of which, he claims, remains tied to National Socialism in Sweden’s public consciousness. Oskorei’s aversion to Nazism, however, is not entirely ideological. He explains:

a radical, mass movement is experienced as radically new only *once*. This means that movements that called themselves communist or National Socialist once succeeded in calling themselves new, but they will have significant trouble doing that a second time. That does not necessarily mean that their ideas *are* not new and radical, but it does not matter what you are when you cling to an image that in the multitude’s eyes *appears* like something [they] already know everything about. It is perhaps doubtful that the term identitarian could be that radically new, but use of concepts and terms that average people do not assume to already know everything about still means that they read what you have to say with more open eyes (emphasis in original).⁸⁵

Oskorei thus embraced identitarianism in part to escape the inherited connotations plaguing any voice indentifying as a nationalist (and thereby National Socialist).

Given that association with one camp or the other could hinge on terminological distinctions, and given that contemporary identitarian and National Socialist organizations both derive, to varying degrees, from the music magazine

⁸⁵ “en radikal massrörelse bara *en* gång historiskt upplevs som något radikalt nytt. Detta innebär att rörelser som kallade sig kommunistiska eller nationalsocialistiska en gång lyckades framställa sig som något nytt, men andra gången har [de] betydligt svårare att göra detta. Detta innebär inte nödvändigtvis att deras idéer inte *är* radikala och nya, men det kvittar vad man är om man envisas med en framtoning som i massans ögon *upplevs* vara något som man redan vet allt om. Att begreppet identitär skulle kunna vara detta radikalt nya är kanske tveksamt, men användandet av begrepp och termer som inte människor i gemen redan tror sig veta allt om innebär i varje fall att de läser det man har att säga med lite öppnare ögon.”

Nordland, contact, and occasionally cooperation between these sectors has at times prevailed. For example, the Nordic League joined both National Socialist Front and the Swedish Resistance Movement for the annual People's March [Folkets Marsch] in Stockholm, and participated less formally—often through its subsidiaries—in other events like the Salem March.

Despite such cooperation, the relationship between these organizations has also exhibited tension and conflict. Initially, this conflict was interpersonal, and resulted in, among other things, violent confrontations between members of the Swedish Resistance Movement and the Nordic League. Such conflicts eventually led to a total breakdown of cooperation between organizations in 2008. That year, National Socialist Front withdrew from the Nordic League's annual Nordic Festival, and the League declined to participate in the People's March; neither event has been held since.

When interpersonal fighting ended formal cooperation between organizations, National Socialist voices began expanding their criticism of identitarian ideology and activism. Such criticism emerged despite the fact that, prior to the intensifying of conflict between leaders, these actors tended to regard identitarians as suitable collaborators, and it was only after interpersonal problems worsened that the differences in strategy and ideology between National Socialists and identitarians were deemed irreconcilable. In a fiery speech at the People's March on June 6, 2008—the same year that the Nordic League had declined to participate—Swedish Resistance Movement member Magnus Söderman attacked

identitarians on the grounds that their strategies and ideologies were fundamentally at odds with those of other nationalists:

People have said that the national movement is divided. But I can promise you, and I actually know what I'm talking about...the national movement is not divided. Because today, we stand here, we who call ourselves National Socialists, and we who call ourselves nationalists. We are the national movement, and we celebrate our nation, our people, our flag – there is no division. However, however, there is a split between us in the national movement, and those who, through different methods like black propaganda, jumbling terminology, ideologies hostile to our people, tried for their own aims to lead good nationalists astray. But these people are not, nor have they ever been, nationalists. Put clearly comrades, people who call themselves national anarchists, the New Right, nihilists, left-wing nationalists, or the collective term for this nonsense, identitarians – they are not nationalists, and they are not a part of the national movement (applause). And their ideologies, to the extent that they have them clearly defined, are nothing but the path of least resistance, an attempt to fit themselves to the reigning world order, to make the struggle populist. They turn to local patriotism, as if having over one million foreigners inside of Sweden isn't the biggest problem, as if having an encompassing Swedish identity wasn't essential. It is the same approach among them that you find among the traitors in the Sweden Democrats – accommodation in order to win the enemy's approval.⁸⁶

Söderman continues with a more direct attack on leaders of Nordisk.nu,

How have they planned to save Sweden? By sitting in [online] forums, coming up with new ideologies, or through the implementation of a, and listen carefully now, 'national-anarchist-traditionalist-catholic-rightist-nihilism?' Please! [...] The Swedish Resistance Movement warned you about

⁸⁶ Man har talat om att den nationella rörelsen skulle vara splittrad. Men det kan jag lova er, och jag vet faktiskt vad jag talar om [...] - den nationella rörelsen är inte splittrad. För idag står vi här, både vi som kallar oss nationalsocialister, och vi som kallar oss nationalist. Vi är den nationella rörelsen, och vi firar vår nation, vårt folk, vår flagga - det finns ingen splittring. Däremot finns det en avgrund mellan oss inom den nationella rörelsen och de som genom olika metoder som svart propaganda, begreppsförvirring, folkfientliga ideologier försökte att vilseleda goda nationalist för sina egna syften. Men dessa vare sig är, eller någonsin har varit nationella. I klartext kamrater, folk som kallar sig nationalanarkister, den Nya Högern, nihilister, vänster nationella, eller vilket samlingsnamn på detta trams är, identitära, de är inte nationella och de är inte en del i den nationella rörelsen (applause). Och deras ideologier, i den mån de har någon sådan klarlagd, är bara den minsta motståndets väg, ett försök att anpassa sig till den rådande världsordningen, och att göra kampen till något populistiskt. Man ägnar sig åt lokalpatriotism som om över en miljon främlingar i Sverige inte skulle vara det främsta problemet, som att inte en övergripande svensk identitet är den grundläggande. Det är samma anda hos dem som hos förrädare i sverigedemokraterna, anpassning för att bli godkänd av fienden.

these forces, and unfortunately we have seen how a little, little fragment of the national movement worked, not to advance the national struggle, but instead for the sake of their own secret agenda. They use the same tactics that the Bonnier family used to dominate Sweden's media⁸⁷, and that's not so strange since they admire their strategies. But it's ok, it doesn't matter. They've exposed themselves. And I can, here, in front of you, once again declare that there is no division in the national movement. However, as I said, a little clique of intellectuals has emerged, and they've gone off the tracks completely. But we, dear comrades, we can handle them. Because if the system, with all its economic resources, hasn't destroyed the national movement thus far, then these identitarians won't be able to do it either.⁸⁸

Söderman was attacking a wing of the scene that was growing increasingly hostile to National Socialism in its rhetoric. By 2008, identitarians, somewhat in parallel with the Sweden Democrats, were increasingly intent on distinguishing themselves based on their alleged distance from neo-Nazi activists. These groups assailed both the ideas and the lifestyles of National Socialist activists in Sweden. Motpol.nu blogger Solguru has been one of the identitarian voices most forward in contrasting his ideal political engagement with the supposed delinquency of neo-Nazis. In the song "Hip Hop is Shit (Hip hop är skröp)," rapper Zyklon Boom—most likely Solguru (see Chapter 3)—says,

Now someone is calling me a rough old Nazi.
Yeah – that could be the case, were I a biologicist,

⁸⁷ The Bonniers are a large Jewish family that have lived in Sweden and worked in publishing since the early 1800s. Today the family owns various large publishing companies, as well as multiple major newspapers in Sweden.

⁸⁸ Hur hade de tänkt att befria Sverige? Genom att sitta på forum, hitta på nya ideologier, skriva bloggar, eller genom införandet av en, och lyssna noga nu, 'national-anarkistisk-traditionalistisk-katolsk-högernihilism?' Snälla nån! [...] Svenska Motståndsrörelsen har varnat för dessa krafter, och tyvärr har vi sett hur ett litet fragment av den nationella rörelsen har arbetat, inte för att avancera den nationella kampen, utan för sin egna dolda agendas skull. Man använder samma taktik som familjen Bonnier gjorde för att kunna dominera i Sveriges medialiv, och det är inte så konstigt eftersom man uppenbarligen sett upp till deras strategier. Men det är bra, det gör ingenting. De har avslöjat sig. Och jag kan här inför er konstatera återigen att det inte finns någon splittring inom den nationella rörelsen. Däremot, som sagt, har det uppstått en liten klick av intellektuella, som spårat ur totalt. Men dem, kamrater, dem kan vi hantera. För om inte systemet med alla sina ekonomiska resuser, hittills lyckats fördärva nationalismen, så kommer inte dessa indentitära att klara av det heller.

an atheist, an amphetaminist, and a race materialist,
and liked to hang with people who fight like nuts,
and listened to shitty punk, and read like a half a book..⁸⁹

Solguru sees himself, and, presumably, others in the identitarian field, as exhibiting qualities opposite to those he attributes to neo-Nazis. Identitarians are well read, upstanding, and more nuanced in their understanding of racial politics than National Socialists. Further, these qualities make identitarians more formidable in the outside political sphere. In his blog posting “0% Hate” from 2008, Sologuru writes of mainstream liberals and Leftists, “[T]hey do not want to see an authentic, traditional Right, that can argue without losing its cool. They want to see a stupid, brutal, bellowing, imbecile Right – a Right they can hate. We will not give that to them.”⁹⁰

As formal cooperation, contact, and respect between National Socialists, identitarians, as well as cultural nationalists deteriorated, various intellectual and expressive trends nonetheless continued to flow throughout the wider scene. Such exchange of ideas and culture is not always indicative of underlying, shared beliefs. For as intellectual and expressive products spread from one sector to another, they often clash with official ideological declarations throughout the process.

Disseminating thoughts and words

The core ideological framework of the New Right, ethnopluralism and identitarianism, has spread and been translated to ideological schools throughout

⁸⁹ Så nu kommer någon och kallar mig för en gammal grov nazist. Tja, så skulle det kunna vara om jag vore biologist, ateist, amfetaminist, och rasmaterialist, och gillade att hänga med folk som slåss som tok, och lyssnat på skruttpunk, och läst typ en halv bok.

⁹⁰ “[D]e vill inte se en autentisk, traditionalistisk höger, som kan argumentera utan att hetsa upp sig. De vill se en dum, brutal, gapig och imbecill höger – en höger de kan hata. Det ska vi inte ge dem.” Available online, accessed July 30, 2012, <http://solguru.motpol.nu/?p=72>.

the nationalist scene. Diversity rhetoric had penetrated the Sweden Democrats official communications during the Jansson administration in the late 1990s. There, however, the emphasis was not on the maintenance of ethnic, but rather cultural diversity. Leading Sweden Democrats began claiming then, as they do today, that preserving cultural integrity domestically ensures that diversity will continue to exist in the global sphere. This reasoning first emerged in the Sweden Democrats' party program in May 4, 2003, where the program's authors wrote,

Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. The separate cultures are humankind's collective heritage and should be recognized and protected for the good of all.⁹¹

Today, cultural spokesperson Chang Frick is the Sweden Democrat who uses this argumentation most frequently. As he put it during one of our interviews,

Sweden has to be Swedish if we are going to contribute anything to global diversity. Think, if you want to learn about the pyramids and that stuff, then you should go to Egypt, not Greenland. It's different if we are talking about snowball fights (Interview, Chang Frick, January 22, 2012).⁹²

Aside from their use of diversity rhetoric—which may or may not ultimately derive from French or American ethnonationalists—various Sweden Democrats also read and occasionally endorse New Rightist histories. Party ideologue Mattias Karlsson, for example, follows postings on Motpol.nu. He was initially enthusiastic about identitarianism, and slogans featured on Motpol.nu like “100% identity - 0% hate.” But he objected to the anti-Semitic undertones in much of the site's writings.

Nonetheless, it was likely here that he came into contact with rightist readings of

⁹¹ “Kulturell mångfald är lika nödvändig för mänskligheten som biologisk mångfald för naturen. De skilda kulturerna är mänsklighetens gemensamma arv och bör erkännas och skyddas till allas gagn.”

⁹² “Sverige måste bli svenskt om vi ska ha något att bidra med till den globala mångfalden. Tänk, om du vill lära dig om pyramider och sådant då ska du ta dig till Egypten, inte Grönland. Vill du lära dig om snöbollskrig blir det något annat.”

Antonio Gramsci, readings that now inform his own analysis of Swedish society and his chosen program to affect change. He explained to me,

When I started to become interested in Gramsci, and to look at society a little – and above all the Frankfurt School, the 68-Left –, in part I was full of amazement by how they [the Left] had succeeded, and taken over institutions that were actually opposed to them, the Church, the Local Heritage Federation, the folk music movement [...] Institutions that I don't think should belong to them. There is no natural connection between being a cosmopolitan and socialist, and in any way sitting in the leadership for the Local Heritage Federation (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, February 11, 2011).⁹³

He thinks that the Left's success in seizing these institutions has had, according to Gramsci, predictable effects.

I thought also that the [national] election in 2006 showed that quite clearly, despite the fact that [the conservatives] won the election, I noticed that there are certain institutions, certain areas of debate that do not change at all, because there the Left has complete hegemony (ibid).⁹⁴

But, in parallel with New Rightist activism, Karlsson aims to employ the same tactics used by Leftists to gain power. He says of the institutions now apparently dominated by the Left, "If we use our resources wisely, we should be able to retake quite a few that haven't been lost, but that have fallen into the opponents' hands" (ibid).⁹⁵ Indeed, much of Karlsson's plans for the future involve pursuing this agenda.

⁹³ "[N]är jag började intressera mig för Gramsci, och tittade på samhället lite, framförallt Frankfurtskolan och 68-vänstern - dels blir jag full av beundran över hur pass väl de har lyckats med att ta över institutioner som egentligen var deras motståndare: kyrkan, hembygdsrörelsen, folkmusikrörelsen. [...] institutioner som jag tycker inte borde tillhöra dem, det finns ingen naturlig koppling mellan att vara kosmopolit och socialist och att på något vis sitta i ledningen för svenska hembygdsförbundet."

⁹⁴ "Det är inte så revolutionerande egentligen - kärnan i det han säger. Men [...] jag insåg att någonstans så hade han rätt. Jag tyckte också att valet 2006 visade det ganska tydligt. Trots att Borgerligheten vann valet, så märkte jag att det finns vissa institutioner och vissa debattområden som inte förändras överhuvudtaget, och därför har vänstern fullständig hegemoni där."

⁹⁵ "Använder vi resurserna klokt så skulle vi kunna återta en hel del av det som inte gått förlorat men fallit i motståndarnas händer."

Just as New Rightist thought and McCulloch-style rights and diversity talk has spread to more moderate nationalists, so too have these forces penetrated revolutionary race nationalism in Sweden. Although the National Socialist organization the Swedish Resistance Movement has been openly hostile towards identitarianism, they began showing less enthusiasm for racial supremacism towards the end of the '00s. Instead of expounding the primacy of the Aryan race, much of their communications have instead advanced a defensive doctrine based in love for one's race and acknowledgement of the love other races (ideally) show themselves. This shift necessitated some commentary on historical Nazism. Jakob Haskå, writing for the organization's online newspaper, *Nationellt Motstånd* [National Resistance] on August 14, 2008, attempts to distance Adolph Hitler from racial supremacy. He wrote of Hitler's activism,

for him it was the simple, decisive fact that he belonged to the Germanic race, which solidified his position as fanatically race conscious. Based on that—the actuality of his ethnic belonging—an unyielding loyalty towards the German people emerged. A loyalty that compelled him to see the construction of a worldview that concerned and pursued the interests only of his own races' interests as his mission.⁹⁶

In Haskå's history, Hitler was not motivated by an outward-looking belief in the Aryan people's inherent superiority to others, but rather by inward-looking concern for Aryans' well-being. This reading then enables Haskå to proceed to the following statement without compromising his commitment to National Socialism:

⁹⁶ "[F]ör honom var det det enkla faktum avgörande att han tillhörde den germanska rasen, vilket fick fastställa hans ståndpunkt som fanatisk rasmedveten. Utifrån denna sin etniska tillhörighets faktiska realitet, sprang en obändig lojalitet mot det tyska folket. En lojalitet, vilken anmodade honom till att se som sin mission att skapa en världsåskådning vilken enbart tillvaratog och såg till hans egen rasliga tillhörighets intressen." Available online, accessed July 22, 2012, <http://www.nordfront.se/kort-om-rasfragan.smr>.

It is, to say the least, a dead project to try to prove or demonstrate that we Aryans are the crown of an evolutionary progression, by trying to show evidence of superiority in our character, beauty, or 'objectively' high marks in intelligence.⁹⁷

Such efforts are paralleled by public rhetoric that seems to draw from the language and reasoning of ethnopluralism more directly. For example, prominent Swedish Resistance Movement figure, Magnus Söderman, said the following in the same speech from the 2008 People's March quoted above:

As a National Socialist, I love my people. I respect other people, and I have the deepest respect for those natural laws that guide all of us. That is the foundation, love and respect.⁹⁸

It is likely due to the steady proliferation of such statements that Metapedia.org claims that today, "National Socialists in Sweden are most often ethnopluralists."⁹⁹ Whatever ethnopluralism there is in groups like the Swedish Resistance Movement, however, it coexists with a continued openness to violent activism, and the celebration of Nazism. At the conclusion of the same speech cited above, Söderman affirms these standard neo-Nazi tendencies, and does so by first responding to Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt's notorious statement that "the core of Swedishness is only barbarism:"

No comrades, I have nothing against barbarism. Instead we must awaken the barbarians in ourselves to fix this. Barbarians were needed today, and barbarians will be needed in the future. The core of Swedishness isn't just barbarism, but it is there - you're right about that Reinfeldt. And we are going to awaken it again! You are going to see an original Swedish barbarism worse

⁹⁷ "Det är minst sagt ett dödfött projekt att vilja bevisa eller åberopa oss arier som kronan på en evolutionär utveckling, genom att försöka påvisa överlägsenhet i karaktärsdrag, skönhet eller "objektivt" höga intelligenspoäng." Ibid.

⁹⁸ "Ännu en lögn från våra fiender, lögnen att vårt engagemang bottnar i hat. Fel. Som nationalsocialist älskar jag mitt folk, jag respekterar andra folk, och jag har det djupaste respekt för de naturliga lagarna som styr oss alla. Detta är grunden, kärlek och respekt."

⁹⁹ "Idag är företrädare för nationalsocialismen ofta etnopluralister." Available online, accessed August 12, 2012, <http://sv.metapedia.org/wiki/Nationalism>.

than anything that has ever been witnessed on this planet (applause, yelling). And barbarians, we, you, shall set out in our streets and squares, through our cities and our countryside, and the enemies will tremble. And when the storm has settled, we won't need to sing about 'great olden days,'¹⁰⁰ we are going to live in them, in a Swedish Sweden, because Sweden remains Swedish! Sieg Heil! (Sieg Heil!) Sieg Heil! (Sieg Heil!) Sieg Heil! (Sieg Heil!)...¹⁰¹

Continuities of sound

Select nationalist music continued to spread throughout the larger scene during the tumultuous first decade of the twenty-first century. This is particularly true of music produced by the Nordic Press. The National Socialist online newspaper Info14.com includes songs by the bands Fyrdung and the project Svensk Ungdom in their online streaming radio. But while Info14.com's stream of this music roused little attention or outcry, interest in Fyrdung and Svensk Ungdom from another nationalist organization would lead to a public scandal. In January 2009, two undercover reporters from Sweden's Radio infiltrated a gathering of Sweden Democrats on a ferry from Stockholm to Tallinn. The reporters filmed leading Sweden Democrats like William Petzäll, Erik Almquist, Jimmie Åkesson drinking alcohol and singing songs by Ultima Thule, as well as the Nordic League's Fyrdung and Svensk Ungdom.¹⁰² In the films, Almquist sings "Folkligt Uppror [Folkly Uproar]" by Fyrdung. Though lyrics to other tracks by the group include talk of race

¹⁰⁰ Here Söderman refers to a line from Sweden's national anthem, "Du Gamla, Du Fria (Thou Ancient, Thou Free)."

¹⁰¹ "Nej kamrater, jag har inget emot barbari. Snarare måste vi väcka barbarerna inom oss för att få rätsida på detta. Barbarer var det som behövdes på vägen hit, barbarer är det som kommer att behövas. Barbariet är inte det enda ursvenska, men det finns där, det har du rätt i Reinfeldt, och vi ska väcka upp det igen. Du ska få se på ett ursvenskt barbari, värre än vad som någonsin skådats på denna planet (applaus). Och barbarerna, vi, ni, ska dra fram på våra gator och torg, genom våra städer och vår landsbygd, och fienderna kommer att darra, och när stormen väl har lagt sig så kommer vi inte behöva sjunga om 'fornstora dagar,' vi kommer att leva i dem. I ett svenskt Sverige, för Sverige förblir svenskt. Hell Seger! (Hell Seger!) Hell Seger! (Hell Seger!) Hell Seger! (Hell Seger!)."

¹⁰² Available online, accessed 07/27/2012,

riots and right-arm salutes, “Folkligt Uppror” speaks only in vague terms of a revolt by “the sons of the North [norden söner]” against an “eternal enemy [evige fiende].” In contrast, Svensk Ungdom’s song “Sweden has Fallen [Sverige har fallit]”—which Petzäll was filmed singing from memory—contains unmistakable anti-Semitism in its lyrics, and thereby conflicts with the Sweden Democrats’ official ideology. One of the verses includes the following lyrics:

[...] He is seen busy at work in those places where profiteering and bargaining reign – every cosmopolitan¹⁰³ can talk shit!
With his snout in the air, he sniffs his way forward,
Through bazaars and entertainment and glamour.
But he goes on the attack, and you’re paralyzed,
he always gets his way.
He spits on all honor and he snorts at morals,
he is greedy, deceitful, and slick.¹⁰⁴

Petzäll reportedly said that he was singing with a sense of irony. Likewise, Erik Almqvist, who was taped singing “Folkligt Uppror” by Fyrdung said that he and many of his fellow party members had a general interest in provocative, political songs, and that they also tend to sing the communist “International” at gatherings (Sydsvensken April 7, 2012). According to Almqvist, as well as other members of the Sweden Democrats’ youth organization who I have spoken with, these ethnonationalist songs are no more important to the party’s ideology than are songs from the far Left. Still given the party’s history in ethnonationalism, the episode stoked speculation that the Sweden Democrats’ overtures towards cultural nationalism were nothing but a public façade.

¹⁰³ The word “cosmopolitan,” along with “the gold,” “the money,” or “the liars,” is frequently used in ethnonationalist circles to refer to Jews.

¹⁰⁴ Han syns flitigt där det ockras och köpslås hit och dit, snacka skit kan vår kosmopolit! Med sin snabel i vädret han sniffar sig fram, bland basarer och nöjen och glam. Men så hugger han till och då ligger du still - han får alltid till slut som han vill. Han spottar på all heder och han fnyser åt moral, han är sniken och svekfull och hal.

Following that scandal, the Sweden Democrats banned the singing of music by Svensk Ungdom and Fyrdung at party gatherings. Still, younger party members continue to listen to and appreciate this music privately, especially the music of Svensk Ungdom. One such individual, who here remains anonymous, described having been so moved by the group's song, "Questions for Father [Frågor till far]," that s/he turned off the lights in his/her room, laid on the floor and sobbed. This song describes multiculturalism's destruction of Swedish society in general terms. In the song, the singer says to his father,

Tell me, how could you let this happen?
You blinded yourself to that which a blind person could see.
Does it feel good, dear father?
Are you proud, are you glad?
And where will you stand in our struggle today?¹⁰⁵

The song does not include any themes that would directly contradict the party's platform or rhetoric. There is no mention of race, ethnicity, or Jews, nor is there any criticism of democracy. This particular individual objects to other songs by Svensk Ungdom that do deal with such themes, but s/he was nonetheless so moved by "Questions for Father" that s/he decided to keep listening to it while avoiding other music by the group.

Leading Sweden Democrat Mattias Karlsson speculated as to why some youths in his party tend towards groups like Svensk Ungdom:

I think that, for some youths in Sweden, it can be like – There has never been a cultural nationalist subculture that has been as strong in any way as the race nationalist. Since [Ultima] Thule, not much has happened [...] And since the rest of society, to such a small extent – in popular culture –, sings about

¹⁰⁵Säg mig hur kunde ni låta det ske? Ni blunda' för det som en blind kunnat se. Känns det bra, käre far? Är du stolt är du glad? Och var kommer du stå i vår strid av idag?

themes that can in any way speak to nationalists – history, tradition, solidarity – then I can certainly imagine that certain culture nationalists have listened to individual songs that you don't think are the most radical, but instead you sing about pride for the country, or some part of history. [You] think like, 'I don't like the band, but this song is actually pretty good' (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, 04/09/2012).¹⁰⁶

Likewise, he says of Svensk Ungdom's "Frågor till far,"

Had I heard it when I was 16, I would have thought it was damn good. Because it describes, quite a bit, the feelings you had at that age (ibid).¹⁰⁷

Almqvist's claim that Fyrdung's and Svensk Ungdom's music is of no greater significance to the party than is communist music seems strained. And though we may be tempted to consider music as a sort of safe haven for allegedly faux cultural nationalists to engage with their true, race nationalist selves, Karlsson's explanation requires no such mindreading. Indeed, he is correct when he notes that ethno and race nationalist bands, record labels, and distribution outlets produce the overwhelming majority of nationalist music in Sweden. Only in Viking rock can one hope to find songs produced by and for self-identified nationalists that are not linked to racial politics, and even there, acts that maintain non-cooperation with race nationalist forces throughout production, distribution, and performance are rare. Those few mainstream groups who have featured nationalistic language in their music—like Nordman, Roger Pontare, and most recently Sabaton—have all

¹⁰⁶ "Jag tror att det kan vara så för en del ungdomar i Sverige - det har inte alls funnits en kulturnationalistisk subkultur som har varit lika starkt som den rasnationalistiska. Efter Thule har det inte hänt så mycket. [...] Och eftersom det övriga samhället i väldigt liten utsträckning - i den populärkulturen - sjunger om teman som på något sätt kan tilltala nationalister - historia, tradition, och solidaritet - så kan jag säkert tänka mig att vissa kulturnationalister har lyssnat på enstaka låter som man inte uppfattar som de mest radikala, utan man sjunga mer om stolthet över landet, eller om någon del av historien. [De har] tänkt liksom, 'jag gillar inte bandet, men den här låten är faktiskt ganska bra.'"

¹⁰⁷ "Hade jag hört den när jag var 16 hade jag tyckt att den var skitbra för att den beskriver ganska mycket de känslor man hade i den åldern."

been celebrated by the Sweden Democrats. But in most cases, cultural nationalists like the Sweden Democrats are dependent on ethno and race nationalists for explicit political music. Finding music that expresses contemporary radical cultural nationalist values, histories, and rhetoric typically requires activists to venture into race ideological circles.

Conclusion

Reformism and the New Nationalism hold contrasting implications for nationalists' musical practices. In most instances, these agendas suggest a reduced role for music. White power and freedom rock belonged to, and typically provided the main voice for, the skinhead subculture that was the target of reformism.

Unsurprisingly, the debate over skinhead delinquency and violence in *Nordland* magazine during the mid 1990s quickly turned into a debate over music, where readers criticized the violent rhetoric and ideological deviance in white power lyrics. For example, following the article, "Hate in the Right Direction" reader "Dietrich" wrote in the letters section,

Now I've had enough! First those crazies who beat a defenseless 14-year old to death [...] And the latest, and most likely the worst foolishness that plays right into our enemy's hands in the band Pluton Svea. With lyrics like, 'Put the traitors to the gas in National Socialism's name' and 'Yes, now you will see, even if you don't want to, how the healthy elite take six million more' they have managed to destroy thousands of hours of hard work for the white race's survival. What a bunch of Hollywood Nazis. How can you celebrate something that hasn't even taken place? (1996, no. 5).¹⁰⁸

In a later issue reader "National Socialist...Indeed! [Nationalsocialist...

¹⁰⁸ "Nu har jag fått nog! Först var de galningarna som slog ihjäl en försvarslös 14-åring [...] Senast i raden och med största sannolikhet det grövsta klavertrampet som spelar våra fiender direkt i händerna är bandet Pluton Svea. Med texter som 'Sätt förrädarna till gasen i nationalsocialismens namn' och 'Ja nu ska ni se även om ni inte vill, hur den ariska eliten tar sex miljoner till' så har de lyckats förstöra tusentals timmar hårt arbete för den vita rasens överlevnad. Vilka Hollywoodnazister. Hur kan man hylla något som inte ens ägt rum?"

Javisst!]" similarly turned to music to contest the notion that *Nordland* magazine was working to counteract delinquency and violence. In the letters section, he wrote,

You often read in your newspaper that National Socialism is 'the one and only healthy ideology,' that you fight for a 'harmonious society' and that it is 'Zionist-owned media' that paint you out to be violent soccer hooligans and that you don't support race-based hatred. That isn't exactly the understanding you get when you listen to recordings that *Nordland* sells. [...] Pluton Svea [sings] about race-based hatred quite a bit and praises the holocaust. It is funny to celebrate something that 'never happened' [...] There are many other relevant examples. For example, think about the fact that [the band name] Odium means hate in Latin ...You claim on page 78 in [1996, no. 6] that 'the extermination of Jews is not part of the ideology,' but after having listened critically to white power music, you start to wonder... (1997, no. 9).¹⁰⁹

While insiders like those quoted above trained their attacks on specific genres and bands, others showed signs of turning away from music in general. More often, however, reformist voices and New Nationalist organizations have rather envisioned a less central role for music. Activists working for a more intellectualized nationalism, for instance, have typically seen music as an unprofitable avenue for pursuing their goals. Again writing in *Nordland* magazine, future leader in National Socialist Front and the Party of the Swedes Björn Björkqvist makes just this case:

The Swedish national movement has, for a few years, gotten stuck and stood and stamped in the exact same place with white power music playing as loud as possible. Music is and will remain a strong weapon in the fight for the white race's survival, but it alone is not enough. Music recruits new, emerging fighters, but it

¹⁰⁹ Man läser ofta i er tidning att nationalsocialismen är 'den enda sunda ideologin', att ni kämpar för ett 'harmoniskt samhälle' och att det är 'sionsägda media' som utmålar er som våldsamma fotbollshuliganer och att ni inte alls står för rashat. Det är inte precis den uppfattningen man får när man lyssnar på skivor som säljs via *Nordland*. [...] Pluton Svea [sjunger] ut en hel del rashat och hyllar förintelsen. Det är lite roligt att hylla något som 'aldrig hänt' [...] Det finns många fler talande exempel. Tänk på att till exempel Odium betyder hat på latin...Ni hävdar på sidan 78 i [1996 no. 6] att 'jude-utrotning inte ingår i ideologin', men efter att ha lyssnat kritiskt på vitmakt-musiken börjar man ju undra..."

does not provide any ideological schooling. (1997, no. 6).¹¹⁰

Likewise, and as we saw earlier, the Nordic Press and Nordic League assigned music to the realm of inspiration, while literature and seminars were the preferred tools of education. Given that intellectualization was the overriding goal of such organizations, designating music as a principally emotional domain ensured that it would be relatively deemphasized in official settings.

But as campaigns of intellectualization and non-deviance apparently relegate music to the background, the following chapters will show us that the New Nationalism also outlines novel tasks for music and musical practice. Metapolitics, with its call for nationalists to spread their message into all arenas of social and cultural behavior, encourages activists to regard expressive forms like music as equally, if not more, vital to nationalist causes than parliamentary politics. As such, those following a metapolitical strategy ought to invest in music and music making. Pluralism and diversity talk also has the potential to inspire renewed commitment to music making. Identitarianism and ethnopluralism call for groups to protect, enliven, and experience their difference. Music, having been so often deployed in diverse social, historical, and political settings as an emblem of difference, seems an obvious tool in this effort.

However, metapolitical and pluralistic visions for music can clash.

Metapolitics encourages nationalist activism to seep into all expressive,

¹¹⁰"Den svenska nationella rörelsen har under ett par år kört fast och stått och stampat på ett och samma ställe med vit makt-musiken på högsta volym. Musiken är och förblir ett starkt vapen i kampen för den vita rasens överlevnad men det räcker inte med den. Musiken rekryterar nya blivande kämpare men den ger ingen ideologisk skolning."

communicative, and knowledge producing domains. It is a program that assumes that media transmitting a political message have no inherent political or cultural connotations. It assumes, for example, that nationalist ideals and values can be expressed through various clothing styles, various institutions, and through various music genres without appreciable mutation or loss of integrity. In contrast, all but the most exclusively race-focused pluralisms regard cultural expressions as contributing to the content of a people's difference. Their agenda would therefore call for the maintenance of particular clothing styles, institutions, and music genres that together constituted the stuff of distinctiveness. In their view, the medium of transmission is not only relevant, but it is among the very objects of their protectionism.

The tensions between expansionism and reunion with the self, between those voices who think expressive genres do or do not bear essential political associations, and between those who think music is and is not part of the difference the New Nationalism seeks, inform the creations and discourses that I detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 3 - White Pride/Black Music: The Rise of Swedish Ethnonationalist Rap and Reggae

Most Swedes have encountered some visual trace of radical nationalism in their local community. Spray-painted swastikas on outdoor electrical cabinets, stenciled announcements for upcoming demonstrations on the sides of buildings, decals for the National Democrats on light posts—such markings appear in public spaces throughout the country. Spray paint and stencil graffiti, as well as decals, allow organizations to communicate simple messages to potential sympathizers, and aid radical nationalist street gangs in announcing their presence. These markings tend to be rendered without appreciable stylization: Spray-painted “tags,” for instance, typically feature single color, single line symbols or text written in unremarkable font.

But in 2010, members of the newly formed ethnopluralist organization Nordic Youth [Nordisk Ungdom] began making more elaborate creations in public places throughout Stockholm. Members produced large, multicolor spray-paint works complete with anthropomorphic characters and ballooning text, works that could be described as murals or street art. Further, these works, such as that shown in Example 3, derive their stylistic mode from hip hop graffiti.



Example 3. Spray-paint mural in Stockholm, with the text “Nordisk Ungdom” [Nordic Youth].

Nordic Youth activists abandoned both the stark, utilitarian character of radical nationalist tagging, and prevailing nationalist attitudes towards hip hop culture. Deemed “foreign,” “ghetto,” “American,” or “black” by insiders, hip hop has for decades served as emblem of the forces Swedish nationalists oppose. But what appears in scenes like that in Example 3 is not an assault on or mockery of this form. Rather, it is a manifestation of nationalists’ desire to participate in the symbolic world of hip hop street art, to inject themselves into this expressive field as one youth group among many.

With their graffiti, Nordic Youth members were carrying into visual domains a trend sweeping through nationalist music. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, Swedish radical nationalist musicians broke into genres often considered inherently anti-nationalist and inherently black: rap and reggae. These musicians, like Nordic Youth’s graffiti artists, were assimilating expressive culture linked in various ways to their ideological and racial opponents.

This chapter focuses on the rise of radical nationalist rap and reggae in Sweden—on the rappers Zyklon Boom and Juice, and the reggae song “Imagine [Tänk]” produced by Nordic Youth. These acts emerged between 2006 and 2010. All of these musicians, and most of their apologists, belong to younger generations of activists, and are associated with reformist ideological schools, such as ethnopluralism and identitarianism. Further, virtually all of these individuals associate with race-conscious circles: To the best of my knowledge, no Sweden Democrats, nor any other self-declared cultural nationalists, played a major role in the production or public discussion of these music projects.

Zyklon Boom’s, Juice’s, and Nordic Youth’s initiatives generated considerable controversy within Sweden’s national movement. They spurred wide-ranging discussion about the categories “Swedish,” “white,” “black,” and “nationalist,” and the relationship between these categories and music. Opponents of the projects allege that rap and reggae are fundamentally anti-Swedish, anti-white, or anti-nationalist musics. My goal in this chapter is not to determine whether rap and reggae are “Swedish” or “white” or “nationalist.” Rather, I consider the ways Zyklon Boom, Juice, and Nordic Youth’s song “Imagine” relate to previous musical practice in the movement and current white nationalist ideological and expressive trends in Sweden and beyond. I consider, in other words, the extent to which rap and reggae conflict with established and emerging understandings of radical nationalism.

A past in blackness

European radical nationalists have long borrowed from Afro-diasporic expressive forms. British skinheadism—the cultural, social, and political movement formative of much contemporary white nationalism—emerged from Jamaican and

African American hairstyles, music, and dance. Late 1960s skinheads piggybacked on an offshoot of the London mod scene, the so-called “hard mods,” by cropping their hair and abandoning the typical mod-style dress suit for jeans and combat boots. Hard mods and skinheads borrowed this shorter hairstyle from West Indian immigrants living in London (Hebdige 1988; Mercer 1990, 1994) and rallied around Jamaican musics, taking rocksteady, ska, and reggae as their own. Contact between these communities also fostered new musical styles, such as the short-lived “skinhead reggae” subgenre that culminated around Jamaican performer Desmond Dekker (Griffiths 1995). First-wave skinheadism was neither exclusively race ideological nor exclusively white. The scene contained race nationalists, anti racists, and a small number of black participants, and featured calls for both reviving Englishness and moves to assimilate Afro-diasporic cultural forms. Les Back describes the movement as containing a “coexistence of a kind of opaque hybridity alongside open racism” (2002:100).

With time, however, the glaring social and political contradictions in the skinhead movement receded. Historians often trace the yoking of neo-Nazi ideology and skinheadism to the late 1970s and early 1980s, a time when radical nationalist groups in Britain, like the National Front and the British Movement, began recruiting skinheads to their cause. The movement shed many of its ties with reggae and ska culture as it aligned with organized race ideology (see Marshall 1991:99). Historians often overlook the impact of near-coterminous changes in skinheadism’s favored music scenes: Throughout the 1970s, for example, reggae became more and more a platform for black nationalism (King 2002), thus enhancing its

unattractiveness for a movement veering towards ideals of white racial purity. Traces of Jamaican influence persisted in skinheadism after its shift toward race nationalism and neo-Nazism, such as the cropped hairstyle. But skinheadism's political mobilization allowed for the rise of a new, ostensibly more white, music culture.

Ian Stuart Donaldson would be the chief protagonist of this new music culture. Born 1958 in Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, England, Donaldson began making music in the 1970s. In 1975, he formed the band Tumbling Dice, a group that played covers of Rolling Stones, The Who, and Free songs. The band changed their name to Skrewdriver in 1977, and began producing punk music. Gradually, and amid internal restructuring, the group's lyrics grew more politically charged and more reactionary, driving a shift from a punk to a skinhead image on the grounds that the punk scene was too left wing. Skrewdriver's move into explicit racial politics and neo-Nazism gained momentum when, in 1979, Donaldson and members of the National Front—including current chairman of the British National Party, Nick Griffin—founded the political action group and record label White Noise. White Noise, and later the German label Rock-O-Rama, promoted Skrewdriver and similar groups throughout Northern and Western Europe (Löow 1998b:138-140).

Donaldson's efforts helped establish punk metal as the dominant style in American and European white nationalist music. As Brown writes, Donaldson "did more than anyone else to forge connections between right-wing rock music and the skinhead scene, and between the skinhead scene and the radical right" (2004:164). Indeed, the story of Skrewdriver, and its impact on the wider movement, counters

Heléne Lööw's claim, regarding radical nationalist music, that "music does not create organizations, nor do musicians necessarily lead the revolution" (1998b:126).

This music, however, as a subgenre of rock, could not escape association with blackness. From Donaldson's time to the present, some insiders have been uneasy about this music due to rock's roots in African American styles. Musicians following Donaldson's lead encountered criticisms that their music betrayed the goals of the movement. One such individual was leading Canadian activist, white power music promoter, and front man of white power band Rahowa, George Burdi (stage name George Eric Hawthorne). Burdi's use of rock was challenged in an interview with American white activist and radio personality Kevin Alfred Strom. The conversation took place in April, 1995 on Storm's Internet radio program, American Dissident Voices, a program sponsored by the American white nationalist organization National Alliance (and later by Strom's own organization, National Vanguard).

KAS: Some of the older patriots that I have met are completely opposed to rock music. They see it as a destructive and degenerative influence on white youth. And looking at most rock music, I'd have to agree with them. Some of them think that the artistic expressions of the pro-white movement should not include rock. What do you say to them?

GB: [...] [The white race has] had many different styles of music during the last three or four thousand years, many of which these same critics would not like very much. For instance, the ancient Vikings used to make as large a racket as possible: banging on drums, smashing things to make as much noise as they could. This was a form of ritual dance and music that was intended to summon the gods. They believed that they would waken the gods by creating this thunder. In many ways, if you compare that to the modern skinhead culture and even the wider culture of pro-White music, you have a lot of it that sounds very noisy, that sounds very heavy, and very loud. And it is meant to be played loud. It is warrior music. It is the new Viking music.

Suggesting that rock had “a destructive and degenerative influence on white youth,” Strom’s question did not necessarily call for a defense of the genre’s racial credentials. But Burdi chose to defend those credentials anyway. Burdi traces rock, not to African American blues, but to Viking sonic practices. He reassigns the genre to a white, rather than a black, musical heritage. Strom then presses Burdi on the point:

KAS: You would agree, though, that some rock music—though not the music you sell—does have a Negroid sound to it and some Negroid influences?

GB: I would have to agree with that. You can take any genre of music and you can blend it and cross it with other genres, and you can spoil it. This has even been done with baroque classical pieces. They have taken compositions by Vivaldi and put rap drumbeats to them and they've rapped to them. You can go into dance clubs and you can hear these bastardized versions of these beautiful compositions which have been ruined by including rap lyrics.

Burdi’s initial response, that genres can be “spoiled” through blending, implies that rock has a white essence that is occasionally contaminated with “Negroid influences.” His parallel example, of baroque classical works being set to rap drumbeats, is likewise one of a European music being “bastardized” with foreign elements. Burdi’s response here, in addition to once again framing rock as white, attempts to project blackness to another genre—rap. Strom then continues:

KAS: But the artists who perform pro-White music have pretty well strained out any of these Negroid influences from rock, haven't they?

GB: Absolutely. As a matter of fact, one of our bands is Bound for Glory - one of the most famous White Power bands in the world - the guitarist, Ed, from this band, whenever asked about from where his influences come for his music writing, says Wagner is his number one influence. He takes a lot of his chord progressions right out of Wagner's compositions and simply plays them on guitar. There is a direct similarity here. This is an evolution of music.

We are simply using guitars to play a form of classical progression in a new music...¹¹¹

Burdi could have responded to Strom's questions differently. He could have deemed rock racially neutral, a blank slate receptive of diverse political and social orientations. He could have accepted the notion that rock was black, and framed his as an effort to undermine or cannibalize that culture. But Burdi instead wants his music to be white music. The argumentative techniques he uses to whiten rock—offering alternate histories of the genre, claiming to have pruned black elements, claiming to have injected additional white elements—resurface among other insiders in interviews, articles, blog postings, and online discussion forums.

A pattern appears as we survey the history of European and American white nationalism, that of insiders embracing and assimilating the musics that surround them. Activists tend to assign musics a particular racial essence, and they have struggled to persuade skeptics that their music is white. The emergence of radical nationalist rap and reggae in Sweden is in some senses a continuation of this pattern—it is only the latest instance in a tradition of borrowing global popular music styles. However, insiders and outsiders, within and beyond Sweden, have for decades linked these genres with blackness and treated them as musical emblems of political, social, and cultural movements counter to white ethnonationalism. Rock, despite its roots in African American blues, was not carrying such ideological and connotative baggage when Donaldson promoted it to the movement. Further, Swedish activists' musical creations appear, not as initiatives to extract a music from its racially tainted originating context, but rather to participate in that very context.

¹¹¹ Transcript available online, accessed March 2, 2012, <http://natvan.com/free-speech/fs954b.html>.

These nationalist rappers assail non-nationalist rap artists within a system of values and standards endemic to hip hop, not radical nationalism. Similarly, though some attempts by insiders to justify use of rap and reggae resemble techniques by Burdi, other claims and rhetoric run counter to the logic of early activists, at times even abandoning the notion that the movement's music must be white music.

Rap and reggae worldwide

Swedish activists were likely the first to introduce reggae into white nationalist music making. However, by the time Zyklon Boom and Juice began producing nationalist rap songs, rap had already penetrated white activist circles in France, Germany, and elsewhere. And though there is little to suggest that ultranationalist rap artists in these various countries are in musical dialogue with each other—that a unified, transnational white nationalist rap movement is emerging—French, German, and Swedish artists and their apologists face similar challenges as they seek to justify their embrace of these genres.

Rap and reggae can conflict with European radical nationalist sensibilities on multiple fronts. In the broadest sense, activists may link these genres to the wider field of global popular music, a flow of culture that transcends—or rather violates—national boundaries. Similarly, they may label rap and reggae “commercial” or “capitalist,” both terms often functioning as placeholders for “Jewish.” Insiders also link these musics with drug use, violence against women, and violence against authorities, thus offending nationalist calls for upstanding, wholesome behavior. But though association with globalization, commercialization, and certain types of social deviance distances rap and reggae from nationalism, it is these genres' more specific link with the Afrodiasporic world and blackness that most makes their embrace by

white activism problematic. However, other attitudes, postures, and identities associated with rap and reggae resonate, rather than conflict, with contemporary radical nationalism in Europe.

Recent scholarship on global rap discourages commentators from assuming that the genre bears a fixed set of associations as it travels across time and space. Following similar admonishments by Paul Gilroy (1994:51), Tony Mitchell calls on scholars to avoid presupposing that rap automatically transfers African American culture or particular political sentiments to the rest of the world (2001a). Social actors throughout the world have differing understandings of the genre's racial and political connotations. Some communities embrace rap as black music. Others see in the genre a music that transcends racial boundaries, while still others attempt to indigenize the genre by tracing it to local music traditions. Some adopt rap as a tool to disassociate and disengage from society, while others use it to cultivate fellowship. Still other case studies show how what might appear to be a direct importation of connotations with music is instead the creation of new meanings by recontextualizing existing expressions and themes. Urla offers an example of the latter case in her study of rap in the Basque separatist movement. There, the group *Negu Gorriak* embraced rap's associations with blackness, praising groups like Public Enemy, figures like Malcolm X, and borrowing black pride rhetoric, such as in their song "Esan Ozenki [Say it loud]" where they proclaim "Say it loud: I'm Basque and I'm proud" (Urla 2001:175). But Urla argues that, for *Negu Gorriak*, blackness stands not only as a token of opposition, but also of militarism—a quality the separatists found appealing (ibid:180).

Though social actors around the globe shape rap's meaning in different ways, scholars still observe some general trends in the genre's reception outside of the United States. Even Condry's influential study of hip-hop in Japan, so much of it geared towards highlighting the peculiarities of Japan's rap scene, still speaks in general terms of "hip hop ideals," ideals of "opposition, self-emphasis, and keeping it real" (2006:214). The ideal of opposition in particular, or as Craig Watkins calls it, rap's "oppositional ethos" (2006), manifests in rap cultures in diverse historical, geographical, and social settings. At times, scholars claim further that this ethos has a gendered core. Keeler, for example, offers the following generalization of rap's connotations:

I would suggest that rap's consumers, whether 'mainstream' or 'oppressed,' urban or suburban, U.S. or foreign, black or white, that is, potentially anyone interested in fantasies of masculine power, take the same pleasure, which is to identify—often quite viscerally and unthinkingly—with the wielders...of that power. The people likely to take the greatest pleasure in such identification, furthermore, are young males who feel powerless or, at least, worry the most obsessively about just how powerful or powerless they are, appear to be, feel themselves to be, and can expect to be in the future, relative to their peers, their kin, their potential sexual partners, and the world at large (2009:9).

Others argue that the oppositional ethos of rap is often directed towards situations of ethnic oppression. Timothy Brown writes that rap, along with its blackness, "supplies not only a connection to new and exciting currents of mass-mediated youth culture, but a ready-made model of ethnic solidarity and resistance against the 'powers that be'" (Brown 2006:143). Mitchell notes that in various places, rap has served as a voice for youth protest, and like Brown, that this protest frequently concerns the cause of ethnic minorities (Mitchell 2001a:10). Opposition to ethnic oppression in rap surfaces among various communities throughout the globe,

including Native Americans (Ullestad 1999), North African minorities in France (Prévos 2001), the Maori (Mitchell 2001b), and Muslim minorities in Germany (Elflein 1998). Studies like these show that, to the extent that rap is widely understood as a commentary on the disenfranchisement of African Americans, this characteristic is exportable and translatable. As Brown puts it, “the Blackness of hip hop is less important for its ethnic nationalist charge than for its ability to stand in for various types of oppression” (Brown 2006:146).

These and other studies of global rap indicate that the genre tends to shed some associations, and retain others, as it manifests in varied geographical, historical, and social contexts. Defiance of oppression is one of those recurring associations. Often, practitioners view this oppression as oppression of an ethnicity, and often defiance takes on a gendered character, where rap communities use male chauvinism to obtain a sense of power. These associations seem to supersede blackness in rap’s international profile.

Compared to rap, reggae’s reception throughout the globe is under studied and under theorized. But scholars have analyzed the events, ideas, and strategies behind the spread of the genre beyond Jamaica and Great Britain. According to Reggae historian Stephen King this move towards internationalizing reggae occurred in the 1970s. During this time, reggae lyrics began expanding beyond Jamaica-specific topics in an effort to make the genre more appealing to white audiences. This expansion occurred in two directions. First, reggae lyrics began more forcefully highlighting the causes of black liberation outside of Jamaica, particularly in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Second, protest statements grew more

universal—describing redemption, oppression, and resistance in general terms—so that diverse audiences could more easily embrace them (King 2002:95-97; Ahkell 1981:15; Jones 1988).

Rap's link with assertions of ethnic oppression and hyper-masculine defiance does not stand in opposition to contemporary radical nationalism in Europe. Nor would reggae's messages of resisting oppression and redemption. Rather, these global styles seem suited to the emerging sensibilities and rhetorical and conceptual modes of the movement. Further, though some activists are deterred by rap's and reggae's potential blackness, others see in these genre's blackness a universal demonstration and call for ethnic difference.

Other nationalist rap

Rap advocating white European solidarity, sovereignty, and pride likely originated in France with the group Basic Celtos. Classified as part of the Rock Identitaire Français (RIF) or French Identitarian Rock movement by the online French nationalist forum *le coq gaulois*, Basic Celtos' lyrics frequently denounce the United States, NATO, immigration, and "finance cosmopolitans."¹¹² These lyrics make simultaneous pleas for pan-European solidarity and the autonomy of subnational regions—especially that of their native Normandy. They debuted with a self-titled album in 1998, followed by the albums *Liberté* in 1999 and *Passalakt!* in 2001. Their music blends distorted guitars with rap vocals—a style approximating the American band Rage Against the Machine—along with infusions of Breton folk instruments. Early in their career, Basic Celtos believed themselves to be the only

¹¹² This expression is likely a reference to Jews.

radical nationalist rap group in Western Europe, noting that they had contact with similar acts in Serbia (Batson 2009:75).

Though the group earned the support of militant identitarian and ethnopluralist groups in France, like Nouvelle Résistance and later Unité Radicale (Bales 2002:42), the black origins of their music stirred controversy in other radical nationalist circles. When asked in interviews to justify their use of rap, Basic Celtos members used two strategies. On the one hand, they stressed the strategic importance of their project to nationalist propaganda efforts:

The rap scene in France is the second in the world behind the United States. 20% of music sales go to rap music (...) we can't bear the thought that such a proportion of the French people are impassioned by the complaints of immigrants or by these attacks that are made against nationalists. That's why we decided to create a new rap with explicit and different sounds and testimonies.¹¹³

Here they claim that, because of the genre's popularity, French nationalists cannot afford to surrender rap to liberalist voices. If rap is the preferred music of a large portion of the French public, projects like Basic Celtos are needed to spread the nationalist message and expand the nationalist movement. In this sense, their music is necessary to pursue nationalist metapolitics in France.

Basic Celtos also responds to critical voices by qualifying their engagement with rap and rap culture:

¹¹³ "La scène rap en France est la seconde du monde derrière celle des Etats-Unis. 20% des ventes musicales vont au rap (...) On ne peut pas supporter l'idée que cette partie des français se passionne pour les plaintes des immigrés ou pour les attaques qui sont faites aux nationalistes, c'est pourquoi nous avons décidé de créer un nouveau rap avec des sonorités et des témoignages explicites et différents." Originally attributed to an interview on the now defunct Italian online magazine, Perimento.com. Available in French translation online, accessed December 4, 2011, http://infosuds.free.fr/082001/enquete_bc.htm

We do a certain kind of rap but we are not ‘rappers.’ We rap in the sense that we don’t sing, but we don’t wear baggy pants and we don’t smoke marijuana all day.¹¹⁴

Here they claim that they adopted a musical technique associated with rap, but they reject the notion that they perform typical rap music, and they refuse to identify as “rappers.”

By the turn of the twenty-first century, Germany had replaced France as the center of rap in radical nationalist Western Europe. Today, German activists can claim more rap groups, with greater ideological differentiation, and greater penetration into the mainstream music market, than can their counterparts in any other Western European country. The country’s scene additionally provides the main source of inspiration to American activists advocating rap.¹¹⁵ Rap has historically provided a key arena for claims and contestations of ethnic and national identity in Germany. In this capacity, 1991 was a watershed year for German rap with the release of the compilation album *Krauts with Attitude*—an album featuring 15 different rap acts, all from Germany. Billed as a rejection of American and British domination of global popular music, this release aimed to assert a specifically German rap. Welcoming the derogatory name “kraut,” and outlining the German flag with the title words on the album cover, *Krauts with Attitude* sought to make a

¹¹⁴ “Nous faisons un certain genre de rap mais nous ne sommes pas des ‘rappers.’ Nous rappons dans le sens où nous ne chantons pas; mais on ne porte pas de pantalon large et on ne fume pas de marijuana toute la journée.” Originally attributed to an interview on the now defunct Polish nationalist site, InfoPatria, Available in French translation online, accessed December 12, 2011, http://infosuds.free.fr/082001/enquete_bc.htm. My thanks to Aleysia Whitmore for help with this translation. All mistakes are my own.

¹¹⁵ I am unaware of any significant white nationalist rap scene in the United States. Some of the only acts to gain significant recognition were the New York-based group *Neo-Hate*, active only during 2001, and a rapper named *Paleface* from San Francisco, whose song “O’Shea Jackson (Diss Therapy)” is mentioned in *Vibe* September, 1993 pg. 29.

statement of national pride by assuming and rebelling against Anglo-American cultural imperialism. The project inspired and codified what came to be known as Neuer Deutscher Sprechgesang, or New German Recitative—a sub-genre defined by its use of the German language and its apparent rejection of the global music industry (Elflein 1998; Brown 2006).

Krauts with Attitude was by no means an ethnonationalist project: The lineup consisted of artists with mixed ethnic backgrounds and builds its nationalist message by challenging the United States and Britain, not domestic minorities. However, large portions of Germany's immigrant population felt excluded from German society at the time, and for that reason these individuals were less inclined to rally behind any kind of national pride. A group of Turkish German rappers responded to *Krauts with Attitude* by creating their own compilation album in 1995, *Cartel*. The tracks on *Cartel* solidified a sub-genre that had been developing in Turkish German rap circles since the release of the single, "My Melody/Istanbul," by Islamic Force (Brown 2006:143). This sub-genre, Oriental hip-hop, combined rap beats with sonic emblems of arabesque, and often lyrics in the Turkish language. Oriental hip-hop became the counterweight to projects like *Krauts with Attitude* and Neuer Deutscher Sprechgesang, a rejection of German identity and an expression of solidarity with the Muslim world and Turkey. Though *Krauts with Attitude* included artists with non-German ethnicities, its perceived embrace of a still exclusive national identity, combined with the rise of Oriental hip-hop, served to ethnicize Germany's rap scene, making that scene not the possession of one ethnicity, nor the

occasion of cross-cultural, cross-ethnic fusion, but instead an arena for ethnic groups to mobilize in competition with one another.

As these shifts took place, artists in the scene's underground were introducing and normalizing the language of racial chauvinism. This underground world featured freestyle and battle rap—styles where rappers improvise lyrics. In the case of battle rap, two or more rappers improvise lyrics in polemics against each other. Murat Güngör and Hannes Loh noticed that towards the end of the 1990s, freestyle rappers, and battle rappers in particular, began both borrowing the African American use of the word “nigger,” and making references to WWII and the holocaust. These latter references often appeared as analogies in disparaging statements between battle rappers, in phrases like, “I’ll burn you like a synagogue,” or “I will gas you like the Jews” (2002:298-300).

By the turn of the century, high-selling, mainstream German rap artists were incorporating not only references to the Hitler and the holocaust, but also statements of ethnonationalistic pride into their lyrics, music videos, and album covers. Artists on Aggro Berlin record label like Bushido and later Fler—both of mixed German and non-German ethnic backgrounds—released tracks that played with such themes. For example, Bushido’s 2004 track “Ellectro Ghetto” contains the lyrics “Salute, stand to attention, I am the leader like A.”¹¹⁶ German and international music critics suspected that the “A” in this text referred to Adolf Hitler (Littlejohn and Putnam 2010:127), though Bushido (Anis Ferchichi) denies this.¹¹⁷ The

¹¹⁶ “Salutiert, steht stramm, ich bin der Leader wie A.”

¹¹⁷ Available online, accessed January 28, 2012.: <http://www.laut.de/Bushido/Rapper-wehrt-sich-gegen-Nazi-Vorwurf/26-09-2005>.

following year, Bushido released the track “Das Leben ist hart” (Life is Hard)—a track laced with diatribes against homosexuals, initially including the lyrics “you fags will get gassed.”¹¹⁸ Likewise, rapper Fler (Patrick Losensky) stirred controversy with the release of his 2005 album *Neue Deutsche Welle* (New German Wave). The album features the track “NDW 2005” with the lyrics, “This is black, red, gold - hard and proud. Nobody noticed it, but believe me, my mom is German.”¹¹⁹ Elsewhere he sings, “I am a German MC to the blood”¹²⁰, and in the music video for “NDW 2005,” Fler is seen waving a German flag—a taboo in Germany, then as today. When these moves drew criticism from the media, Fler responded in part through his song “Identität,” claiming “I am no Nazi – I’m a German with identity.”¹²¹

Few of Fler’s critics were satisfied with his simultaneous rejection of Nazism and defiant championing of German nationalism. Perhaps because he speaks of his own Germanness as blood-based, or because of widespread understandings that German nationality is a racially exclusive identity, politicians, commentators, and activists from the German Social Democratic Party to Antifaschistische Aktion remain suspicious of Fler’s ideology. Fueled by the controversy, he would nonetheless inspire a wave of other artists whose music rejected Nazism, but rallied behind German pride. The foremost example of this later wave is the East German rapper Dissziplin. Dissziplin released his first album with rapper Joe Rilla as the duo Ostmob in 2005. After multiple subsequent solo albums, he produced his most

¹¹⁸ “Ihr Tunten werdet vergast.”

¹¹⁹ “Das ist Schwarz-Rot-Gold - Hart und Stolz, man sieht's mir nicht an, doch glaub mir, meine Mum ist Deutsch.”

¹²⁰ “Bis aufs *Blut bin* ich ein *deutscher MC*.”

¹²¹ “Ich bin kein Nazi, ich bin ein Deutscher mit Identität.”

popular release to date, *Ich bin Deutschland* [I am Germany]. The title track, “Ich bin Deutschland,” makes frequent denunciations of Nazism. The chorus rings, “Scheiß auf dein Hackenkreuz [fuck your swastika].” But Dissziplin also demands that German youth free themselves from the shame and guilt of their national past to reclaim and reassert national identity:

Do you hear? I am the future whether you like it or not
And she shines on me in black, red, and gold
And I don't hide myself,
I maintain my face, my identity, my colors, my self
[...]
I am Germany, and I stand for that.
I am a German, look how the flag sways in the wind.
This is black-red-gold.
This is my blood, my pride, my people.¹²²

Commercial rap artists like Fler, Bushido, and Dissziplin attracted the adoration of radical nationalist groups with lyrics like these. Though these artists condemned Nazism in their music, they nonetheless perpetuated a defiant German nationalism that shook the mainstream. Skinheads began attending Bushido and Fler concerts (Süddeutsche, June 27, 2005), the ultranationalist National Democratic Party of Germany endorsed Fler, and white nationalist online organizations abroad, from the American Stormfront.org to Sweden's Nordisk.nu, promoted Fler and Dissziplin while remaining silent on Bushido—probably due to the latter rapper's Tunisian roots.

¹²² “Hört Ihr? Ich bin die Zukunft ob ihr wollt oder nicht, und sie scheint auf mich im schwarz-rot-goldnen Licht. Und ich lass mich nicht blenden ich bewahr mein Gesicht meine Identität, meine Farben, mein Ich [...] Ich bin Deutschland und ich kann sagen das ich dazu steh. Ich bin Deutscher, gugt da wie die Fahne weht. Das ist schwarz-rot-gold. Das ist mein Blut, mein Stolz, mein Volk.”

The ethnic differentiation in the country's rap scene, the frequent use of anti-Semitic and racially chauvinistic lyrics in underground freestyle, and the normalization of ethnicized national pride in mainstream circles, eventually cultivated explicitly white nationalists and National Socialist rap artists in Germany. The rap group Dissau Crime was one of the first such groups, releasing their album *Zyklon D* in 2003—the word “Zyklon” likely referring to the Zyklon B gas used in holocaust gas chambers. In contrast to the underground rappers or mainstream artists like Fler and Bushido, Dissau Crime maintained a steady focus on the Third Reich, and frequently call themselves Nazis in their lyrics. A wave of similar, self-declared Neo-Nazi rap artists surfaced towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In contrast with Dissau Crime, the underground freestyle and mainstream rappers, this latter wave of openly neo-Nazi and white nationalist rappers often restrict their activities to the internet. Rather than recording and printing albums, these artists release tracks one by one on private web pages, or through video and audio sharing sites, like youtube.com and myspace.com. Rapper Makss Damage (Julian Fritsch), for example, began releasing songs online in the summer of 2009. He styled himself as a communist activist at first, recording songs like “Lenin,” and “Sowjetmacht” [Soviet Power]. But towards the end of 2010 he became disillusioned with what he called the anti-Germanness of the left, and moved to the hard right, declaring himself a Nazi during an interview, posted online, with well-known Cologne neo-Nazi Alex Reitz.¹²³

¹²³ Available online, accessed December 14, 2011, <http://rap.de/news/5507>.

These artists' justifications for their use of rap often resemble explanations given by France's Basic Celtos. Like Basic Celtos in France, the German rap duo N' Socialist Soundsystem views the rap scene in their country as overwhelmingly anti-nationalist—this despite the presence of voices like Fler, Bushido, and Dissziplin. Accordingly, N' Socialist Soundsystem aims to neutralize this threat to the movement by offering a nationalist alternative to standard, anti-nationalist rap.¹²⁴ Like Basic Celtos, they disavow any genuine love for rap; a position illustrated most clearly in their song "Scheiss auf Hip Hop" [Fuck Hip Hop]. Similarly, in their name, the German group Sprachgesang zum Untergang mimics Basic Celtos' attempts to redefine their music as in some way not being rap. Sprachgesang zum Untergang, or "Speech-Song to the Down-Fall," indicates a framing of the group's vocal technique as "speech-song" rather than rap per se.

But the radical nationalist community in Germany also used features specific to their domestic scene to advocate for nationalist rap. During the early rise of nationalist language in mainstream rap, the nationalist music magazine Rock Nord published the article, "HipHop wird schneller weiß, als man denkt" [Hip Hop is Becoming White Faster than You Think] in their 2001 issue. Insiders circulated this article throughout Germany's white nationalist and neo-Nazi online forums as they discussed the potential for nationalist rap. It argued that Germany's hip hop community seemed poised to become a meeting place for ethnic Germans and therefore could serve as a useful site for nurturing activism. Further, the article, and the responses it drew in online forums, interrogated the notion that rap's black

¹²⁴ Available online, accessed January 12, 2012. <http://www.dasgehtinsohr.de/nasoso/bio.html>.

roots prohibit its use in European nationalism: Rock music—the genre at the core of most music making in the movement—also had black roots (Güngör and Loh 2002).

Sweden

Whereas in Germany rap became a site for performing various ethnic identities and ideologies, rap in Sweden maintained a relatively uniform political profile into the 2000s¹²⁵. This is not to say that Sweden's scene completely lacks ideological or ethnic differentiation. The initial wave of Swedish rappers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, recording artists like MC Tim and Just D, were ethnic Swedes whose lyrics were not obviously political. The commercial successes of groups like Just D, however, paved the way for a more politicized music performed by artists outside the socio-cultural mainstream. Throughout the 1990s, the headlining groups Infinite Mass, The Latin Kings, and later Timbuktu—each predominately made up of non-European immigrants—used hip hop music to deliver scathing critiques of Swedish society and its treatment of minorities. Occasionally, artists paired these critiques with a rejection of Swedish identity, as is the case in Infinite Mass' 2004 English-language hit “No. 1 Svartskalle:”

I'm that dude you see hanging around the town
You can call me a grease ball if you like the way it sounds
Is it a smile on your lips turned upside down
Or is it the ugliest frown in this goddamn town
I know your parents warned you about people like me
I know you ain't stupid girl, just open your eyes and see
If you wanna take my hand I can show you what life could really be
'Cause people like us loves a big family
Yeah!
I don't wanna be the one you like!
I don't wanna be the one you talk about!
All I wanna be is the No. 1 Svartskalle!

¹²⁵ Tony Mitchell writes that rap in Scandinavia is in general an understudied topic (2001:7).

Here, the hip hop group affectionately self-applies the term “svartskalle”—a derogatory expression directed at non-Nordic immigrants, meaning literally “black skull”—refusing to identify as Swedes. Further, in his study of hip hop circles in Gothenburg, ethnographer Ove Sernhede shows how immigrant youth use rap to escape the question of Swedish identity, and align themselves instead with a transnational Hip Hop Nation (2002). Other immigrant artists seek to inject themselves into a Swedish identity, albeit one reconstructed as more inclusive of their deviation from the Swedish mainstream. Such a desire is expressed, with some irony, when rapper/reggae singer Papa Dee calls himself an “Original Black Viking” in his 1993 track by that name (Bjurström 1997:51).

Although throughout much of the past 20 years explicitly political Swedish rap has voiced immigrant issues, the scene also contains multiple acts espousing leftism. These two political threads—leftism and immigrant advocacy—overlap on occasion. But some groups, like T-Röd and Ray Marx, devote themselves more or less exclusively to anti-capitalism, anti-fascism, and communism. Leftist, anarchist, and syndicalist youth groups, in turn, often choose politically sympathetic rap or reggae music to profile themselves in public. For example, as I was observing nationalist demonstrations and marches throughout Sweden, counterdemonstrators from the socialist Justice Party [Rättvisepartiet] consistently played songs by Konkret Konspiration through loudspeakers at their information tents. Konkret Konspiration’s song “Struggle” [Kamp] was a particular favorite.

Like their counterparts in France and Germany, Swedish nationalists tend to consider their country’s domestic rap scene anti-nationalist. For some activists, it

was rap's broader association with blackness that opposed it with their cause; for others, it was the scene's specific ties to immigrants and leftism. Further, most instances of direct criticism of contemporary nationalist politics in music comes from hip hop musicians. For instance, the rap group Stress, consisting of the artists Adam Tensta, Aleks, Eboi, and Dida, released what is to date the most widely circulated musical attack on the Sweden Democrats since the party's election to the national parliament in September, 2010. The song, "Drowned Out [Tystas Ner]", speaks of an immigrant boy who did not vote in the 2010 election, and references the Sweden Democrats (SD), their party leader Jimmie Åkesson, and life in immigrant communities along Stockholm's blue subway line:

Now that Nazis are sitting in our own parliament, brother,
and to the police who want him to piss blood,
because all he has gone through, this is his version of what SD calls 'security
and tradition.'
But if you ask the dude who he voted for in the election,
you can put one and one together and guess the answer.
(Because he votes not. Because he votes not).
Hope that he regrets this now that the nightmares have become a reality.
[...]
I start and thank my single mother, for all that I got from her.
Was born on the blue [line], was called Ibrahima, consider myself a true
Swede [Svenne].
The line that you, the outsider, stay away from.
The line where crimes are frequently committed and where they have
become professional robbers.
On the line there are no Sweden Democrats,
because we color our streets with Somalis, Turks, Serbs, and Croats.
Know what you're thinking now, but you know how it goes for those who
come here and sound like Jimmie Åkesson.
Those who don't give a shit about the nigger, who just want power.
So go sharpen the knife and send the pig to the slaughter.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ "Nu när nazister sitter i vår egen riksdag bror, Och till poliser som vill få honom att pissa blod. För allt han gått igenom det här är hans version av det som SD kallar trygghet och tradition. Men om du frågar shuno vem han röstar på i valet, så kan du nog pussla ett med ett och gissa svaret. För inte röstar han, för inte röstar han. Hoppas han ångrar sig nu när mardrömmen blev sann. [...] Jag börjar

The song was performed live on November 22, 2011 on Sweden's most watched television morning news program, *Nyhetsmorgon* on TV4. Nationalists were angered both by the lyrics in the song—which they thought promoted violence towards the Sweden Democrats—and, similarly, for the mainstream reception of the song:¹²⁷ In addition to the television appearance, Stress performed “Drowned Out” on national public radio and at the publicly funded cultural center, Kulturhuset in Stockholm.

Throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, nationalists and non-nationalists alike viewed rap and reggae not only as being opposed to nationalist politics, but also as the musical antithesis of Viking rock and white power punk (Peterson 1995:58). A pair of films directed by Daniel Frisell during the 1990s—*Sökarna* [The Seekers] in 1993, and *30:e November* [November 30th] in 1995—undoubtedly reinforced these oppositions. Both *Sökarna* and *30:e November* treat the rise of skinhead culture and its antagonisms with immigrant groups during the 1990s. These films portrayed skinhead youth gangs with Ultima Thule's music, while hip hop music often accompanies immigrants. One rap group in particular, The Latin Kings, grew to serve as the chief musical marker of anti-nationalism during the 1990s. The group, whose members all have roots in Latin America, hails from immigrant communities in Stockholm's southern suburbs. Their often crude

att tacka min ensamstående morsa för allt jag fick av henne. Föddes på blåa, kallades Ibrahima, känner mig som en riktig svenne. Linjen som man som utomstående håller sig borta ifrån. Linjen där brott begås frekvent och där man har blivit proffs på rån. På linjen finnes inga sverigedemokrater, för vi färgar gator med somalier, turkar, serber, och kroater. Vet vad du tänker nu men du vet hur det går för dom som kommer hit och låter som Jimmie Åkesson. De som skiter i blatten, vill ha svinen vid makten. Så gå och slipa kniven och skicka grisen till slakten.”

¹²⁷ Available online, accessed February 2, 2012, <http://avpixlat.info/2011/11/02/sr-musikguiden-i-p3-spelar-lat-dar-sd-kallas-for-nazister/>.

and misogynistic lyrics also tend to advocate minority rights and criticize Sweden's treatment of its immigrant populations. As an anonymous informant recalls,

During high school [gymnasiet] in the early 1990s, when I was in high school, I heard that everyone in school who didn't like blacks and immigrants listened to Ultima Thule, and everyone who liked blacks listened to The Latin Kings. And so I thought, fine, then I don't like [The] Latin Kings (Interview, anonymous, July 14, 2011).¹²⁸

Yet another film would advance this specific opposition between Ultima Thule and The Latin Kings. The documentary *Racist Sweden? [Racist Javisst]* (1993) by Leon Flamholc traced conflicts between skinhead and immigrant groups during the summer and winter of 1992, and was distributed throughout secondary schools in Sweden during the mid to late 1990s. With slightly inflated claims, the film's narrator, Flamholc, declares:

Hip hop music has become a means for the expression of anti-racist sentiment. Every group has texts debating the race conflict, and many Swedish youths are involved, as well as those of immigrant backgrounds. The music, clothes, gestures--everything turns into a pattern which is in stark contrast to the behavior and style of their counterparts (Flamholc 1993).

The film uses interviews with and performances by The Latin Kings' front man, Dogge Daggelito (Douglas León) to illustrate this hip hop style. Flamholc shows Ultima Thule concerts and interviews with the band's lead singer Jan Thörnblom to show the contrasting nationalist behavior and style. Presentations like these helped render hip hop in general, and The Latin Kings in particular, a target for nationalist ideologues and musicians. The Trollhättan-based white power punk band Brigad Wotan (later known as Somalia Kickers), for example, highlights the rap group on

¹²⁸“Under tidigt 90-tal när jag gick på gymnasiet hörde jag att alla som inte tyckte om svartingar och invandrare lyssnade på Ultima Thule, och alla som gillade svartingar lyssnade på The Latin Kings. Då tänkte jag, ok då, då gillar jag inte Latin Kings.”

the cover of their 1995 album *Sweden Ablaze* [Sverige i brand], shown in Example 4. In this image, they attribute what they see as the destruction of Swedish society to The Latin Kings and the subculture they inspire.



Example 4. Cover to Brigad Wotan's 1995 album *Sweden Ablaze* [Sverige i brand] on Svea Records.

Organized nationalist political parties also paint hip-hop music as being at variance with Swedish culture. We find examples of this in an unattributed article in the 1993 issue of the Sweden Democrats' newspaper, *SD-Kuriren*. The article sought to spur discussion and input about the party's official cultural policy ahead of a party congress scheduled for the following year. During this congress the party would draft a new position statement on cultural issues. The author(s) of the 1993 article, "Om Konst och Kultur" (On Art and Culture) attempt to provide some guidelines—albeit rather narrow guidelines—for a discussion of what types of cultural expression they believed the party should support and oppose. They write,

Certain foreign TV channels show stupefying popular music segments around the clock, often without any meaningful content. This often brings aggressive, racist propaganda from American Negro groups. [...] Afro-American music's

global expansion constitutes a set back of thousands and thousands of years. The lyrics typically encourage only sentimentalism, shallowness, bad morals, and low living ideals. A positive counterweight to this is the popular music containing nationalistic lyrics that today is poised to make nationalism fashionable. Primitive elements are still no less influential even in these cases. Music has degenerated such that it mainly consists of only rhythm. An immense decline, unfit for the Nordic human (*SD-Kuriren* 1993).¹²⁹

Here, the author(s) argue that Afro-American musics, both through their lyrical content and their musical structure, conflict with healthy life styles in general and the Nordic people in particular. The National Democrats also target expressive forms like hip hop music in the cultural policy section of their 2001 party position program. In a statement on culture retained in the program up to the present, they describe their goal to:

Limit the influence of foreign cultures in Sweden, especially those whose aim conflicts with what is traditionally Swedish. Prioritize healthy causes in public places that expose life-affirming qualities worthy of pursuit. Limit public display of divisive or degenerative elements, such as the glorification of perversions, disgusting art, and manifestations of American ghetto culture.¹³⁰

Nationalist organizations seldom target reggae specifically, though they may include the genre under the umbrella of “Afro-American music” or even “American ghetto culture.” When reggae is mentioned, it is often associated with drug use. For

¹²⁹ “Vissa utländska tv-kanaler visar dygnet runt fördummande populärmusikaliska inslag, oftast utan något meningsfullt innehåll. Där förekommer det ofta aggressiv, racistisk propaganda från olika amerikanska negergrupper. [...] Den afroamerikanska musikens stora genomslag i världen innebär en kulturell tillbakagång på 1000-tals år. I texter uppmuntras i stort sett enbart sentimentalitet, ytlighet, dålig moral och lågtstående levnadsideal. Som en positiv motvikt framstår den populärmusik innehållande nationella texter som bland ungdomen idag håller på att göra mode av nationalismen. Dock är det primitiva inte desto mindre framträdande även i detta fall. Musiken har degenererats till att i stort sett enbart innehålla ryt. Ett stort förfall ovärdigt den nordiska människan.”

¹³⁰ “Begränsa inflytandet av främmande kulturer i Sverige, särskilt sådana vars uppfattningar går stick i stäv med det traditionellt svenska. Prioritera sunda ideal i offentliga sammanhang som visar upp eftersträvansvärda och livsbejakande egenskaper. Begränsa offentlig exponering av nedbrytande eller degenererande inslag såsom glorifieringen av perversionser, sjuk konst och framhävandet av amerikansk ghettokultur.” Available online, accessed February 12, 2012, <http://www.nd.se/vaara-aasikter/politik/principprogram.aspx#02..>

example, Magnus Söderman, former leader of the militant Swedish Resistant Movement [Svenska Motståndsrörelsen], wrote “A reggae festival has been taking place in Uppsala since last Thursday. And just like last year’s festival, drugs are flowing freely. That isn’t so strange, given that reggae is synonymous with drugs” (Nationellt Motstånd, August 12, 2007).¹³¹

Nationalist Rap in Sweden

When Zyklon Boom and Juice began producing nationalist rap music, they were thus breaking into a genre that had for decades, in Sweden as elsewhere, been marked as opposed to their ideological and social sphere. However, these artists, Zyklon Boom in particular, do not belong to the same musical, political, and social subculture that mobilized against immigrant and leftist rap music during the 1990s. In addition to their choice of genre, the content of their lyrics, their rhetorical forms, and methods for distributing music, radical nationalist rappers in Sweden instead align with the intellectual and cultural streams that gained prominence within the last decade. Unlike Brigad Wotan, or rappers like Dissau Crime and Makss Damage in Germany, neither Juice nor Zyklon Boom celebrate National Socialism, organized white nationalism, or skinheadism. Rather, their music, and their apologists’ attempts to justify it, resonates with emerging metapolitical strategies and reformist discourses in Sweden’s national movement.

The solo rapper Zyklon Boom is the only nationalist oriented, hip-hop artist in Sweden to produce an entire album’s worth of music. Like similar rappers in Germany and France, his music is distributed almost exclusively online. He began

¹³¹ Sedan i torsdag har en reggaefestival hållit på i Uppsala. Och precis som föregående år har knarket flödat fritt. Detta är inte så konstigt med tanke på att knark och reggae är synonymt med varandra.

producing and uploading individual songs in 2005, and released the album *Welcome to the De-Population Area* [Välkommen till Avfolkningsorten] on September 11, 2009 via free Internet downloading sites. The album title is likely intended as a play on The Latin Kings' first release, *Welcome to the Suburbs* [Välkomen till Förorten]. Zyklon Boom claims that his project was initially created with the with a sense of irony, and that he aimed for his music to sound unpolished and unprofessional in the style of Swedish slapstick-rock act, Okel Kåinkel. As time went on, Zyklon Boom began treating his project more seriously (personal communication, Zyklon Boom, June 29, 2012).

Zyklon Boom provides no direct information as to his name or identity online.¹³² However, the voice on the recordings is that of a male with a northern Swedish dialect, and lyrics occasionally refer to northern Sweden, especially the city of Umeå. Further, various insiders claim that Zyklon Boom is the same individual who writes an online blog under the pseudonym Solguru, and that he is also the same individual behind the little known electronica act Green Army Faction. I have had strained relations with Solguru, and for that reason have been unable to confirm these claims. Solguru's blog is one of the most visited on the nationalist blog portal Motpol.nu, and in my experience, his is one of the most respected voices among identitarian and free nationalist activists.

On his blog, Solguru says that he:

[...]takes a starting place in perennialism and tradition, and in a politically reactionary foundation...discussing and criticizing different aspects of

¹³² Available online, accessed January 21, 2013, http://sv.metapedia.org/wiki/Zyklon_Boom

modernity, from secularism and humanism, to cultural diversity and feminism...¹³³

Whether Zyklon Boom and Solguru are the same person or not, the above description could also summarize much of the lyrical sentiments on Welcome to the De-Population Area. These lyrics are polemical, targeting identity politics, claims to victimization, democracy, and homosexuality. Solguru does not mention immigrants, Jews, or racial politics in the above description, and so too are these topics marginalized in Zyklon Boom's songs. And just as the above statement lacks a declaration of any well-defined nationalist ideological school—be it ethnopluralism, identitarianism, National Socialism—so too does Zyklon Boom avoid labeling his own political orientation. He does call himself a conservative intellectual in “Damn, I am so Tuff [Fy Fan Vad Tuff Jag Är],” pre-modern in “Dumb Idea [Dum Idé],” and names early nineteenth-century Romanian fascist, Corneliu Codreanu as his idol in “Badass Party [Fetjävla Fest].” But instances like these are few. It is rather his rhetorically playful attempts to obscure or sideline his ideology that distinguish him from other nationalist musicians in Sweden, and European radical nationalist hip hop more generally. Zyklon Boom's reluctance to advocate a particular political position undermines the notion that his music is propaganda, and simultaneously links him to the intellectual world of Swedish identitarians, a world where Solguru's voice reigns. This reluctance may also stem from prevailing associations and trends in hip hop, from an “oppositional ethos” that can reject ideologies without having to

¹³³ “[...] tar avstamp i perennialism och Tradition, och i en politiskt reaktionär grundinställning... Här diskuteras och kritiserar modernitetens olika aspekter, från sekularism och humanism till mångkultur och feminism.” Available online, accessed February 2, 2011, http://solguru.Motpol.nu/?page_id=2.

affirm an alternative. Rap scholars might also argue, as Elflein does (1998), that hip hop is pluralistic by nature, and this pluralism hinders any attempt to capture hip hop under a single flag or worldview.

The surface rhetoric in Zyklon Boom's songs foregrounds the virtues of Zyklon Boom himself and the failings of his adversary, not politics. Most of his lyrics center on his ability to overpower, outsmart, or outdrink his opponent, the "you" to whom he addresses his polemic. Though this implied opponent takes various forms, he is typically not part of an ethnic or religious minority, but instead a white male—sometimes a cosmopolitan contemptuous of his own majority status, sometimes an overzealous political activist from either the far left or the far right. But this opponent is always insufficiently masculine, insufficiently read, and cowardly.

Zyklon Boom nonetheless reveals his political orientation within this scheme, making political statements in the process of demeaning this "you." He does this, in part, through his use of analogy, such as in the chorus to the song

"Dumb Idea":

You fucked with me, but luck was not on your side.
[That was] a dumb fucking idea, just like democracy.
I will kick your head until it hangs by a thread,
until Daniel Poohl becomes proud to be a European.¹³⁴

This chorus centers on the foolishness of his challenger and the might of Zyklon Boom's impending vengeance. In supporting and coloring these statements, he mocks democracy, and calls leading Swedish anti-racist and editor of Expo

¹³⁴"Du jävlades med mig, men lyckan stod dig inte bi. En jävligt dum idé precis som demokrati. Jag ska sparka dig i huvudet tills det hamnar på sned, ända tills Daniel Poohl blir stolt över att vara europé."

Magazine, Daniel Poohl, anti-European. Revealing analogies like these appear in song after song, such as “Shut Up! [Håll Käften!]”:

Shut up! You are a worthless human being. Zyklon Boom—retaining 16 damn liters of liquid.
Shut! I know so damn much more than you that compared with me you aren't even a girl.
Shut up! Otherwise you'll get hit in bed, I'm crazy, with an immigrant gang's regard for women.
Shut! I am so much more than you that if you compare yourself to me, you aren't even gay.¹³⁵

These analogies leave little question as to the rapper's stance on immigrants, democracy, and anti-racist activists. But by restricting political language to a supporting role for other statements, Zyklon Boom discourages listeners from reducing his music to crude ideological propaganda. Further, he uses phrases like that above to blur the boundaries between nationalist and non-nationalist. In “Shut Up!” the rapper confirms his own misogyny and unruliness—an attack a mainstream critic would likely launch against him. But he allows his opponents to pursue this attack only if they first accept his stereotyping of “immigrant gangs.” With this move, he disassociates himself from both mainstream progressives and radical nationalists. His stereotyping of immigrants as misogynistic would likely offend non-nationalists. However, his embrace of this misogyny also undermines nationalists' efforts to use their supposed support of women's rights to distinguish themselves from non-Nordic immigrants.

¹³⁵ “Håll käften! Du är en värdelös person. Zyklon Boom med sexton jävla liter vätskeretention. Käften! Jag kan så jävla mycket mer än dig att om man jämför dig och mig så är du inte ens en tjej. Håll käften! Annars dängs du i säng, jag är fläng, med kvinnosyn som ett invandrargång. Käften! Jag är så mycket mer än dig att om man jämför dig och mig så är du inte ens gay.”

This refusal to adhere to the profile of a typical radical nationalist youth extends to full-on criticisms of skinheads. Such criticism often appears alongside assaults on leftists (Anti-Fascist Action [AFA]) and immigrant groups, the prime example of which comes from his song “Your Own Fault [Ditt Eget Fel]”:

You skinhead, sitting there with your nose stuffed with speed, then howling about nation and the Volk, for fuck’s sake what drivel.

Head in to town, a fight breaks out, indeed, an exercise in violence [...].
Then go home and beat the shit out of the girl—authentically Germanic.
But perhaps your life doesn’t suck solely because of the Jew.

But what is said about nationalists also applies to AFA reds:
If you play pretend politics, you can count on internal bleeding.
So no red here, I’d rather have a beer, take it easy, hate in silence, and fill out a verse.

And you over there, whose parents come from some other place,
now you’re screaming “Swedish whore!” [Svennehora!] as though you got paid each time you say it.

Is it a surprise that problems arise when you enter the pub?
I don’t give a shit about discrimination and “the Man:”
If you can feign oppression and thereby get what you want,
then fuck, you can also take responsibility for all the shit you cause.¹³⁶

Zyklon Boom’s willingness to assail skinheads and the nationalist establishment offers further evidence that he and Solguru, himself one of the leading reformist voices in the movement (Lundquist 2010), are the same individual.

Though Zyklon Boom avoids labeling his ideology outright, he does allow other voices to describe him in this way. Such is frequently the case in the

¹³⁶ “Du skinhead som sitter där med näsan full med tjack, och sen gormar om nation och folket, fy fan vilket snack. Dra ut på stan och slagsmål blir det, våldsutövning visst. [...] Sen drar du hem och sant germansk så tokspöar du bruden, men kanske suger ditt liv inte bara på grund av juden. Men det som sägs om nationella gäller även AFA-rödingar, om man leker låtsaspolitik får man räkna med inre blödningar. Så ingen röding här, jag vill hellre dricka bärs, ta det lugnt och hata i ensamhet och fylla ut en vers. Ni där borta vars föräldrar kommit hit från något ställe, nu vrålar ni "Svennehora!" som om ni fick betalt per tillfälle. Är det konstigt att det blir problem när ni ska in på puben? Sen skiter jag i diskriminering och den dryga jävla gubben. Kan ni anses förtryckta som grupp och därmed få saker ni vill, kan ni fan också ta ansvar för all skit ni ställer till.”

introduction to his songs, which occasionally consist of other voices speaking about him, such as in the introduction to “In the Winter Sun [I Vintersolen],” the opening track on *Welcome to the De-Population Area*:

Voice 1: ‘When the sun goes down, towards the night, towards winter. And people stand and cry, and the skis glide. The gnomes are approaching, sleighs are pulled, and then you can hear:’

Voice 2: ‘Oh no, now he’s back! That irritating fucker has sabotaged Swedish hip hop, and blasts people because they say pussy and dick. Zyklon Boom, crazy fucker, sexist, fucking asshole. And by the way, they say he’s an Anti-Semite.’¹³⁷

Or in the introduction to “Shut Up!” where a group of younger men are having a conversation about him:

Voice 1: It’s so damn unsettling.

Voice 2: Yes, exactly. I mean you just don’t know how people are thinking. He can say anything, like, racist, a Sweden Democrat. But he’s not some skinhead. He’s a well-read intellectual.

Voice 3: Yes, exactly, and those are the ones who are the most dangerous.¹³⁸

In each of these cases, Zyklon Boom quickly emerges to skewer the voices in the introduction. But he does not question the labels they apply to him. He never denies being an anti-Semite or a race ideologue; those accusations are left standing as he begins his polemic. This process plays out, in miniature form, in the song “Tiger Ridden [Tigerrytt]”¹³⁹:

We will skip equality, and crush humanism.
And I’m not talking about street warfare, but there will be a change,
And it may well take a thousand years, but in the end, we will win.

¹³⁷ När solen går ned, emot natt, emot vinter. Och folk står och gråter, och skidorna slinter. Tomtarna närmar sig, slädarna dras, se då kan man höra: Nej, nu är han tillbaka! Den där störiga jäveln har sabbat svensk hip-hop, spöar folk för dom säger snippa och snopp. Zyklon Boom, jävla tokfan, sexist, jävla skit. Förresten så tycks han vara antisemit.

¹³⁸ Det är jävligt obehagligt. Ja, precis, man vet ju aldrig hur folk tänker. Han kan säga vad som helst, typ rasist, Sverigedemokrat. Men inte någon skinnskalle, utan en påläst intellektuell. Ja, precis. Och det är de som är allra farligast.

¹³⁹ This title may refer to the 1961 book *Cavalcare la tigre* (Ride the Tiger) by Italian anti-modernist Julius Evola.

You call me a right-wing extremist; I call you a queer with eczema.¹⁴⁰

A final technique Zyklon Boom employs to subtly convey his political orientation, is to express ideological convictions through satire and irony. This technique appears in the above-quoted lyrics to “Shut Up!,” and in “Your Own Fault:”

I absolutely refuse to make a fool of myself here.
I do what I do because I am what I am.
If I punch someone in the jaw, it’s not because I’m oppressed,
not because of body stereotypes, crazy outbursts, or heavy taxes.
Like all others on this planet, I’ve had a certain chance.
But I gave it up for cheap beer, religion, and pure intolerance.¹⁴¹

Far from a resounding battle cry for nationalist ideology, Zyklon Boom’s music expresses disengagement from political categories. As discussed in Chapter 2, such disengagement can be a technique aimed at advancing nationalist ideals in a time and place where the label “nationalist” is stigmatized. These ideals are apparent in his lyrics, but Zyklon Boom presents them in ways that prevent their being interpreted as political proselytizing, as “political lyrics.”

Solguru’s writings on music shed light on possible motivations behind this approach. His most thorough commentary on music comes in a blog post on the rise of neofolk. At the beginning of the post, he explains his enthusiasm for the genre and, by omission, his distaste for other “radical right-wing” music. Of the genre, he writes:

¹⁴⁰ Vi ska skippa jämlikheten och krossa humanismen. Och jag snackar inte gatukamp, men ändring ska det bli, och det kan nog ta tusen år, men till slut så vinner vi. Du kallar mig högerextrem. Jag kallar dig bög med eksem.

¹⁴¹ Jag avstår helt brutalt ifrån att skämma ut mig här, att jag gör det jag gör beror på att jag är den jag är. Slår jag någon på käften beror det inte på förtryck, inte heller på kroppsideal, CP-ryck eller skattetryck. Liksom alla andra på vår glob har jag haft en viss chans, men jag avstod den för folköl, religion och ren intolerans.

Overblown, programmatic, banner messages, not so much suggested as forced upon the listener, are thankfully absent. Neofolk is, when it is at its best, a long ways from ‘political music’...just as much an aesthetic in itself.¹⁴²

Later in the post, he reflects on the contributions of such styles to “radical right-wing” music as a whole. Focusing on the Swedish synthesizer duo, Winglord—a group performing essentially all instrumental music, and whose CD art and promotional material features epic scenes of classical European architecture and sculpture—he writes:

Both as regards their music and concepts, you have to say that the genre, with [Winglord’s] debut CD ‘Heroica,’ has matured to something that surpasses previous expression. Here there are musical nuances - indeed, it largely focuses on neoclassical pomp and circumstance, but there are also easy-going and more finely-styled turns in the music that I, speaking as a dilettante in the area, don’t dare to explore further, but will instead leave to more competent pens. It is nonetheless a CD that in many ways lifts the genre (at least in principle) above its punk, subcultural background; away from the MIDI-synthesizer, plasticity drum sounds; above pubescent Nazi fetishism, and in to something that can be called art.”¹⁴³

Here, Solguru specifies his wishes for “radical right-wing” music, a genre rooted in subcultural punk music and “Nazi fetishism.” He praises Winglord in part for their ability to move beyond what he sees as the common elements of the genre, the low quality of the music, the delinquent subculture it inspired, and the shallowness of its ideological foundation. Solguru’s previously expressed opposition to “political

¹⁴² Överdrivna, programmatiska banderollbudskap som inte så mycket skriver som klipper till lyssnaren på näsan är också lyckligtvis frånvarande. Neofolken är, när den är som bäst, långt ifrån någon ”politisk” musik [...] utan lika mycket en estetik i sig själv. Available online, <http://solguru.Motpol.nu/?p=1276>. Accessed 02/11/2012.

¹⁴³ Både vad avser musik och koncept måste man säga att genren i och med deras debutskiva ‘Heroica’ mognat till något som vida överstiger tidigare uttryck. Här finns musikaliska nyanser – visserligen handlar det till stor del om nyklassisk pompa och ståt, men där finns även lättsammare och mer finstilt svängar i musiken som jag i egenskap av dilettant på området inte vågar ge mig in på att skildra, utan överlåter till kompetentare pennor. Det handlar i varje fall om en skiva som på många sätt lyfter genren (åtminstone principiellt) över dess punkigt subkulturella bakgrund, bort från MIDI-grundsynthens plastiga trumljud, över pubertal nazifetischism, och in i något som kan kallas konst. Available online, accessed February 12, 2012. <http://solguru.Motpol.nu/?p=1276>.

music” complements these criticisms of radical right-wing music: He calls for music that constitutes art in its own right, and he regards the use of cliché or forced political proselytizing as antithetical to this cause.

Whether Solguru and Zyklon Boom are the same person or not, Zyklon Boom’s music appears to follow this program. Dissing and chauvinistic self-aggrandizement occupy the focal point in this music, while political statements are marginalized. It is an approach that prioritizes characteristics of the art form—the rhetorical forms and sentiments often associated with rap and hip hop—and deemphasizes ideological agenda.

There are other senses, however, in which Zyklon Boom could be seen as violating Solguru’s expressed preferences. In the same post quoted from above, Solguru comments on the potential negative impact of neofolk. He expresses concern about the genre’s

general emphasis on the subcultural, which accompanies neofolk’s status as an alternative ‘lifestyle.’ Deviant clothing styles and a [...] social and cultural palette that completely strays from what most people – regardless of their intellectual level – can relate to limits the music’s influence and potential to break through. Worse, a general interest in not only alternative political or spiritual ideas, but also anything that ‘breaks the rules’ can cause the whole thing to spin into the perverse and the evil in the most absolute sense, and (perhaps more often) lead to a pointless continuation of the consumer society’s constant yearning for self-definition and stimuli.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Värre är då den allmänt subkulturella framtoningen, som sammanhänger med neofolkens status som alternativ ‘livsstil.’ Avvikande klädstil och en [...] social och kulturell palett som totalt avviker från vad de flesta människor – oavsett intellektuell nivå – kan relatera till begränsar musikens inflytande och möjlighet att få genomslag. Värre, ett generalintresse i inte bara alternativa politiska eller andliga idéer utan vad som helst som ”bryter normen” gör att det hela kan urarta i det perversa och ondskefulla i mer absolut mening, eller (kanske vanligare) leda till en poänglös fortsättning av konsumtionssamhällets ständiga strävan efter självdefinition och stimuli. Available online, accessed February 11, 2012.<http://solguru.Motpol.nu/?p=1276>.

The initial criticisms above could be, and in radical nationalist circles often are, issued against rap and reggae. These genres maintain salient associations with subcultural behaviors, indeed with “deviant clothing styles and a [...] social and cultural palette” outside the mainstream. Perhaps Solguru thinks rap has moved beyond its subcultural confines, offering today an expressive form that everyday Swedes can engage and identify with—a useful vehicle for metapolitics. Perhaps he holds a personal affinity for the genre, and therefore exempts it from the standards he applies to other music styles. Or perhaps Solguru and Zyklon Boom are not the same person.

Solguru seldom mentions hip hop in his posts, and he never discusses the genre in any depth. Zyklon Boom, on the other hand, occasionally reflects on hip hop in his lyrics. This commentary begins to frame the genre as an art distinguished through its rhetorical forms—not through any association with a subculture, race, or, for that matter, a political position. One of his most direct references to hip hop comes in “Badass Party”:

You cause problems when you come here and think you’re something.
When I get the carving knife, I will be showing you.
I run around and laugh at you while you walk on crutches.
I have incredibly funny humor, but I mainly joke about airplane crashes.
So don’t be bitter if you get dissed, just because you have a spare tire
[excessive fat].
Because hip hop is all about coming up with amusing stories, just like
holocaust historians [do].¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ “[D]u stör, när du kommer hit och tror du är något, när jag hämtat förskäraren så är det dig jag lär något. Jag springer runt och skrattar åt dig när du går på kryckor. Jag har skitrolig humor, fast jag skämtar främst om flygolyckor. Så bli inte sur om du blir dissad, bara för att du har bilringar. För hiphop handlar främst om att göra roliga liknelser som förintelseskildringar.”

In “Badass Party,” Zyklon Boom links hip hop to rhetorical features, to “dissing” in entertaining, imaginative ways. He illustrates this claim by referring to scholars of the Holocaust who, he implies, falsify historical fact. Hip hop, for him, is not about alternative clothing styles, rebellious behavior, or decrying oppression. His commitment to creative dissing, demonstrated in song after song, is what qualifies his music as hip hop. Thus, the definition offered in “Badass Party” offers him an avenue to escape charges that his music is subcultural or political—associations that would devalue the music according to Solguru.

Further commentary on rap in Zyklon Boom’s songs dissolves the notion that the genre would have fixed associations with a subculture. Such a stance flows from his move to link hip hop with rhetorical forms rather than people or behaviors. But he implies more specifically that the genre is dynamic enough to expand beyond any one subculture. He does this by criticizing other hip hop artists, by associating them with negative cultural trends that he, despite his use of hip hop, is apparently not a part of. In his song “Modern Guy [Modern Kille]”, for example, he links the popularity of American rapper 50 Cent with the decline of masculine behavior and the rise of self-contempt in Sweden:

What is that scarecrow standing there, pathetic, with tight sweatpants and a
Palestinian scarf?
Why it’s you, you who get it, a real genius.
Can I talk to you for a moment, you modern guy?
Because I have a few questions, a few articles: For one, where the hell are
your testicles?
It is not because of some hormone deficiency, because it’s clear you aren’t
taking steroids.
Second, how could things have gone so wrong? Is it due to a lack of animal
fat?
You have problematized all aspects of existence, except for all the babble
coming from political sects.

You believe in activism and justice, that equality should exist, and you don't have an excuse because you're not even a woman.
In your house you don't get to make any decision, your wife has granny panties while you have a g-string.
She'd much rather listen to Bang [feminist magazine] than to you, and she obeys their every word, an independent gal.
But what the hell are you going to do, my modern friend?
You can't possibly be gay, because gays like men.
You're a nothing, a sissy, a fucking joke.
Are you surprised that your son likes 50 Cent?¹⁴⁶

At the end of this verse, the son turns to 50 Cent's hypermasculinity to fill a void left by his modern father. Zyklon Boom's interpretation frames the popularity of artists like 50 Cent as an undesirable outgrowth of rising progressivism in Sweden. He does not specify why listening to 50 Cent is harmful—this artist's hypermasculinity is not obviously different from Zyklon Boom's. It could be because of 50 Cent's additional endorsements of capitalism, drugs, and crime, or perhaps because of his foreignness, his blackness. But rap music itself would not constitute an affront to Zyklon Boom's cause. With his own existence, and through his criticism of other artists, he paints hip hop music in Sweden as a site for ideological and social battles rather than a weapon of a particular interest, a scene like Germany's.

The artist Juice carries Zyklon Boom's reach into the symbolic world of hip hop a step further. Juice is a young man named Rasmus who lives in Stockholm and

¹⁴⁶ Vad är det där för fågelskrämman som står där skral, i tigha mjukisar och virkad palestinasjal? Det är visst du, du som fattat, ett riktigt snille. Får jag prata med dig lite du moderna kille? För jag har några frågor, ett fåtal artiklar. För det första, var i helvete är dina testiklar? Det är väl inte någon hormonbrist utav vilken du lider, för det syns att du aldrig käkat steroider. För det andra, hur i hela friden gick det så snett? Kan det bero på någon brist på animaliskt fett? Du har problematiserat alla tillvarons aspekter utom allt det snack du fått ifrån politiska sekter. Du tror på kamp och rättvisa, att jämställdhet ska finnas, och har inte ens någon ursäkt för du är inte ens kvinna. I ditt hem får du inte bestämma någonting, din brud har mormorstrosor medan du har string. Hon lyssnar mycket hellre på Bang än på dig, och hon lyder varje stavelse (en självständig tjej). Men vad fan ska du göra min moderne vän? Du kan knappast bli böj för bögar gillar män. Du är en nolla, en fjolla, ett jävla skämt. Är det konstigt att din son gillar 50 cent?

began making music in 2006. Like Zyklon Boom, he most often raps solo and releases his tracks online, uploading his first song in 2007. His most popular track is “Now You Know [Nu Vet Ni].” “Now You Know” is included in Nordisk.nu’s online radio and uploads of the song on Youtube.com have been viewed over 160,000 times. “Now You Know” is an assault on the rappers Alby’s Kings [Albys Kungar]. Alby’s Kings is a group from the immigrant dominated southern Stockholm suburb of Alby. Immigrants, some refugees from former Yugoslavia, comprise the group. Though they haven’t experienced any significant commercial success, Alby’s Kings gained attention in nationalist circles because of the crude insults of ethnic Swedes in their songs. Juice released “Now You Know” as a response to these songs, targeting the group’s front man Abel in particular. The track won Juice widespread adoration in nationalist circles—even among individuals who otherwise oppose the use of rap in the movement.

All of your songs have the same theme,
going to hate on me because I’m a so-called Svenne?
Albys Kungar, what a bunch of idiots.
You think you’re the best, but everyone is against you. [...]
And if you’re going to hate Sweden then go home to your own country.
Yes, you talk a lot of shit, that you’re the kings of Alby,
and you think you are the best, but you’re suburban brats.

You were supposed to start the dissing, but I just can’t wait.
Do I finally get to diss you? Damn, how I’ve been waiting for this.
You don’t understand how fucking terrible you are,
but it’s all your fault because you shouldn’t be here.
You put down Svenne, but you must be joking, since your greatest wish is to
speak Swedish.
Is it bad to be a Swede when you yourself moved here?
Abel, he’s a queer, and he’ll be slaughtered.

(Chorus:)
So now you know, that you’ll be slaughtered again.
So now you know, that it’s time to go back home.

Because now you know, that everyone hates you,
so cut the shit because nobody can take it anymore.
(chorus)

You want to win against me? You don't have a chance.
Abel, he is gay, everyone knows that he's a tranny.
You don't rhyme at all, and have a cock in your throat.
You're even more hated than the hooligan dance.
You had your dick clipped, never get any girls.
How did you get here? Why, you came in a container.
You hid out for years afterwards.
Yes, you sought asylum and then came up out of your hole. How did you breathe?
Yes, you are so fucking hated, both you and your friend,
What the hell do you know about the street?
From this moment forward, Albys Kungar will be known as Alby's Little Bitches.

'Hey my name is Abel, I'm 20 years old.
I don't have a foreskin, but it's dense with pubic hair.
Don't get any girls, so I fucked a camel.
Hate Sweden, but there is nothing wrong with that.'

(Chorus)
(Chorus)¹⁴⁷

Set to a beat from American rapper Eminem's song "Lose Yourself," enhanced with chorus effects, and rapped slowly with an unapologetic, unwavering inflection, the sonic character of "Now You Know" matches the aggressive nature of the lyrics. It is,

¹⁴⁷ "I alla era låtar så har ni samma ämne. Ska nu börja hata för jag är så kallad Svenne. Albys Kungar vad är det för idioter, ni tror ni är bäst medans alla är emot er. [...]Och om ni ska hata Sverige så stick hem till erat land. Ja, ni snackar massa skit att ni är Albys Kungar, och ni tror ni är bäst men ni är förortsungar. Du skulle börja dessa men jag pallar inte vänta. Ska jag äntligen få dessa er, fan vad jag har längtat. Du fattar inte hur jävla dåliga ni är, men allt är erat fel för ni ska inte vara här. Ni rackar ner på Svenne men du måste väl skämta när din högsta önskan är att kunna svenska. Är det dåligt att var svensk när ni själva har flyttat hit? Abel han är bög och han blir slaktad på ett vis. (Chorus:) Så nu vet ni, att ni blir slaktade igen. Så nu vet ni, att det är dags att åka hem. För nu vet ni, att alla hatar er, så lägg ner med skiten för ingen orkar mer. (Chorus). Vill ni vinna emot mig, men ni har ingen chans, va? Abel han är gay, alla vet att han är transa. Du rimmar inte alls och har en kuk i halsen. Du är ännu mer hatad än hulligandansen. Du blev omskuren på tasken, får aldrig några tjejer. Hur kom du hit? Du kom visst i en container. Du gömde dig sedan i minst flera år. Ja du sökte asyl, kom sedan upp ur ditt hål. Var fick du luft ifrån? Ja, men du är så jävla hatad både du och din vän, vad fan vet ni om gatan? Från och med nu, byter Albys Kungar namn till Albys Horungar. 'Hej mitt namn är Abel jag är 20 år, har ingen förhud, men fet med pubishår. Får inga tjejer så jag knullar en kamel. Hatar Sverige men det är väl inget fel.' (Chorus) (Chorus)."

as I experience it, the most threatening and frightening nationalist song produced in Sweden.

Juice does not attack rap or hip hop culture in “Now You Know.” His wholesale adoption of a beat by Eminem—a world famous white rapper—could be an attempt to neutralize hip hop’s blackness. But there are no concrete examples, in “Now You Know” nor his other songs or promotional material, that he sees rap as essentially anti-Swedish, anti-nationalist, or black. He uses rap and its rhetorical tropes as a tool against his adversaries. Like Zyklon Boom, he impugns his adversary’s manhood, charging that Abel has unsavory anatomy and is unsuccessful in his courting of women. But Juice’s embrace of prevailing hip hop conceptual frameworks goes beyond the male chauvinist one-upmanship that Keller uses to define rap (2009). Juice self-applies the derogatory term “Svenne”—a term commonly used in non-Nordic immigrant circles to describe ethnic Swedes. This move recalls African American rappers’ embrace of the term “nigger” in their music, and constitutes an attempt to establish ethnic Swedish victimization. Establishing such victimization, in turn, facilitates Juice’s defiant tone, his embrace of hip hop’s “oppositional ethos.” He further adds to images of Swedes as threatened by repeatedly suggesting that Abel hates Swedes and Sweden.

During the song, Juice questions Abel’s rhyming abilities and knowledge of the street. Competing over “street cred” is a theme as endemic to hip hop as it is foreign to other nationalist music. The line, “What the hell do you know about the street?” represents uncommon, if not unprecedented, participation by Swedish nationalists in the symbolic world of hip hop. Here, Juice seeks to excel in, rather

than ridicule, Albys Kungar's standards of social prowess, endorsing street knowledge as a virtue, and claiming superior access to it.

Juice's regard for rap contrasts with that of groups like N' Socialist Soundsystem in Germany—white nationalist rap groups whose primary aim is to undermine rap. Likewise, he departs from nationalist attitudes like that represented in Brigad Wotan's album cover (Example 4 above) and the National Democrats' party principle program, where hip hop culture is portrayed as destructive and inherently foreign to Sweden. Like Zyklon Boom, Juice implies that rap is not antithetical to Swedish ethnonationalism. Rather, it offers an opportunity to assert pride in being Swedish—in being a Svenske—and for affirming opposition to immigration and multiculturalism.

These Swedish artists nonetheless differ in their willingness to assimilate expressive and symbolic forms common in rap. Zyklon Boom's music incorporates the beats, chanted vocals, samples, and lyrical themes of male self-aggrandizement to mark it as rap. Juice's music also includes these elements. However, Juice expands his reach into hip hop's rhetorical and conceptual realm by also framing himself as a victim of ethnic discrimination, and by challenging his opponent's rhyming ability and knowledge of the street. Put another way, while Zyklon Boom adopts rap's basic sonic elements, as well as one of its most general lyrical themes, Juice's lyrics use additional conceptual tropes more specific to hip hop. Whereas Zyklon Boom recruits hip hop forms to express ideology (chanted text set to a beat), Juice also recruits hip hop ideological content (valuing of rhyming ability, knowledge of the street, ethnic victimization).

Commentary

Both in and beyond Sweden, online discussion forums provide the main arenas where nationalists debate rap and hip hop music and its place in their cause. Though radical nationalists in the United States have yet to produce a major hip hop act, the American white nationalist forum Stormfront.org has hosted some of the longest and most heated discussion threads on the topic. These debates necessarily focus on artists from Europe, and often showcase passionate arguments in support of or opposition to using rap and hip hop in nationalist politics. A post by user “45ACP” on August 27, 2011 offers an example of those arguments against the genre:

There is no such thing as 'White Nationalist Hip Hop.' Such a thing is not possible. Its only mongrelized wigger crap. Race and culture go hand in hand, one cannot exist without the other. The controlled decay of white culture over the last few decades has produced the mongrelized wigger society we have today.¹⁴⁸

User “45ACP” posits an essential link between expressive forms and race, and therefore, by defining hip hop music as non-white culture, deems the idea of white nationalist hip hop music nonsensical. Accordingly, attempts at creating such music build nothing other than corrupt, mutant culture. Those advancing positive opinions of the genre often attack the foundational concepts behind arguments like user “45ACP’s.” User “Foust” in the same thread, for example, qualifies claims that “race and culture go hand in hand,” writing on August 28, 2011:

Organized sound (music) doesn't support or contradict any message, lyrics do that. The music is all created on devices invented by Whites. Hiphop is an American invention. White technology, American invention. Music is a tool. In the hands of good people, it's a good tool...like guns.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Available online, accessed February 12, 2012.<http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t827233-2/>.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

After dismissing the notion that musical sounds possess inherent social or political characters, user “Foust” then introduces a contrasting justification for using hip hop music. In subtle contradiction of his opening claim, the user seeks to imbue the genre with a white essence, an essence derived from the fact that, as he sees it, hip hop music is produced using white inventions. He then closes by reverting to his original conceptual framework and arguing that hip hop can assume any meaning depending on the agent employing it. The basic arguments appearing in exchanges like these—that hip hop is essentially non-white, that it is essentially white, or that it has no essential meaning whatsoever—surface in debates among Swedish activists.

In Sweden, the online forum Nordisk.nu has hosted the largest threaded-discussions on nationalist rap. The more than 20,000 users on this online forum tend to be younger, and are therefore more likely to have listened to rap and hip hop music than activists in other forums and organizations. Whatever additional familiarity with the genre their age may bring them, however, does not automatically translate into approval. Various statements in these threaded-discussions dismiss the concept of white nationalist rap altogether based on rap’s blackness. User “xBXSx” in one such thread on May 22, 2007, writes, “hip hop was developed for monkeys. By monkeys – for monkeys!”¹⁵⁰ Activists who define rap as black tend to write short statements, like “xBXSx’s:” If rap is essentially black, then arguing for its exclusion from the movement is uncomplicated.

¹⁵⁰ “hiphop är utvecklad för apor. Av apor - för apor!” Available online, accessed February 19, 2012. <http://www.nordisk.nu/showthread.php?t=269>.

Most often, however, activists critical of rap move beyond blanket, race-based definitions of the genre, and instead point to rap's social connotations. For example, on April 26, 2007, user "Daniel" writes,

I myself think that it would feel extremely wrong to sit around and listen to rap, whether it is nationalist or not. Just like many have said here, it isn't the music style that does it, but the gangster culture around the music. But the music has to a certain extent grown up out of that gangster/ghetto culture, and I don't think, regardless of the lyrics, that music belongs in nationalist Sweden at all.¹⁵¹

"Daniel," while stopping short of looking for racial elements in rap's sound, wavers as to the music's link with "gangster culture"—a culture he deems irreconcilable with nationalism. At first, he writes that rap itself is not the problem, but then he suggests that the genre may be inseparable from problematic "gangster culture."

User "Fester" takes this claim a step further. On April 30, 2007, this user writes to supporters of nationalist rap:

I don't understand how you are thinking. All nationalists' object of hatred today is decadent skinhead culture. And now that it is about to disappear, you want to go for a new, equally, if not more despicable, subculture? Because fuck if that's going to end at 'the music.'¹⁵²

The user implies that rap music is not his concern. Apparently, were nationalist use of the genre indeed to "end at the music," little harm to the movement would have been done. But "fester" argues that use of rap music will lead activists to a

¹⁵¹ "Tycker även själv att det skulle kännas extremt fel att sitta och lyssna på rap, även om det är Nationel [sic] elr inte. Precis som många redan sagt här så är det inte direkt musikstilen som gör det, utan gangsterkulturen runt musiken. Men, musikstilen har väl till viss del och växt upp [sic] ur denna gangster/ghetto kulturen, och jag tycker inte, oavsett texten att den musiken hör hemma i det Nationella Sverige överhuvudtage." Ibid.

¹⁵² "Jag förstår inte hur ni tänker? Alla nationalisters hatobjekt idag är den dekadenta skinheadkulturen och nu när den väl håller på att försvinna så vill ni satsa på en ny, minst lika vidrig, subkultur. För det kommer så fan heller att stanna vid 'musiken'." Ibid.

destructive lifestyle. Adoption of the lifestyle, rather than the music per se, is what most concerns this user.

Other opponents see the move to adopt rap as capitulation to the social and political trends they resist. On April 24, 2007, user “Tobbe76” writes,

There is nothing nationalist about rap/hip hop. How much shall we conform to a society we want to change? What will be the next thing we should accept, drugs?¹⁵³

User “Sloban” advances this argument when responding to supporters who think rap will enable outreach to non-nationalists. On April 29, 2007, he writes,

All you who like hip hop and want it to be in the nationalist cause can start living like them also. So it's all about us matching everyone else? Get rid of hip hop. [...] Why not also start making nationalist porn? That would certainly attract a few pedophiles and gang rapists. But you all surely think [that would] really be great.¹⁵⁴

And later in that same thread:

Time to start listening to hip hop and hip hoping a little now. That is the future for our race, imitate everything and everyone. That is what our race will live off of, being bloodsuckers like Jews, and rapists like negros, and robbers like darkies, and plunderers like gypsies.¹⁵⁵

Voices like “Sloban’s” and “Tobbe76’s,” argue that efforts to broaden the appeal of nationalism through metapolitics can venture so far from the movement’s core ideas and expressive forms that they cease to convey nationalism. As “Sloban” sees it, rap is irreversibly non-white.

¹⁵³ “Finns inget nationellt med rap/hiphop. Hur mycket ska vi anpassa oss till ett samhälle vi vill ändra på? Vad blir nästa sak vi ska acceptera, knark?” *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ “Ni som gillar hip hop och vill att det ska finnas i de nationella leden, kan börja leva som de också då. Så allt går ut på att vi ska rätta oss efter alla andra? Bort med hiphopen. [...] Varför inte börja göra nationalistporn också? Kan säkert locka några pedofiler och gruppvåldtäktsmän. Men det tycker ni säkert är jättebra.” *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ “Dags att börja lyssna på hiphop och hippa hoppa lite nu. Det är visst det som är framtiden för vår ras, ta efter allt och alla. Det ska våran ras leva av, bli utsugare som judar och våldtäktsmän som negrer och rånare som blattar och zigenarer som plundrare.” *Ibid.*

As in American discussion threads, supporters of nationalist rap in Sweden, who on Nordisk.nu outnumbered opponents by about a five-to-one ratio, tend to form their arguments by attempting to either indigenize rap or dispel notions that music has inherent social, cultural, or racial aspects. One individual who frequently employs both of these techniques is Nordisk.nu user “Bockas,” his most representative post being the following, submitted on April 21, 2007:

Rock music is also ‘negro music,’ and most other music builds from rock music. All metal, for example, is built on rock music, and, following that same logic, all ‘freedom rock’ [or white power rock] is also negro music.

And to mix things up: Perhaps the biggest rapper in the world is white? And he says specifically that he is not a ‘wigger,’ and that he is: ‘a piece of white trash and proud of it.’ Is he best at being a negro?

Further you can draw pretty strong parallels between creating rap and old ancient Nordic balladry, and if you have heard *rímur* (which I doubt), that is exactly what you hear – Icelandic old men who ‘rap,’ even without music, or by sitting and stamping the beat (that can be compared to ‘beatbox’ if we would like to). Another phenomenon in the world of hip hop, that also interestingly enough is represented in the Nordic culture, is ‘battles;’ that is, that you without preparing and in verse shall taunt each other in the cleverest way possible in front of an audience. There are many examples of these ‘nidvisor,’ for example, Lokasenna in The Edda is one big display of ‘battle skills’ from Loki’s side.¹⁵⁶

In this statement, “Bockas” first attempts to undermine the notion that rap poses to introduce blackness to the movement. He argues that the music styles Swedish

¹⁵⁶ ”Rockmusik är ju också ‘negermusik’, och den mesta andra musiken bygger ju på rockmusik. All metal är ju t.ex. baserad på rockmusik, och all ‘frihetsrock’ är med samma logik också negermusik. Och för att skoja till det: Världens kanske störste rappare är vit? Och han säger uttryckligen att han inte är en ‘wigger’, samt att han är: ‘a piece of white trash and proud of it’. Är han alltså bäst på att vara neger? I övrigt så kan man ju dra ganska starka paralleller mellan uppbyggnaden av rapmusik och gammal fornnordisk skaldskap, och om du hört *rímur* (vilket jag tvivlar på), så är det precis vad du hör - gamla isländska gubbar som ‘rappar’, och det dessutom utan musik, eller genom att sitta och stampa takten (det kan vi jämföra med ‘beatbox’ om vi så vill). Ett annat fenomen inom hip-hopvärlden, som också lustigt nog finns representerat i den nordiska kulturen, är ‘battles’; dvs. att man utan förberedelser och på vers skall smäda varandra på skickligast möjliga vis inför åskådare. Det finns åtskilliga exempel på dessa ‘nidvisor’, t.ex. så är Lokasenna i Eddan en enda uppvisning i ‘battle skills’ från Lokes sida.” Ibid.

activists currently accept as nationalist are themselves black. “Bockas” then moves to whiten rap, and he tries to do this in two ways. First, he notes that white artist Eminem is one of the most popular rappers in the world, and that Eminem has not felt the need to deny his racial identity as a result of his music. Second, and perhaps most daringly, he attempts to provide a Nordic precedent for elements of rap music structure and practice. He finds such precedent in *rímur*—the metered, rhymed epic poetry tradition of Iceland. With these comparisons, “Bockas” implies that nationalists need not feel that listening to or creating rap compromises their allegiances to Nordic culture or the white race.

“Bockas” is only one of many attempts by Swedish nationalists to indigenize rap. Other attempts appear in the comments field for an article by prominent Motpol.nu blogger Oskerei praising Zyklon Boom. On January 15, 2007, user “Oliver” responded to the article, agreeing with Oskerei’s compliments to Zyklon Boom, and adding,

...and further, [Zyklon Boom] is not ‘rap,’ but instead rhyming poetry, which according to European tradition emerged among British poets during the Middle Ages.¹⁵⁷

This approach parallels not only “Bockas,” but also argumentative techniques explored above among the French white nationalist hip hop group, Basic Celtos. “Oliver” denies that Zyklon Boom’s music is rap, choosing instead to generalize the style to the seemingly more universal category of “rhyming poetry,” much like Basic Celtos describes their style as “not singing.” The most ambitious effort to reconcile

¹⁵⁷ “Japp, dessutom är ZB inte ‘rap’ utan rimmad dikt, vilket enligt europeisk tradition uppfanns av brittiska diktare på medeltiden.” Available online, accessed February 19, 2012. <http://oskerei.motpol.nu/?p=349>.

rap with Swedish ethnonationalism comes from an author named “Alexis,” writing for the anti-multiculturalist Swedish Nihilist Underground Society. In an online article about the black roots of jazz and hip hop music, the author makes the following statement,

We are all too familiar with the prevailing climate in Sweden, where immigrant youths play up a ‘gangster role’ based on African American rappers. What is interesting in this case is not that they look past their own original culture, but that they think that hip hop is ‘black music’ that rebels against white (European) society. Surprisingly enough, even that is a modern, multicultural myth. Hip hop and rap were not discovered by blacks at all, but were instead discovered by the Germanic synthesizer pop band, Kraftwerk, which basically laid the foundation for modern hip hop as the youth today know it.¹⁵⁸

Though not directed at the debate over nationalist rap, this article was nonetheless circulated in discussion threads on Nordisk.nu and other online nationalist forums.

With this approach, activists were able to suggest, not only that Zyklon Boom and Juice were not making black music, but that rappers like 50 Cent, Snoop Doggy Dogg, or The Latin Kings were in fact producing white music.

The opposition to rap shown in these debates conforms to established intellectual trends and conceptual methods in race-conscious European radical nationalism. Rap is here treated as antithetical to whiteness, and as a vessel for destructive, deviant behaviors. Further, critics of Zyklon Boom and Juice treat the genre as a fixture of mainstream, multiculturalist, anti-Swedish society, such that, by

¹⁵⁸ “Vi är alltför bekanta med det rådande klimatet i Sverige, där invandrarungdomar spelar upp en ‘gangsterroll’ utifrån afro-amerikanska rappare. Det intressanta i sammanhanget är inte så mycket att de förbiser sin egen ursprungliga kultur, utan att de tror att hip hop är ‘svart musik’, som rebellerar mot det vita (europeiska) samhället. Lustigt nog är även detta en modern, mångkulturell myt. Hip hop och rap uppfanns inte alls av svarta, utan av det germanska synthpopbandet Kraftwerk, som praktiskt taget lade grunden till modern hip hop så som ungdomar i dag känner till den.” Available online, accessed February 19, 2012, <http://www.anus.com/tribes/snus/nihilism/artiklar/alexis/svartvit/>.

producing rap, nationalists perpetuate the forces they claim to fight against. Noticeably absent from these charges were claims that rap music and hip hop culture were spread by Jewish interests in order to cultivate drug use and self-contempt in white society, ultimately weakening that society. Such claims are otherwise common in white nationalist circles in the United States and Europe.

Apologists for nationalist rap, on the other hand, attack the notion that Zyklon Boom and Juice use an inherently anti-nationalist genre. At times, this attack attempts to place rap in older Nordic or European music traditions, or deny that the music produced by these nationalist artists is indeed rap. Still other times, activists seem inclined to claim rap as white music. And while many of these arguments appear strained—appear dismissive of much of rap’s history—that strain testifies to activists’ desire to participate in rap and hip hop culture. Nationalists’ willingness to advance eccentric histories and definitions of rap, and even assail dominant white power punk and metal as “negro music,” illustrates an intense drive to reconcile rap with the ideology and practice of radical nationalism. To the extent this drive aims to embrace Afro-diasporic musics more generally, it broke new ground in 2010.

“Dear Neighbor, Take Me by the Hand”

In a move that to the best of my and my informants’ knowledge is unprecedented in European and American radical nationalism, activists from the organization Nordic Youth produced a nationalist reggae song. Nordic Youth is an ethnopluralist political action group founded by disaffected members of the National Democrats youth chapter. The group gained recognition in nationalist circles for carrying out a string of high-profile demonstrations and vandalizations, including egging refugee housing, casting pig’s blood on holocaust memorials,

spraying graffiti in major Swedish cities (described above), and destroying what they consider to be decadent art. But before any of these events occurred, Nordic Youth attracted nationalist and non-nationalist attention by releasing the reggae song “Imagine [Tänk]” at their founding on January 30, 2010. The song features a standard reggae brass, guitar, bass, trap set, and bongo drum accompaniment, and is sung in Swedish with a Jamaican accent. A single individual from Western Sweden recorded all of the tracks for the song, and the lyrics, listed below, were written by a group of Nordic Youth members from Gothenburg.

Imagine living in a country populated only with your own kind.
Imagine if my dreams were to come true, in a land where my forefathers
toiled,
that one nation shall be one nation,
one nation where people take each other by the hand.
So now’s the time to fight back, my friend,
against their sickly lies and distortions.

Losing your country is terrible indeed, so rise up, ethnopluralist!

(refrain:)
All have a right to their own homeland, indeed,
so dear neighbor take me by the hand.
Stand tall, grow up secure,
because together we can solve the problems (repeat).

Imagine living in a land, a land without buildings ablaze.
I promise, there is potential, but our government doesn’t want to bother.
Imagine saying what you want, reacting,
no longer having to sit still.
Imagine seeing your children grow up
without being robbed by an immigrant mob.

Losing your country is terrible indeed, so rise up, ethnopluralist!
(refrain)

Nordic Youth – together we carry the message forward, together we are
strong.
Forever hold the banner high, and during these dire times,

we break out in song to make our statement, so come on now.

Losing your country is terrible indeed, so rise up, ethnopluralist!
(refrain)¹⁵⁹

“Imagine” almost instantly generated controversy within the larger movement. In the days following its release, Nordic Youth received large amounts of critical and laudatory e-mails, and discussion forums dedicated to the song emerged on almost every major nationalist online forum. Two weeks after the song’s release, Nordic Youth leader and “Imagine” co-producer Andreas Nyberg issued the following statement on the organization’s website to calm critical voices:

Our goal is to make it publicly acceptable to be a nationalist in Sweden. [...]

As I write this, 6,229 people have listened to the song Imagine on Youtube, and the song has been downloaded hundreds of times from our homepage. [...] We knew ahead of time that a lot of people would not like this decision, but we also knew that there were those in the movement who were ready for such progress. It is important to emphasize that our decision was not based on a desire to see Sweden’s youth listen to more reggae. We made this decision because we wanted to start a discussion about the future of the movement and at the same time we wanted to increase our chances of reaching the broader public.

We are very mindful of our Swedish culture, but we feel that it is very important that we can change the form of how we reach out with our message without changing the message itself. We must adjust the form of our message to the society we live in today. We must be ready to change the way

¹⁵⁹ “Tänk att få leva i ett land, där bara dina egna fanns. Tänk om mina drömmar skulle bli verklighet, ett land [där] mina förfäder slet, om att ett land skall vara ett land, ett land där folket tar varandra i hand. Så nu är det dags att ge tillbaka kamrat, mot deras vidriga lögner och tjat. (refrain:) Att förlora sitt land är tråkigt - javisst, så res dig upp nu/här ethnopluralist. Alla har rätt till sitt egna land, javisst - så kära granne, omfamna min hand. Stå rak i rygg! Väx upp, var trygg! För tillsammans skall vi lösa problemen. Alla har rätt till sitt egna land, javisst - så kära granne, omfamna min hand. Stå rak i rygg! Väx upp, var trygg! För tillsammans skall vi lösa problemen (..lösa problemen). Tänk att få leva i ett land, Ett land utan byggnader i brand. Jag lovar att det finns potential, men vår regering ser frågan som sval. Tänk att få säga som man vill, agera och slippa sitta still. Tänk att få se sina barn växa upp, utan att bli rånad av en invandrargrupp. (refrain). Nordisk Ungdom - tillsammans för vi budskapet vidare, tillsammans är vi starka. Håll alltid fanan högt, och i dessa dystrar dagar brister vi ut i allsång för att få ut vårt budskap. (refrain).”

we think, we must be open to using other resources to make nationalism accepted as a normal part of youths' everyday lives.¹⁶⁰

Nyberg justified releasing the song due to its metapolitical utility—its ability to carry the nationalist message to new sectors of society—and this goal seems to have been achieved. “Imagine” likely gained more attention in nationalist online forums, as well as in the mainstream media, than any other piece of contemporary nationalist music in Sweden. Further, journalist Fredrik Strage, writing for Sweden’s largest morning paper, *Dagens Nyheter*, offered what amounted to a compliment to the song’s producers: “while so-called white-power rock is in general much worse than regular rock, ‘Imagine’ is just a little worse than the Swedish reggae that has been produced during the last decade.”¹⁶¹

Strage also notes that the song’s lyrics “evoke a bizarre ‘one love’ feeling.” He writes this in reference to Bob Marley’s reconciliation and forgiveness-themed hit “One Love.” Indeed, though “Imagine’s” lyrics scold the Swedish government, speak disparagingly about “immigrant mobs,” and foreshadow “losing [one’s] country,” the overall tone of the text is positive. Themes of unity, fellowship, and resistance fill the

¹⁶⁰ “Vårt mål är att se till att det blir allmänt accepterat att vara nationalist i Sverige. [...] I skrivande stund har 6229 personer lyssnat på låten Tänk på Youtube, dessutom har låten laddats ner hundratals gånger från vår hemsida. [...] Redan innan vi släppte låten visste vi att många skulle ogilla beslutet, men vi visste även att vissa i rörelsen var mogna för denna utveckling. Det är viktigt att poängtera att valet inte berodde på att vi vill få svenska ungdomar att lyssna mer på reggae. Beslutet togs istället för att vi ville få en diskussion om rörelsens framtid samtidigt som vi vill öka chanserna att nå ut till den breda allmänheten. Vi är mycket måna om vår svenska kultur, men vi anser att det är väldigt viktigt att vi kan ändra på formen på hur vi når ut med vårt budskap och inte budskapet i sig. Vi måste anpassa formen på budskapet på det samhälle vi lever i idag. Vi måste vara redo att ändra vårt sätt att tänka, vi måste vara benägna att ta till andra medel för att göra nationalismen accepterad som ett vanligt inslag i ungdomens vardag.” Available online, accessed October 30, 2011, <http://nordiskungdom.se/nio-dagar-med-nu-och-atta-dagar-med-laten-tank/>.

¹⁶¹ [S]å kallad vit makt-rock i allmänhet är mycket sämre än vanlig rock är ‘Tänk’ endast lite sämre än den svenska hippiereggae som producerats det senaste decenniet [...] framkallar en bisarr ‘one love’-känsla. Available online, accessed October 30, 2011, <http://www.dn.se/blogg/pastan/2010/02/26/fredriks-kronika-det-finns-en-framtid-for-nazistisk-reggae-2570/>.

refrains and many of the verses, with lines like “dear neighbor take me by the hand,” “one nation shall be one nation, one nation where people take each other by the hand,” and “together we can solve the problems.” A nationalist song with a “one-love feeling” may indeed seem bizarre to an outsider like Strage. But “Imagine’s” lyrics resonate with emerging rhetorical and intellectual trends in the national movement, with themes of defiant self-love and the right to difference. Considering the prevailing rhetoric in certain nationalist circles today, reggae might appear an especially well-suited fit for nationalist music.

Nyberg emphasized this fit in our conversations about the song. Though he justified “Imagine” in his official written statement by emphasizing the song’s metapolitical potential, in our conversations, he indicated that he was also motivated by what he saw as a more specific link between reggae, his organization’s ideological profile, and the type of rhetoric he strives for in his political engagement.

A lot of rap and reggae in Sweden - there are influences of nationalism. Even that with ethnopluralism that our organization has as an ideology, with different people in different countries - different nations quite simply - in order to create cultural and ethnic conditions so that all different peoples can survive, that it doesn’t get blended up in some gray mass - we oppose that. We see nationalism as an ideology of love, not as a hate ideology that many others see it as. It is about love for your own people, but also love for there being many different cultures that can be experienced. [...] But there are a lot of influences of this, first and foremost in hip hop in Sweden, but also in part in reggae. [...] [reggae is a genre] with an eye towards the Self, but even love for the Other, but not at the same time - from a distance quite simply. But nonetheless love, I mean, reggae is very - it is like the music genre of love (Interview, Andreas Nyberg, July 4, 2011).¹⁶²

¹⁶² “Mycket rap och reggae i Sverige, det finns ju inslag av nationalism. Även det här med ethnopluralism som vår organisation har som ideologi, det här med olika människor i olika länder, olika nationer helt enkelt, för att skapa kulturella och etniska förutsättningar för alla olika folk att överleva, att det inte blandas upp i en grå massa, som vi ställer oss emot. Vi ser nationalism som en kärleksideologi, inte som en hatideologi som många andra ser det som. Det handlar om kärlek till sitt eget folk men också kärleken till att det ska finnas många olika kulturer som ska kunna upplevas. [...] Men det finns mycket inslag av det här, framförallt i hip hoppen i Sverige men också delvis i reggae.

Nyberg opens by suggesting a link between ethnopluralism and reggae. But he moves to stress the genre's theme of love, a theme he claims is integral to nationalism. Reggae's association with loving rhetoric provided Nyberg and the other producers an opportunity to distance themselves from earlier trends in nationalist music making. Of "Imagine" he says:

It isn't singing about some hate for something, right? It is singing above all about love for the Self, and that makes it positive, it isn't that negativity you find in other nationalist songs, that we should hang people and so forth. Instead, this is a positive contribution to the freedom struggle. And if you can do it through music, then you can reach many more people (ibid).¹⁶³

Nyberg frames nationalist music as being in need of reform. "Other nationalist music" features threatening, violent negativity—messages that conflict with, rather than advance his understanding of nationalism. Reggae, as a genre of love, offers an ideal medium to pursue reform and project the image of a positive nationalism to more people.

This justification may answer the concerns of some of "Imagine's" critics. But the wider nationalist community would find other reasons to support or condemn the initiative. The online debate on nationalist reggae differed in multiple ways from those on rap. Whereas I estimate that roughly one out of every five posts in the forums on rap were critical of Juice or Zyklon Boom, nearly half of all posts on "Imagine" expressed disapproval. Unlike debates on nationalist rappers, the

[...] med blicken till dina egna, men även kärleken till de andra fast inte på samma gång, fast, på ett avstånd, helt enkelt. Men ändå kärlek, jag menar, reggae är väldigt, det är liksom kärlekens musikgenre."

¹⁶³ "Den sjunger inte om något hat till någonting, vad? Den sjunger framförallt om kärleken till de egna, och det gör att den är positiv, det är inte det här negativa som du hittar i andra nationella låtar, om att vi ska hänga folk, osv, utan det här är ett positivt inslag i frihetskampen. Och kan man göra det genom musik, då kan man nå mycket fler människor."

majority of those opposing reggae charged that the genre was essentially black: opponents of nationalist rap more often decried the genre's association with ostensibly un-raced, deviant behaviors. But perhaps in even greater contrast to earlier discussions, some advocates for Nordic Youth's project maintained that reggae was indeed "black music," and they based their approval on this fact.

Without explicit prompting, some early advocates of the song rushed to defend its whiteness and Swedishness, knowing, it seems, that the song would be attacked on those grounds. In the online forum, Frihet.nu, user "Frigörelse" offered the following defense of the song on February 1, 2010, a defense that combines Nyberg's metapolitical justification, as well as a claim that the music had become Swedish:

If you can win over many youths and hinder them from falling into destructiveness by instead offering a desirable, healthy, national Swedish identity, then I don't understand why one medium would be forbidden, and others allowed. For me, it is the content that matters, for me Nordic Youth's new reggae song is much more Swedish and nationalist than Mötley Crüe for example, despite the fact that those druggies, according to some people's logic, play Swedish music because it is rock.¹⁶⁴

"Frigörelse" claims that "the content" of this reggae song—likely the messages in the lyrics—renders it more Swedish than it would be otherwise. He emphasizes the importance of lyrical content over genre by calling "Imagine" more Swedish than rock, a genre that others, according to him, accept as Swedish.

¹⁶⁴ "Kan man övervinna många ungdomar och hindra dem från att falla i det destruktiva genom att istället erbjuda en åtråvärd, sund och nationell svensk identitet så förstår jag inte varför ett medel för att nå målet skulle vara förbjudet, andra tillåtna. För mig är det innehållet som räknas, för mig är Nordisk Ungdoms nya reggaelåt betydligt mer svensk och nationell än till exempel Mötley Crüe trots att knarkarna spelar en, enligt någras sätt att resonera, svensk musik för att det är rock." Available online, accessed May 27, 2011, <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

Nordic Youth co-founder Andreas Johansson (writing under the user name Talemannen) also combines a defense espousing “Imagine’s” metapolitical potential with a claim that musical products previously marked as un-Swedish can obtain such a Swedish status. He writes of the initiative, on February 1, 2010,

The idea is that not even society should have a monopoly on information. If society is the only one making reggae or any other genre, then all music in the genre will be crap, message-wise. Rock also used to be a very un-Swedish and outright anti-White phenomenon, but it has been remade to fit with the West and before long we in the West took it over.¹⁶⁵

Johansson argues that whatever un-Swedish, anti-White elements the genre bears can be neutralized. Later, when pressed on this point, he specified how something like reggae could become Swedish. Whereas “Firgörelse” suggests lyrical content could make an otherwise un-Swedish music Swedish, Johansson considers the ethnicity of those practicing the culture. In the same forum on February 3, 2010, Johansson writes:

Culture is never static, and it isn’t possible to control it. Swedish culture, according to me, is that which Swedes do. That is, if many listen to reggae in Sweden then it is a part of Swedish culture, assuming that it is ethnic Swedes who are listening. Were ethnic Swedes to start Thai boxing, then it would be a part of Swedish culture.¹⁶⁶

Johansson’s claim, that ethnic Swedes confer a Swedish identity on whatever phenomenon or activity they favor is guaranteed to receive criticism from other

¹⁶⁵ “Tanken är ju även att samhället inte ska ha monopol på information. Om samhället är de enda som gör reggae eller vilken genre som helt [sic], ja då kommer all musik inom den genren att vara skit, rent budskapsmässigt. Rocken var ju också en väldigt osvensk och rent ut sagt anti-vit företeelse en gång i tiden, men den har gjorts om för att passa västvärlden och så småningom tagits över helt av oss i väst.” Available online, accessed May 27, 2011, <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

¹⁶⁶ Svensk kultur är enligt mig det som vi svenskar lever. Alltså skulle många lyssna på reggae i Sverige så är det en del av den svenska kulturen, förutsatt att det är etniska svenskar som lyssnar. Skulle etniska svenskar träna thai-boxning så är det en del av den svenska kulturen. Available online, accessed May 27, 2011, <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

nationalists. All nationalists, from Sweden Democrats to National Socialists, argue that mainstream Sweden is out of touch with itself—is behaving in ways that are fundamentally un-Swedish. Such claims serve the movement by providing activists a method to explain why they differ, at times dramatically, from the population they claim to fight for. Johansson’s approach would strip nationalists of this method by possibly equalizing the behaviors of mainstream and nationalist ethnic Swedes.

Unsurprisingly, his stance received swift rebuke from user “Folkbildare” on February 3, 2010:

If Thai boxing becomes Swedish culture because Swedes do it, well, then the Jewish mass media becomes Swedish culture when Swedes read it.¹⁶⁷

Neither Johansson nor any other user responded to “Folkbildare’s” statement. When I asked Johansson about the exchange over a year later, he maintained his initial stance, but retreated to the more established, metapolitical argument:

Reggae isn’t a part of Swedish culture, but it is becoming [a part], and because we live in a multicultural society. What we did was, simply, to use a music genre that is very politically correct, and fill it with politically incorrect messages, just to create this internal conflict in people. I think that, if you work in this way, you reach those – I usually call them free thinkers – people who manage to think for themselves (Interview, Andreas Johansson, May 29, 2011).¹⁶⁸

Multiculturalism is making reggae a part of Swedish culture, Johansson contends.

However, in concert with Nyberg’s official statement on the song, Johansson

¹⁶⁷ “Om thai-boxning blir svensk kultur för att idrotten utövas av svenskar ja då blir ju judisk massmedia svensk kultur när den läses av svenskar.” Available online, accessed May 27, 2011. <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

¹⁶⁸ “Reggae är inte en del av den svenska kulturen, men det håller på bli på grund av att vi har ett mångkulturellt samhälle. Det som vi gjorde var, helt enkelt att använda en musikgenre som är väldigt politisk korrekt, och fylla den med politiskt inkorrekta budskap, just för att skapa de här interna konflikterna hos personer. Och, jag tror att arbetar man på det sättet så når man de [som] jag brukar kalla fritänkare, människor som klarar av att tänka själva.”

suggests that “what [they] did” was based more on a desire to inject the nationalist message in a place where it previously was absent.

Though some individuals like user “Frigörelse” and Johansson attempted to make reggae Swedish, metapolitical justifications were the most common among “Imagine’s” apologists in online forums. Johansson’s tendency to return to this argument when questioned about his other claims in our interview may reflect an understanding that arguing on metapolitical grounds tends to yield most success. User “Peace,” on February 1, 2010, makes the following justification in the Frihet.nu forum, referencing the Gothenburg-based, communist reggae band Kapten Röd:

Kapten Röd, whose music is pure red propaganda and is political to its core, are really popular among everyday kids who are not interested at all in politics. We know that music is a gateway to many political movements, subcultures, etc. Why not make sure that we have a broad enough platform for recruiting that we can reach these youths and get to them first, before the Left does it via Kapten Röd?¹⁶⁹

Opponents’ grievances with the initiative, and reggae as a genre, varied.

Some, like Sanna Hill—high profile female activist, and current editor of the National Democrats’ newspaper, *National Idag*—, considered reggae and Rastafarianism an instrument of Jewish interests. On the online news magazine, Nationell.nu, on February 1, 2010, Hill writes:

Why was Nordisk Ungdom founded ‘with reggae music?’ [...] Since the 1970s confessors of the religion ‘Rastafari’ used reggae music as a form of religious expression, and if you read about that very ‘interesting’ religion you’ll see

¹⁶⁹ “Kapten Röd, vars musik är ren och skär rödingpropaganda och som verkligen är politisk i hela sin essens, är jättepoppis bland vanliga kids som inte är ett dugg intresserade av politik. Vi vet att musiken är en inkörsport till många politiska grenar, subkulturer osv. Varför inte se till att vi har en sådan bred rekryteringsplattform så att vi kan nå dessa ungdomar och knipa dem först, innan vänstern gör det via Kapten Röd?” Available online, accessed May 27, 2011.<http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

that certain words appear consistently, 'Africa,' 'Israel,' 'Zion' and 'Holocaust.' Undeniably a zesty choice of music genre to start a project with.¹⁷⁰

Here, Hill appears to equate Rastafarian references to Israel and Zion with Jewish Zionism.

Most opponents, however, criticize "Imagine" on the grounds that reggae is essentially black. User "Robert," in the frihet.nu forum, assails the initiative's metapolitical potential based on such grounds. On February 1, 2010, this user writes:

As far as I'm concerned niggers can have a monopoly on their drug abuse and Rastafari music. Because these are the people, and their sympathizers, who make this music, not society [at large]. The fight over reggae may be your fight, but it's not mine.¹⁷¹

According to "Robert," reggae is the wrong place for metapolitics. By creating nationalist reggae, Nordic Youth is injecting their message into black society, not Swedish ethnic society. Such efforts are a waste of resources: They attempt to wage culture wars and shift the definition of political common sense in arenas beyond that of the national people.

Some opponents of "Imagine" similarly denounce Nordic Youth for perpetuating the very phenomena nationalism seeks to counteract. Such claims appear in a second post by user "Robert" on February 1, 2010:

¹⁷⁰ "Varför lanserades Nordisk ungdom 'med reggaemusik'? [...] Sedan 1970-talet har bekännande till religionen 'Rastafari' använt just reggaemusiken som religiös uttrycksform, och läser man om denna mycket 'intressanta' religion ser man att vissa ord återkommer regelbundet, 'Afrika', 'Israel', 'Sion' och 'Förintelsen'. Onekligen en lustigt val av musikgenre att inleda projektet med." Available online, accessed May 27, 2011, <http://www.nationell.nu/2010/01/31/nordisk-ungdom-lanserades-i-goteborg/>.

¹⁷¹ "För mig får gärna drogmissbrukande negrer ha sin rastafarimusik under fullständig kontroll och med fullständigt monopol. för det är dessa, och deras sympatisörer, som producerar denna musik, inte samhället. Kampen om reggaen kanske är er kamp, men inte min." Available online, accessed May 27, 2011, <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

Reggae is, as [they] say, likely the music style more connected to a foreign ethnicity than any other, not to mention drug culture. [...] The fact is that the Swedish people, or rather, all Western people, are subjected to constant pressure from an extreme propaganda machine; MTV, TV4, everyday media, school policies, and others all working to impose multiculturalist ideals on our people. To get us to surrender to globalization. We are the counterweight, a small, but determined and dedicated group who work against that enemy. And it is not easy work. [...] It is not only 'they' who are affected by the enemy's propaganda, but we too are subjected to and worn down by it, which means that we must be on the lookout. And if we start working with the system and force reggae on potential nationalist youths, yes, then you have unfortunately fallen to the enemy's propaganda, so much so that you have begun to be assimilated into the society of multiculturalism. [...] That day that I am so affected that I abandon normal nationalist music genres like folkrock, hard rock, troubadour, etc. in order to embrace reggae, that will be the day I cease to work as a nationalist.¹⁷²

User "Viktor"—singer-songwriter musician Viktor Sjölund—makes a similar argument on February 1, 2010:

[T]here are other, less attached, music genres to expand through. The ultimate goal for nationalist political, cultural, and social structures cannot be to acclimatize to the prevailing multiculturalist norms. We must organize around the identity we see to be healthy and productive for the people. Normalizing reggae culture does us a disservice in that regard. [...] I think it will be hard to say that you stand for ethnic-conscious politics if you simultaneously pump out culture marked with multiculturalism.¹⁷³

¹⁷² "Reggae är som representanterna säger troligen den musikstil som är mer kopplad till främmande etnicitet om någon, för att inte tala om en drogkultur. [...] Faktum är att det svenska folket, eller rättare sagt alla västerländska folk, utsätts för kontinuerlig påverkan av ett extremt propagandamaskineri. MTV, TV4, vanlig media, skolstadgarna med flera arbetar alla för att påtvinga mångkulturellt tänkande på vårt folk. Att få oss att underkasta sig globaliseringen. Motpolen är vi, en liten men målmedveten dedikerad skara som arbetar mot denna fiende. Och det är inget lätt arbete. Samtidigt påverkas inte bara 'de' av fiendens propaganda, utan även vi utsätts och nöts ner av den, vilket gör att vi måste vara på vår vakt. Och börjar man då springa systemets ärenden och trycka på reggae på potentiella nationella ungdomar, ja då har man tyvärr drabbats för hårt av fiendens propaganda, så pass att man börjat assimileras i det globala och mångkulturella samhället. [...] den dagen jag påverkats så mycket att jag förkastar vanlig nationell musik i genrer som folkrock, hårdrock, trubadur med mera, för att föra fram reggae, den dagen lägger jag ner allt mitt 'nationella' arbete." Available online, accessed May 27, 2011, <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

¹⁷³ "[D]et finns andra, mer fristående, musikgenrer att bredda sig i. Ändamålet för nationell politik, kultur och social struktur kan inte vara att aklimatisera sig till de rådande mångkulturella normerna. Vi måste bygga kring den identitet som vi anser vara hälsosam och utvecklande för folket. Att normalisera reggaekulturen gör oss ingen tjänst i den frågan. [...] [Jag tycker] det blir svårt att stå för en etniskt medveten politik om man samtidigt pumpar ut kultur med mångkulturella förtecken."

Both “Robert” and “Viktor” see Nordic Youth’s initiative as a concession to multicultural society, a concession that mangles nationalism beyond recognition. Their comments suggest that Nordic Youth has been unwittingly subsumed by the forces they claim to resist.¹⁷⁴

Earlier we saw attempts to anticipate charges like those by “Robert” and “Viktor.” Nordic Youth co-founder, Andreas Johansson, and user “Frigörelse” offered ways to interpret the song as being Swedish. Other apologists would contest the move to link reggae with any particular group or sentiment. On February 2, 2010, user “Peace” responded in this fashion to “Robert’s” post:

It isn’t a question of whether it is smart to make ‘[our] struggle’ multicultural or not. You assume that we all think that it is making our struggle multicultural. I claim the opposite, that the question should be about what is multicultural and what isn’t [...] I don’t think that pitches have [moral or political] values, that is, I don’t think that a certain type of music can really be ‘Swedish’ or ‘Nordic’ or ‘multicultural.’ Then there are of course different, particular styles that have historically been played in different countries, like our folk music, Irish folk music, or the Middle East’s jalla jalla music. These music styles [...] have rooted themselves in cultures for hundreds of years. I would have understood the strong reactions, and reacted just as strongly myself, had the song been of the jalla jalla type, like those howling Arabs from the Middle East. But there is a big difference between these classic cultural music styles and today’s. Modern music styles, like rock, pop, reggae, etc., that have existed a few decades, don’t have the same anchoring, but are instead quite open. That rock in particular has become ‘the national movement’s music’ isn’t because it is whiter or more drug-free (rather the opposite) than any other music style. But because it is a part of our ‘originating’ subculture, which in a way reggae is too through SKA.¹⁷⁵

Available online, accessed May 27, 2011,
<http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Viktor Sjölund would later tell me that he was not opposed to all use of reggae in nationalist music. Rather, he objected to the fact that a nationalist organization used the genre to announce and define itself. In his mind, reggae may be included in the scene, but it should not represent it (Interview, Viktor Sjölund, April 12, 2012).

¹⁷⁵ “Det är inte en fråga om huruvida det är ett smart drag att göra ‘kampen’ mångkulturell eller inte. Du förutsätter att alla tycker att man gör kampen mångkulturell [...] Jag hävdar tvärtom att frågan bör ligga i vad som är mångkulturellt och inte, [...] Jag anser inte att toner har värderingar, alltså

“Peace” distinguishes between “classic cultural” and “modern” musics, arguing that reggae belongs to the latter category, and is therefore unmarked. Knowledgeable about the links between reggae and early skinhead culture in Britain, the user then tries to link reggae, if not with Swedishness, than with European nationalism. Along these lines, he attacks the notion that reggae is any less white than the dominant genre in nationalism: rock.

Some “Imagine” apologists call the song Swedish. Others, like user “Peace,” claim that it stems from a genre with no inherent ethnic affiliations. But a third category of apologists embraced a core attack issued by opponents. In a departure from the argumentative techniques of defenders of nationalist rap and nationalist rock, some arguing in favor of “Imagine” make their case by asserting, rather than denying, reggae’s blackness. Such apologists build their arguments by claiming that Nordic Youth’s official ideology, ethnopluralism, allows for the promotion of black culture. User “Dennis,” in the online comment field for Fredrik Strage’s article in *Dagens Nyheter*, offered the following clarification for his support:

One of the cornerstones in the Rastafari movement is among other things ethnic nationalism and the desire to see all blacks return to their motherland. That is to say, that blacks belong where they ethnically descend from, exactly like ethnopluralism means that you believe Europe should be European, etc.

anser jag inte att en viss typ av musik egentligen kan vara ‘svensk’ eller ‘nordisk’ eller ‘mångkulturell’. Sen finns det givetvis olika typiska stilar som historiskt har spelats i olika länder, som vår folkmusik, den irländska folkmusiken eller mellanösterns jallajallamusik. Dessa musikstilar [...] har ju dock rotat sig i kulturerna under århundraden. Jag hade förstått starka reaktioner och reagerat lika starkt själv om låten hade varit av jallajallatyp som de ylande araberna från Mellanöstern. Men det finns en stor skillnad mellan dessa klassiskt kulturella musikstilar och dagens. Moderna musikstilar, som rock, pop, reage mfl som existerat ett par årtionden har inte alls samma kulturella förankring utan tvärtom, en enorm bredd. Att just rock blivit ‘den nationella rörelsens musik’ är ju inte för att den är vitare eller ‘mer drogfri’ (snarare tvärtom) än någon annan musikstil, utan för att den är en del av vår ‘ursprungliga’ subkultur, vilket ju också reagen är på ett sätt i och med SKA'n.” Available online, accessed May 27, 2011.<http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>.

If you look at Nordic Youth's homepage and their anti-imperialist position on the Palestinian question and the Afghanistan question, then it is also a crystal-clear statement for ethnopluralism considering the text 'All have a right to their own homeland.' The question is, why is there nothing wrong with black nationalism like the Rastafari movement while European nationalistic ethnopluralism is despicable according to many?¹⁷⁶

"Dennis" claims that, viewed through the prism of ethnopluralism, black nationalism is equally desirable to white nationalism. Therefore, reggae as a genre, with its Rastafari-inspired calls for black nationalism, with its inherent blackness, is a legitimate object for praise by organizations like Nordic Youth. User "Nils"—an individual linked with Nordic Youth—offered a similar explanation when responding to a criticism of "Imagine" by a left-wing reggae fan on the nationalist online news magazine, Nationell.nu. This left-wing fan argued that the song insulted, and "trampled upon" the true practitioners of Rastafarianism, a charge to which "Nils" replied:

The Rastafari movement as a religion, is a religion that should to the greatest extent be understood as nationalistic, regardless of whether it is geared towards blacks or not. It is a stretch, I think, to say that we are trampling on an entire people through a song saying that everyone has a right to their own home land. Especially considering the ethnopluralistic themes in reggae. Two examples that pop up in my mind right away are Bob Marley's two songs Redemptions Song and Africa Unite. Or is it just that you are of the belief that white nationalism is bad and that you think black nationalism is ok?¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ "En av grundstenarna i Rastafarin är bl a etnisk nationalism och en strävan efter att alla svarta skall återvända till sin moderjord. Dvs att svarta hör hemma där de etniskt härstämmer från precis som att etnopluralismen innebär att man anser att Europa ska vara europeiskt etc. Kollar man sedan på nordisk ungdoms hemsida och deras antiimperialistiska ställningstagande i Palestinafrågan och i Afghanistanfrågan så är det definitivt också ett solklart ställningstagande för etnopluralism med tanke på texten 'Alla har rätt till ett eget land'. Rastafarin är inte så långt borta från etnopluralismen när man tänker efter. Frågan är dock, varför är det inget fel med svart nationalism likt rastafarin medan europeisk nationalistisk etnopluralism är förkastligt enligt många?" Available online, accessed October 30, 2011, <http://www.dn.se/blogg/pa-stan/2010/02/26/fredriks-kronika-det-finns-en-framtid-for-nazistisk-reggae-2570/>

¹⁷⁷ "Rastafari som religion är en religion som i allra högsta grad är att betrakta som nationalistisk oavsett om den är anpassad för svarta eller ej. Att vi skulle trampa på ett helt folk genom en låt vars budskap går ut på att alla folk har rätt till ett eget land känns ganska långsökt enligt mitt tycke. Speciellt med tanke på de etnopluralistiska dragen inom reggaen. Två exempel som ploppar upp i

Like “Dennis,” user “Nils” refers to the first line of the refrain, “All have a right to their own homeland,” to argue that both the song’s message and the nationalist cause transcend racial lines. Similarly, and also like “Dennis,” he equalizes white and black nationalism in ethnopluralism, and says that the lyrics of “Imagine” advance both of these causes.

Nordic Youth activist Kim Petrusson suggests that reggae has essential qualities and associations—including its ethnic specificity—that white nationalists can identify with. During an interview, I asked Petrusson what he thought of the organization’s use of reggae. He replied,

KP: As I said earlier, my activism has to do with traditional values against modern [values], and that is something I share with large parts of the reggae movement. Their music is also about traditional values.

BT: [...] How so?

KP: [...] If we look past the slackness-scene and look at the conscious-scene, then it only deals with religion—black Rastafarianism, criticism of modern, white society—Babylon, on black women—‘Mama,’ the inner and the outer flame—fyah bun, etc., etc. In general, it is the same values we have, just a different color.

BT: Yes, yes, some have even said that reggae is ethnopluralistic.

KP: No, it’s black, plain and simple, but in its form it is an expression for ethnopluralism, like Nordic folk music.

BT: How is Nordic folk music an expression of ethnopluralism?

KP: It is a manifestation of the soul of the Nordic people (Interview, Kim Petrusson, August 10, 2011).¹⁷⁸

huvudet direkt är bob marleys bägge låtar, redemption song och africa unite. eller är det bara som så att du är av tron att vit nationalism är fel och att du tycker att svart nationalism är okej?” Available online, accessed May 25, 2011, <http://www.nationell.nu/2010/01/31/nordisk-ungdom-lanserades-i-goteborg/>

¹⁷⁸ “KP: [...] Som jag sa innan så handlar mitt engagemang om traditionella värderingar gentemot moderna, och det är något jag delar med stora delar av reggaerörelsen, deras musik handlar också om traditionella värderingar. BT: Kan du säga mer om det? Hur då? KP: [...] Om vi bortser från slackness-scenen inom reggaen och tittar på conscious-scenen så handlar den enbart om religion--svart rastafarianism, kritik mot det moderna vita samhället--babylon, om svarta kvinnor--Mama, den inre och yttre elden--fyah bun, etc. etc. Det är i stort sett samma värderingar som vi har, fast en annan färg. BT: ja, ja, vissa har sagt att Reggae är t.o.m ethnopluralistisk. KP: nej, den är svart, kort och gott.

Reggae's essential blackness does not oppose it with white nationalism, according to Petrusson. Distinguishing between more and less pious types of reggae culture—"conscious" and "slackness" scenes respectively—he sees in "conscious" reggae an anti-modern movement built from values he shares. Reggae's blackness does not corrupt these values, or render them unavailable to activists like him. Indeed, elsewhere in our interviews he mentions that he listens to reggae regularly. He nonetheless reacts negatively to my suggestion that reggae is ethnopluralistic, but says that it can be an "expression for ethnopluralism." Nordic folk music is also an expression for the ideology because it is a "manifestation of the soul of the Nordic people." Likewise, I assume, he thinks that reggae is a manifestation of the soul of black people. As musical incarnations of separate peoples' separate souls, musics like Nordic folk music and reggae reinforce ethnopluralistic conceptual foundations; that peoples are essentially different. This, I believe, is what Petrusson means when he says reggae is an expression for ethnopluralism.

Combined, users "Dennis" and "Nils," as well as Petrusson, show how nationalists in Sweden can champion reggae as a black music. For some, the genre's association with cultural conservatism—in form of religiosity or family values—resonates with their cause. For others, reggae's black nationalism harmonizes with their worldview, a worldview where all ethnic groups should strive for independence and separateness. Still others, like Petrusson, see in the genre's blackness demonstration of ethnic distinctiveness, and thereby, justification for

Men i sin form ett uttryck för etnopluralismen likt nordisk folkmusik. BT: Hur är nordisk folkmusik ett uttryck för etnopluralism? KP: Den är en manifestation av den nordiska folksjälén."

their politics. Indeed, as these actors indicate, ethnopluralism provides much of the conceptual and ideological framework to promote these views. In the words of political scientist Hans-Georg Betz, ethnopluralism “entails affirmation, if not outright celebration, of cultural differences and identities” (1999:309). Indeed, it was “Imagine’s” ability to manifest difference that rendered the song appealing and acceptable to Petrusson. Ethnopluralism further recasts these activists’ nationalism as a movement for universal rights, rather than for one race’s or one people’s superiority. Black nationalism is as important to this cause as is white nationalism. Ethnopluralism can thus provide activists license to access expressive forms that even they themselves define as black.

Conclusion

Swedish activists’ forays into rap and reggae can be treated as only the latest instance in a long tradition of borrowing from black music and culture. From the sounds and dances of reggae and ska clubs in 1970s Britain, to white-power punk and metal, late-twentieth-century European radical nationalists routinely claim as their own expressive culture with Afro-diasporic roots. Having trafficked in such culture so long, activists are accustomed to defending their use of it. Various argumentative techniques used to justify nationalist rap and reggae echo earlier efforts to justify nationalist rock. As in George Burdi’s defenses of rock, some Swedish apologists for rap and reggae posit white musical heritages and claim to have exorcized blackness.

The differences between appropriations of rap and reggae on the one hand, and rock on the other, may be interpreted as differences of degree rather than kind. Whereas some scholars argue that rap’s black roots continue to pervade its

reception throughout the globe (e.g. Rose 1994), the black roots are comparatively more shrouded in rock, let alone rock subgenres like punk and metal that tend to be associated with whiteness (Beckwith 2002; Purcell 2003). For that reason, activists encounter fewer challenges when motivating their use of rock. But they too will need, and have needed, to answer charges that theirs is a black music. Advocates for nationalist rap and reggae perform the same task—the difference is that the charges against their chosen genres are more numerous and more emphatic.

Although certain aspects of the rise of nationalist rap and reggae suggest continuity, others constitute a fundamental break from previous practice in the movement. This break appears both in the musical creations themselves, and in activists' attempts to defend those creations. Juice and Zyklon Boom aim, not to scorn hip hop culture, nor to appropriate it wholesale, but rather to become participants within that culture. These artists aspire to preeminence within a universe of meaning whereby knowledge of “the street,” the ability to make rhymes, and self-application of ethnic slurs confer hypermasculine social status. Theirs is a posture accepting, rather than contesting, the existence of a hip hop scene in Sweden. Theirs is a fight waged via, rather than against, hip hop culture and ideals.

As the online discussions of Zyklon Boom and Juice show, the extent to which insiders conceived of rap as black varies. However, unlike rock, hip hop music has an extended history of demonization by nationalists, at times because nationalists define hip hop as black, other times because they associate the culture with deviant behaviors, still other times because it has served as a medium for musical criticisms of nationalist organizations and ideologies. The focused condemnation of hip hop

music led nationalist rappers throughout Europe to disavow their link to the genre. The French identitarian group Basic Celtos, for example, claimed that, rather than rapping, they were simply “not singing.” And though some of Zyklon Boom’s and Juice’s advocates make similar cases on their behalf, these Swedish artists describe their own music as hip hop, and frame themselves as participants in that subculture. These artists, if not their supporters, break the pattern of deeming hip hop anti-nationalist.

Activists’ reception of “Imagine” also marks a departure from prevailing nationalist rhetorical and conceptual strategies. Some apologists defend the song on the grounds that it lacks black elements—a claim paralleling those of rap and rock advocates. But individuals like Kim Petrusson, or online users “Dennis” and “Nils,” base their justifications for “Imagine” on reggae’s link to blackness. Reggae’s racial connotations hold varying significance for these insiders: “Dennis” and “Nils” treat reggae as an expression of black nationalism, Petrusson as an emblem of ethnic specificity. But justifying use of a music on account of that music’s blackness—whatever that blackness means—is an anomaly in the history of European radical nationalism.

Recent intellectual reformist trends appear to have aided the rise of nationalist rap and reggae. Rap and reggae musicians, and some of their chief supporters, come from organizations that call for change in the movement and embrace ideological schools of the French New Right. Blogger Solguru (likely the same person as Zyklon Boom) belongs to the identitarian blog portal Motpol.nu. Nordic Youth has adopted ethnopluralism as its official ideology. Both

ethnopluralism and identitarianism denounce chauvinistic language and notions of racial supremacy, and encourage the shedding of skinhead culture (see chapter 2). Calls for a break with the past may have inspired Zyklon Boom's critiques of skinheadism. And in their defense of "Imagine," other insiders referenced ethnopluralism's emphasis on a universal right to difference and language of self-love. Both rap and reggae musicians, and most of their supporters, are further aided by the fact that they belong to race-conscious sectors of the national movement, to ideological currents defining the Swedish people in terms of race and ethnicity rather than culture. Accordingly, activists like Andreas Johansson of Nordic Youth can claim that what ultimately matters is not the origin of the culture being practiced, but the ethnicity of the practitioner.

Swedish nationalists have yet to produce another major rap or reggae act beyond those discussed here. However, the initial debates over Zyklon Boom, Juice, and "Imagine" initiated new discourses on music, discourses that would encourage further musical groundbreaking. As shown in this chapter, supporters of nationalist rap and reggae often challenged opponents to defend the whiteness of the predominant genre in nationalist music, rock. Rarely were these challenges answered—perhaps because the argumentative techniques typically used to whiten rock (alternate histories, the expulsion of black elements, etc.) were already appearing in defense of rap and reggae. Instead of championing either established rock or new rap and reggae, some insiders arrived at a third option. User "Palnatoke," writing in the Nordisk.nu rap thread on May 1, 2007, is one such insider:

Our music would have been developed more properly, and become better and more original without major intrusions from jazz, rock, or other foreign music. To repeat the mistake with a music that is much more foreign than any of those ever were is pure craziness.

We need to reconquer our own culture, not willingly replace it with someone else's! We need, in other words, nationalist folk music...¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Vår musik hade utvecklats sundare och blivit bättre och mer originell utan starka intrång av vare sig jazz, rock eller annan främmande musik. Att upprepa misstaget, med en musikstil som är mycket mer främmande än någon av de ovanstående någonsin var, är rena galenskapen. [...] Vi behöver återerövra vår egen kultur, inte villigt ersätta den med någon annans! Vi behöver med andra ord nationell folkmusik... Available online, accessed February 19, 2012, <http://www.nordisk.nu/showthread.php?t=269&page=11&highlight=zyklon+boom>.

Chapter 4 - "What we need is race-conscious music": Radical Nationalism and Swedish Folk Music.

In an interview with the newspaper *Sydsvenskan* on October 3, 2010, Mattias Karlsson—unofficial chief ideologue and cultural policy spokesperson for the Sweden Democrats—claimed that traditional Swedish culture was competing with foreign folk cultures for public funding in Sweden. Asked to defend this statement he replied,

I have, for example, spoken with multiple fiddlers who say that there certainly is such an opposition. When you, for example, at music colleges, give more resources to teaching foreign folk music, then there are simply fewer spaces and resources for Swedish folk music. I think it is pretty obvious, as long as you don't assume that resources are unlimited, and they aren't.¹⁸⁰

Karlsson's statement came just weeks after the national parliamentary elections on September 19, 2010. Media focus on the Sweden Democrats was at a frenzy: The party surpassed 4% of the national vote, meaning that, for the first time, Sweden would have an openly anti-immigration party, with roots in neo-Nazism, in its national parliament.¹⁸¹ As media scrutiny intensified, the Sweden Democrats found themselves struggling to clarify key elements of their political program. Attempting to distance themselves from their ethnonationalist past, the party asserted that they were fighting for a Sweden that would be culturally, rather than ethnically,

¹⁸⁰ Jag har pratat med till exempel flera spelmän som menar att det absolut finns en sådan motsättning. När man på till exempel musikhögskolor lägger ner resurser på att lära ut utländsk folkmusik så blir det helt enkelt mindre platser och resurser över till den svenska folkmusiken. Jag ser det som ganska självklart – såvida man inte utgår från att resurserna är oändliga, och det är de ju inte.

¹⁸¹ The right-wing populist party New Democracy [Ny Demokrati], which served in parliament between 1991 and 1994, grew increasingly anti-immigrant during their time in power, but they did not foreground the issue in the same way as the Sweden Democrats, nor did they emerge out of, nor maintain significant links with the nationalist scene (though party co-leader Bert Karlsson was for a short while producing Ultima Thule records through his label, Mariann Grammofon).

homogeneous. They claimed to champion a Swedish identity that was open to any individual regardless of his or her ethnic background, an identity achieved by assimilating certain values and behaviors (see Chapter 2). Pursuing this agenda required some clarification as to what that Swedish culture was. The question was particularly relevant when considering the party's cultural policy and proposed budgets, which called for increased government spending to support Swedish cultural heritage. And in this and other statements, Karlsson began to illuminate the content of that heritage; it included Swedish folk music.

Journalists and leaders of opposing parties—all jostling for the politically advantageous position of chief adversary to the Sweden Democrats—responded to Karlsson's thinking as they had so often in the past, by questioning the existence or inherent value of clearly definable Swedish culture. For example, then Minister of Culture Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth said in an interview with *The Dagens Nyheter* on October 6, 2010, "there is no specifically Swedish culture."¹⁸² Alongside such expressions, other public figures sent signals that seemed to endorse the notion that folk music was the domain of the Sweden Democrats, the chief example of this being an uncaptioned illustration by Joakim Pirinen in *Aftonbladet* on October 13, 2010. This cryptic image, shown in Example 5, appears to wrap the Sweden Democrats, folk music, and Nazism into one.

¹⁸² "[D]et inte finns någon specifikt svensk kultur."



Example 5. Illustration by Joakim Pirinen in Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*. Text on the bottom reads, “Dance Schottische in Auschwitz,” and the “SD” markings around the frame stand for the Sweden Democrats. Published October 13, 2010.

I was in Helsinki at the time, presenting a program review I had conducted of a transnational, multi-institution master’s degree program in Nordic folk music. Sven Ahlbäck, leading Swedish folk fiddler and representative of one of the participating institutions (the Royal College of Music, Stockholm), arrived in Helsinki on October 12, 2010 incensed by developments in Sweden. He was frustrated, not only at Mattias Karlsson, but also the likes of Minister of Culture Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth and Joakim Pirinen. As we spoke late at night in the lobby of Hotel Helka, he decried both the Sweden Democrats’ advances on Swedish folk music, and the responses that, as he saw it, either surrendered folk music to the party or denied that the music existed. Moreover, he objected to the fact that this public debate had been taking place without the involvement of any folk musicians. But, he told me, measures were underway to change that.

Earlier, on October 7, 2010, Ahlbäck, along with a group of younger Swedish folk musicians—many of them current or former students of the folk music program

at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm—met in Stockholm to form a political action group. Fiddler Bridget Marsden initiated contact with the other participants (Interview, Bridget Marsden, November 22, 2010). These individuals eventually adopted the name Folk Musicians Against Xenophobia [Folkmusiker mot Främlingsfientlighet], drafted a manifesto, and began planning a public debate and demonstration outside of Sweden’s parliament to take place on October 19, 2010. Their efforts inspired groups throughout the country, such that, when this Stockholm contingent gathered in Mynttorget on that rainy October afternoon, folk musicians in Malmö, Gothenburg, Arvika and elsewhere staged simultaneous demonstrations in their home cities.

These events brought Swedish folk music unprecedented levels of media exposure, and also briefly shifted media commentary on the Sweden Democrats from their immigration policy to cultural policy. Moreover, they alerted the wider folk music community to nationalists’ interest in their music, an interest that was growing at various locations in the nationalist scene, with varied impetuses, and with varied goals.

This chapter explores folk music from nationalists’ perspective. I investigate the processes that lead nationalists to engage with folk music and the outcomes they seek from that engagement. There is still an emerging interest, and as I argue here, much of it responds to values and developments surrounding reformism (see Chapter 2). In the discussions below, we will see how nationalists turn to folk music in order to distance themselves from delinquency, to find evidence that their worldview is within the mainstream, and to express their love of self and diversity.

Throughout these functions, nationalists consistently treat folk music as a representation of the national people. The exact nature of that purported representation differs, however, with activists regarding folk music as an integral part of a shared cultural heritage, a beacon for ethnic gathering and fellowship, or an arena where the Swedish people's integrity may be affirmed or violated.

Folkly and Folkly

Nationalists' understandings of folk music vary. This is of course not unique to the nationalist scene, for as Philip Bohlman claims, with regard to musical structure, "the dynamic nature of folk music belies the stasis of definition" (1988:xviii). When nationalists and non-nationalists say "folk music" they may refer to a wide range of sonic and social phenomena. Some use the term with reference to dance music traditions common in Sweden's rural countryside from the 1700s and into the 1900s. This music is typically performed on fiddle or nyckelharpa, but regional traditions may also include flutes, pipes, bagpipes, and clarinets. It foregrounds the polska—a triple meter dance form with markings on first and third beats. Today, conservatory programs in folk music, as well as self-described folk music festivals, tend to focus on this style. Contemporary practitioners may distinguish this music by referring to it as fiddler's music [spelmansmusik] or folkly music [folklig musik].

Herding music traditions [fäbodsmusik] occupies a close conceptual proximity to "folkly music" in the minds of nationalists and non-nationalists alike. Prolific folk music scholar, performer, and pedagogue Sven Ahlbäck groups both these subgenres under the heading "older folk music" (1995). Like folkly music, its contemporary practitioners may appear to be carrying on an unbroken tradition

rooted in a distant, pre-modern era. The most salient styles of herding music can be traced back to herding practices in western and northern Sweden [fäboddrift], where peasant women led livestock to graze in unsettled forested areas or tundra during the summer. During these outings, herders used pipes, cow horns, and their voices to communicate with their animals or other herders. This sonic style frequently included a particular scale, intonations, and melodic patterns, and early and late nineteenth-century tune collectors recorded and presented these melodies alongside polska music on fiddle and nyckelharpa.

The meaning the Swedish term folkly music can be confusing. As David Kaminsky points out, folkly [folklig] is used as a descriptor of popular culture “of the people”—that is, culture that is widely disseminated and known among everyday Swedes. Additionally, the term can carry connotations of describing culture that lacks refinement (Kaminsky 2005:209). These connotations are less helpful when considering folk music insiders’ use of the term. Folk musicians tend to say “folkly” in order to contrast older dance forms with a newer subgenre known otherwise as gammaldans (which ironically means “old dance”). Gammaldans, which nationalists and others also call folk music, typically features the accordion and occasionally fiddles and nyckelharpas performing dances like schottische, waltz, and hambo. Additionally, this style may include more choreographed, codified, and classicized renditions of folk tunes and dances from the early 1900s. In this sense, the “folkly” of folkly music advances a narrative that, whereas these early 1900s subgenres were produced by ballet choreographers, national romantic intellectuals and art

music composers, folkly music is authentic folk music, music “of the people,” albeit a people from a past epoch.

Along these lines, however, the term folkly music, and with it folk music, can also be applied to a genre of music often imagined as belonging to “today’s people,” a genre musically distinct from rural fiddling or nyckelharpa traditions of the 1800s. Dansband music—sometimes described as a mixture of German schlager, American country, and occasionally gammaldans dance forms—acquires a status as “folkly music” by virtue of its historic popularity among older, rural populations. Today, many Swedes, including nationalists, associate dansband music and gammaldans with Swedish holidays, midsummer in particular.

Whereas gammaldans shed various features of older folk music, and dansband more so, a final style nationalists occasionally refer to as folk music moves even further from traditional Swedish forms. Popular singer songwriters of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s are today spoken of as folk musicians in much the same sense that Peter, Paul, and Mary, John Denver, or Bob Dylan are in the United States. Swedish artists like Evert Taube and Cornelis Vreeswijk recorded songs and ballads of love, life, peace, and protest that later became mainstays of amateur music making in Sweden. And just as the greater populace calls this music folk music by virtue of its participatory or anti-commercialist ethos, or its generally popularity and folkyness, so too do nationalists. Similarly, singer songwriter acts in the nationalist scene, such as the project Svensk Ungdom or singer Viktor Sjölund, self-identify and are frequently named by others in the scene as troubadours, ballad singers, or folk musicians.

Whether they refer to herding forms, fiddler's music, gammaldans, dansband, or singer songwriter styles, nationalists think of "Swedish folk music" as music that is essentially local, Swedish, or Nordic via its instrumental musical structure, the community that surrounds it, or the practices behind its production. Though they may refer to various genres with the term folk music, contemporary discourses tend to focus on those styles that may be regarded as traditional, whose roots appear, in their minds, to stretch back to a time when Sweden was not marred by the cultural, ethnic, or racial heterogeneity that plagues it today, and whose basic features appear unique to Sweden. That is to say, the rising nationalist interest in folk music tends to focus on herding calls, fiddler's music, and gammaldans (with the assumption that gammaldans is indeed an older artform). Accordingly, when I refer to folk music in this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, I too refer to these genres.

Engagement and Non-Engagement

This is not the first time folk music has appealed to ultraconservative ideologues in Sweden and elsewhere. In step with continental trends, waves of romantic nationalist intellectuals, from student writers' circles at Uppsala University in the early 1800s, to poets, authors, and artists of the early twentieth century, have treated folk music as emblem and vessel of the nation's essence. These ideologues typically regarded rural fiddle and nyckelharpa dance genres, as well as herding music and ballads, as the true folk music. Towards the turn of the nineteenth century, such individuals generally viewed the accordion as threatening true folk music, and thereby Swedish musical distinctiveness (Roempke 1980). To this day, some Swedish folk musicians still perceive a fundamental opposition between accordion music and other Swedish folk music. During the 1920s, however, an

additional musical Other to Swedish folk music emerged: jazz. The rise of this latter music pushed to the surface generally tacit racial connotations in debates on Swedishness and foreignness in music.

In tandem with the rise of racialized discourses on folk music, wealthy anti-communist forces began enlisting folk culture into the movement of resistance to Marxism and proletarian revolution. As Barbro Klein shows, during the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, Sweden's economic elite funded various initiatives that celebrated and promoted rural culture among the newly urbanized in part to reinforce allegiances to rural origins and nation as opposed to class (Sundin 1999; Klein 2000). These various ultraconservative interests in folk culture and music would eventually find a venue in the country's largest folk music and dance organization.

"For wholesome youthful joy, rising to fight against the inauthentic and the foreign."¹⁸³ So rang the motto of the organization The Swedish Folk Dance Ring [Svenska Folkdansringen]. Ernst Granhammar, a supervisor at the National Museum in Stockholm, was among the founders of The Swedish Folk Dance Ring in 1920. It quickly became an umbrella organization for most of the folk dance groups operating in Swedish cities, and its journal *Hembygden* [the Heimat]—a central resource for information about folk music and dance—was widely read among enthusiasts.

Authors in the organization's journal treated folk music and rural culture as a means of resisting the spread of communism, decadent modernity, and

¹⁸³ För sund ungdomsglädje upp till strid mot det oäkta och främmande (1922 no. 6-7).

Afrodiasporic musics. In 1922, guest author Sven Kjellström bemoaned the decline of fiddlers in his native province of Hälsingland, implying that this decline was the result of the flow of foreign peoples and musics. He continues,

I hope that jazz and shimmy were the last traces of the coarsening influence brought by the war, these so-called dances that were not the least contagious seeds wild races [vilda folkslag] carried into our old civilization (no. 6-7).¹⁸⁴

In one article, the organization's president Granhammar quoted legendary fiddler Hjort Anders (perhaps falsely cf. Jan Ling [1980:29]) as saying about jazz, "that music, as well as the negro dance shall be thrown off our local dance floors and leafed barns, it is unworthy of the Germanic race and the rural Swedish people" (1935, no. 11).¹⁸⁵ Jazz and Africans were not the only targets in the journal's polemics. For example, Thore Härdelin attributed the decline of fiddlers in his home area to the arrival of the accordion, an instrument that, as he wrote in bold letters, was brought by German Jews and Italians (1922, no. 6-7). At times, the journal included writings focused exclusively and unequivocally on race ideology, such as the letter titled "Care for the Family [Vårda Släktet]" which advocated the cleansing of the gene pool through eugenics, and made no mention of music or dance (1924, no. 2). Given this backdrop, it is unsurprising that during the 1930s writers for the journal celebrated Nazi Germany (Ling 1980:33), albeit primarily for its displays of unity and alleged rejection of urban industrialism. After World War II, however,

¹⁸⁴ Jag hoppas att jazz och shimmy var de sista spåren av det förråande inflytande kriget förde med sig, dessa s.k. danser som icke var det minsta smittofröet vilda folkslag förde in i vår gamla civilization.

¹⁸⁵ Den musiken, liksom negerdansen skall bort från våra hagars dansbanor och lövade logar, den är ovärdig germansk ras och svenskt bygdefolk.

staunchly xenophobic sentiments in the journal subsided, a change perhaps hastened by Granhammar's death in 1946.¹⁸⁶

Contemporary radical nationalists seem largely unaware of this history. One exception, however, is David Eljas—former member of the militant neo-Nazi organization the Swedish Resistance Movement [Svenska Motståndsrörelsen]. While a member, Eljas often wrote articles for the organization's newspaper *National Resistance* [Nationellt Motstånd] that dealt with folk culture. He, along with Magnus Söderman, drew attention to prominent anti-Semites among the Local Heritage Federation's [Hembygdsrörelsen] founding circles (see *National Resistance* February 14, 2010). And in an article from August 1, 2004, he portrayed early fiddlers as agents resisting foreign musical intrusion in Sweden, referring to Granhammar's citation of Hjort Anders.¹⁸⁷

But in addition to his historical review, Eljas sheds light on the state of folk music within the radical nationalist scene at the time. At the conclusion of the article he writes,

In the future we will hopefully get to see a growing nationalist folk music movement. For who is best suited to carry folk music forward if not we, the true patriots? (ibid).¹⁸⁸

Eljas' call reflects the fact that there was no nationalist folk music movement during the early twenty-first century. Indeed, such has been true throughout much of the contemporary nationalist scene's history. In 1998, the Swedish white power music

¹⁸⁶ Note that there were a few ultraconservatives who continued to write for *Hembygden* even after the war, such as Karl Sporr.

¹⁸⁷ Incorrectly, I might add. Eljas appears to have taken the quote from Ling (1980:29) but attributed it to a similar version of Granhammar's article from *Hembygden* 1925, no. 10, instead of the actual article in 1935, no. 11.

¹⁸⁸ I framtiden kommer vi förhoppningsvis att få se en växande nationell folkmusiksrörelse. För vilka är bäst lämpade att förmedla folkmusiken vidare, om inte vi, de sanna patrioterna?

magazine *Nordland* published an article profiling one of the few acoustic singer songwriters, or what they called folk music acts in the international scene: American Eric Owens. In the introduction to the piece, author Peter Andersson writes,

A big part of patriotic music is obviously aggressive due to the simple reason that we *are* aggressive.¹⁸⁹ [...] Obviously there should be plenty of patriots who play folk music. But there are not (1998, no. 12; emphasis in original).¹⁹⁰

If troubadour-folk music artists like Eric Owens and his Swedish counterparts like Odal mannen, Ferox, and the project Svensk Ungdom are rare in the nationalist scene, insiders who perform traditional dance music—the type Eljas called for in 2004—are almost unheard of. The few insiders who engage with traditional folk music are scattered throughout the nationalist scene. Fiddle player Nils Blomberg, who has never recorded and mainly performs solo (such as at *Folkets marsch* 2008), is a member of the Swedish Resistance Movement. Highly active folk dancer, and former committee member of Umeå Folkmusikförening, Erik Alhem, has written for the National Democrat-affiliated newspaper, *Nationell Idag*. And renowned fiddler Marie Stensby became a member and spokesperson for the Sweden Democrats in 2010, much to the shock of the broader, non-nationalist folk music community. This is nearly an exhaustive list of outspoken nationalists who frequently participate in traditional folk music and dance.¹⁹¹

To the extent that nationalist music making has incorporated folk music themes, it has typically done so through Viking rock. Though Viking rock bands

¹⁸⁹ Note that the Andersson's phraseology here seems borrowed from an interview with Owens in the American music magazine *Resistance* (1996, no. 6).

¹⁹⁰ En stor del av den patriotiska musiken är självklart aggressiv av den enkla anledningen att vi är aggressiva [...] Lika självklart borde det finnas gott om patrioter som spelar folkmusik. Men det gör det inte.

¹⁹¹ Other, somewhat less engaged insiders include Angelika Bengtsson and Runar Filper in the Sweden Democrats and Andreas Johansson in Nordic Youth.

almost never include fiddles, nyckelharpas, flutes, or bagpipes, they do perform renditions of well-known folk tunes with their standard, hard rock format. Ultima Thule, for instance, has made recordings of Dalarna fiddle tune, “Gärdebylåten.” More commonly, groups like Röde Orm, while not playing any specific traditional tune, nonetheless base solo guitar lines on common melodic idioms in Swedish folk music, such as in their song “Vårt Land.” Alternately, some nationalist metal and Viking rock groups praise folk music in their texts, such as in Enhärjarna’s track “Gryningssol:”

(chorus:)

With sorrow in his chest, anger in his sights, he plays, though it is forbidden.
He begins yet another tribute song with a melancholy sound.
He does not turn; he plays on, with the bow in his hand.
From moonlight to sunrise, he plays for his country.¹⁹²

Featuring a banjo instead of a fiddle, the text still depicts folk music as an expression of nationalism, and a subversive, “forbidden” practice for that reason.

Historically, and to this day, nationalists on the whole seem generally uninterested, not only in performing folk music, but also in listening to it being performed by others. Marie Stensby recalls an anti-climactic reception she received when she performed for fellow Sweden Democrats at a party convention:

MS: It was really just one of those lousy gigs, like when people aren’t really listening – just, like, mingling. I spoke with a few afterwards, they came up and talked. I spoke with Mattias [Karlsson] a bit. But as a gig, gigs like that are not that much fun of course. [...]

BT: Because they haven’t been that engaged with folk music?

¹⁹² Med sorg i bröst, ilska i syn han spelar trots förbud. Här nalkas ännu en hyllningssång med vemodigt ljud. Han vänder ej, han spelar på, med stråken i sin hand. Från månsken till gryningssol han spelar till sitt land.

MS: No, no. They are not that knowledgeable in that area. [...] There I have a bit of teaching to do if I am going to teach them to say the right things. [...] They don't have the 'inside' so to say (Interview, Marie Stensby, November 19, 2010).¹⁹³

At time of writing, traditional folk music is almost entirely absent from nationalists' formal avenues for disseminating music recordings. The identitarian online store Arktos.com has extensive offerings of mostly nationalist neo-folk, but nothing that I would call traditional folk music. The same is true of Sverigebutiken.se and the white nationalist Arminius.se (save one disc titled "Folk Songs from Scotland"). Like online stores, music vendors at nationalist festivals and seminars tend not to sell any folk music recordings. When visiting various nationalist events, I often asked these vendors why they did not carry any Swedish folk music recordings. Typically, they responded saying that they think they should sell folk music, and were unsure why they were not doing this.

Though folk music is scarcely represented among online retailers, it is included in online streaming radio from nationalist web sites. Info14.com includes a folk music channel in its radio player. However, nationalist troubadour acts like American Eric Owens and the Swedish group Ferox, as well as non-nationalist folk rock groups like Garmarna, dominate this channel, and there is no acoustic

¹⁹³ MS: Det var egentligen en sådandär tråkig spelning, när folk inte riktig lyssnar då, typ mingel. Det kom fram några och pratade, och så diskuterade jag litegrann med Mattias. Men som spelning, sådana spelningar är ingen höjdare naturligtvis. [...] BT: För de har inte varit väldigt engagerade inom folkmusiken? MS: Nej. Nej. De är ju inte särskilt kunniga inom det området. [...] Där skulle jag vilja utbilda dem lite grann så att de säger rätt. [...] de har inte 'inside' så att säga."

instrumental dance music. Nordisk.nu also has a streaming radio function, and like Info14.com, they too offer a folk music channel. Of the 81 tracks in the folk music channel's playlist, most are folk rock. The bulk of the tracks that are not folk rock—that could qualify as being more traditional—come either from Icelandic singing traditions, or are renditions of Swedish folk music using eccentric playing styles or instruments, such as the bagpipe. Only one track, "Wedding March from Dalarna in Sweden" (original title in English!) includes what I consider to be generally standard, traditional fiddling.

Folk music's scarceness in these venues could stem from attempts to prioritize and encourage nationalist musicians. Promoters of nationalist music may not want to include music produced by non-nationalists among their offerings. Hence, the fact that virtually no outspoken nationalists have recorded traditional folk music would exclude the genre from these settings. Similarly, this pattern may be a business strategy. As Erik Alhem, a writer for *Nationell Idag* and highly active folk dancer, said, "I think that they want to sell music that cannot be found anywhere else. And then we are talking first and foremost about music that is explicitly political" (Interview, Erik Alhem, February 28, 2011).¹⁹⁴ However, nationalist radio stations and retailers showcase music that is not produced by nationalists, does not articulate a clear political message, and is widely available and appreciated outside of nationalist circles. Sverigebutik.se, Arminius.se, and the radio station on nordisk.nu sell and stream Western art music. These offerings tend

¹⁹⁴ Jag tror att de vill sälja musik som inte går att hitta någon annanstans. Och då gäller det först och främst musik som är uttalat politiskt.

to favor Swedish composers like Carl Michael Bellman, Wilhelm Petersson-Berger, and Wilhelm Stenhammar, but they also include non-Swedish figures like Johan Sebastian Bach and Ludwig Beethoven. The absence of traditional folk music recordings, in other words, cannot be attributed to any commitment to nationalist musicians, to music with an explicitly nationalist message, nor to music appreciated only in nationalist circles.

Some voices in the scene consider investment in folk music unnecessary. Such expressions may emerge through criticisms of cultural nationalism. I have heard these sentiments from members of Nordic Youth [Nordisk Ungdom], as well as Thorgrim Bredesen, former co-leader of the Norwegian organization, Vigrid:

I get so sick of this shit when they put niggers in folk costumes and have them dancing around, down here at the castle [in Oslo], thinking that if you do that then they're Norwegian. No, the basic – the most important thing is that the country be white again. If you bring that back, the culture will follow. These music and dance traditions, they come from the real Norwegian society, and that society is a white society (Interview, Thorgrim Bredesen, June 6, 2011).

Bredesen depicts music and expressive culture not as instruments for promoting the national people as a unique population, but rather as a barometer of that people's racial integrity. His thinking—which exhibits the characteristics of what some insiders call “race materialism”—frames race as the ultimate foundation or base of social life such that other behaviors like musical practice derive from it, and not the other way around. Accordingly, activism in the realm of race's by-products, of its superstructure, is misguided and ultimately doomed to ineffectuality.

Kim Petrusson of Nordic Youth, while not embracing Bredesen's race materialism, still similarly criticizes the notion that folk music bears any sort of

Swedish essence. Responding critically to an article on Motpol.nu on May 9, 2012 that praised a group of Japanese musicians for performing Swedish folk music and the famous fiddle tune Gärdebylåten, he wrote,

All I see in front of me is the idea, with its privileging of cultural Marxist interpretations: 'Gärdebylåten is not more typically Swedish than that Japanese people can also embrace it.'¹⁹⁵

Still other prominent voices in the international scene criticize nationalism's larger focus on folk culture. Eccentric Frenchman and leading intellectual in the international identitarian movement, Guillaume Faye, recently decried what he saw as

an overemphasized folklorism and excessive cult of rootedness. The soul of European artistic culture lies not in small pyramidal objects of baked clay, painted furniture from Schleswig-Holstein, Breton bonnets or the naïve wooden sculptures of Scandinavian farmers; rather, it is found in the Reims cathedral, the double-helix Italian stairway in the Château de Chambord, the drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, the comics by Liberatore and the Brussels school, the design of Ferraris and the German-French-Scandinavian Ariane 5 rockets. By reducing European culture to mere folklore, this is depreciated and dragged down to the level of 'primitive art' (2010:35).

The prominence of Greco-Roman classicism in identitarian imagery stems from a similar drive to show European culture at its highest. And here, Faye describes folk culture as counter to that cause.

But changes in the scene are leading activists to folk music. The debates on nationalist rap and reggae described in Chapter 3 prompted some insiders to call for nationalist investment in the genre. User "Fd. Aktivist Gbg," responding to

¹⁹⁵ Allt jag ser framför mig är uppslaget, med kulturmarxistisk tolkningsföreträdare: "Gärdebylåten är inte mer typiskt svensk än att japaner också kan anamma den." Available online, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://nordanvind.motpol.nu/?p=304>.

opponents of Nordisk Ungdom's reggae song, wrote the following on February 3, 2010 on Nationell.nu:

I don't like reggae at all, but I still think that innovation is beneficial. Hard rock/metal has never been ethnic Swedish music, there are tons of drugs in the genre, so you can't really call it a nationalist music genre exactly. Older Swedish folk music could well be the correct genre in that case.¹⁹⁶

User "Lennart B" on Nordisk.nu, writing on April 21, 2007 in response to Zyklon Boom's rap music, makes a call for folk music that appears less a default position emerging from criticisms of reggae, rap, and rock:

More projects influenced by folk music should be prioritized, because there, the music itself, regardless of the lyrics, [...] can strengthen an ethnic consciousness.¹⁹⁷

Though they would certainly distance themselves from "Lennart B's" language of ethnic consciousness, other forces in the nationalist scene began advocating folk music at roughly the same time as those voices above, and also on the grounds that "the music itself" had a unique ability to inspire Swedes.

Folk Music and the Sweden Democrats

The Sweden Democrats' interest in folk music, which in 2010 seized the attention of the folk music community and the media, emerged gradually, and is deeply intertwined with a broader concern for the arts, folk culture, and cultural nationalism. References to expressive culture appeared irregularly in comprehensive presentations of the party's positions. In this category I include

¹⁹⁶ Jag gillar inte reggae alls men jag tycker ändå att ett nytänkande är förnuftigt. Hårdrock/metal har aldrig varit etniskt svensk musik, det är grymt mycket droger inom genren, så det kan man inte kalla nationell musikgenre precis. Svensk gammalmodig folkmusik skulle väl vara rätta genren isåfall. Available online, accessed May 25, 2011, <http://www.nationell.nu/2010/01/31/nordisk-ungdom-lanserades-i-goteborg/>

¹⁹⁷ [M]er folkmusikinfluerade projekt borde sättas i första rummet, eftersom där kan även själva musiken, oavsett texterna, på ett helt annat sätt stärka en etnisk medvetenhet. Available online, accessed May 21, 2012, <http://www.nordisk.nu/showthread.php?t=269&highlight=zyklon+boom>

articles from the party's newspaper that attempt to summarize the Sweden Democrat's political profile—often penned by party leaders—as well as official party platforms (presentations of a party's policy proposals that are adopted via a vote by party members). Topics like national defense, membership in the European Union, and above all immigration dominate these documents, while culture and cultural policy lie at the margins. Sometimes, authors discuss culture only under the heading of another topic. Such is the case for the only mention of culture in a summary article of the party's positions in the first issue of the party newspaper *Sverige-Kuriren* (later *SD Kuriren*), where the word culture only appears in a section on education:

Instruction in school shall place added weight on guiding ethnical principles, so that pupils, from the beginning, learn to show honesty, courtesy, and camaraderie. A cultural consciousness shall be established and a firm understanding of our cultural heritage and our history, as well as good knowledge of the Swedish language, shall be prioritized (*Sverige Kuriren* 1988, no. 1).¹⁹⁸

Other comprehensive articles on the party's positions during the early 1990s—including an unofficial party platform in *Sverige-Kuriren* in 1990—omit the word culture, as well as music, art, and literature. One exception is the article, "This is what the Sweden Democrats want," where then party leader Anders Klarström lists the bullet point, "A Living Countryside: Stop the impoverishment of the countryside.

¹⁹⁸ Undervisningen i skolan ska ge extra tyngd åt vägledande etiska principer, så att eleverna från början lär sig att visa ärlighet, hänsyn och god kamratanda. Ett kulturmedvetande skall grundläggas och en gedigen kunskap om vårt kulturella arv och vår historia, liksom goda kunskaper i svenska språket ska prioriteras i skolan.

An essential part of our cultural heritage lies among those who work there” (*Sverige Kuriren* 1991, no. 14).¹⁹⁹

Official party platforms, in contrast, routinely devoted sections to cultural policy, and occasionally music. The Sweden Democrats’ party platform from 1989, for example, includes a section on cultural policy, but offers few details as to the types of culture the party supports and opposes:

The Sweden Democrats want to fight for the standing of Swedish culture and promote its development on both national and local levels. The Swedes have a rich cultural heritage that cannot be lost for future generations. That cultural heritage is seriously threatened by poor instruction in culture in schools, the rising non-European immigration, as well as commercialized, USA-inspired ‘trash culture.’ Therefore Swedish primary school education must give students increased knowledge of cultural expressions in the local community, Swedish and Nordic cultural heritage. The Sweden Democrats want to work for a new, living Swedish culture that is an alternative to today’s cultural darkness. Grants for culture should be given to those who through their creations shape expressions of our national and cultural identity. Valuable cultural items and national cultural treasures shall remain inside the country and may not be sold through export.²⁰⁰

The authors juxtapose “creations [that] shape expressions of [Swedish] national and cultural identity” with “commercialized, USA-Inspired ‘trash culture,’” but they offer no clarification as to the content of these categories.

¹⁹⁹ “En levande landsbygd: Stoppa utarmningen av landsbygden. En väsentlig del av vårt kulturarv ligger hos de som arbetar där.”

²⁰⁰ “Sverigedemokraterna vill slå vakt om den svenska kulturens ställning och främja dess utveckling, både på riksnivå och på lokal nivå. Svenskarna har ett rikt kulturarv som inte får gå förlorat för framtida generationer. Detta kulturarv är idag allvarligt hotat av dålig kulturundervisning i skolorna, den ökande utomeuropeiska invandringen samt den kommersiella, USA-inspirerade ”skräpkulturen”. Därför måste den svenska grundskolan i undervisningen ge eleverna ökade kunskaper om de lokala kulturyttringarna i hembygden, det svenska och nordiska kulturarvet. Sverigedemokraterna vill verka för en nya, levande svensk kultur som alternativ till dagens kulturella mörker. Kulturanlag skall kunna beviljas de som i sitt skapande gestaltar yttringar av vår nationella och kulturella identitet. Värdefulla kulturföremål och nationella kulturskatter skall bevaras inom landet och ej få säljas på export.” Available online, accessed May 27, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20021124154536/http://sverigedemokraterna.se/>.

The 1989 party platform maintained its endorsement until 1999. Though the 1999 program retained some elements from the previous edition, the sections on cultural policy were expanded. These changes in cultural policy stemmed from an internal power shift that took place in 1995. Then, Mikael Jansson replaced Anders Klarström as party leader on a reformist platform. In 1998, party members elected Johan Rinderheim to serve as vice president in the Jansson administration, a circle known as “the bunker” by insiders to this day. And in an interview with the party newspaper following his election, Rinderheim said that one of his first tasks as vice president would be to

work with the party’s ideological profile. There needs to be more literature so that the party can be more rooted. The importance of culture and national identity will be emphasized a bit, even though my ambition is that the Sweden Democrats will be a broad party, with strong positions in every area of politics (1998, no. 34).²⁰¹

Indeed, the cultural policy statement in the 1999 party platform begins to specify organizations and expressive forms that the party wants to support, and offers a more nuanced presentation of Swedish culture than the previous program:

The country’s different local heritage organizations must receive increased support. Swedish folk dance and folk music shall be supported and through state direction be disseminated to the people. [...] Public places in society shall be adorned with statues and paintings that describe our history and our cultural heritage. Much in our cultural heritage is colored by impulses from other folk cultures, just as our folk culture gifted impulses that impacted others. Such exchange did not eliminate the individual folk cultures and their characteristics only because every true folk culture is deeply rooted, in its unique history and in its reverence for the forefather’s quest.²⁰²

²⁰¹ “arbeta med partiets ideologiska profil. Det behövs mycket litteratur för att partiet skall bli mer ideologiskt rotfast. Kulturens och den nationella identitetens betydelse kommer att läggas viss tyngd på, även om min ambition är att Sverigedemokraterna skall bli ett brett parti med hjärtefrågor inom politikens alla områden.”

²⁰² Landets olika hembygdsföreningar måste ges ökat stöd. Svensk folkdans och folkmusik skall understödjas och i statlig regi föras ut till folket i olika sammanhang. [...] Offentliga platser i samhället skall förses med statyer och målningar som beskriver vår historia och vårt kulturarv. [...] Mycket i vår

The statement calls for support to both “low” and “high” culture, advocating local heritage organizations and folk music and dance on the one hand, and statues and murals on the other. The concluding section responds to outside criticisms of the party’s cultural policy that persist to the present, namely, that Swedish culture is itself the product of exchange, and therefore, any attempt to preserve purity in Swedish culture is inherently flawed. The authors of this passage counter that, while cultural exchange is part of Swedish culture, it must maintain some inherent essence in order to survive such exchange. This is a claim future party members would develop.

Although the 1999 program represented a move to provide a more detailed and philosophically grounded cultural policy, not to mention an embrace of folk music absent in most other party writings, subsequent editions did not continue this trajectory. In the next edition, ratified May 4, 2003 and revised May 8, 2005, the party removed the lines about folk music and folk culture, as well as murals and statues. Then, their discussion of culture focused less on elevating particular forms of cultural expression, referring instead to culture in an anthropological sense and using it to advance ontologies of nationhood and Swedishness. And it was here that they first offered their definition of Swedish identity: “A Swede is one who, by him

folkkultur är färgat av impulser från andra folkkulturer, precis som vår folkkultur utskänkt impulser med genomslag i andra. Att en sådan växelverkan inte raderat ut de enskilda folkkulturerna och deras särprägel, beror på att varje sann folkkultur har ett djup i sina rötter, i sin unika historia och i sin vördnad för förfädernas värv. Available online, accessed May 27, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/19991013170835/http://www.sverigedemokraterna.se/sd/>

or herself and by others, is understood to be Swedish.”²⁰³ Further, the rhetoric in this edition began framing the party’s protectionist stance in cultural issues as one motivated by a concern for preserving difference (see Chapter 2):

Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. The separate cultures are humankind’s collective heritage and should be recognized and protected for the good of all.²⁰⁴

The most recent party platform was ratified on November 25, 2011. It discusses culture as encompassing the domains of values, behaviors, and institutions on the one hand, and art, dance, music, and food on the other—it encompasses culture in both its anthropological and expressive, creative meaning. However, the discussion of expressive culture is again quite general:

What we primarily aim to preserve is [...] that which we understand to belong to the core of the Swedish culture. We attribute to this core, in the first instance, phenomena that to an especially great extent have impacted our social development, that have a deep link in Swedish history, that have been widely dispersed among earlier and/or living Swedes, that have a strong symbolic importance for Swedish identity, or that in some way are unique for the Swedish nation or a particular part of the Swedish nation.²⁰⁵

Though authors removed some of the detail expressed in earlier versions, they add an additional motivation for investing in cultural heritage, namely, its role in

²⁰³ “[S]vensk är den som av sig själv och som av andra uppfattas som svensk.” Available online, accessed May 27, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20050422065932/http://www.sverigedemokraterna.se/sd/>.

²⁰⁴ “Kulturell mångfald är lika nödvändig för mänskligheten som biologisk mångfald för naturen. De skilda kulturerna är mänsklighetens gemensamma arv och bör erkännas och skyddas till allas gagn.” Ibid.

²⁰⁵ “Det som vi primärt inriktar oss på att bevara är dock sådant som vi betraktar som tillhörande kärnan i den svenska kulturen. Till denna kärna räknar vi i första hand sådana företeelser som i särskilt hög utsträckning har präglat vår samhällsutveckling, har en djup förankring i den svenska historien, har en stor utbredning bland tidigare och/eller nu levande svenskar, har en stark symbolisk betydelse för den svenska identiteten eller på något sätt är unikt för den svenska nationen eller en viss del av den svenska nationen.” Available online, accessed May 27, 2012, <https://sverigedemokraterna.se/vara-asikter/principprogram/kultur/>

enabling a robust social safety net. They write that, while cultural heritage is valuable in many senses,

The absolutely most important aspect is [...] that cultural heritage functions as a social adhesive. In the long run, every society needs shared norms and values, collective memories, shared myths, shared holidays and traditions, shared customs and behaviors in order to stay together. This is especially important in a state like Sweden with a welfare model financed in solidarity, because the solidarity that supports that system is in turn based on identification and a strong sense of community.²⁰⁶

The party's "election manifesto [valmanifest]" for the 2010 national elections outlines an agenda for funding cultural projects in concert with the sentiments expressed above. In the manifesto, the party declares its intention to support cultural expressions aiming "to gratify, beautify, and create community"²⁰⁷ and strip funding for those "whose primary aim is to shock, disturb, and provoke"²⁰⁸ (Åkesson 2010:7). Additionally, the Sweden Democrats' hypothetical budget, released in spring 2010, calls for 500 million crowns per year of investments in "Swedish culture." And along with calls to reduce funding for multicultural projects and immigrant culture, the budget seeks a reduction of funds to "those parts of the culture sector where the operational dimension does not stand in reasonable proportion to interest among the people" (Sweden Democrats 2010).²⁰⁹ This latter

²⁰⁶ Den absolut viktigaste aspekten är dock att kulturarvet fungerar som ett sammanhållande kitt. Varje samhälle behöver gemensamma normer och värderingar, kollektiva minnen, gemensamma myter, gemensamma högtider och traditioner, gemensamma seder och bruk för att i förlängningen kunna hålla samman. Särskilt viktigt blir detta i en stat som den svenska med en solidariskt finansierad välfärdsmodell eftersom den solidaritet som håller upp systemet i sin tur baserar sig på identifikation och en stark känsla av gemenskap.

²⁰⁷ vars syfte är att glädja, försköna och skapa gemenskap.

²⁰⁸ vars primära syfte är att chockera, uppröra och provocera.

²⁰⁹ "de delar av kultursektorn där dimensionen på verksamheten inte står i rimlig proportion till det folkliga intresset."

position is targeted at funding for opera companies and symphony orchestras.²¹⁰

In sum, formal presentations of the Sweden Democrats' cultural policy reflect a steady concern for preserving cultural heritage. But party members' understandings of the content of that heritage, and indeed their need to specify that content, shifts. Additionally, authors of these statements hope to use this variously conceived culture to achieve a variety of goals. Early writings and the original party platform placed Swedish cultural heritage opposite American "trash culture," and frame cultural heritage as a vessel for promoting morals. The 2003 party platform describes the party's cultural policy as a tool for ensuring the survival of cultural diversity in a global context. And the most recent program emphasizes culture's role in strengthening social solidarity among Swedes, and thereby, the welfare state.

Attitudes towards culture reflected in these formal presentations seldom parallel party members' use of and commentary on culture and music in other venues. The most recent party platform notwithstanding, leaders in the Sweden Democrats have gradually shifted from championing the High Nordic and the fine arts to celebrating Swedish folk culture, and with it Swedish folk music. This latter emphasis spread, not only into political activism, but also into the private lives of party members, first and foremost Mattias Karlsson.

Music was involved at official events and gatherings early in the party's history. Sometimes this music appears suited to the party's political agenda,

²¹⁰ Note that opposition to these institutions of Western art music is a relatively recent phenomenon in the party, driven in large part by Björn Söder. Mikael Jansson—the previous party leader—does not share this sentiment. The 2011 budget for the Gothenburg regional chapter of the party, where Jansson was president, called for support for the city opera house, theater, and concert house. These lines were removed in the 2012 budget. Available online, accessed 06/14/2012, www.sd-gbg.se.

sometimes not. At the annual meeting of the organization Keep Sweden Swedish [Bevara Sverige Svensk]—one of the Sweden Democrats’ predecessor organizations—attendees were reported to have sung “national songs [nationella visor]” (*BSS-Nytt* 1983, 4). The label “national songs” could describe a repertoire of classic patriotic hymns, such as the national anthem, or songs produced within the contemporary nationalist scene. In contrast with this early event, a report from a Sweden Democrats party meeting in Göteborg April 29, 1989, states that dire and depressing speeches about mass immigration, as well as moments of silence for murdered party members, were interspersed with “fun happy-jazz [rolig gladjazz]” to lighten the mood. However, after party leader Anders Klarström gave the final speech, he closed by saying, “Let us Swedish patriots sing the most beautiful song we know, our own [national anthem,] Thou Ancient, Thou Free” (*Sverige Kuriren* 1989, 7-8).²¹¹

Folk music seems to have been generally absent from these settings. However, isolated writings in the party newspaper, *Sverige Kuriren*, occasionally celebrated the genre. Here, however, such celebration was sporadic and subordinate in relation to that for other musics. In 1988, the first issue of *Sverige-Kuriren* included a review of nyckelharpa player Åsa Jinder’s album, “Salute to Life [Hyllning till Livet]” The review praised the album’s blending of new and old, and the visions the music inspires: The forests of Värmland, Skåne’s green fields, and Midsummer celebrations in Dalarna. In this first number, however, folk music shares space with four other music styles. One article calls for the preservation of the mounted

²¹¹ “Låt oss svenska patrioter sjunga den vackraste sång vi vet, vår egen Du gamla Du fria.”

military music corps, one criticizes the removal of the patriotic hymn “Church of the Fathers [Fädernas Kyrka]” from the state church hymnal, while another treats turn-of-the-century art music composer Wilhelm Peterson-Berger at length. Additionally the number included advertisements for Viking rock band Ultima Thule and their then new release, *Sverige, Sverige Fosterland*.

Though the party seemed interested in five different music genres—folk music, military music, Christian hymns, art music, and Viking rock—subsequent early numbers of *Sverige-Kuriren* abandoned folk music, as well as religious music. Writings on culture instead focused on high culture or the High Nordic, on Swedish art music composers, poets, playwrights, or painters, on the one hand, and heroic kings and Vikings on the other. An author writing under the name “Balder,” for example, filled early editions of the newspaper with articles on painter Carl Larsson (1988, 2), poet Verner von Heidenstam (1988, 3-4), novelist Selma Lagerlöf (1988, 5-6), early nineteenth-century nationalist writers group the Gothic League, as well as King Charles XII (1989, 7-8), etc. Throughout these years, though no articles focused on Viking rock, advertisements for Ultima Thule were a constant. The contrasting representations of music in articles and advertisements may shed light on readers’ musical practices. Paper editors seemed most interested in teaching readers about the high arts through Balder’s writings, but readers seem to have been more likely to consume Viking rock. “Balder’s” writings began to subside at the start of the 1990s, and instead the topics he wrote about were often discussed in a new feature called “Fun Culture [Kul Kultur].”

This trend continued throughout the 1990s, boosted by frequent street commemorations of historical Swedish kings, and the use of Viking iconography in the party's promotional material. Even after the 1999 party platform highlighted the importance of Swedish folk culture, the party paper continued its focus on kings, Vikings, and high art. This focus received an additional impulse when Torbjörn Kastell rose in the ranks of the Jansson administration, eventually becoming an alternate vice president (together with Johan Rinderheim) and editor of the party newspaper. Since his youth, Kastell was deeply interested in Swedish military and political history (Interview, Torbjörn Kastell, March 29, 2011), and he focused on these topics during his tenure as editor.

Towards the end of the Jansson administration, however, internal voices began critiquing the party's stance on cultural issues. In 2004, then high-ranking party member Jimmy Windeskog wrote an article expressing such a critique:

If you look back at [the Sweden Democrats'] work, especially in newspapers, imagery, and demonstrations, you can see a clear, and probably unhealthy fixation on statues and poetry rooted in Sweden's age as a great power. Only occasionally is that image supplemented, and then often with farmer romanticism [bonderomatik] from the beginning of the last century (*SD-Kuriren* 2004, no. 58).²¹²

Despite voicing these criticisms, he did not specify why he considered the party's cultural profile problematic. He provides some insight into his thinking, however, when he proceeds to celebrate ice hockey in the province of Dalarna. He suggests that ice hockey is a cultural phenomenon the party could support on the grounds that it

²¹² Ser man tillbaka på SD:s arbete, inte minst i våra tidningar, bildspråk och manifestationer kan man se en märklig, och förmodligen osund fixering kring statyer och lyrik med sina rötter i den svenska storhetstiden. Bara ibland kompletteras denna bild, och då inte sällan med en bonderomantik från förra seklets inledning.

creates contact between people in society where we to a greater and greater extent keep to ourselves. That is exactly what culture should do.²¹³

The reader is left to assume that Windeskog opposed the party's fixation on statues, poetry, and farmer romanticism (read traditional folk culture) on the grounds that these forces do not encourage interaction among Swedes. His praise for ice hockey indicates a desire to see the party open itself to supporting types of culture previously overlooked, culture that may be more relevant to contemporary life and society in Sweden.

Windeskog would not get a chance to enact these changes, however. As part of the political circle surrounding party leader Mikael Jansson, Windeskog was stripped of his posts following Jansson's loss to Jimmie Åkesson in the party leader elections on May 7, 2005. That same year, Windeskog was thrown out of the Sweden Democrats completely for criticizing fellow party member Tony Wiklander's decision to adopt a non-European daughter. Today he is active in circles surrounding the National Democrats.

The 2005 party-leadership elections swept not only Windeskog, but also Rinderheim and Kastell from power. Mattias Karlsson, one of the so-called "fantastic four" faction surrounding incoming party leader Jimmie Åkesson, then became the main force driving the party's cultural policy, as well as the main media spokesperson on cultural issues. And though he did not embrace Windeskog's celebration of ice hockey, he did employ Windeskog's standards for supporting culture. He too envisioned a cultural policy that forged camaraderie among Swedes.

²¹³ blivit något som skapar kontakt och gemenskap mellan människor i ett samhälle där vi mer och mer lever för oss själva. Detta är precis vad kultur ska göra.

Karlsson expresses this in his section on culture in the 2011 party platform, where he emphasizes culture's ability to function as a "social adhesive (sammanhållande kitt)" and thereby encourage the solidarity necessary to maintain a welfare state. However, though he endorsed the notion that culture should bring people together, the phenomena Karlsson considered best suited to this task were some of the very symbolic and expressive forms Windeskog sought to scrub from the party's profile.

Karlsson explains his motivation to change the party's political profile:

Many of those who wrote about culture in the [party] newspaper at the time had an almost exclusive focus on the High Swedish. A lot of conservative poets, Carolean soldiers, Sweden's era as a great power, and Vikings, etc. And I felt that, while that was interesting, the era as a great power is also politically sensitive. And then I thought that, if you are going to find something to build a cultural renaissance around, it should be something that unites as many as possible. Many of these traditions and holidays that they highlighted, connected to the Royal Family and the era as a great power, were ultimately just something that the aristocracy were involved in and cared about. And I thought now, the type of voter we had, I felt that it could be difficult to get them to identify with that. But this folkly - that comes from the Swedish peasant tradition, that is something most Swedes have just two generations back, maybe, and therefore I wanted to bring in more of that (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, February 11, 2011).²¹⁴

Karlsson's desire for the party to invest in folk culture thus stems from his drive to "unite as many as possible." His description depicts folk culture as being that of common Swedes today, in contrast with stories of Vikings, kings, and aristocracy

²¹⁴ Många av dem som skrev om kultur på den tiden i tidningen hade ett nästan uteslutande storsvenskt perspektiv, med väldigt mycket konservativa diktare och Karoliner, stormaktstid och vikingar osv. Jag kände att förvisso är det intressant, men det här med stormaktstiden blir så politiskt känsligt. Sedan har jag tänkt att om man ska hitta någonting att bygga en kulturell renässans kring så bör det vara någonting som förenar så många som möjligt. Många av de här traditionerna och högtiderna som man lyfter fram, kopplade till kungahuset och stormaktstider, är egentligen bara någonting som aristokratin har sysslat med och i första hand tyckte var viktigt. Jag tror, att med den typen av väljare vi hade så kan det bli svårt för dem att identifiera sig med det. Det här folkliga, som kommer ur den svenska bondekulturen, det är någonting som de allra flesta svenskar har bara två generationer tillbaka. Jag vill få in mer av det perspektivet.

which ultimately concern a bygone society or a miniscule portion of Sweden's living population.

Karlsson's conception of folk culture encompasses clothing, architecture, holiday celebrations, as well as Swedish folk music and dance. This understanding is somewhat based on his own life story (see Chapter 1). He describes folk music as a sidelined, yet constant feature of his early life. Though not a musician himself, various family members played instruments and danced. His father played fiddle and flute, his grandfather played accordion, and older members in his family danced common Swedish folk dances like schottis and hambo (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, December 3, 2010). He nonetheless recognizes today that there is a difference between the type of folk music he had in his home, and "older" ostensibly more authentic variants. He says of the music in his childhood home:

You can call that type of music folk music, but it's a little younger. [...] But it was much more accordion music and a lot of Evert Taube songs, some singing. But that is perhaps the folk music of today. But this older tradition, with a lot of fiddles, nyckelharpas, certain types of flutes, Swedish bagpipes, I didn't have any knowledge of that (Interview, Mattias Karlsson February 11, 2011).²¹⁵

This latter, older tradition, was one that Karlsson today privileges within his conception of Swedish cultural heritage, naming the nyckelharpa, for instance, as, in his mind, one of the main icons of Swedish culture (*Aftonbladet*, January 27, 2011). His interest in older traditional music began when he started listening to folk rock groups as an adult during the late 1990s:

²¹⁵ Den typen av musik kan man också kalla folkmusik, men den är lite yngre. [...] Det är mer dragspelsmusik och mycket Evert Taube visor, lite sång där. Men det är väl folkmusiken idag, kanske. Den här äldre traditionen, med mycket fiol, nyckelharpor, vissa typer av flöjter, och svensk säckpipa, den hade jag inte haft någon kunskap om.

A few bands came out at that time who started playing modern folk music, popularized, like Garmarna, Hedningarna, and Nordman. And it was kind of natural that you started looking at it. And we went to a few concerts. It was ultimately via modernized folk music that I started paying attention to folk music in general. Of course you know that it existed, but you didn't have any relation to it at all. You had heard the modernized variants, and then you get interested in the pure tradition that they built upon (Interview, Mattias Karlsson February 11, 2011).²¹⁶

Karlsson and his wife, Gabriella Hedarv, would later include a song by Garmarna at their wedding in 2006.

Karlsson's burgeoning interest in folk music did not entail a corresponding disinterest in the High Nordic. During his youth, he was an avid reader of Swedish popular historian Herman Lindqvist, and as a student at Lund University, from 1999-2002, he was a member of the National Democratic Student Organization [Nationaldemokratiska Studentföreningen]. This organization, distinct from the National Democrats party founded in 2001, aimed to promote nationalist ideals among university students through activities that praised icons of Swedish history and romantic era Swedish arts. Most of the organization's activities focused on celebration of classic Swedish poets, artists, and composers, or commemoration of the deaths of past Swedish kings, especially Charles XII.²¹⁷

Nonetheless, when Karlsson has had a leadership role in determining policy or founding organizations, he has emphasized folk culture over the High Nordic. In

²¹⁶ Det kom några band vid den tidpunkten som började spela modern folkmusik, populariserad, som Garmarna, Hedningarna, och Nordman. Det blev på något vis naturligt att man fick upp ögonen för det och vi gick på några konserter. Det var egentligen via den moderniserade folkmusiken som jag tror att jag fick upp ögonen för folk musik överhuvudtaget. Klart att man visste att det fanns, men jag hade ingen relation till det alls. Man hade hört den i moderniserade varianter, och så blev man också intresserad av den renodlade traditionen som den byggde på.

²¹⁷ Available online, accessed 06/14/2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20030127052019/http://lund.nationaldemokrater.com/>

2009, together with fellow party member Erik Almquist, Karlsson founded the party-unaffiliated cultural organization Gimle. The two conceived of Gimle as an avenue to promote Swedish and Nordic culture among social conservatives and nationalists, and to provide these individuals a forum to engage with this culture as practitioners, rather than as mere observers. Gimle maintains a website with articles, written almost exclusively by Karlsson, on topics ranging from folk music to regional holiday celebrations. The organization also sponsored a festival in 2009, complete with feat-of-strength games, Viking food and drinks, folk dancing, as well as motocross bike racing (the latter on the grounds that it has become a part of contemporary Swedish culture). The festival concluded with a visit to a folk music festival in nearby Borås.

At Gimle festival, and at Sweden Democrat party events, Karlsson and Almquist themselves typically perform the ox dance (oxdansen) folkdance—a dance Karlsson learned by watching youtube.com videos. The ox dance is a choreographed dance-fight between two men that originated in a secondary school in Karlstad during the early 1800s (Andersson 2001 [1964]:78). Karlsson considers the dance ideal because of the overrepresentation of men in the organization and party.



Example 6. Erik Almquist (left) and Mattias Karlsson (right) teaching attendees at Gimle Festival 2009 to dance the Oxdans.

In public statements nearer to the 2010 elections, Karlsson began describing the Sweden Democrat's cultural policy as being more focused on folk music and dance than official presentations of the party's positions imply. Whereas the party's election manifesto called for culture that "gratifies, beautifies, and creates community," Karlsson clarified in newspaper and radio interviews (such as the interview mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) that folk music and dance, as well as local heritage organizations, filled the content of that category.²¹⁸ And in their 2011 spring budget, they proposed the establishment of a "state cultural heritage fund where individuals and organizations [...] can turn to in order to receive support for their operations and projects."²¹⁹

But despite his focus on the genre, folk music is not an obvious choice for Karlsson's agenda to "unite as many as possible." In his dissertation on

²¹⁸ See article, "SD vill ha en mer centralstyrd kulturpolitik," (Kulturnytt, October 21, 2010), and program "Morgon" on P1 radio, October 27, 2010.

²¹⁹ Införa en statlig kulturarvsfond dit bland annat individer och organisationer [...] skall kunna vända sig för att få stöd till kulturarvsbevarande verksamheter och projekt. Motion to Riksdagen, 2010/11:SD300

contemporary Swedish folk music, David Kaminsky writes that virtually no folk musicians “would argue that folk music, in any real way, is today a ‘music of the people’ in the sense that it might have been in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (2005:208). Only a small portion of Sweden’s population performs or listens to folk music regularly, and this is especially true of the “older folk music”—esoteric in its sounds and difficult to perform—that Karlsson seems to idealize.

Along these lines, on October 17, 2010, Malmö Academy of Music lecturer Pär Moberg, in a radio debate on the Sweden Democrats’ interest in folk music, declared,

It is interesting that the Sweden Democrats want to support culture that is broadly entrenched among the people. And then you can ask, ‘Is Swedish folk music broadly entrenched among the people today?’ [It is] the opposite. I would say that there are significantly more Swedes today – if we are talking about ethnic Swedes in case there are any of those – who are interested in tango, and popular music above all else. And similarly, in their budget the Sweden Democrats talk about how elitist culture should have less money. If there is something that is elitist today, it is Swedish folk music.²²⁰

Indeed, in my experience, the folk music community in Sweden is largely urban, educated, and young, much like that in the United States. I am often surprised by how few Swedes, for example, are familiar with the instrument I play—the nyckelharpa, a traditional folk instrument depicted on the back of the Swedish 50 crown bill, and unofficially Sweden’s national instrument.

²²⁰ Det är intressant att Sverigedemokraterna vill stödja framförallt kulturer som har en bred folklig förankring. Och då kan man fråga sig, 'har svensk folkmusik idag en bred folklig förankring?' Tvärtom. Jag skulle vilja påstå att det är betydligt fler svenskar idag - om vi pratar om etniska svenskar ifall det finns sådana - som är intresserad av tango, och framförallt populärmusik. Och likadant pratar man i Sverigedemokraternas budget om att elitistiska kulturer ska ha mindre pengar. Är det något som är elitistiskt idag så är det svensk folkmusik. Available online, accessed June 14, 2012, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2487&artikel=4102334>

But Karlsson's concerns go beyond the popularity of cultural products. He finds folk music suited to his agenda not only because of to whom, but also because of what it signifies.

BT: I understand that you want music that everybody can gather around, but is folk music the best music for that? Dansband, psalms – if there is something more obviously appreciated by the majority of Swedes?

MK: I don't think that one prohibits the other, we haven't really deemed folk music more important than psalms. But I think nonetheless that many Swedes have – there are certain symbols, mental images connected with Swedishness. There, I think that specifically folk music, and folk musicians and such are a very central symbol. And I actually think many Swedes, even if they are not nationalistically inclined get a certain feeling when they hear Swedish folk music, but perhaps not other music. As regards dansband, it doesn't really have that – there isn't that seriousness, there aren't those roots back in history that folk music has that could rouse strength and so forth. [...] In those contexts that incorporate folk music today, for example in Swedish TV, or in other contexts, folk music accompanies descriptions of Swedish holidays and traditions, moments of positive fellowship, or pictures of Swedish landscapes that are very important for Swedes and the Swedish self-image and the Swedish identity. That is something very significant for the Swedish self-image, that it is closely tied to nature – more perhaps to nature than to people and habits, and holidays, really. And folk music is seen as connected to nature, there is a sound in Swedish folk music that developed in some form of symbiosis with the Swedish landscape. Kulning, for example, which uses the Swedish landscape to send its sound between two points. Or herding music (fädbodsmusiken) in general (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, December 3, 2010).²²¹

²²¹ BT: Jag förstår att ni vill ha musik som alla kan samlas kring, men är folkmusik den bästa musiken för det? Ta t. ex. dansbandsmusik eller psalmer, finns det någonting som är mer självklart omtyckt av de flesta svenskar? MK: Jag ser inte att den ena utesluter den andra, vi har egentligen inte pekat ut folkmusik som viktigare än psalmer. Men jag tror ändå att många svenskar har, det finns vissa symboler, mentala bilder kopplade till svenskheten. Där tror jag att just folkmusik, och folkmusiker och så spelar en väldigt central roll. Och jag tror faktiskt att många svenskar, även om de inte är nationalistiskt synade får en viss känsla när de hör svensk folkmusik, men kanske inte annan musik. När det gäller dansband har den liksom inte den seriositeten, det finns inga rötter bakåt i historien som folkmusiken har, som skulle kunna samla krafter och så. [...] I de sammanhang folkmusiken figurerar idag, till exempel på svensk TV, eller i andra sammanhang, då ackompanjerar musiken skildringar av svenska högtider och traditioner, stunder av positiv gemenskap, eller bilder av svensk landskapstyp som är också väldigt viktiga för svenskar, den svenska självbilden och den svenska identiteten. Det är någonting som är väldigt signifikant för den svenska nationalkänslan, att den är väldigt starkt knuten just till naturen. Mer kanske till naturen än till kanske människor, seder och högtider egentligen. Och folkmusiken ses också som kopplad till naturen, det är en klang i den svenska folkmusiken som har vuxit fram i någon form av symbios med det svenska landskapet.

Folk music's appeal thus goes beyond its potential to serve as a musical common denominator for Swedes. Karlsson links the art form with wholesome community life, and claims that this association is formed in part by the entertainment industry. Additionally, he associates folk music, herding music in particular, with Swedish landscape, and he sees this association coded within the musical sounds themselves. Given longstanding tendencies to associate nation with nature in Sweden (see Löfgren 1979; Berggren and Trägårdh 2009), such an inherent connection to the country's natural world could encourage interpretations of the music as a manifestation of Swedish national essence. Karlsson says that the art form's link with landscape gives it potential to inspire Swedes on a deeply emotional plane, connecting them with Sweden and Swedish identity in ways other musics cannot.

Runar Filper, a party veteran who nonetheless supported Karlsson and Jimmie Åkesson's faction in 2005, offers further defense of Karlsson's agenda and thinking:

The character of this cultural policy that is coming out, it is more linked to the old Swedish farming society, something that all still have a connection with. Because everybody has their memories - or their grandparents, or maybe have memories of their great grandparents who maybe were a living part of that society - where that culture was important. And that was the music and dance of the time, when they were youths. So it is something that we all are connected to (Interview, Runar Filper, April 4, 2011).²²²

Kulningen till exempel, som liksom utnyttjar det svenska landskapet för att få sin klang mellan två punkter, eller fädbodsmusiken överlag.

²²² Den här kulturpolitiksprägeln som är på väg att komma fram, den har mer förankring i det gamla svenska bondesamhället, något som vi alla har koppling till fortfarande. I och med att alla har kvar sina minnen, eller mor- och farföräldrar, och kanske har minnen av sina gamla morfäder och gamla farmor som kanske var en levande del i ett samhälle, där den kulturen var viktig. Och just den typen av musik och dans gällde då, när de var ungdomar, så det är någonting som vi har koppling till allihop.

Filper calls attention to the fact that most ethnic Swedes are but a few generations removed from rural farming society—to a time and a place where folk music might more accurately be described as “music of the people.” He suggests that bloodlines convey memories of rural life, and thus that, though folk music may not be popular today, most Swedes are at some level conscious of their historical relation to it.

Other voices linked to the Sweden Democrats, however, suggest that the party’s current focus on folk culture is instead a product of political populism.

Torbjörn Kastell, former newspaper editor, alternate vice president, and major voice on the party’s cultural policy, says of the current administration (the Åkesson faction):

They are vote-maximizers above all else. Again, there we have a conflict between the factions regarding tactics and strategy, basically. The Åkesson faction placed significantly more emphasis on maximizing votes, while my side held onto ideology more tightly whether it helped or hurt us. [...] But I think that, as soon as the Sweden Democrats become a more ‘mainstream’ party, they can go back a bit and emphasize high culture and history. I know that it is still there deep down in them. So if they can maintain power, inside the party that is, and not be out-maneuvered by an even newer faction, then I can imagine things developing like that. But as I said, they are first and foremost tacticians. (Interview, Torbjörn Kastell, March 29, 2011).²²³

Kastell implies that current party leaders feel passionately about high culture and history. This interest is absent from the current administration’s public profile, however, because party leaders regard it as counterproductive to their electoral goals. Karlsson’s statements above lend some support to this interpretation, such as

²²³ De är ju röstmaximerare framförallt. Där har vi återigen konflikt mellan falangerna ifråga om taktik och strategi helt enkelt. Åkessonfalangen satte betydligt större vikt vid röstmaximeringen medan min sida kanske höll fast mer vid ideologi, må det bära eller brista. [...] Men jag tror att, så fort sverigedemokraterna blir ett lite mer ‘mainstream’ parti under tiden, så kan de gå tillbaka lite mer och betona det lite mer högkulturella och historiska. Jag vet att det fortfarande finns kvar i grunden hos dem, så om de håller sig vid makten ett tag och inte blir utmanövrerade av ännu en nyare falang, då kan jag se en utvecklingen åt det hållet. Men som sagt, de är ju i första hand taktiker.

when he calls the history of Sweden's age as a great power "politically sensitive"—likely because of its tendency to appear alongside chauvinistic patriotism, and its association, in a contemporary context, with neo-Nazism.

The flipside to these statements is that folk culture is not politically sensitive, or at least significantly less so than high culture. Other nationalist activists carry this thinking one step further, treating folk music as an emblem of the positive nature of the nationalist cause. One such individual is National Democrat Vávra Suk, a former Sweden Democrat, and editor of nationalist newspaper, *Nationell Idag*. Throughout his tenure as editor of National Today, Suk routinely published articles on folk music. Suk himself, Johannes Schwartz, Stefan Pettersson, and, most of all Umeå folk dancer Erik Alhem authored these articles. Members of the folk music community came in contact with these articles in early 2010, in part because many of them are linked with leftist organizations that monitor publications like National Today, and Suk claims that it was his paper, not the Sweden Democrats, who first ignited the controversy over nationalism and folk music. While he was serving as editor, I asked him to explain his paper's focus on the genre:

Now, I don't know much about Swedish folk culture, folk music and folk dance and stuff like that. But we have people who participate in that. However, as editor-in-chief, I am highly involved in what we publish and why, and we've been doing this in the paper for a while now. Sometimes we are criticized for only focusing on multiculturalism's problems or immigration and immigrants, etc. And here we show that, that isn't true at all, here we take up genuine Swedish culture, things that aren't multicultural, but instead part of the Swedish tradition, of European tradition. [...] Other papers, Aftonbladet for example, what they write about - the news is crime, crises, and different sorts of problems. Multiculture is often involved in those problems, we think. And the difference is that we write that, Aftonbladet doesn't. But at the same time, unlike Aftonbladet, we also look at real Swedish culture, both folk culture and national events – Swedish Christmas celebrations, culture articles that delve into tradition more broadly. [...] So

really, we have less multicultural, less immigration, than the big papers (Interview, Vávra Suk, April 1, 2011)²²⁴

According to Suk, these writings on folk music, on “real Swedish culture,” provide evidence that the paper is not consumed with negative reporting. With their celebration of folk music, they show that they are for, and not just against something. Such qualities are essential to Suk’s sense of nationalism. He explains, beginning with a reference to earlier activists,

Many of those who reacted, earlier, to the problems, were not nationalists. Instead, they saw a problem that dealt with immigration and crime, cultural conflicts and such – they were against that. But they didn’t have much of their own. If you are a nationalist, you build out from the Self – what you *want* to create, how you *want* society to work (ibid; emphasis in spoken original).²²⁵

Andreas Nyberg, leading member of the ethnopluralist, and National Democrat-derived action group Nordic Youth, arrives at a similar sentiment when we discussed the relative absence of folk music among nationalists.

BT: Why isn’t [folk music] bigger in nationalist organizations, why aren’t there more people investing in it?

AN: I think I know part of the answer, and that is that nationalist have been so incredibly bad at emphasizing, and recruiting people who have any type of quality. They have tried – they have attracted a completely different type of

²²⁴ “Nu kan inte jag jättemycket om svensk folkkultur, folkmusik och folkdans och sådant, men vi har människor som håller på med det. [...] Men därmed som chefredaktör så är jag i högsta grad inblandad i vad vi ska publicera och varför, och vi har kört det här i tidningen ett tag. Vår tidning kritiserar ibland för att bara handla om mångkulturens problem eller om invandring och invandrare osv. Och då visar vi att, så är det inte alls, utan vi tar upp det som är genuint svenskt också, det som inte är mångkultur, utan det som finns i den svenska traditionen, i den europeiska traditionen. Andra tidningar, Aftonbladet t. ex., de skriver om brottslighet, kriser, och problem av olika slag och så. Vi menar att det är ofta mångkultur inblandat i de problemen. Skillnaden är att vi skriver det, medan Aftonbladet inte skriver att det är så. Men samtidigt, till skillnad från Aftonbladet, så tar vi också upp riktig svensk kultur, både vad gäller folkkultur men också nationella tillställningar, svenskt julfirande samt kulturartiklar som går in i traditioner i största allmänhet. [...] Så egentligen skriver vi om mindre mångkultur och mindre invandring än de stora tidningarna.”

²²⁵ “Många av de som reagerade tidigare på problemen var inte nationalist. De såg ett problem som hade med invandrares brottslighet att göra, kulturkrockar och liknande. Då var de emot det men hade inte så mycket eget. Är man nationalist, då bygger man utifrån det egna, som man *vill* skapa, så som man *vill* att samhället ska fungera.”

people who sometimes have not been so positive for nationalism, people who maybe like to drink, people who don't have very high morals, and that has been very negative (Interview, Andreas Nyberg, July 4, 2011).²²⁶

Just as Suk regards the presence of folk music in his paper as a sign of the positive, upstanding nature of nationalist activism, Nyberg considers instances of folk music's absence as a symptom of nationalism's previous delinquency.

Indeed, reformist agendas propelled folk music's rise to prominence among Sweden Democrats and other nationalists. Folk music first appears in the Sweden Democrats' 1999 party platform after then vice-president Johan Rinderheim called for a more rooted party ideology. Karlsson turned to the music so that the nationalist message might connect with more Swedes at a deeper emotional level, to escape associations with chauvinism, and thereby, if we are to believe Kastell's interpretation, to increase the party's share of votes. Likewise, Suk frames appreciation of folk music as a potential avenue towards becoming a true nationalist, juxtaposing such nationalists with less refined anti-immigrant activists. But though activists may champion folk music because of what the music represents, they also celebrate the genre because of the people it attracts.

Folk Music and Implicit Whiteness

Why I am not voting for [the Sweden Democrats] is not a very difficult question. Simply, I care, not only about the Swedish culture, but also about

²²⁶ BT: "Varför är inte [folkmusik] större inom nationalistiska organisationer, varför är det inte fler som satsar?"

AN: "Jag tror att en del av svaret kan bero på att nationalisterna har varit så otroligt dåliga att punktmarkera och rekrytera människor som har någon speciell kvalité. Man har försökt men har helt enkelt lockat till sig en helt annan typ av människor som ibland kanske inte har varit jättepositiv för nationalismen, t. ex. människor som kanske gillar att dricka alkohol eller som kanske inte har jättehög moral, och det har varit väldigt negativt."

the Swedish people. I want to save, not only the Swedish folk costume, but also the person inside of it.²²⁷
- Sanna Hill, *Nationell Idag*, August, 2010.

In justifying her 2007 move from the Sweden Democrats to the National Democrats—from cultural nationalism to ethnonationalism—high-profile writer and current editor of *National Today*, Sanna Hill, articulated an understanding common among cultural and ethnonationalists alike. Namely, that Swedish folk culture is a domain of social behavior dominated by non-immigrants, that inside a Swedish folk costume one is likely to find an ethnic Swede. Most often, however, nationalists have expressed this understanding with reference to Swedish folk music rather than costumes. For decades, nationalists have observed, as have I, that Swedish folk musicians, dancers, and enthusiasts are overwhelmingly white. Nationalists derive differing significances from these observations. Some cultural nationalist Sweden Democrats interpret this homogeneity as an undesirable product of multiculturalism and Swedish self-contempt—illustration of the fact that Sweden’s immigrants are not assimilating into the national culture. In contrast, some ethnonationalists treat folk music gatherings as oases in a society otherwise plagued by ethnic diversity. The folk music community’s whiteness constitutes an ideal in the minds of such nationalists. But even as the folk music community’s ethnic composition means different things to different nationalists, it also confirms overarching narratives in nationalist thought, specifically, that a Swedish people exists, that this people is on some level conscious of its existence, and conscious of

²²⁷ *Varför jag inte lägger min röst på detta parti är inte en särskilt svår fråga att svara på, jag bryr mig helt enkelt inte bara om den svenska kulturen, utan bryr mig även om det svenska folket. Jag vill inte endast bevara den svenska folkdräkten, utan även personen som är klädd i den.*

the fact that their peoplehood threatens mainstream sensibilities and social agendas.

When contemporary nationalists advance this claim, some do so explicitly referencing the concept of “implicit whiteness.” Tenured psychology professor at California State University, Long Beach, and outspoken white nationalist, Kevin MacDonald coined this term to describe patterns of tacit white ethnocentrism in multiethnic democracies, and he describes the concept thusly:

[W]hite people are gradually coalescing into implicit white communities that reflect their ethnocentrism but ‘cannot tell their name.’ They are doing so because of the operation of various mechanisms that operate implicitly, below the level of conscious awareness. These white communities cannot assert explicit white identities because the explicit cultural space is deeply committed to an ideology in which any form of white identity is anathema (2006-2007:23).

Implicitly white communities are implicit because discourses prevalent in the public sphere, in “explicit cultural space,” discourage whites from behaving ethnocentrically, a behavior MacDonald claims is essential to our psychology, and, thereby, a virtue. In his other writings (1994, 1998a, 1998b), MacDonald argues that Jews perpetuate such discourses, as well as corresponding governmental policies, in an effort to undermine white solidarity and formidability in an ongoing competition among races for resources and influence. Accordingly, he interprets the phenomenon of implicit whiteness as a symptom of defeat in this struggle:

Because there is no mainstream attempt by whites to shape the explicit culture in ways that would legitimize white identity and the pursuit of white ethnic interests, implicit white communities become enclaves of retreating whites rather than communities able to consciously pursue white interests (2006-2007:24).

MacDonald’s writings, some in Swedish translation, are distributed in

Sweden by the identitarian Arktos.com and Arminius.se. Additionally, bloggers on Motpol.nu, especially Oskerei have reviewed and promoted MacDonald's work, including his studies on implicit whiteness.²²⁸ But long before MacDonald had written about implicit whiteness, Swedish nationalists were observing the same phenomenon. And whereas MacDonald describes the social formations in the United States surrounding stock car racing (NASCAR), Evangelical Christianity, Republican voter registration, and country music as implicitly white communities, his Swedish counterparts saw tacit white collectivities coalescing around Swedish folk music.

In a 1990 issue of the Sweden Democrats' newspaper Sverige-Kuriren, party member Ola Sundberg described his visit to Mälarsalen dance hall in Stockholm. At the time, the Sweden Democrats were generally an ethnonationalist organization. On this particular evening, attendees were dancing to dansband music—a German schlager-styled genre that can include gammaldans dance forms, and thereby occasionally acquires the label of folk music:

You might think that because of the atmosphere, you were somewhere in Blekinge, Dalarna, Östergötland or Jämtland...but the fact was that I was in Mälarsalen in the heart of our capital Stockholm. That evening...the dansband Lill-Nickes from Halmstad was playing, full with enthusiastic and skillful dancers on the floor and pleasant people with a nice, clean, and harmonious atmosphere all around. The number of attendees that night was about 700, which is pretty representative for a dance on Sunday evenings.

Who were these attendees, what kind of people were they? Well, all ages from 18 up to 75, and only Swedes and Scandinavians – at least that evening. In fact I didn't see a single person there with non-European ancestry. It is truly a pleasure to see that Swedes and Scandinavians see the need to carry on with our traditions.
[...]

²²⁸ See "Implicit Whiteness." Available online, accessed 06/01/2012, <http://oskerei.motpol.nu/?p=572>.

Hans Ryberg [the venue's owner] says also that Mälarsalen has become an obvious choice for nationalistically-minded Swedes, just like Skansen.²²⁹ Flashy headlines are not needed – people know nonetheless where they feel at home.²³⁰

In the center of a multiethnic city, a dance event featuring what Sundberg considers Swedish traditional dance drew ethnically homogeneous patrons. But the key statement comes in the final sentence quoted above, “Flashy headlines are not needed – people know nonetheless where they feel at home.” For here Sundberg says that without being told, Swedes (apparently non-nationalist, since they are described as “people” in this instance rather than “nationalistically-minded Swedes”) are seeking out ethnically homogeneous collectivities where they can feel at home, and they are doing so without explicit encouragement or direction.²³¹

More than twenty years later, multiple informants described similar experiences and offered similar interpretations. During an interview with Vávra Suk, former chief ideologue for the National Democrats and former editor of *Nationell Idag*, I asked why nationalists cared about Swedish folk music in the first place. His response extols ethnocentrism, and eventually refers to his own visits to Skeppis folk dance club in Stockholm:

It [folk music] creates identity, it is also something that disproves many of those claims and ideas that are disappearing. ‘No, well we all come from the same - we are all descended from the same monkey in Africa and therefore we are all the same.’ We are not [all the same], we have developed differently, all have their own unique features that they are proud of, all have their own roots, and roots are key to the functioning of a society. [...] I think that many people today are quite unhappy and lonely, and what you hear

²²⁹ Skansen is an outdoor folk park in central Stockholm showcasing rural culture from around the country.

²³⁰ *Sverige-kuriren* 1990, no. 9.

²³¹ I interviewed Hans Rydberg on March 29, 2011, more than twenty years after Sundberg wrote this article. Rydberg did not recall having told Sundberg, nor having ever thought, that large numbers of nationalists were attending his dances.

from commercials all the time is that you can buy yourself happy, buy more and you will be happy. It doesn't work like that. Instead, I think that this folk music scene, among other things, there you'll find no money to be made, but still there are very happy and fulfilled people there because they have each other, that is, there is a human connection. And you might ask yourself, 'yes, but don't we have that out in society with its multicultural? It is so nice that we can learn African dance,' and so on. No. It's not the same thing. Because people have different backgrounds, different cultures, they think differently, they have different expectations. You have surely noticed that in the folk music scene, and in Swedish folk culture, it is only Swedes and Westerners, even if politicians try, with various economic resources, to force in other groups', other ethnic groups' equivalent culture. People go there because they recognize themselves, it is their own group, it is one's own who one can trust. In reality that's how it is. There, you won't have your wallet stolen (Interview, Vávra Suk, April 1, 2011).²³²

Suk's words evoke themes common in the rhetoric of New Nationalism.

Having first asserted the existence of the Swedish through a general reference to folk music, Suk then disavows chauvinism by saying "all have their own unique features that they are proud of." Moving back to folk music, he specifies that it is not the music per se, but the practice and community surrounding it that he is concerned with. It is a community that, like the one Sundberg observed in 1990 in Stockholm, is ethnically homogeneous. Further, Suk introduces the claim that

²³² "[D]et skapar identitet, vilket är någonting som motbevisar många av de påståenden och ideer som försvann: 'alla härstämmer vi från samma apa i Afrika och då är vi alla likadana.' Det är vi inte, vi utvecklas olika, och alla har sina egenheter som de är stolta över. Alla har sina rötter som är väldigt viktiga för ett fungerande samhälle. [...] Jag tror att många idag är ganska så olyckliga och ensamma människor. Via TV reklamer får man höra hela tiden att man ska konsumera sig till lycka: köp mer så blir du lyckligare. Det funkar inte så. Jag tror att den här världen kring bland annat folkmusiken, där finns det inga pengar eller krav att känna så, men ändå är folk väldigt glada och lyckliga för att man har varandra. Det skapas mänskliga band. Då kan man fråga sig, visst, men har vi inte det där ute i samhället med mångkultur, det är väl fint att man kan lära sig afrikansk dans och så? Nej, det är inte samma sak därför att om man har olika bakgrund och olika kultur så tänker man olika och har olika förväntningar. Du har säkert märkt att inom folkmusikvärlden och inom den svenska folkkulturen så är det ju bara svenskar och västerlänningar, även om politiker försöker att med olika ekonomiska medel få in andra grupper. I andra etniska gruppers motsvarande folkkultur så går folk ofta dit för att de känner igen sig i den egna gruppen, de känner att det är de egna som man kan lita på. Och i praktiken det är ju så, det är ju där som man inte blir av med plånboken."

Swedes' interest in communing through Swedish culture rebels against a mainstream political agenda of interculturalism.

Folk music festivals have provided nationalists opportunities to experience the alleged ethnic homogeneity of the folk music community. In such large gatherings, the lack of darker-skinned individuals is more striking to those on the lookout. Alexander Helgesson of the Party of the Swedes has made repeated visits to the largest folk music festival in Sweden, Korrö Folk Music Festival. In a 2011 article that eventually caught the attention and condemnation of the festival organizers, Helgesson writes that it is not just the concerts, but also the atmosphere of Korrö that draws visitors, bonhomie exemplified by participatory music making and enabled by ethnic homogeneity. In the article, published in the Party of the Swedes online newspaper Realisten.se on August 3, 2011, he writes,

Wherever you go, regardless of whether you are at the stages, the restaurant or at the festival campsite, festival visitors spontaneously start playing with each other. Regardless whether you are sitting and eating, or want to relax in the tent you hear beautiful tone from fiddles, accordions, nyckelharpas, and guitars. Yet another detail that makes Korrö Folk Music Festival worth visiting is the ethnic homogeneity. Wherever you go, there are only those who belong to our people. The vast majority are of course Swedes, but even Norwegians, Germans, and Danes, for example, visit the festival. Even if the arrangers of Korrö Folk Music Festival will not admit it, this weekend is nationalism in practice. Here, ethnic homogeneity and Swedish culture pervade, as well as a wholesome multiculturalism in the sense that different cultures, each unto itself, can learn and be inspired by each other without interfering with each other. Further, a strong people's fellowship [Swe. folkgemenskap Grm. volksgemeinschaft] pervades at the festival, where all visitors are united by their ethnicity, regardless of age, gender, or income.²³³

²³³ Vart man än går, oavsett om man rör sig vid scenerna, restaurangen eller på festivalcampingen så ses festivalbesökare spontant börja spela med varandra. Oavsett om man sitter och äter eller vill vila upp sig vid tälten så hörs vackra toner från fioler, dragspel, nyckelharpor, och gitarrer. Ytterligare en detalj som gör det värt att besöka Korrö folkmusikfestival är den etniska homogeniteten. Vart man än går återfinns bara människor som tillhör vårt folk. Den stora majoriteten är så klart svenskar, men även t.ex. norrmän, tyskar och danskar besöker festivalen. Även om arrangörerna till Korrö folkmusikfestival inte kommer erkänna det så är denna helg nationalism i praktiken. Här råder etnisk

Like Sundberg, Helgesson also anticipates that the politically significant elements he sees in the gathering will be unarticulated, or denied by participants. He further specifies that this denial will come from the festival organizers—the elites—leaving open the possibility that the average visitor recognizes the elements he does, and sympathizes with his interpretation.

Cultural nationalists have made similar observations. During my interviews with her, leading fiddler and Sweden Democrat Marie Stensby commented on the demographic makeup at folk music gatherings, framing the issue as a lack of immigrants, rather than a lack of non-whites more generally. However, whereas the ethnonationalist voices cited above celebrate such homogeneity, Stensby bemoans it. At the beginning of the below quote, she refers to her own performance at Planeta World Music Festival alongside fiddler Pelle Gustafson on November 5, 2010

MS: At performances, this world music festival Planeta I was at in Gothenburg, there is no interest from the immigrant parts of the population to go and listen to Swedish folk music, there wasn't even a single soul there that came from another place. While we are expected to be interested in everything else. And I don't get that, because when the Swede goes abroad, I have an understanding that he is interested in that country's culture [...], but I don't see that interest from the big groups that come [here].

BT: Why is that, do you think?

MS: In part it has to do with how Swedish politics and Swedish politicians – they have always belittled and talked about how it [Swedish culture] isn't worth anything, 'so why should we go to something like that?' [...] That's kind of how I think it has been and is. If you're going to have some kind of

homogenitet och svensk kultur, men även en sund mångkultur i bemärkelsen att olika kulturer, var för sig, kan ta lärdom av och inspireras av varandra utan att inkräkta på varandra. På festivalen råder dessutom en stark folkgemenskap, där samtliga besökare förenas av sin etnicitet oavsett ålder, kön eller inkomst. Available online, accessed 06/03/2012, <http://www.realisten.se/2011/08/03/korro-folkmusikfestival-aterspeglar-den-sanna-folkgemenskapen/>

welcoming, this stuff [folk music] should be a part of how you show you own country. But it doesn't happen. It is fine for foreign tourists – then you can show it – but for those who come from abroad and are going to stay here, you shouldn't show it. It's remarkable. It provides an opportunity to show those who come here and want to live here just what kind of folks we are, really (Interview, Marie Stensby, November 19, 2010).²³⁴

Thus, Stensby links the lack of immigrants at folk music events, not to inborn ethnocentric drives, but to public discourses that all nationalists, including ethnonationalists, condemn—discourses of self-denial and self-contempt propagated by political elites. Her interpretation appears informed by her assimilationist ideals. Like fellow Sweden Democrat Runar Filper (interview April 4, 2011), she sees folk music as a potential tool to educate immigrants about Swedish culture, and the lack of immigrants at folk music events is therefore regrettable.

Though nationalists' reactions to the folk music community's ethnic composition differ dramatically, all of these interpretations can reinforce a strategic claim that is vital to the contemporary radical nationalist cause. Namely, that non-nationalist Swedes' celebration of, and calls for, cultural diversity are insincere. Helgesson approaches such a claim when he anticipates festival organizers' objections to his article. But Vávra Suk and a man I am here calling Mr. X articulate

²³⁴ MS: "På uppspelningar som den här världsmusikfestivalen Planeta i Göteborg, så fanns det ju inget intresse från invandrade delar av befolkningen [att] gå och lyssna på svensk folkmusik. Det fanns inte en käft där som kom någon annanstans ifrån, medan vi förväntas vara väldigt intresserade av allt annat. [...] Och det fattar jag inte, för att när svensken åker utomlands så har jag i alla fall en uppfattning av att han är intresserad av det lands kultur dit han kommer [...], men jag ser ju inget sådant intresse från de stora grupper som kommer hit."

BT: "Varför är det så tror du?"

MS: "Det har delvis att göra med hur den svenska politiken och de svenska politikerna uttrycker sig - de förminskar värdet av folkmusik, så varför skulle folk vara intresserade? [...] Så tror jag faktiskt det är. Ska man ha något slags mottagande så borde ju sådant här vara en del i hur man visar upp sitt eget land. Men det finns inte. Det går bra för utländska turister, där kan man visa upp, men för utlänningar som kommer och vill bo här då ska man inte visa, det är ganska anmärkningsvärt. Det ger ju tillfälle för de som vill komma och bo här att få lite bättre förståelse för vilka vi är för några kufar egentligen."

this point directly. Mr. X is an unaffiliated activist and musician who has been involved in both ethnopluralist and identitarian circles. During one of our interviews, he disagreed with my suggestion that fusion projects and non-Western music were popular in Sweden. As evidence for his contention, he described his visit to an outdoor summer concert at Vitabergsparken in Stockholm featuring folk singer Sofia Karlsson. Karlsson, whose style draws from older rural traditions as well as classic popular Swedish singer-songwriter repertoires, has a rising profile in mainstream music scenes and among nationalists. He describes his arrival at the concert that evening in Stockholm to me:

I was very surprised. There was free admission, true, but I was still very surprised by 'the turn out.' As it was, this very concert had the public attendance record. There were 6,000 people there. And there was an unbelievable, ah, it's kind of a political term, but, people's community [Sw. folkgemenskap, Grm. volksgemeinschaft]. There were 6,000. I struggled to get pictures, there were people everywhere, absolutely everywhere. [...] But of those 6,000, who were really engaged in the concert - there was a lot of Swedish music - and of those 6,000 there wasn't one, not one from Somalia. There might have been one who looked like you [author]. 6,000, and unbelievable fellowship, and enthusiasm, and people sang along at times, and it was quite telling in a way. And it was mostly Swedish music, both older, from the early twentieth and nineteenth centuries, but there was also a little - she had guests from other EU countries, England or, so there was that kind of folk music as well, a little 'cross over,' but nonetheless unbelievable enthusiasm, a genuine, ah, there was something in the air. So, if you think of all these projects to bring Congolese musicians here - you just cannot compare the enthusiasm for that (Interview, Mr. X, March 4, 2011).²³⁵

²³⁵ "Jag blev väldigt förvånad. Det var fri entré, visst, men ändå väldigt förvånad över 'the turn out.' Det visade sig att just den här konserten var den sommarens publikrekord. Det var 6000 personer fram för scenen och det fanns en otrolig, nästan en halvpolitisk term, folkgemenskap. Det var 6000... jag hade nästan svårt att ta bilder, det fanns mycket folk över allt, precis över allt. Men till slut på konserten fick jag en del bilder, och det blev bra. Men av de här 6000 människorna som verkligen var närvarande på konserten, det var väldigt mycket svensk musik, och av de där 6000 så fanns det inte en, en enda från Somalia. Det kanske fanns någon som såg ut som du. 6000, och en otrolig gemenskap och entusiasm där folk sjöng med ibland. Det var mestadels svensk musik, både äldre från tidigt 1900- och 1800-tal, men så var det också lite gästartister från andra EU länder, bl. a. England. Det var folkmusik och lite 'cross over', men den otroliga entusiasmen, och den genuina känslan, det var något speciellt i luften. Så, om man tänker på alla projekt för att få kongolesiska musiker hit, så går det inte att jämföra med."

In addition to describing the crowd's ethnic characteristics, Mr. X also comments on the Swedishness of the music and what he experienced as attendees' passion for the event. He juxtaposes this passion—exemplified in part by the size of the crowd—with ethnic Swedes' alleged lack of equivalent passion for foreign musics. Mr. X was thus referring to the concert as an example of the fact that ethnic Swedes prefer participating in Swedish culture more than they do multiculturalism.

Mr. X, like most activists, claims the Swedish political establishment and the media seek to convince ethnic Swedes that they need cultural importation—specifically culture from the non-Western world—to be a well functioning society. Marie Stensby expressed this in a quote above, saying “[W]e are expected to be interested in everything else.” Further, virtually all nationalists claim that public criticism of this sentiment is stigmatized, such that in official discourses, in what Kevin MacDonald would call “explicit cultural space,” Swedes must express approval of cultural importation. Against this backdrop, the enthusiasm for Swedish music and the fellowship on display at Sofia Karlsson's concert constitutes subversion of official agendas and discourses. It constitutes, in the nationalist worldview, deviance.

Vávra Suk advanced such an interpretation in his analysis of Sweden's folk music community. As we discussed that community's ethnic homogeneity, I mentioned to him that, in my experience, its participants are also generally left-leaning, and that most would likely say they support multiculturalism if questioned. He responded:

I think that it is somewhat hypocritical also. Because, were there a lot of multicultural, they would probably go looking for a new group [...] another group where there isn't so much multicultural. That is my guess. They say, 'yes, we want to take in these other cultures' and so on. But, to start with these other cultures have different ways of looking at things, another way to socialize where there are other rules as to how you should relate to each other, between men and women that is. It creates a greater insecurity as to how you should act, they don't really know what to expect from the others. And that's what is so great about the folk music scene, you understand everybody else, you don't have to be worried. I think that Somalis who go to their cultural organizations, they feel exactly the same way. You know how people work (Interview, Vávra Suk, April 1, 2011).²³⁶

Thus, Suk extends his assertion that the folk music community is disobeying the directives they receive from political elites. Members of this community, he suggests, may even act against their own stated convictions. Though they may claim to support and appreciate cultural diversity, their actions speak otherwise.

Kevin MacDonald occasionally describes a link between the implicitly white collectivity and the activity or practice that attracts it. He claims, for example, that whites coalesce within the Republican Party in the United States because this party best advances white interests (2006-2007:19-20). Most of the Swedish activists quoted above, in contrast, do not mention any fundamental connection between Swedish folk music and the demographic that surrounds it. But Mr. X attempts to establish such a link. As he spoke about the concert in Vitabergsparken, he twice

²³⁶ "När vi pratar om miljöpartisterna som håller på med musik, så tror jag att det är lite hyckleri också. Därför att, skulle det blir väldigt mycket mångkultur så skulle de förmodligen söka sig till en ny grupp [...] en annan grupp där det inte är så mycket mångkultur. Det är min gissning. De säger att, 'ja vi tar in gärna sådana där andra kulturer' och så där men andra kulturer har olika sätt att se på saker och ting. Det är ett annat sätt att umgås där det finns andra regler om hur man ska relatera till varandra, man och kvinna och så. Det skapar en större otrygghet och osäkerhet i hur man ska bete sig, de vet inte riktig vad de ska förvänta av de andra. Och det är det som är så skönt i folkmusikvärlden, att man vet var man har de andra man och man behöver inte oroa sig. Jag tror att de somalier som går till sina kulturföreningar, de känner precis samma sak. Du vet hur de människorna fungerar."

broke his narrative flow to remind me that the music being played was Swedish. I asked him what significance that had to the event. His response did not clarify the importance of the Swedishness of the music, but it did comment on the potential importance of music to implicit whiteness, and social deviance more generally:

I thought that it spoke its own language, so to say, it spoke for itself through the event and atmosphere. It was satisfactory in an artistic sense, but since I am not really for the politicizing of art, I think that one can draw his or her own conclusions. But I've given you a few hints. But still, I think there is a term often called 'implicit whiteness' (Interview, Mr. X, March 4, 2011).²³⁷

I later pressed him on the point, and he replied:

[The fellowship at the event created] a sort of belonging and a community built on something that doesn't need to be verbalized. So in a way it is the power of music, even though it wasn't instrumental [music] - that music picks up where words run out and says that which perhaps cannot be said. I can't imagine that anyone who left the concert, after a couple of hours, all encores and such, was dissatisfied. But at the same time it wasn't in any way an exclusive event. It was rather the opposite of exclusive, but still there was a certain pattern among these 6000 everyday Stockholmers. [...] They themselves can explain why they were there, but all the same, it was a very enjoyable event (ibid).²³⁸

Though he did not state it outright, Mr. X carefully suggests Karlsson's music was the non-offensive, uncontroversial medium for transmitting "that which cannot be said," that which "doesn't need to be verbalized"—the call to and continued

²³⁷ "Jag tyckte att det talade sitt eget språk s.a.s., det talade för sig [självt] genom evenemanget och atmosfären. Så rent konstnärligt så var det tillfredställande, men eftersom jag är inte så himla mycket för politiceringen av konsten, så tycker jag att man kan dra sina egna slutsatser. Nu har jag gett dig lite ledtrådar. Men ändå, jag tror det finns en term som man brukar kalla 'implicit whiteness.'"

²³⁸ "[...] en sorts tillhörighet och gemenskapen kring någonting som inte behöver uttalas. Det är ju på något sätt musikens styrka: även om det inte är instrumentalt, så tar musiken vid där orden tar slut och säger kanske det som inte kan sägas. Jag kan inte föreställa mig att någon, när de gick därifrån efter ett antal timmar, plus alla extranummer [...] var missnöjd. Men samtidigt var det inte på något sätt en exkluderande tillställning. Det var snarare motsatsen till exkluderande, men ändå så fanns det ett visst mönster bland de 6000 vanliga Stockholmarna. [...] Så anledningen till att de var där, det får de svara själva för, men likväl var det en väldigt trevlig tillställning.

existence of Swedish ethnic fellowship. He further speculates that music might be particularly well suited to deliver such messages.

Regardless of whether or not participants in folk music circles behave this way—and regardless of whether or not the ethnic homogeneity of these collectivities constitutes defiance—the claim that they do so stands to address a key concern nationalists face as they justify their activism. Despite claiming to fight on behalf of a majority population, nationalist organizations in Sweden are unpopular when compared with other political groups. During the 2010 national elections, the Sweden Democrats, though they achieved a symbolic and strategic victory by entering the national parliament, received only 334,053 votes (or 5.7% of the total vote). The National Democrats received 1,141 votes (0.02% of the total vote) and the Party of the Swedes received 681 votes (0.01% of the total vote).²³⁹ Nationalists thus need to explain why the people they champion appear to reject nationalist values and agendas. The commentary on the folk music community quoted above can resolve this dilemma. It allows nationalists to claim that the Swedish people do in fact support nationalist ideals. However, this people expresses its support, consciously or unconsciously, with its feet rather than its votes. Values do not separate nationalists from other Swedes; the difference between these groups is that nationalists declare their values to themselves and others. Musical practices offer nationalists an opportunity to find evidence that their worldviews are recognized and embraced by many. Music offers them a second chance, an alternate domain to seek better fortunes. Though nationalist ideals may fail at the ballot box,

²³⁹ Available online, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.val.se/val/val2010/slutresultat/R/riike/index.html>

according to the voices quoted above, those ideals reign supreme in Swedish folk music.

A Tradition Violated

Though nationalists may praise the folk music scene—though they may see it as a collectivity and social behavior that exemplifies their ideals—they are as likely to condemn it on the grounds that it is populated or controlled by their political opponents. On the whole, folk musicians, dancers, and other enthusiasts are politically left leaning. Whereas Vávra Suk dismissed the scene’s leftism as a disingenuous attempt to conform to mainstream ideological codes, other nationalists claim that conscious, committed left-wing ideologues drive contemporary Swedish folk music. Mattias Karlsson articulated this latter position when I ask him to respond to folk musicians’ protests against the Sweden Democrats:

BT: How is it that you are supporting people who don’t want your support?

MK: To begin with, I think that is exaggerating it a bit, it isn’t like all folk musicians in Sweden are in Folk Musicians Against Xenophobia. I’ve also had conversations and received letters from folk musicians who appreciate what I am doing. So there is a divide in that movement. But of course I think that those, right now, who support us are in the minority. And there is a historical explanation for that, as I see it. During the ’68-wave in Sweden, which was very strong – more than anything the Left-wing wave, they were very extreme at the time. [...] they ultimately were inspired by Antonio Gramsci’s ideas about power through the institutions, that it is important to break down the traditional bourgeoisie culture, even more important than taking power in parliament – that is how you can realize a socialist society. They sought out different forms of cultural expression for their socialist ideas. In part, they found music, and that proggmusik²⁴⁰ that was pretty big. But also to find an alternative to the imperialist American culture, many also turned to folk music, in part because it was anti-hierarchical in such a way that anybody could join and play. Everyone stands together at folk music festivals (spelmansstämmor). They were against all forms of hierarchy, and they

²⁴⁰ “Proggmusik” or progressive music was a genre of 1960s and 70s hippie-inspired rock in Sweden.

didn't like it when one artist stood up there on a stage, and everyone else sits passively. Because of that, the Swedish far left embraced the music. And suddenly thousands of youths began showing up at folk music festivals in Dalarna and Härjedalen, that earlier were almost only for older people. And those people who got involved did it mostly for political reasons. They later came to take over the folk music organizations. People like Lars Farago and others have their roots in that movement, so it is not that strange that they don't like a conservative party like ours (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, December 3, 2010).²⁴¹

Though one might take issue with Karlsson's sweeping claim that 1970s leftists were interested in folk music mainly for political reasons, as well as the extent to which leftists were operating under a crude Gramscian agenda, much else in his history is accurate.

What Karlsson describes is the folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s. In Sweden, as in France, Britain, the United States and beyond, youth energized by students' movements and anti-war protest began turning towards folk music as a means of challenging Western cultural imperialism (see Ling 1980; Ramsten 1992; Kaminsky 2005). Individuals from this generation founded and assumed leadership

²⁴¹ BT: "Hur kommer det sig att ni stöder någon som egentligen inte vill ha ert stöd?"

MK: "Dels tror jag att det är att hårdra det lite, det är inte så att alla folkmusiker i Sverige är med i FmF. Jag har också fått samtal och brev från folkmusiker som uppskattar det jag säger, så det finns en splitting inom den rörelsen. Men visst tror jag i nuläget, att de som stödjer vårt perspektiv är i minoritet, och som jag ser det finns det en historisk förklaring till att det är så. Under 68-vågen i Sverige som var väldigt stark, framförallt vänstervågen, då var de väldigt extrema. [...] Där var man framförallt väldigt inspirerad av Antonio Gramscis ide om makt genom institutionerna, att det viktiga var att bryta ner den traditionella borgerliga kulturen, kanske viktigare än att ta makten i parlament, det var så man skulle förverkliga ett socialistiskt samhälle. De sökte olika kulturella uttryck för sina socialistiska idéer. Dels använde de musiken, t. ex. den här proggmusiken, som var ganska stor [...] men för att hitta ett alternativ till den imperialistiska amerikanska kulturen, var det många som också vände sig till folkmusiken. Dels för att den var icke-hierarkisk på ett sätt som [gjorde att] vem som helst kunde vara med och spela, på spelmanstämmer står alla tillsammans. De var emot alla former av hierarki och de gillade inte att en artist stod på scen, och alla andra satt passiva. Därför tog den svenska extremvänstern musiken till sig, och helt plötsligt började det dyka upp tusentals ungdomar på spelmansstämmer uppe i Dalarna och Härjedalen. Tidigare hade [stämmorna] nästan bara varit för äldre människor. De människorna som engagerade sig var mest av politiska skäl. De kom sedan att ta över folkmusikförbunden. Människor som Lars Farago och andra har ju sina rötter i den rörelsen, så det är inte särskilt konstigt att de inte gillar oss som ett konservativ parti."

roles in music conservatory folk music departments, major record labels, and local and national folk music organizations—the body of institutions sometimes referred to by folk musicians today as the “folk music establishment.” Many of these same individuals are additionally some of the most appreciated performing and recording artists in the contemporary scene, such as Sven Ahlbäck and Mats Edén.

Hardliner communist and Maoist ideologues also joined this movement as both performers and as commentators. Though these voices had previously rallied around the rock-dominated proggmusik scene, towards the end of the 1970s they began favoring folk music because of its relative distance from American music, and thereby, cultural imperialism. The most direct articulation of this latter agenda was the volume *The People have Never Achieved Victory by Marching to the Enemy's Music: Articles on Music Politics* [Folket har Aldrig Segrat till Fiendens Musik: Musikpolitiska Artiklar] (Fiskvik et al 1977), where various leftist activists like Anders Johansson praised folk music in often romantic, mystifying terms, such that musicologist Jan Ling warned these individuals that their rhetoric might help make folk music appealing to their political polar opposites (Ling 1979).

But while Karlsson sees leftism as the hijacking force in folk music's recent history, other nationalists emphasize that it was more specifically Jews who took control of the scene during the last decades. These latter interpretations follow a program similar to that articulated by Karlsson, but they draw from anti-Semitic narratives whereby Jews are seen as striving to seize and undermine other peoples' methods for maintaining cultural, ethnic, and racial integrity—all while preserving the boundaries of their own population and lifestyles (see MacDonald 1994). In this

case, nationalists claim that Jews engage with folk music in order to render the genre impotent as a marker of Swedish identity. Jews, on the one hand, perpetuate histories of the music that frame it as being essentially cosmopolitan and thereby not Swedish, and, on the other hand, encourage folk musicians to blend their music with folk music from other nations, thus producing the cosmopolitan, rootless music they first described. Such interpretations parallel others where Jews are seen as promoting ideologies (Marxism) and academic paradigms (the Frankfurt School) that deconstruct understandings of race, ethnicity, culture, and the notion of distinguishable peoples (see Söderman 2011), while also advancing open immigration policies in Western nations and championing interracial marriage among other groups (see MacDonald 1998b).

These theories are nourished by the fact that two prominent individuals in “the folk music establishment” are Jewish. Izzy Young, an influential music promoter and Jewish American from New York, moved to Sweden in 1973 and founded the store and newsletter *Folklore Centrum*.²⁴² The newsletter, which ceased production in 2011, was a widely read source for information on events in Sweden’s folk music scene. Young collaborated with activists in Sweden’s communist circles, and contributed to the volume, *The People have Never Achieved Victory by Marching to the Enemy’s Music* mentioned above.

But nationalist claims of Jewish exploitation in folk music tend to center on another individual, Lars Farago. Farago, originally from Hungary, immigrated to Sweden in 1958 with his parents when he was ten years old. He is both Jewish and,

²⁴² Available online, accessed 06/20/2012, http://www.folklorecentrum.se/empty_7.html

as Mattias Karlsson mentioned, a former Left-Party activist.²⁴³ He learned folk dance as a teenager, and helped found the National Folk Music and Dance Organization [Riksförening för Folkmusik och Dans] in 1981, becoming president of that organization in 1984. In contrast with the Swedish Folk Dance Ring [Svenska Folkdansringen] and the Sweden's Fiddlers' National Organization [Sveriges Spelmäns Riksförbund], Farago's organization embraces folk music and dance in its widest definition, championing traditions from both Sweden and abroad (Kaminsky 2005:68).

Farago has publically condemned the Sweden Democrats' cultural policy. He organized a seminar series titled *We are All People* (Vi är Alla Folk) featuring discussions and presentations on xenophobia, national identity, and folk music. The series ran at music festivals throughout the country from 2010-2011. He wrote multiple articles in his organization's magazine *Folk Music and Dance* [Folkmusik och Dans] attacking romantic nationalism, extremism, and advocating cultural diversity. And he participated in a live television debate with Mattias Karlsson on October 21, 2010 about the Sweden Democrats' interest in Swedish folk music and dance.

²⁴³ He left the party after its leader, Lars Ohly, embraced communism. It appears that Karlsson became aware of Farago's political background by reading *Nationell Idag*.



Example 7. Debate, Folk Costume and Folk Music: Battle for Sweden's Cultural Heritage [Folkdräkt och Folkmusik: Strid om det Svenska Kulturarvet] between Lars Farago (left) and Mattias Karlsson (right). SVT, October 21, 2010.

Throughout these activities, Farago made statements that, according to his opponents, constitute a denial of the Swedish. During his television debate with Mattias Karlsson on SVT, October 21, 2010, he argued that the traditional music in certain parts of in Sweden more resembles styles from across, rather than within, Sweden's borders:

When we talk about Swedish folk culture, I think it is hard to call it Swedish. I call it Nordic. I think the border between Värmland and Norway is pretty irrelevant when you look at culture. The difference between Värmland's culture and culture in Sörmland can be much greater than the difference between Värmland and Norway, or maybe Sörmland and Finland. I think Nordic culture is a good term when we talk about that.²⁴⁴

Farago appears to extend such claims in other statements. The Piteå Newspaper [Piteå Tidning], for example, published the following in a report on a seminar and lecture Farago held at Piteå Folk Music Festival, on November 19, 2010:

²⁴⁴ "När vi talar om svensk folklig kultur så tycker jag det är svårt att kalla den svensk. Jag tycker den är nordisk. Jag tycker gränsen mellan Värmland och Norge är ganska irrelevant när man tittar på kultur. Skillnaden mellan Värmländsk kultur och kultur i Sörmland kan vara mycket större än skillnaden mellan Värmland och Norge, eller kanske Sörmland och Finland. Nordisk kultur tror jag ar ett bra begrepp när vi talar om detta." Available online, accessed May 23, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ca1VGhDrn2E>.

Lars Farago emphasized that there is no folk music or folk dance that originates only in Sweden, so he rejected terms like 'genuine Swedish' and 'specifically Swedish' which assume the existence of a pure Swedishness.²⁴⁵

Farago, in sum, has publically scrutinized the tendency to designate music "Swedish." Additionally, as *Nationell Idag* reported in 2010 (no. 48), Farago is a member of the organization Limmud which strives to "strengthen and develop" Jewish identity.²⁴⁶ Vávra Suk, *Nationell Idag's* former editor, had the following to say about Farago and his engagement in Swedish folk music and Limmud:

He is a hypocrite of the worst kind. Because he says that, 'Yes, but Swedish culture, there really isn't anything that is genuinely Swedish. Instead it was influenced from abroad, and so on.' But at the same time he is a member of the Jewish cultural organization Limmud. If you go in to their home page it is like, 'The fantastic ethnic, genuine culture and klezmer dances.' Because then, all of a sudden, it is completely acceptable, there you'll find not a word about multiculturalism. It isn't like 'Yes, but klezmer comes from a bunch of outside influences, you can't really say that it is really Jewish.' 'What is Jewish culture, really?' Nobody says that, right? And how can he, on the one hand, give lectures for Limmud, and talk about how fantastic – they have their own traditions,' and then, go to the Swedes and say, 'But you don't have any. What do you have to be proud of? Everything came from abroad.' Isn't that hypocritical? I think that, of course Jews can be proud of their traditions and their roots, what they have built up and so on. But how then can Farago come to us, come to the Swedes and say, 'Yes but, now you have to open yourselves to multiculturalism.' I think it's shameless (Interview, Vávra Suk, April 1, 2011).²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Lars Farago slog fast att det inte finns någon folkmusik eller folkdans med ursprung endast i Sverige, så renhetsbegrepp som "genuint svenskt" eller "specifikt svenskt" tog han avstånd ifrån.

²⁴⁶ Available online, accessed June 21, 2012, <http://www.limmud.org/home/mission/>

²⁴⁷ "Du kanske har hört [talas om] den här Lars Farago[...] Det är en hycklare av grövsta sort, han säger att, 'Ja men, svensk kultur, egentligen är det ju ingenting som är genuint svenskt, utan det kommer influenser utifrån, man ska inte säga så och så.' Men samtidigt är han medlem i den här judiska kulturföreningen Limmud. Om man går in på deras hemsida så är det liksom, 'Den fantastiska etniskt, genuina kulturen och klezmer danser.' Då är det plötsligt helt ok, där är det ingen snack om mångkultur. Det är inte så att, 'ja men klezmer har en massa influenser utifrån, man kan inte riktigt säga att det är riktigt judiskt.' 'Vad är judisk kultur egentligen?' Det är ingen som frågar sig det? Och hur kan han då, å ena sidan vara föreläsare i Limmud, och prata om hur fantastiskt det [är att] de har sina egna traditioner, och gå till svenskarna [och säga att] 'ni har inga. Vad har ni att vara stolta över? Allting kommer utifrån.' Är inte det hyckleri? Jag tycker att, naturligtvis får judarna vara stolta över sin kultur och sina rötter, och allt de har byggt upp och så. Men hur kan då Lars Farago komma till oss, komma till svenskarna och säga, 'Ja men, nu måste ni öppna er för det mångkulturella.' Jag tycker det är fräckt."

The image of Farago as a Jew undermining notions of distinct Swedish culture while acting to preserve Jewish culture made him an ideal target for more explicitly anti-Semitic nationalist voices. These voices undoubtedly learned about Farago from National Today's reporting. User "Varnagel" wrote the following on February 22, 2012 on Flashback.org:

It is the Jews who have destroyed our cultural identity and who actively prevent us from recovering it and building it up. One of many examples is the Jew Lars Farago, who for some fucking reason is president in the Swedish folk music organization (!) or whatever it is. There, he claims that Swedish folk music doesn't have to be Swedish, and a ton of other shit. At the same time, he is a member of Limmud, which is an explicitly ethnic Jewish society that promotes what is Jewish.²⁴⁸

Likewise, user "Klompe" wrote on May 16, 2011 in the same forum:

Lars Farago's behavior is an example of a classic Jewish strategy: To weaken the majority population's cultural identity at the same time as you, in jealousy, guard your own Jewish identity.²⁴⁹

But the image of Farago advanced through these discussions does not entirely reflect my experience with him. Despite the organization's official mission statement, he describes Limmud as a discussion group rather than an instrument for preserving and protecting Jewish identity. More to the point, however, in interviews and other writings, he has asserted that discernibly Swedish folk dance and music exists. For example, in an interview with Minister of Culture, Lena Adelsohn

²⁴⁸ Det är judar som har raserat vår kulturella identitet och som aktivt hindrar oss från att återfinna den och bygga upp den. Ett av otaliga exempel är juden Lars Farago som av någon jävla anledning är ordförande i *svenska folkmusikförbundet*(!) eller vad det nu var. Där hävdar han att svensk folkmusik inte alls behöver vara svensk och massa annat blaj. Samtidigt är han med i Limmud som är en uttalat judisk etnisk sammanslutning som främjar det judiska. Available online, accessed May 23, 2012, <https://www.flashback.org/p35839566#p35839566>.

²⁴⁹ Lars Faragos agerande är ett exempel på klassisk judisk strategi: att försvaga majoritetsbefolkningens kulturella identitet samtidigt som man svartsjukt värnar om sin egen judiska identitet. Available online, accessed May 23, 2012, <https://www.flashback.org/p30650991#p30650991>.

Liljeroth published in *Folk Music & Dans* (2011 no. 1:11), he criticizes the Minister for her statement (in *Dagens Nyheter* on October 6, 2010) that no specifically Swedish culture exists. And during one of our interviews about responses to the Sweden Democrats' cultural policy, he said,

We've seen the effect that, some culture journalists, and some politicians, deny that Swedish music exists, and deny that there are Swedish traditions. And that is a very strange polarization too. So I think it is very unfortunate that you have to counter the Sweden Democrats by saying that it doesn't exist. At the same time, I think you must see how interwoven it all is, historically, with other parts, other genres (Interview, Lars Farago, January 21, 2011).²⁵⁰

And later, in unequivocal terms,

There are completely unique qualities in music cultures that don't exist anywhere else in the world. We must always say that Nordic, Swedish - only exists in Sweden. That needs to be number one, in a way, and it hasn't been. That is a weakness in Sweden, there is a principally - that we don't do a better job of protecting it. I think that's bad (ibid).²⁵¹

Farago thus expressed an understanding of Swedish folk music and Swedish culture in line with that of some nationalists, such as the authors of the cultural policy sections in the Sweden Democrats' party platforms, as well as those identitarian voices who claim that cultural and national boundaries do not match. He acknowledges that cultural phenomena in Sweden arose in exchange with other forms. But despite this history of outside influence, he still asserts that there are practices unique to Sweden. This qualifies his earlier statement to the Piteå paper.

²⁵⁰ "Vi har sett en trend i att en del kulturjournalister och politiker förnekar att det finns svensk musik och svenska traditioner. Det är en jättekonstig polarisering. Jag ser som väldigt olyckligt att man måste argumentera emot sverigedemokraterna med att det inte finns. Däremot så tycker jag att man samtidigt ska se hur pass hopflätat det är, historiskt, med andra delar och andra genrer."

²⁵¹ "Det finns helt unika kvalitéer i musikkulturer som inte finns någon annan stans i världen. Vi måste alltid säga att nordisk, svensk tradition finns bara i Sverige. Det måste vara nummer ett, på ett sätt, och det har det inte varit. Det är en svaghet i Sverige, rent principiellt - att vi inte värnar om det på ett bättre sätt. Det tycker jag är dåligt."

When he says nothing originates in Sweden, that does not mean he believes that nothing is Swedish.

Nationalists' fixation on Farago is even more striking given that there are other voices within the folk music scene that more directly deny Swedish difference. For example, musicologist Lars Lilliestam, from Gothenburg University, said the following on the radio program *Folke*, October 24, 2010:

There isn't anything that is genuinely Swedish. There has never been and never will be something that is genuinely Swedish, because cultural things, if it is music or language, dinnerware, or clothing – all such things change over time. That means that, if you call something genuinely Swedish, you are guilty of writing a false history.

[...]

What do you call Swedish music? If you take this argument to its conclusion, then you would call Mozart and Beethoven German. We can't have that. A lot of what is Swedish folk music, or that we today see as Swedish folk music, was once, in fact, imported musical goods. Is the waltz a Swedish music form? Certainly many would say that today. But it came from abroad in the beginning of the 1800s. And there are endless examples of this. I will take *gammaldans*, take *mazurkas*, or *polskas*, or whatever you want.²⁵²

Though Lilliestam, like Farago, criticizes the term “genuinely Swedish,” his subsequent comments preclude using the word Swedish to describe anything.

Whether they implicate Jews, politicians, or Marxists, nationalists' understanding that elite or foreign forces are bankrupting Swedish folk music make the genre, in their eyes, a legitimate site for political struggle. They see their

²⁵² Det finns inget som är genuint svenskt. Det har aldrig funnits och kommer aldrig att finnas något som är genuint svenskt, därför att kulturella saker, om det handlar om musik eller språk, mat, eller klädedräkter - allting sådant ändrar sig över tid. Det betyder att, utnämner man någonting till genuint svenskt, så gör man sig skyldig till någon form av historieförfalskning. [...] Vad anser man vara svensk musik? Om man för det här resonemanget till sin spets så skulle man säga att Mozart och Beethoven [musik] är tysk. Så kan vi inte ha det. Mycket av det som är svensk folkmusik eller som vi idag ser som svensk folkmusik är ju importerat musikgods en gång i världen. Är vals en svensk musikform? Det skulle nog många säga idag. Men den kom utifrån i början av 1800-talet. Och det finns hur många exempel på detta som helst. Jag ska ta en gammaldans, ta mazurkor eller polskor eller vad ni vill.

overriding analyses of contemporary Swedish society—where foreign influence is threatening the continued existence of the Swedish people—playing out in musical domains through folk music. Accordingly, since roughly 2007, multiple nationalist activists and organizations have been trying to participate in a debate within the Swedish folk music community over innovation and tradition. Though such debates rage in many folk music scenes throughout the world today, folk musicians in Sweden are increasingly treating the category of innovation as referring to fusion with non-Swedish folk musics (Lundberg, Malm, and Ronström 2000; Kaminsky 2005).

Because of this, discussions about innovation and tradition in Swedish folk music offer nationalists a platform to exhibit their commitment to the Swedish in the face of globalization, multiculturalism, and what they see as trends of cultural anti-Swedishness. Further, they have used the rhetoric and ideology of the New Nationalism when participating in these debates: Just as they may claim to fight for the preservation of cultural, ethnic, or racial diversity, so too do many nationalists frame their interest in folk music as an effort to maintain musical diversity.

National Today journalist and folk dancer Erik Alhem, though he would prefer that folk music festivals in Sweden feature Swedish groups and avoid importing acts from distant cultures, described being most incensed by groups like Ale Möller Band and Ellika and Solo—groups that, in single performances, seek to blend diverse music traditions (Interview, Erik Alhem February 28, 2012). The Ale Möller Band, for instance, intertwines traditional music and instruments from Europe, Latin America, and Africa, seldom playing music from one region without

also including elements from another. What Alhem sees as the “all folk music is the same,” or the “let’s make a global folk music” ethos constitutes, for him, an affront to the survival of Swedish musical difference. He writes in *Nationell Idag*:

We Swedes are, like many other nationalities, gifted with a rich and vibrant cultural heritage. All different sorts of music, types of dance and costumes that our people produced, all that diversity we managed to create completely devoid of a vast and encompassing mass-immigration. It is indeed thanks to the fact that people have been distanced from each other that it was possible to develop everything that is unique for every group of people. [...] Why do some want to take away all these wonderful differences [...]?

If we do not preserve our people’s culture, then who will? If in the future it is Inuits, Bedouins or Tibetans who take over the practice of our folk culture – is it still the folk culture of the Swedish people? Nobody denies the existence of cultural diffusion, that cultures influence each other, but different nations develop and reformulate culture to fit with their respective character and temperament, and together [they] constitute our world’s diversity (*Nationell Idag* October 23, 2010).²⁵³

“[W]onderful differences” that “constitute our world’s diversity;” such is the language Alhem uses to carry his call for musical separatism. He advocates a pure Swedish folk music and dance with rhetoric that treats cultural diversity as a virtue and a resource rather than a threat. Following the rhetorical techniques of the New Nationalism, Alhem makes this characterization via an extension of the arena for musical diversity, by expanding the forum for difference from a national to an

²⁵³ Vi svenskar är likt många andra folk lyckligt lottade med ett rikt och ytterst levande kulturarv. Alla olika musiksorster, danstyper och dräktvariationer som vårt folk framställt, all denna diversitet har vi lyckats frambringa, helt utan någon stor och omfattande massinvandring. Det är just tack vare att människor har fått leva utspridda på skilda platser som gjort det möjligt att utveckla allting som är särpräglad speciellt för varje grupp av människor. [...] Varför vill vissa ta bort alla dessa underbara olikheter som livet har frambringat? [...] Om inte vi upprätthåller vårt folks kultur, vem skall då göra det? Om det i framtiden är inuiter, beduiner eller tibetaner som tar över utövandet av vår folkkultur – är det då fortfarande svenska folkets kultur? Ingen förnekar existensen av kulturdiffusion, att kulturer påverkar varandra, men olika folk utvecklar och omformar kulturer till att passa respektive folkgrupps karaktär och sinnelag och som tillsammans utgör mångfalden i världen.” *Nationell Idag*. Available online, accessed March 19, 2011, <http://www.nationellidag.se/visa/default.asp?dokID=1304>

international context where homogeneity within one's country constitutes heterogeneity in a global perspective. And in subtle indication of his ethnonationalistic orientation, Alhem also indicates that, for true diversity to be achieved, those performing distinctly Swedish music must also be distinctly Swedish themselves.

This same conceptual technique, save the references to ethnonationalism, underlies the argumentation of cultural spokespersons for the Sweden Democrats. The following excerpt comes from a P2 radio debate on October 17, 2010 between Lotta Johansson, producer for a nation-wide world music and dance initiative, and famed fiddler and SD spokeswoman Marie Stensby. The two discussed public funding for music and whether the government should show preference towards genres that are deemed a part of Sweden's cultural heritage.

LJ: If every person in Sweden has equal value, then they should also have the same right to money for their music.

MS: I love different cultures, and I want to hear the different national, regional, and local characteristics that exist. And I think that it is every country's responsibility to promote and give economic support to their folk music.²⁵⁴

Later in the debate, Stensby called for diversity again, this time as a means of criticizing the genre of world music, a genre that she thinks cultural elites favor over traditional Swedish music:

I see things like this, that world music that is so celebrated today, I think that if you look past the musical qualities, and the very competent musicians, then I think that it is a step away from the rich characteristics of every culture,

²⁵⁴ LJ: Om alla människor i Sverige har samma värde så har de också samma rätt till pengar för sin musik.

MS: Jag älskar olika kulturer, och jag vill höra de olika nationala, regionala, och lokala särarter som finns. Och jag tycker att det är varje lands ansvar att stötta och ekonomiskt stödja sin folkmusik.

going instead in the direction of a dreary, grey gruel. If it is going to sound the same throughout the world, I think that the music of the world will lose its nuances.²⁵⁵

Stensby argues that preserving the purity of Swedish folk music is a necessary step towards maintaining a vibrant musical life throughout the globe. And as she said earlier in the debate, it is the responsibility of the government to assure that this diversity will live on.

Sweden Democrat spokespersons' use of such rhetoric extends into other performative domains. On November 24, 2010, the youth wing of the party organized a demonstration against both Stockholm's Poetry Festival, and against a syndicalist group that had also organized a demonstration against the festival.²⁵⁶ Leading up to this snowy night when the two companies of protesters would stand on opposite sides of the Royal Dramatic Theater's grand entrée, scorning the festival and trading blows with each other via socialist and emancipationist poets like Forough Farrokhzad and Sonja Åkesson on the one side, and romantic nationalist Swedish poets like Vilhelm Moberg and Viktor Rydberg on the other, the chief organizer of the Sweden Democrats' protest took time to clarify the party's position in a radio interview. One of the hosts of Studio Ett on P1 asked this organizer, Chang

²⁵⁵ Jag ser det så här: att om man, i den världsmusik som omhuldas idag, bortser från musikaliska kvaliteter, [inklusive] väldigt duktiga musiker, då tycker jag att [man tar] en väg bort från de berikande särarterna inom varje kultur och istället går i riktning mot en ganska grå, trist tongröt. Om det ska låta likadant i hela världen, så tycker jag världens musik tappar nyanser.

²⁵⁶ The festival had criticized the Sweden Democrats in some of their promotional material, and youths from the party decided that, in protest, they would take a loudspeaker system and stand outside the Royal Dramatic Theater—where the festival was taking place—and read aloud works by Swedish national romantic poets. As it happened, groups linked to Sweden's syndicalist movement were also planning to protest in similar fashion that night, in part because the festival's after-party would be taking place at a venue notorious for worker's rights violations, and in part because the Sweden Democrats would be there.

Frick, to speak to those who think SD's cultural policy is grounded in xenophobia.

Frick responded:

A cultural policy, if it is to be xenophobic, I don't really understand how they are thinking here. You have to see things in a larger perspective. Sweden is not the entire world. Sweden is one of the countries in the world, and if we are supposed to work for multiculturalism, then we have to see that different countries exist, different people exist who have their culture, their own history. And the best that we can contribute, from Sweden to this multicultural stage, if we think in global terms, it is our own culture, our own history. Who are we? What do we have to offer? And we want to strengthen that.²⁵⁷

Frick here defends the party's investment in Swedish culture as being an effort towards preserving global diversity. In my experience, Frick uses the language of diversity in his public and casual speech more often than any of his fellow party members. And while formulations like that above parallel those coming from other nationalists (like Alhem), he also finds less common ways to introduce a diversity frame to the nationalist cause. After the Local Heritage Federation in the city of Karlstad announced that they would be protesting the Sweden Democrats and their representation of folk costumes, the Sweden Democrats decided to hold a counter demonstration—one made famous by the fact that Sweden Democrat Runar Filper attended the demonstration with the pants to his folk costume on backwards. After Frick spoke at the Sun Square (Soltorget) in Karlstad, he said to me,

This whole thing with diversity that the Local Heritage Federation is talking about, just the fact that you have different folk costumes from different parts of Sweden, that itself is diversity. [...] We don't have to fly in a Japanese

²⁵⁷ En kulturpolitik, om den ska bli främlingsfientlig, så förstår jag inte riktigt hur man resonerar där. Man måste ha ett större perspektiv, Sverige är inte hela världen. Sverige är ett av många länder i världen, och ska vi ha ett mångkulturellt perspektiv, så måste vi se att det finns många olika länder, finns olika folk som har sin egen kultur och sin egen historia. Och det bästa vi kan bidra med, [från] Sverige till den här mångkulturella scenen om vi tittar på ett globalt sätt, det är vår egen kultur, vår egen historia. Vilka vi är, vad vi har att bidra med, och det vill vi stärka.

person to play onion flute at the Royal Dramatic Theater in order to feel like we have diversity (Interview, Chang Frick, June 1, 2011).²⁵⁸

He argued this same point in his speech earlier. I have almost never heard any other nationalist make such a case—that any need for diversity in Swedish society can be met by the country’s native traditions and cultural products. One of the few other instances of this approach is contained in an online banner for the nationalist online community Nordisk.nu, shown in Example 8.



Example 8. English-language web banner for nationalist online portal, Nordisk.nu. Available online, accessed August 18, 2012, <http://www.okno.mk/node/12993>.

I anticipate that such claims will proliferate in coming years.

The above examples from Alhem, Stensby, and Frick all show that New Nationalism’s hallmark rhetoric on human exchange—that preservation of the Swedish people is necessary for the sake of diversity—has been transferred to musical domains. The similarities between nationalists’ commentary on foreign influence in folk music and that on foreign peoples in Sweden could suggest that one

²⁵⁸ “Det här med mångfald, som hembygdsföreningen pratar om, bara det att man har olika svenska folkdräkter från olika håll i Sverige, det i sig är ju en mångfald. [...] Vi behöver inte flyga in en japan som spelar lökflöjt på dramaten för att känna att vi har något mångfald.”

discourse is a proxy for the other. The sentiments and rhetoric exemplified in the above quotes could be a substitute for more incendiary and controversial commentary on immigration, ethnicity, or race. Criticizing folk fusion, for example, is far less inflammatory than criticizing interracial marriage. But while we may be tempted to interpret nationalist commentary on music as a euphemized discussion of demographics—that when they criticize musical exchange, they mean to criticize exchange of people (Taguieff 2001 [1987])—other statements by activists serve to qualify such interpretations. Specifically, these statements suggest that nationalists' criticism of world music and folk fusion is not always a sublimated discourse, but at times may stem from what some see as a fundamental link between expressive culture and demographic change. In such cases, commentary on music and culture does not conceal, but rather coexists and interacts with discourses on race and ethnicity.

As Mr. X and I were discussing folk fusion and world music, specifically the Ale Möller Band, he mentioned that he avoided such music on both aesthetic and philosophical grounds. I asked him to explain this philosophical distaste:

It can function as propaganda. It markets a sort of problem-free, sterilized, multiculturalism where you can just take in a small portion, like 'one more scone' (Interview, Mr. X., March, 4 2011).²⁵⁹

After having grouped such musics under the larger heading of boutique multiculturalism—a term from Stanley Fish describing manifestations of cultural diversity that do not obviously offend core majority sensibilities (see Fish 1997)—he specified his criticism:

²⁵⁹ “[D]en har ett propagandasyfte. Den saluför ju en sorts problemfri, steriliserad mångkulturalism som man bara kan ta i en liten portion, typ ‘en scone till’ liksom. [...]”

This boutique multiculturalism paves the way for mass immigration because it sends out signals that, 'but we will be so enriched, we need cultural exchange,' bla, bla, bla. [...] boutique multiculturalism masks the other sides of what can be called an exchange of peoples. That is of course the danger, and that is what I mean when I say that it can function as propaganda (ibid).²⁶⁰

In the scheme Mr. X describes, music can provide a cover for more contentious and indeed dangerous phenomena. Folk fusion and similar emblems of cultural exchange have the potential to popularize social developments that will corrupt Swedes' broader cultural or ethnic integrity. Thus, the plights of a pure Swedish folk music and a pure Swedish population are related. Opposition to cultural expressions like folk fusion is, in embryo, opposition to immigration, multiculturalism, and/or racial mixing.

Conclusion

The examples discussed in this chapter expose the varied meanings nationalists attach to folk music. Energized by their criticism of reggae and hip hop, some nationalists see in folk music an opportunity to cleanse entrenched foreignness in their cause and establish a more Swedish nationalism. Mattias Karlsson and the Sweden Democrat leadership regard the music as a feature of Swedes' collective past, and one that channels specifically Swedish notions of nationhood and national identity. These individuals, as well as former party member Torbjörn Kastell, consider the genre, and folk culture in general, a less inflammatory emblem of the Swedish nation than symbolism rooted in royalty and

²⁶⁰ "[D]en här boutiquemångkulturalismen banar på sätt väg för en massinvandring, för den sänder ut signaler att, 'men vi blir så berikade, vi behöver kulturellt utbyte bla, bla, bla. [...]' boutiquemångkulturalism maskerar de andra sidor av vad som kan kallas ett folkutbyte. Det är förstås faran, det är det jag menar med att det sker i ett propagandasyfte."

warfare. Vávra Suk similarly claimed that by supporting folk music, activists express what in Swedish society they value, what they fight *for*, and only when activists formulate this understanding do they become true nationalists. Suk and others also praise the ethnically homogenous community folk music attracts, and refer to this practice in order to show that their worldviews are valid and to some extent acknowledged in the mainstream. Finally, we saw how nationalists expand their rhetorical and conceptual models into musical domains via folk music, where they resist hybrid and fusion practices in folk music for the sake of ensuring musical diversity, and to counteract the supposedly misrepresentative images of multiculturalism such practices project.

A number of factors remain constant throughout these examples. As was the case in nineteenth and twentieth-century romantic nationalist movements, contemporary nationalists treat folk music as a music “of the people,” one that is inherently Swedish either in its musical structure or via the population coalescing around it. This is true even of race materialists, who, though they discourage engagement on behalf of folk music, nonetheless see the genre as a natural outgrowth of a racially pure population. Furthermore, in these examples, folk music frequently functions as both an instrument and outgrowth of the broader reform process in radical nationalism. Mattias Karlsson accentuated folk culture in the Sweden Democrats’ public profile in part so that the party could dispel association with delinquency and connect with average Swedes. Framing the folk music community as implicitly white enabled activists like Vávra Suk and Mr. X to claim that their observations are shared and acted upon by the greater public. And those

seeking to defend Swedish folk music against foreign intrusion have drawn from New Nationalist discourses that place an inherent value in difference. Combined, these initiatives advance and reflect efforts to present an upstanding, non-offensive nationalism, one that meshes with mainstream sensibilities and behaviors, and that fights on behalf of a national people for the overarching cause of maintaining human diversity on Earth.

Nationalists' interest in folk music, compared with their interest for other musics, places them in dialogue with outsiders. The reasons for this contact are multiple. While some praise the genre for its ability to impact insider activists, others, like Mattias Karlsson and those describing its role in implicit whiteness, celebrate the music's potential to unify and potentially mobilize all Swedes. Additionally, nationalists remain dependent upon others to produce folk music for them, and such is not the case when they deal with punk, metal, pop, hip hop, or reggae. This necessarily brings nationalists and the folk music community into contact and conflict.

The interaction between these two groups, described in the introduction of this chapter, continues to unfold. Members of organizations like Folk Musicians Against Xenophobia have been generally satisfied with their ability to communicate their rejection of radical nationalist politics to the public. Indeed, just as an illustration in a major national newspaper suggested to some folk musicians that they were being associated with nationalists in the public's eyes (see Example 5), so too did a newspaper illustration published months later suggest that their message had resonated among the broader populace (see Example 9 below).



Example 9. Illustration by Magnus Bard in Swedish newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*. The figure in the center is Sweden Democrats' party leader, Jimmie Åkesson, and he leads a procession of dancers in vaguely Nazi-like clothing opposite a seemingly disapproving group of folk musicians. Here, Åkesson says, "ONE - TWO - THREE - AAAND - HOP-STEP." Published June 5, 2011.

But while such expressions may encourage supporters of Folk Musicians Against Xenophobia, individuals like Lars Farago remain cautious about the future.

The danger is that, it would split up [the folk music movement] [...] that a 'we-are-defending-Swedish-folk-music' organization would emerge that would be friends with the Sweden Democrats, and thereby create a polarization (Interview, Lars Farago, January 24, 2011).²⁶¹

Of course, such an organization has emerged in form of Mattias Karlsson's and Erik Almqvist's Gimle. But when Karlsson spoke to me about his future plans, he described a vision that might concern Farago even more:

I want to focus more and more on the extra-parliamentary. Build associations, and hopefully provoke these existing, larger associations more. I was just emphasizing for the [Sweden Democrats Youth Society] that we can't just sit and be internet warriors, and write op-eds and such. Instead we have to join these associations and get involved, join a folk dance team, or a local heritage council, and work actively there, win the members' trust and get elected as a representative at conventions and so forth. And in the beginning, we may not have a chance to take these associations over, but we can at least make sure that the debate moves into their own conventions and

²⁶¹ "Hotet är att det skulle splittra upp den här rörelsen, [...] att det bildas en 'vi försvarar svensk folkmusik organisation' som blir kompisar med sverigedemokraterna, och så skapas det en polarisering."

meetings. I think that there is an assumption that, once you have started the debate, there are actually a fair number who are active in these associations who lean in our direction. I don't think that the normal, volunteer worker in a local heritage council necessarily agrees with the leaders. But there has never been an alternative, not for a long time at least (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, February 11, 2011).²⁶²

²⁶² "[Jag vill] fokusera mer och mer på det här utomparlamentariska, bygga föreningar och gärna provocera de här befintliga, stora förbunden mer. Jag poängterade väldigt hårt just för ungdomsförbundet att vi inte kan bara sitta och vara internetkrigare och skriva debattartiklar [...] utan de måste gå med i de här föreningarna och engagera sig, gå med i folkdanslagen och hembygdsföreningar och sådant och arbeta aktivt där, vinna medlemmarnas förtroende och se till att bli valda som ombud på kongress och sådant. Och i början så har vi kanske inte någon chans att ta över i de här förbunden, men vi kan åtminstone se till att debatten flyter in i deras... egna kongress och möten. Jag tror att det finns en förutsättning att, när man väl har börjat föra den där debatten, så finns det nog en hel del av de som är aktiva i de här föreningarna som faktiskt skulle luta åt vårt håll. Jag tror inte alls att de vanliga ideellt arbetande i hembygdsförbundet per automatik sympatiserar med ledningen. Men det har aldrig funnits något alternativ, inte på väldigt länge i alla fall."

Chapter 5 - “Don’t let it end this way, I can’t bear to witness”: Song, Sorrow, and the Gender of White Victimization.

Saga is a courageous, Swedish, female nationalist-oriented musician who creates pop-music with patriotic texts. She is, as far as I know, the best and most talented patriotic musician in the English speaking [sic] world. And for those of you, like myself, who hates [sic] ‘metal,’ Saga is one of the few sources available that offers quality patriotic pop-music with brilliant texts.

[...]

I discovered Saga’s music relatively late, in 2008, but have enjoyed it ever since. I have listened to many of the tracks several hundred times and I don’t seem to get tired of them. I would HIGHLY recommend that all Justiciar Knights of Europe and other revolutionary conservatives use these tracks for self-motivating purposes. Don’t just listen to the tracks but learn the texts as well. It has worked brilliantly for me and it will likely work just as well for you
- Anders Behring Breivik (2011:847).

Nationalist imaginaries, in various times and places, and in forms mainstream and deviant, often build from a series of dualisms. These agendas simultaneously advocate modernism and tradition, engagement abroad and seclusion at home, materialism and spiritualism, rationalism and emotionalism. These multiple dualisms (Nairn 1998) also tend to be gendered. Anne McClintock argues that gender difference has often been used to illustrate nationalism’s temporal dualism, where “[w]omen are represented as the atavistic and authentic body of national tradition (inert, backward-looking, and natural), embodying nationalism’s conservative principle of continuity. Men, by contrast, represent the progressive agent of national modernity (forward-thrusting, potent, and historic)” (1997:92). Partha Chatterjee, examining nationalism in colonial India, further emphasizes the role of nationalist locative dichotomies in the construction of gender identities. There, while men roam the “outer,” Westernized world with its

decadence and materialism, women should instead root themselves in the “inner” world of the home, preserving the spiritualism that would define (and privilege) emerging Eastern national cultures (1986, 1993). Indeed, associations with tradition, the home, spiritualism, and emotionalism have marked women as vessels of national essence in diverse historical and geographic settings (Kandiyoti 1991:8; Collier 1997; Yuval-Davis 1996, 1997; Goluboff 2008).

This table of gender divisions is not relevant to all nationalist imaginaries (see Elliston 2000, 2004:624), and its applicability in contemporary radical nationalism in Scandinavia has historically been unstable. The skinbyrd (skingirl, skinett) style and persona of the 1980s and 1990s, for example, rebels against gender ideologies that would bar women from the public sphere or from imitating men’s behavior and expressive forms. By mirroring male skinhead appearances with combat boots, bomber jackets, and cropped or semi-cropped hairstyle, these women cultivated an aggressive image, one enhanced by their participation in street activism and demonstrations. Further, female nationalists in Sweden have obtained major leadership roles in the scene. Vera Oredsson, for example, was leader of The Nordic Rich Party (Nordiska Rikspartiet) from 1975-1978—the first woman in Sweden to lead a nation-wide political party (Löow 2004). By participating in street activism and obtaining formal and informal leadership positions, these women engage, in the words of American race nationalist scholar Kathleen Blee, “operatively” in radical nationalism (2004:61-65), and thereby challenge ideological agendas that would restrict them to passive, supportive, or dependent roles.

As skinheadism and street violence declined with the rise of New

Nationalism, however, gender identities in the scene have glided towards those of classical nationalism and other ultratraditional regimes of patriarchy. Here, men's cosmopolitanism often translates to confronting opponents in the public sphere and exercising other forms of political agency. Ideal women, on the other hand, are to avoid the public sphere, disengage from media and higher education—both driven by corrupting Marxist or Jewish forces—and commit themselves to building large, white families. Put another way, whereas men fight for the ethnonational People in public, in the “outer” world, women wage this battle in their homes and their wombs. And to the extent that women have been able to gain prominence in today's scene, they have often done so by performing and stylizing their distance from modernity, rationalism, and street activism.

Saga—the musician that Norwegian terrorist and self-identified nationalist Anders Behring Breivik describes in the quote above—is one such woman. Saga currently dominates, not only the field of women musicians in Swedish radical nationalism, but also radical nationalist music the world over. She has been a headlining act in Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Finland, and Hungary, as well as throughout the United States, for most of the past decade. Her charismatic appearance and stage presence, as well as her relatively refined musical skill, distinguishes her from other nationalist music acts. She is most popular in white nationalist, neo-Nazi, and other race-conscious nationalist circles, and has performed or collaborated with organizations like the now disbanded Nationalsocialistisk Front [National Socialist Front] in Sweden, white nationalist Resistance Records in the United States, and the anti-Roma, anti-Jewish party Jobbik

in Hungary. Her popularity continues to soar despite her confinement to the more radical wings of the nationalist scene. At present, her facebook.com fan page has nearly 9,000 members, and some uploads of her songs on youtube.com are approaching one million views—numbers that, while small compared to mainstream popular music acts, far surpass those of her nationalist musician counterparts. And her name was recently thrust into mainstream Scandinavian media following the 2011 terrorist attacks in Oslo and Utøya, Norway, and the discovery that Anders Behring Breivik considered Saga his chief musical influence.²⁶³

Saga's surging popularity coincides with a shift in her music's instrumental style, lyrical content, and rhetoric. In her more recent music, she depicts herself as representing or embodying the national people. Further, this music portrays her personal suffering due to multiculturalism and immigration, and presents her as being unable to remedy her pain without outside intervention. Saga's music projects

²⁶³ In the weeks following the attacks, I was interviewed on Swedish and Norwegian state radio about Breivik's interest in Saga, starting with the Swedish radio program *Mitt i Musiken* (In the Midst of Music) on July 27, 2011. I initiated contact with these media outlets after having read the Norwegian killer's manifesto and its references to nationalist music. To the best of my knowledge, the reports I participated in were the first in the Nordic region to focus on Saga and Breivik's appreciation of her music. A synopsis of one of my interviews with Swedish radio was syndicated, and appeared in most Swedish national and local newspapers on July 28. On August 7, Sweden's largest evening paper, *Aftonbladet*, published a long article on Saga where I was interviewed, and included a large, front-page picture of Saga and the text, "Swede Saga, 35, Breivik's Idol." Additionally, I authored an op-ed published in Norway's *Dagbladet* newspaper on August 8. This intense, negative media exposure caused Saga's employer to reassign her to a less public position, one that dropped her annual salary by almost two thirds. This change in turn forced Saga and her German boyfriend Dennis to sell their apartment in Germany. I have been and remain uneasy about my role in drawing attention to Breivik's writings on Saga and the consequences that publicity had for her. However, I believe these writings would have eventually surfaced in the media, perhaps through voices less obliged to offer dispassionate portrayals of her. In my commentary, I have attempted to convey what I experience as Saga's genuine disgust and horror at Breivik's actions, arguing that while Breivik's interest in Saga offers insight into his thinking, it does not implicate her as being in any way accomplice to his actions. I hope that my continued commentary on Saga advances that same truth.

an image of femininity similar to that idealized in traditional nationalist imaginaries, and, increasingly, in contemporary radical nationalism: It is an image wherein women cradle the national essence, but depend on men to defend that essence in the public sphere. Additionally, as a performance of the national people's victimization, this music nourishes understandings that nationalists are agents of justice fighting on behalf of a threatened population—it nourishes the New Nationalism. Understanding Saga, her music, and her reception among and significance for activists requires a survey of her life, of gender discourses in the nationalist scene, and of constructions of gender in radical nationalist music more generally.

Womanhood in the Radical Nationalist Imagination

Emerging insider discourses on the national people's victimization frequently reference women. At times, radical ethnonationalists highlight women as responsible for the national people's downfall. Typically, such charges—voiced by both men and women—concern motherhood and women's failure to produce racially pure children. These themes predominate both in the international race nationalist scene (Anahita 2006; Dobratz and Shanks Meile 1997; Ferber 1998, 2004; Rogers and Litt 2004), and in Scandinavia. For example, Norwegian Thorgrim Bredeesen, co-founder of the former paganist, ethnonationalist organization, Vigrid, explains,

You know those [white] women who get pregnant with a black guy? They should be thrown in jail. Because it's like, they have been given a gift. They've been given genes that have been passed down from generation to generation, hundreds of years, and they just destroy it. [...] You know how environmentalists talk about [how] nature is passed down, that we don't own it, and we don't get to, you know, do anything we want with it because it's not ours? I'm not an environmentalist, but it's kind of like that. Those

genes belong to a lot of people, so you shouldn't get to just throw them away, they're not yours (Interview, Thorgrim Bredesen, July 6, 2011).

Bredesen's analogy between society as steward for the environment, and the individual woman as vessel for the race, illustrates a broader, recurring feature in radical nationalist thought: He equates the wider collectivity with the individual woman. It is women who are responsible for the integrity of the ethnic Norwegian community.

Bredesen's regard for women is not new to radical ethnonationalism.

Activists, including musicians, have voiced such sentiments for decades. The song "For Fuck's Sake, Swedish Girl [Fy Fan Svenska Flicka]" by the white-power band Storm expresses similar contempt for interracial relationships involving white Swedish women. The song was released on the band's 1994 record *Hell Seger* [Seig Heil!/Hail Victory!] on Ragnarock Records:

Our Swedish girls are very distinct,
blond, Aryan, with pure white blood.
All with proud, Nordic heritage.
The importance of keeping the race pure – they all understood.

Perhaps that is only true of yesterday's girls,
whose healthy disposition seems to have been broken.
Today there is no pride for our origins,
command of the people's pure and white race.

(chorus:)

For fuck's sake Swedish girl, you filth.
For your cravings, you sacrifice your race.
I say, for fuck's sake Swedish girl, you filth.
For your sick cravings, you sacrifice your race.

Now, you eye other races.
Driven by sick cravings you go towards your goal.
Blitzed of off their cheap wine,
you then give the nigger all he can take.

Nine months later you give birth to a bastard.
Anguished, you must accept your punishment.
Dumped by the nigger, you think of your prize.
You sold you race for cheap wine in a carafe.

(chorus)

Fuck, how you regret it, but now it is too late.
To think that the white man wants you now – that’s just obscene.

(chorus)²⁶⁴

In addition to treating women as stewards of the white race’s purity, texts like these also link women’s failures as racial guardians to their emotionality, to their inability to reason past their “sick cravings.”

The troubadour/rock group Ferox, featuring Viktor Sjölund, provides a more contemporary, softened musical expression of these sentiments in the English-language song, “Farewell White Woman.” The text is a slight alteration of a poem written by the then imprisoned American activist, David Lane. And unlike, Storm’s track, it is a personalized commentary on and criticism of interracialism.

Many years have come and gone, for I was just a lad of five,
when I first noticed nature’s great work of beauty made alive.
By sacrifice, war and struggle, by mind of god or faith.
How she got there, why I loved her, I leave to debate.

(chorus:)

Skin so fair, of golden hair, brunet, or red hair tresses.
Enchanting temptress in the nude, or draped in diverse dresses.

²⁶⁴ Våra svenska flickor är mycket speciella, blonda, ariska och med rent vitt blod. Samtliga med stolt nordisk bakgrund. Vikten av att hålla rasen ren de alla förstod. Kanske gäller det bara gårdagens flickor, vars sunda inställning verkar gått i kras. Idag saknas stolthet över vårt ursprung, härska folkets rena och vita ras. (chorus:) Fy fan Svenska flicka - Ditt as. För dina lustar offrar du vår ras. Jag säger, fy fan Svenska flicka - Ditt as. För dina sjuka lustar offrar du vår ras. Nu så sneglar du på andra raser. Styr av sjuka lustar går du mot ditt mål. Fulltankad med deras billiga vin, ger du sedan blatten allt vad han tål. Nio månader senare föder du en oäkting. Förtrivlad får du ta ditt straff. Dumpad av blatten tänker du på ditt pris. Du sålde din ras för billigt vin i en karaff. (chorus). Du ångrar dig som fan - men nu är det försent. Att tro att en vit man vill ha dig nu det är ju obscent. (chorus).

Desired by males of every race, nature's greatest glory.
They look as though a diadem, white women are my story.

Was four years ago, maybe just a little less,
when the treason by white women first brought me such distress.
Though men hath failed the duty, that does not provide a reason,
for the flaunting by white women of deathly racial treason.

(chorus)

[...]
Strong men can still stand alone, for golden dreams or hope.
Exist without a women's love? With all things they can cope.
And if Valhalla is a truth, a reward someday I'll see,
Beautiful Valkyrie, waiting there for me.
Beautiful Valkyrie, waiting there for me.
Beautiful Valkyrie, waiting there for me.

White women's attraction to non-white partners is so total that Sjölund resigns himself to seek out white women in the afterlife.

Though at times nationalists regard women as agents of national decline, they may also conceive of women as the chief victims of multiculturalist regimes. This occurs when nationalists abandon claims that white women's alleged preferences for non-whites stem from individual "sick cravings," and insist instead that such phenomena result from broader societal trends. Paulina Forslund, writer and activist for the Swedish Resistance Movement [Svenska Motståndsrörelsen], a militant National Socialist organization, provides an example of this thinking.

Speaking at Aktivistdagarna in May 2011, she decried

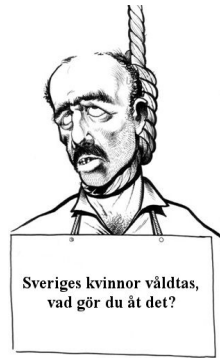
The union between men and women has always been a precondition to life. Nothing can be more important than that. Without the sexual drive, there will be no children. It is therefore of utmost importance that men remember that you must fight for your women, for your children, and for your future children. Without that goal, all will be lost. Our race will die if more don't feel this energy. This vital energy is being gutted by an unnatural society all, unfortunately, are forced to live in today. You all know what I'm talking about. A crooked society, where men are encouraged to be sensitive and

feminine, and women should, from childhood, act more like men. It's not surprising that many women, though foolishly, chose immigrant men. The media depicts the foreign man as exotic, erotic, and masculine.²⁶⁵

Forslund's statement draws from wider nationalist, or more specifically identitarian, critiques of Marxism. The same ideology that seeks to disassemble racial, ethnic, or cultural difference, nationalists claim, also seeks to undermine gender difference. This latter cause renders men and women unattractive to each other. And given that media, political, and academic elites target whites with this agenda, the breakdown of gender difference amounts to a decrease in pure white birth rates. From this perspective, white women's "racial treason" derives from Marxist forces (communists, socialists, Jews).

Conspiracy theories like these predominate in race conscious or other intellectualist anti-Semitic circles. More commonly, however, discourses framing women as victims of multiculturalism and immigration typically center on sexual crimes committed by immigrant men against ethnic Swedish women. These discourses have, and continue to provide one of the most prominent propaganda tools for the larger nationalist scene.

²⁶⁵ I alla tider har föreningen mellan mannen och kvinnan varit förutsättning till liv. Inget kan vara viktigare än detta. Utan den sexuella drivkraften blir det inga barn. Det är därför av yttersta vikt att ni män kommer ihåg att ni ska kämpa och strida för era kvinnor, för era barn, eller för era framtida barn. Utan den viljan kommer allt gå förlorat - vår ras kommer att dö om inte fler känner den energin. Den här livsnödvändiga energin håller på att urholkas på grund av ett onaturligt samhälle som vi alla tyvärr tvingas leva i idag. Ni vet precis vad jag talar om. Det snedvridna samhället där män uppmanas att vara känsliga och feminina, och kvinnor ska redan från barnsben vara mer som män. Det är inte att undra på att många kvinnor, dock i sin dumhet, väljer invandarmän. Media framställer den främmande mannen som exotisk, erotisk, och maskulin.



Example 10. Decal by the Swedish Resistance Movement (Svenska Motståndsrörelse). The text reads, “Sweden’s women are being raped, what are you doing about it?”

Nationalists, from National Socialist militants, to the moderate Sweden Democrats, tie Sweden’s high rate of reported rapes—the highest in Europe (Lovett and Kelly 2009:15)—to the growth of the country’s immigrant population. To support these claims they often cite a 2005 report from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ). In the report’s data, an individual born abroad is five times as likely to commit sexual assault than an individual born in Sweden to two native-born parents (2005:42).

In their own report on rape in Sweden, the Sweden Democrats offered the following explanation for immigrants’ disproportionate representation among convicted rapists:

For many years, the Sweden Democrats have highlighted the increase of rapes as one of many examples of the multicultural society’s dark sides. In an increasingly conflict-ridden multicultural society, women risk being reduced to symbols for a certain people or a certain culture. As is the case with many armed conflicts in the world, rapes can be a way for certain men to humiliate and show contempt, not just for the female victim, but also for the entire culture or people she belongs to.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Sverigedemokraterna har under många år lyft fram ökningen av våldtäkterna som ett bland många exempel på det mångkulturella samhällets baksidor. I ett allt mer konfliktbetonat mångkulturellt samhälle riskerar kvinnor att reduceras till symboler för ett visst folk eller en viss kultur. Precis som i fallet med många väpnade konflikter i världen kan våldtäkterna då bli ett sätt för vissa män att förnedra och visa förakt för, inte bara den drabbade kvinnan, utan också för hela den kultur eller folkgrupp som hon tillhör.

The report accordingly moves to suggest that rapes committed by immigrant men may be expressions of contempt for Sweden and Swedish society (2010:3-4). But just as the report decries non-Swedes for reducing women to “symbols for a certain people or a certain culture,” quotes above, such as that from Bredesen, suggest that nationalists may defend women on the same grounds.

Manifestations of this ideology extend beyond discourses of victimization and childbearing. Theatrics at street demonstrations and festivals often portray women as tradition bearers. In recent years, for example, women have often formed the flag corps at official events. These flag corps typically lead the larger assembly and public marches, and process up to the stage during the singing of the national anthem at private nationalist festivals and parties.



Example 11. Promotional photo of flag procession, Nordiska Festival, 2005. Available online, accessed May 18, 2012, http://sv.metapedia.org/w/Nordiska_festivalen.

Processions like these, as well as the singing of the national anthem and the serving of certain foods, tend to be the occasions at nationalist gatherings most tied to

tradition. As such, they serve to link women with ceremony and the preservation of heritage.

Women in Radical Nationalist Music

Activists, especially woman activists, began calling for female white nationalist musicians during the mid 1990s. Cindy MacDonald, writing circa 1997 for the pan-Aryanist women's web site "Her Race" (hosted by the American white nationalist site Stormfront.org), made such a call:

There is nothing I find more discouraging than browsing through a catalogue of white racist CDs and finding NO WOMEN ARTISTS! Sure, racist music is racist music. The message is roughly the same whether a man or women sings the song. But, I like to hear women singing too. And those female voices just aren't out there in racialist music. Women need to harness music's power [...] The potential market for racist women music groups is larger than it is for men. An all-female band would have far less trouble in terms of anti-racist violence at gigs. All-male bands have problems. They are far more restricted in terms of the types of clubs they can get into. That limits their audience. But with women artists, protestors would be a little less aggressive than they would be towards male musicians; also, concert goers might be curious at why women would be singing racialist songs. It's a good selling point—women racialist musicians. It allows more potential concert goers because some women are turned off by ultra-aggressive testosterone-laced performers. A racialist woman singer would be an excellent role model which might attract women into our cause (capitals in the original; cited in Back 2002:116).

When she wrote this piece, MacDonald may not have been aware of the small scattering of female musicians throughout the radical nationalist music world at the time. Virtually all these women played or sang in European white power skinhead bands. British neo-Nazi band Lionheart was one of the first to include a woman performer. Lionheart began playing in 1988, and added a female singer, "Jackie," in 1989 to the otherwise all-male group. 1990s British band Razor's Edge occasionally performed with a female bass player, "Kel," as did Italian band ADL122. In each of these cases, the female performer donned a skinbyrd look, sometimes with bomber

jackets, combat boots, and, in the case of “Shiva”—the bass player in *ADL122*—the semi-cropped, “feather-cut” hairstyle.

Following the turn of the twenty-first century, several new female acts entered the scene. These acts received considerable nationalist and non-nationalist media exposure, though they were few in number. Further, these women generally abandoned the skinbyrd profile, and along with it white power punk. Though at times they performed covers of white power classics, their music tended instead towards the acoustic, troubadour style emerging throughout the wider scene.

The American girl-child duo Prussian Blue is one of the most publicized acts from this wave. Prussian Blue consists of twins Lamb and Lynx Gaede, born 1992. Lamb and Lynx first performed together at the American white nationalist festival Euro-fest in 2001. There, the nine-year-old twins sang an a cappella cover of “Ocean of Warriors” by British band, Brutal Attack. That day, Dr. William Pierce—a late, prolific American activist who held leadership positions in The American Nazi Party, The National Socialist White People’s Party, National Alliance, and Resistance Records, and author of *The Turner Diaries*—sat in the audience. Pierce offered to sign the girls to a record deal (Davis 2009:16-18). In the following years, the duo would release three albums, *Fragment of the Future* (2004) *The Path We Chose* (2005), and *For The Fatherland* (2006). Roughly half of their tracks are covers, while the other half are original material, typically backed by Lamb’s acoustic guitar and Lynx’s fiddle. The twins promoted their recordings with tours throughout the United States and Europe, including a performance in 2007 at Nordiska Festivalen in southern Sweden. During this time, the girls received intense media attention. They

were the subjects of two BBC documentaries, and were featured on American television programs ABC Primetime and ABC Good Morning America.

Outside commentators tended to perceive the twin's mother, April Gaede, as the driving force behind the group. April Gaede's motivations for pursuing the project resemble those outlined for female white nationalist musicians in Cindy MacDonald's post. But Gaede also saw potential for the duo in their ability to function as sex symbols. In an interview with journalist Louis Theroux, she says, "I mean, what red-blooded American boy isn't going to find two blonde twins, 14 years old, singing about white pride and pride in your race very appealing?"²⁶⁷

After having interviewed the girls and their mother extensively, Louis Theroux made the following prediction: "As for Lamb and Lynx, it seemed more than likely that they would rebel against their mother, in the manner of all teenagers, and that part of that rebellion would be a rejection of her racism."²⁶⁸ Indeed, by 2011, Lamb and Lynx claimed to have left their music, and the white nationalist movement.²⁶⁹

Though Lamb and Lynx no longer perform, the model they established—that of two sisters singing to an acoustic, light accompaniment—may be spreading throughout the scene. Teen sisters Charity and Shelby Pendergraf, for example, follow this model in their duo, Heritage Connection. The Arkansas-based act began playing in 2003, and like Prussian Blue, they play guitar and fiddle.

²⁶⁷ Cited in Theroux, Louis, "Young, gifted, and Nazi." *The Independent* December 28, 2003.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Gell, Aaron. "Change of Heart: Former Nazi Teeny Boppers Singing a New Tune." *The Daily*, July 17, 2011. Available online, accessed May 7, 2012, <http://www.thedaily.com/page/2011/07/17/071711-news-nazi-twins-1-6/>.

Though no child act like Prussian Blue or Heritage Connection has emerged in Europe, a handful of solo female acts began performing around the same time as the American girl duos. Italian Francesca Ortolani, also known as “Viking” and “Aufidena,” started producing records in 2000 and is still active today. The former Sapienza University of Rome student often identifies as a fascist, and sets anti-Semitic lyrics to either solo acoustic guitar, or a synthesized pop/classical accompaniment. While receiving less international and mainstream attention than Ortolani, Annett Müller (born Annett Moek) gained relative fame in her native Germany, thanks in part to her connections with Germany’s National Democratic Party (NDP). She began recording in 2001 with her husband Michael Müller, occasionally under the name Faktor Deutschland (Dornbusch and Raabe 2008:176).

Female nationalists in Sweden entered the music scene by the mid 1990s. Sunita Ringstad, former Sweden Democrat from Vännersborg (Ekman and Poohl 2010:147-148), was one of the first female nationalist artists in Sweden. With the stage name Sunita, she released the album “Frihetskamp” in 1994 on Ragnarock Records. Her music follows a punk rock model, and she appears on the album cover with a bomber jacket and combat boots (but without a cropped hair style). Though her vocals were not screamed, she sang in a rough, gravely style, and her themes were unmistakably race nationalist. Activists I have spoken with consider the recording one of the worst in Swedish nationalist rock history due to the poor singing and awkward lyrics. Similarly, it was one of the few albums to receive a 1 of

5 rating in *Nordland* magazine, and was described by *Nordland* reviewer “19” as “among the worst I’ve heard in a long time” (1995 no. 2).²⁷⁰

In 1998, before Prussian Blue, Heritage Connection, or Francesca Ortolani, producers at Midgård Records released an album showcasing solo singer “Frigg.” The recording was the first in a series called “Pro Patria.” The music on *Pro Patria I* was not punk or hard rock, nor acoustic troubadour style; rather, it was light pop—with moderate tempos, muffled percussion, diverse instrumentation, and standard, non-screamed, pop vocals. This recording seemed to serve Midgård’s overarching goals at the time. As they recall it on their official website: “We wanted to reach more people with music and try new styles. Styles that were non-existent in freedom rock.”²⁷¹

Frigg—a woman named Ulrica Pettersson—did not produce the music, but was instead hired as a studio musician, despite the fact that her singing formed the project’s focal point. Pettersson is not even the same woman as that pictured on the album cover. Instead, Jocke Karlsson and Nigel Brown wrote and produced *Pro Patria I*. Karlsson was front man for the neo-Nazi punk band Pluton Svea, and, in 2007 joined the Viking rock band Völund Smed. Brown, from Australia, is also a prolific white nationalist musician from the group No Remorse. Lyrics to the album’s ten songs lack the hate rhetoric of standard white power punk, but they do vilify “Zion’s men” and borrow lines from writings by 1930s Nazi-sympathizers Per Engldahl and Sven-Olof Lindholm.

²⁷⁰ “bland det sämsta som jag hört på väldigt länge.”

²⁷¹ “Vi ville nå fler människor med musiken och testa nya stilar. Stilar som inom genren frihetsrock inte förut existerat.” Available online, accessed May 10, 2012, <http://midgaardshop.com/om-oss>.



Example 12. Album cover for *Pro Patria I* on Midgård Records, 1998.

Pettersson was skeptical of the music's lyrical content when she began to record.

The album's co-producer, Jocke Karlsson, wrote the following on Nordik.nu, August 17, 2009 about the recording session with Pettersson:

She almost refused to sing anything that dealt with the fatherland, etc., so we had to lie about what Zionism is. I don't remember what we said, but I have some sense that we tricked her into thinking it was some kind of mystical spirit. We even had to quickly put together a lie about who Lindholm & Engdahl were too.²⁷² Hahaha.²⁷³

"Pro Patria I" was not an instance of a woman assuming an influential role in nationalist music making. No single woman actually provided the sounds and images for the project. However, with its softer instrumental music, softer vocals, and milder lyrical content, the project introduced a new model for the musical performance of femininity in the scene.

²⁷² Here Karlsson refers to Sven Olof Lindholm and Per Engdahl—two WWII-era Nazi sympathizers (see Chapter 1).

²⁷³ "Hon vägrade ju närapå att sjunga saker som innefattade fosterlandet m.m, så vi drog en nödlögn om sionismens innebörd. Minns nu inte vad vi sade, men jag har för mig att vi lurade i henne att det var ett slags väsen. Fick även lite raskt ljuga ihop vilka Lindholm & Engdahl var också. Hahaha." Available online, accessed May 10, 2012, <http://www.nordisk.nu/showthread.php?t=37464&page=3&highlight=Frigg>.

Ulrica Pettersson would continue producing nationalist music. Along with her sister Malin, she teamed with three members from Völund Smed (prior to Jocke Karlsson's involvement with the band) to form the Viking rock band Hel in 1999. Compared with Sunita and other female artists in the wider scene, the Pettersson sisters had fairly polished singing styles, laying colorful melodic vocal lines and two-part harmonies on top of heavier instrumental accompaniments. They rejected race nationalism and Nazism, and even collaborated with Exit—an organization devoted to assisting individuals who leave neo-Nazism. In 2002, wanting to incorporate more “folk elements” in their sound, they added a female violinist, Cia Hedmark, only to disband in 2004.²⁷⁴ Despite having only been active for five years, Hel remains one of the more popular Viking rock bands today, and likely inspired female singers in other Viking rock bands, like S.O.T., Heidrun, and Dagaz.^{275 276}

The percentage of women in the nationalist music scene has been static during the past decade. However, female musicians have by and large abandoned the white power skinhead profile. Even the female singer in the National Socialist metal band Vinterdis, a woman named Johanna, eschews both the skinhead look and screamed vocals. The same is true of women singers in other nationalist bands in Sweden, including the white nationalist Asynja and the neo-folk Valkyria.

²⁷⁴ Interview with Ulrica Pettersson. Available online, accessed May 9, 2012, <http://www.vikingarock.se/intervjuer/2007/intervju-med-Ullis-Hel.php>

²⁷⁵ Interview with Dagaz. Available online, accessed May 9, 2012, <http://www.vikingarock.se/intervjuer/2002/intervju-med-dagaz.php>

²⁷⁶ After Hel, Malin Pettersson pursued a short-lived Viking rock band called Höstmörker. And in 2005, both Ulrica and Malin started the group Tales of Origins—a generally non-nationalist band where they sang about medieval fantasy topics. Ulrica is a certified behavioral scientist today, and Cia Hedmark went on to perform with world famous Swedish (non-nationalist) death metal band, Vintersorg.

Lyrical themes among female groups are varied. However, certain textual tropes distinguish these artists from male performers. For example, all of the acts mentioned above often sing lyrics that pay tribute to past and present male activists. These tribute songs glorify men's strength and encourage men to continue fighting for the national cause. Heritage Connection's track, "Aryan Warrior," from their 2007 CD, *Aryan Awakening*, provides an example of this type of song:

[...] Like knights of old, his story's told, and the history of his race.
He battles the invaders with unfailing warrior's grace.
He fights the noble war, drives back the evil hoard,
fighting Zionist minions, never asking for reward.

(chorus:)

He's an Aryan warrior, bring hope back to the land.
He will not let our people down without a final stand.
He's an Aryan warrior, like an eagle taking flight.
We shall reign in victory at the final fight [...].

Other examples of popular tribute songs include Hel's "Res Dig Upp [Rise Up]!" or Viking's "The Warrior's Call."

The historical ballad, or chronicle song, is a less common subgenre among female musicians. Here, the singer recounts historical events leading up to the present. The music often directly or indirectly frames contemporary activists as the latest in a long lineage of nationalists. Examples of chronicle song include Saga's "Black Bannered Legion" (based on a poem by David Lane), Vinterdis' "Promises in Blood," and Viking's "White Flowers." But Asynja's track "Fädernas Kall [The Fathers' Call]," provides the quintessential example of chronicle song. It is one of the more polished pieces on their 2007 album, *Through the Misty Air* on Nordvind Records, with a crisp, driving metal backup and soaring vocals.

I stand on a battlefield where ancient war cries rang,
where fathers proudly marched towards victory or death.
Carved the runes of Tyr, burned their ships.
Glanced at the enemy, who was sent to hell.
The ring of swords has been silent for a thousand years,
But the voices from the soil still reach my ears.

(chorus:) Do you hear the voices from the soil?
Do you hear the wind speak?
Do you hear the wise words from the hall of the forefathers?
Do you hear how the storm rages – orders from Valhall?
Hear how the thunder roars, hear the fathers' call!

I walk on a forgotten forest path – towards grandfather's grave.
He was a man of honor and much wisdom he gave.
My grandfather fell in Berlin, with pride in his soul,
after courageously fighting for Europe's sake.
He left this life on Earth many years ago,
but his spirit lives on, and his voice reaches me.

(chorus)

I think of a hero, who raised the fathers' sword,
forged an Order to change this world.
Over the child they swore a now holy oath,
secure the people's future, nation, culture, and customs.²⁷⁷
The hero has now left, some years ago,
but Robert Jay Mathews – his voice reaches me.

(chorus)
(chorus)

I listen to those voices that rouse me to battle,
warrior in the blood, wake now to life.
I break my chains, tear the weights free,
and urge you to see, to fight for our future.
If the people don't listen, towards our death we go.
So spread the fathers' call, and your voice will reach the people.

(chorus).²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Here the text refers to the famous "14 words" phrase penned by Order member, David Lane: "We must secure the existence of our people, and a future for white children" (see Michael 2009).

²⁷⁸ Jag står på ett slagfält där forna stridsrop ljud, där härar ledde fäder mot seger eller död. Ristade Tyr's runa, brände sina skepp, blickade mot frienden som sänts till helvetet. Svärdklingor har nu

In this text, the singer recounts a history of individuals who fought on behalf of the white race. She begins during the Viking era and those warring for a Norse god of war, Tyr, moving then to describe the plight of her own maternal grandfather who fought for the Nazis and died in Berlin during World War II. Finally, she turns to 1980s white nationalism in the United States, saluting Robert Jay Mathews—founder of the militant white separatist organization the Order—who was firebombed and burned to death in 1984 after a 35-hour stand off with American federal agents on Whidbey Island, Washington. The prominence of chronicle songs like “Fädernas Kall” among female artists reinforces nationalist ideologies that link women to the past.

Saga

Saga’s career spans the aesthetic shifts the lyrical subgenres discussed above. But her recent professional rise coincides with her increased use of a particular persona in her music. “Saga” is the stage name for a woman born in 1975 in Kalmar in southern Sweden. She has three children, and is currently in a long-term relationship with her former bodyguard, a German man named Dennis. She makes relatively little money from her music, and, for that reason, she has pursued other

tystnat sedan tusen år, men rösterna från jorden mina öron når. (chorus:) Hör du rösterna från jorden? Hör du vindens tal? Hör du de visa orden - från förfäders sal? Hör hur stormen vrålar - order från Valhall! Hör hur åskan dånar - hör Fädernas kall! Jag går på bortglömd skogsstig - på väg till morfars grav, han var ärans man och visdomen han gav. Min morfar stöp i Berlin med stolthet i sin själ, efter tappert kämpat för europas väl. Jordeliv han lämnat sedan många år, men anden lever vidare och hans röst mig når. (chorus) Jag tänker på en hjälte som tog upp fäders svärd, bildade en orden för att förändra denna värld. Över barnet svor de sedan helig ed, säkra folkets framtid nation kultur och sed. Hjälten är nu borta sedan flera år, men Robert Jay Mathews, hans röst till mig den når. (chorus) (chorus) Jag lyssnar till de röster som manar mig till strid, krigaren som finns i blodet vaknar nu till liv. Jag bryter mina kedjor - sliter bojan loss, och manar er till insikt att för vår framtid slåss. Om folket inte lyssnar mot vår död vi gå, så sprid nu fäders kall och folket din röst skall nå. (chorus).

careers including running a beauty salon and working as a sales person. Having lived for extended periods of time in both the United States and Great Britain, and given that her boyfriend Dennis does not speak Swedish, she speaks impeccable English, and in dress and demeanor reminds me more of an American than a European.

Saga recalls having gradually grown critical of immigration throughout secondary school. However, one particular experience pushed this critical stance to outright opposition.

S: To begin with, it was just something that happened to me, and I got in a lot of arguments with people from – that are not Swedish – arguments (laughs). And then there was one specific event that made me very uncomfortable.

BT: I take it you don't want to say what the events were?

S: No, that stays with me. It was kind of serious though, it involved a lot of people, it was just a very unpleasant experience. And then, there were some trials, and there were some things like that. And then the outcome of the trial was terrible for me and for the other ones. That was like, what? You know. And then I started looking up some other similar cases, and in every case where there was a non-Swede, the sentence was always milder, always, always, always. In every case, it was a milder sentence. And that makes me go, like, why? Why, if you commit the same crime, in the same country, to the same people, why are there two different sentences, why don't you get convicted for the same - treated equally?
[...]

BT: Before this incident, did you have any connections with the nationalist world?

S: Yes, had friends. And I had my beliefs. That was not the first incident, that was just the incident that made me, at that time, see red. [...] That is what made me become Saga, if you know what I mean. I had all the beliefs and stuff before, but that was what made me feel like I really just had to do something. Maybe not for everyone else, but for me. I was going nuts, I had to do something, so my music has always been therapy to me, it has always been like therapy (Interview, Saga and Dennis, July 28, 2011).

While she traces the intensifying of her political sentiments to this traumatic experience, she describes her entry into the nationalist music scene as having been more coincidental and casual. She recalls,

S: At that same time I met a guy who was into the scene. He knew someone who knew the record label, Midgård, and then I got in contact with them. We just spoke, talked like friends and then they asked questions about me and I got like, 'yeah, I'm a singer,' and they were like 'hey, do you want to do background vocals for a band that I have.' And I was like, 'yeah, I can do that' (ibid).

She recorded background vocals for white-power punk band Pluton Svea, and their 1998 release "88% Unplugged." Impressed with her performance on this recording, producers at Midgård invited Saga to participate in other projects, this time in a more central role.

The ball started rolling. [Midgård's producer] asked me if I wanted to be a singer on a project, which was Symphony of Sorrow, and I said 'yeah, why not.' 'It's already recorded, the music's already recorded, it's already done.' So I said, 'ok send me the music.' And they sent me the music and I went like, 'hmmm. Yeah, ok, well, I'll do this and nothing else' (ibid).

Midgård Records paired Saga with Trollhättan-based band, Triskelon, to create the group Symphony of Sorrow. They released their first album, *Paradise Lost*, in 2000. Singing at the depths of her register, and accompanied by Triskelon's bassy carpet of sound, this metal project has a dark, heavy tone. Likewise, the lyrical themes are severe—unwavering as they describe the direness of the political situation, and unequivocal in their glorification of a coming violent rebellion. The title track, "Paradise Lost" offers an example of this:

A paralyzed dream and stifled scream.
Europe torn apart from the seams.
Preparing for war with a mutant horde.
Striking at the heart of the system's core.

(chorus:)

Let my fury be known - the seeds of violence be sown.
Let my hatred be fed - with the body count of the enemy dead.

Hell unleashed like a sacred beast.
Vengeance arriving to crush the hated peace.
A mighty cost for this paradise lost.
The only response is a holocaust.

[...]

You've built a lie into a governing state
So now our force runs its brutal course
We'll kill you all without remorse
We'll kill you all without remorse.

Having had little creative liberty during the production of *Paradise Lost*, Saga initially planned to cease work with Symphony of Sorrow. However, she wanted to continue making nationalist music, and again circumstances presented a new opportunity. She explains,

Symphony of Sorrow is not my kind of music. However, I did the recording and everything was fine and dandy. And the guy that I was seeing at the time was listening to Skrewdriver a lot, so I'd heard Skrewdriver way before of course, but it's like, I listened to Skrewdriver 24/7 for a long time. And then they asked me if I wanted to make a tribute CD and I went, 'Yeah, why not.' Because I like some of the songs that Skrewdriver does. Basically it is just three chords that they shift around, it's like it is really simple [...] I like the melody. I like the sound. I like the rhythm. So I said, 'yeah sure, but I need to do it better, better recordings and stuff like that,' because Skrewdriver, they didn't really have the studio equipment that I had access to. So music-wise it is better, but the original is always the original, I can never do - with the feeling and emotion that he [Skrewdriver singer Ian Stuart Donaldson] had - I could never do that, I can only do that with things that I write.

Almost immediately after singing for Symphony of Sorrow, Saga began recording covers of songs by flagship white-power band Skrewdriver and its legendary leader, Ian Stuart Donaldson. This recording effort began with the release of two volumes of tributes, followed by the live solo album *Live and Kicking* recorded at a memorial

concert for Ian Stuart Donaldson sponsored by Midgård. All three albums were released in 2000, and were followed by a third volume of Skrewdriver covers in 2001.



Example 13. Album cover for Saga – *My Tribute to Skrewdriver*, Volume 1, Midgård Records, 2000.

The tribute recordings—not Symphony of Sorrow—established Saga in the international white nationalist music scene, and made her the highest-selling artist at Midgård Records. As she notes in the quotation above, her renditions of Skrewdriver classics are much more polished than the originals. Further, the mood in her covers is much more lighthearted: She often selected more moderate versions of Donaldson’s lyrics (i.e. “Free My Country”)²⁷⁹, avoided screamed vocals, and occasionally abandoned the punk rock accompaniment altogether in favor of sparse and soft piano backing (i.e. “Tomorrow Belongs to Me”). I have spoken with insiders who think her covers strip the Skrewdriver originals of their bite and character. However, by recasting these originals, she also seems to have carried Donaldson’s classics to new audiences, especially younger females. Demand for Saga grew

²⁷⁹ Donaldson alternated between singing “Once a nation, and now we’re run by Jews,” and “Once a nation, and now we’re run by whom?” in this track. Saga chose the latter text when she recorded “Free My Land” her second tribute album in 2000.

quickly throughout Europe, and she began performing at concerts and festivals in Great Britain, Germany, and Finland, in addition to Sweden. Her profile grew in North America as well—thanks in large part to promotional efforts by white nationalist Resistance Records—and for a short time she lived in the United States. Saga returned to Sweden in 2005, and, on the grounds that she would be given greater artistic control, recorded another album with Symphony of Sorrow titled, *Symphony of Hatred*. Starting with this recording, Saga began developing a new persona in her music, one that avoids calls for violence and statements of chauvinism, and instead showcases personal suffering and sorrow.

In one sense, her return to Symphony of Sorrow entailed a move from the punk or party rock style of her Skrewdriver covers, and back to a more shrouded and dark heavy metal. The group's second recording featured a more complex and dynamic musical and lyrical model than that of their first release, *Paradise Lost*. Here, the music oscillates from subdued, slow-tempo sections to high-speed, explosive passages with screamed vocals. These two musical flavors typically bear contrasting textual themes, with lyrics to subdued sections voicing sorrow, dread, pessimism and subjugation, and those to more energized and aggressive music calling for resistance, revolution, and even advocating chauvinism and hatred.

Saga routinely sings the former type of passage, leaving the hate lyrics to a screaming male chorus. In such instances, she performs the role of sufferer; it is in aid of this victim that the chorus issues its call to action. Again, the title track, "Symphony of Hatred," offers the clearest example of the prevailing musical and textual mode on the album:

Saga: A vortex of madness is torturing my mind,
layer on layer of lies deceiving our kind.
A flickering maze of pictures staring back at me,
people with fabricated smiles gloom in my TV.
My head is filled with sick lies - food for my brain.
No wonder the time's up, no wonder the world's insane!

(Chorus:)

Male Chorus: Hatred - are [sic] nourishing my body as my warrior soul comes
to life!

Hatred - are feeding my mind as I watch our people die!

Hatred - is the essence of survival, we need it to save our kind!

Hatred - don't be scared, hatred is our friend!

Saga: A vortex of madness is torturing my mind,
layer on layer of lies deceiving our kind.
A mouth is murmuring about money, health, and state.
Behind our backs, they're digging our kind's grave.

(Chorus) [...]

Here, Saga suffers psychological distress over the deception and betrayal of her kind, enduring mind-torture as the media fills her head with "sick lies." The phenomena she sings about are not external to her, not the concern of an abstract community. Rather, they manifest inside of her. She withdraws from any type of resistance by declaring "time's up" and calling the world "insane."

The male chorus sings from a different position. The political plight of their kind also inspires in them a personal, emotional response. However, that response is one of hatred rather than sorrow. And it is followed by calls to channel hatred in an effort to resolve the situation. In this sense, the individuals in the chorus do not share Saga's defeatism, nor are they implicated in any surrender on her part. They treat themselves and their listeners as actors in an ongoing, unsettled struggle for the survival of their kind. Saga is not part of the struggle; her suffering is rather evidence for its necessity.

Today, Saga represents many things to her fans. Her status as a sex symbol certainly saturates her own promotional efforts, such as in the slogan for her website, “Resistance Never Looked This Good” (see Example 14).



Example 14. Banner for Saga's official web site. Available online, accessed May 21, 2012, www.thisissaga.com.

But in the years since her Skrewdriver tribute albums, Saga's music has enhanced the identity displayed in "Symphony of Hatred"—that of an individual exemplifying the suffering and sorrow of the besieged national people, an individual who cries for help, but who, like the abstract national people, cannot fight this fight, and must rely upon the efforts of activists for deliverance.

Other musicians—virtually all of them women—project this type of persona in song. In Vinterdis' track "White Warrior," for example, singer Johanna also positions herself as a being distressed by interracialism and in need of male intervention. However, Saga's sophisticated expression and illustration of sorrow and dependency in music distinguishes her from other artists, and the chief example of this is her track, "Ode to a Dying People."

“Ode to a Dying People”

Eyes shining bright with unspilt tears,
Thinking about all these wasted years.
Everything worth living for is gone.
Brother, I find it hard to keep fighting on.
Falling down towards the abyss, the abyss.
The reaper embraces me with his kiss.
It makes me want to refuse to care, refuse to care.
To watch this all unfold - too much to bear.

(chorus: x2)

If this is the way it ends,
if this is the way my race ends,
if this is the way it ends,
I can't bear to witness.

Disease encroaching on all I hold dear.
Somehow I gotta get my soul out of here.
Heart of agony, faint burning hope.
I'm finding it hard to try to cope.

Because liars own the world with conquering poise, with conquering poise,
in a wasteland of meaningless noise.
We don't stand a chance with dormant pride, with dormant pride.
The heroes of our race have already died.

(chorus x2)

To imagine it has all come down to this.
Apathy and suicidal bliss.
It's all over except for the crying.
With a whimper instead of the roar of a lion.

The greatest race to ever walk the earth,
dying a slow death with insane mirth.
The tomb has been prepared, our race betrayed, our race betrayed.
White man, fight the flight towards the grave.

(chorus x4)

Don't let it end this way!
Don't let it end this way!
Don't let it end this way!
I can't bear to witness.

Don't let it end this way!
Don't let it end this way!
Don't let it end this way!
I can't bear to witness.

(chorus x2)

Saga did not write “Ode to a Dying People.” Her recording, on her self-produced 2007 album *On My Own*, is a cover of the original written by Canadian George Burdi of the band Rahowa. Somewhat the “Summertime” of contemporary white nationalist music, over 20 groups in multiple countries have covered the song. But Saga’s rendition has been the most popular, and is often mistaken for the original. It may in fact be the most popular white nationalist recording in recent history. Counting views of uploaded songs on the online video website youtube.com is one of the only available methods for assessing the consumption of nationalist music. And combined, uploads of Saga’s version of “Ode to a Dying People” on youtube.com are nearing one million views, a number far beyond not only other covers of the song, but also any other white nationalist song on the website. Some insiders describe the song as having “changed their life” or as having “something religious about it.”²⁸⁰ User “Matthew Bostdorf,” for example, wrote the following on Saga’s official facebook.com fan page, on November 4, 2011:

Saga, I heard your version of ‘Ode To A Dying People’ for the first time recently. I caught on to it and played it again. This time it really started to sink in. My throat tightened and eyes started to swell (it's touching!) Then my wife and two boys walked in behind me. She looked at me and asked "honey, what's wrong?" Gabe looks up and asked "daddy why are you sad?" I couldn't speak! I shrugged my shoulders, shook my head and hit play again! Now, my wife thinks she should monitor my listening time. No way[.] You have the power men dread most! The ability to penetrate our chests and

²⁸⁰ See for example user “brandr” on nationell.nu, August 7, 2011. Available online, accessed March 14, 2012, <http://www.nationell.nu/2011/08/06/saga-i-expressen-da-var-jag-mer-extrem/>.

pierce our hearts to the core and make us cry. You could conquer the world!
All Hail Queen Saga!!²⁸¹

Throughout my research, I heard various accounts of the song's provenance. The most common explanation holds that George Burdi, the song's author, wrote the piece after witnessing a romantic relationship between two whites implode due to domestic violence. Subsequently, according to the account, this event led Burdi to reflect upon the declining birth rates among whites, upon the fact that whites are a "dying people."

Burdi, however, offered a different explanation to me during an interview. He instead ties the song to his personal trials surrounding his conviction and incarceration for assault—experiences that would eventually prompt his renunciation of white nationalism.

I wrote 'Ode to Dying People' in the winter of 1995 while in the middle of a legal battle. I got out on appeal after serving a month in jail for an assault charge. At this point I'd been in the movement about seven years. I was alone, it was about 2 AM, and it was just me and my guitar and a pack of cigarettes. In many ways it's ironic that the song 'Ode to a Dying People' has become as popular as it has because in reality it was my farewell to the movement. It was [...] in many ways my admission that I couldn't continue with my activities of the previous decade, but I was tired and I was ready to leave (Interview, George Burdi, April 3, 12).

And though Burdi no longer identifies as being part of the nationalist scene, he still has high regard for the song.

Most of the songs in the movement were all cheerleading anthems trying to always inspire confidence and courage in the face of insurmountable odds. But the album that 'Ode' appeared on, *Cult of the Holy War*, was a different type of album. It had all the bravado [...] but lyrically it was attempting a broad historical sweep, more rooted in tradition, and philosophically deeper. To reveal sadness or defeat was part of the natural maturation process. It

²⁸¹ Available online, accessed 05/08/2012, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Saga/249159933080>.

didn't matter to us so much how we were received by the members of the movement, our audience at the time, but rather how we would be viewed in a historical context. [...] There's much of the song that still rings true today. Do liars own the world? Is our culture a wasteland of meaningless noise? Are the heroes of our people long dead? Is humanity itself on the precipice of destruction? These are powerful themes that appeal to people from many different races around the world. If you remove the racial context, and instead look at the song as an urge to protect the fragility of life, then you'll understand the appeal to those who find it meaningful. Because the last lyric of the song is 'don't let it end this way,' which despite all the lamenting and desperation is ultimately a message of hope (ibid).

Burdi's performance of the song is sober, with a slow tempo, solo guitar accompaniment, and dark-toned vocals. The song maintains this structural profile throughout, thus exemplifying those characteristics Les Back writes of when he likened Burdi and Rahowa to the English rock band Pink Floyd (2002:111).

Saga abandons the sparseness and static dynamics of Burdi's original. Her version combines acoustic guitar, bass, trap set, and synthesizer cellos, and uses these forces to power a large-scale dynamic curve peaking at the lines, "The greatest race to ever walk the Earth," in addition to more localized dynamic shifts (see below). She alters the melody in the chorus as follows:

The image shows a musical transcription comparing two versions of a vocal melody. The top line is labeled 'Saga' and the bottom line is labeled 'Burdi'. Both are in 4/4 time. The lyrics for Saga's version are: "If this is the way it ends, if this is the way my race ends, if this is the way it ends, I can't bear to witness". The lyrics for Burdi's version are: "this is the way it ends, I can't bear to witness". The melody for Saga is transposed up a perfect fourth from Burdi's original melody to facilitate comparison.

Example 15. Transcription of vocal melody line from the chorus of "Ode to a Dying People." Top line: Saga's version. Bottom line: George Burdi's original version. Burdi's melody has been transposed up a perfect fourth to facilitate comparison.

Reflecting the prominence of Saga's recording, most covers of "Ode to a Dying People" after 2007 use her melodic variants.²⁸² But Saga's expressive rendition of the lyrics is the most striking difference between her version and all others.

The song's lyrics deal with the approaching death of the white race, and they offer little in the way of consolation. The approaching disease, the agony, the liars, the meaningless noise, the dormant pride, the whimpers, the apathy, the flight towards the grave—how does the singer respond to this? "I can't bear to witness," an exasperated, defeated, non-response, one that retreats from potential collective action into solitary escape. And it is a response Saga colors musically. She begins the verses at the bottom of her register, with the melody restricting itself to a narrow range. Slowly, the dynamic level begins to rise, climaxing at the onset of the chorus, and the line, "If this is the way it ends." The percussion aids this development through regular durational diminutions that continue through the first two verses and choruses. These forces build expectation for a statement of resilience in the chorus, a call to resistance, an expression of hope or encouragement. Her alterations to the melody in the chorus, which avoid Burdi's resolving descent to the tonic (see Example 15), reinforce this tension. But with her dynamic level falling, her voice turning thin, and her pitch fading, she delivers the line "I can't bear to witness," and the buildup dissolves.

Through words and music, Saga's rendition of "Ode to a Dying People" becomes a performance of emotionality and fragility. And in a section towards the

²⁸² This is true even of the Swedish band *Vinterdis*, whose singer Johanna has been hostile towards *Saga* and her music in public interviews (Interview Available online, accessed 05/10/12, http://revoltns.blogspot.com/2009_07_01_archive.html).

end of the song, she extends this performance through imitations of crying, and by calling directly for outside intervention. She delivers the lines, “Don’t let it end this way, I can’t bear to witness,” in an anxious, urgent tone interspersed with sighs and gasps for air. She pleads for intervention. And on the penultimate statement of the line “Don’t let it end this way,” she opens into a sharp, arching melodic flourish suggestive of a shriek. Her rendition of these lines does not deliver the “message of hope” that Burdi imagined. Here, she sounds like she is crying. She sounds in pain.

Conclusion: The Sound of Oppression, The Imperative of Suffering

I do not find the real life Saga as a helpless victim; I see her rather as the opposite. She has endured great challenges throughout her life—challenges including those derived from the steady stream of stalker-types that have followed and harassed her throughout much of her adult life. Despite such issues, she manages to maintain a day-job where she works in a managerial position, raise two children, and nurture an international music career. Her stage presence is commanding, more so, in my opinion, than that of any other performer in the scene. She projects confidence as she moves across the stage, stares into the audience, and inserts right-arm salutes throughout her performance. Young women in the international nationalist scene often speak of Saga as a hero or role model.

Additionally, she claims not to be interested in projecting an image of herself as weak and victimized. Though she does hear herself crying at the end of “Ode to a Dying People,” she is otherwise ambivalent about my analysis of her songs. During one of our interviews, she clarified her overall goal for her music:

What I want is for people to listen to my music and go, 'Oh, she feels the same. I'm not alone.' My music should be an option for normal people who feel that there is something wrong, but they don't have to go out and get punched in the nose for it (Interview, Saga and Dennis, July 28, 2011).

With her music, she wants listeners to be able to identify with her, and further, to give listeners a means of engaging with nationalist ideas outside of street activism.

Insiders' experiences of Saga and her music, however, do not always follow her intended program. Dennis, Saga's boyfriend, claims that insiders view her as a detached symbol for the nationalist cause rather than a peer one identifies with and fights alongside:

Everybody says [she is] the Valkyrie and stuff like that [...] I mean you can look at her - you can stand a six-year old blond girl or boy there, it would be the same effect. That would be like - ok, I fight for that. [...] I do it for the kids and the girls. Men don't do that for themselves, men do that for children and girls (Interview, Dennis and Saga, April 11, 2012).

And on Nordisk.nu, user "Maximus" wrote the following on July 18, 2007,

What a Goddess! Wonderful voice, fantastic lyrics and strong melodies. A blend of Tori Amos and Enya. I will be thinking of this Valkyria at my first sacrifice.²⁸³

Such sentiments may be reinforced by the rhetorical and gendered positioning exhibited in Saga's pieces like "Ode to a Dying People." Male insiders' behavior at her concerts reinforces such a claim. Typically, attendees at radical nationalist concerts interact with the performers by exchanging right-arm Heil salutes and by singing along with the music. But by singing along to Saga's music, by

²⁸³ "Vilken Gudinna! Underbar röst, fantastiska texter och starka melodier. En blandning av Tori Amos och Enya. Jag ska ha denna Valkyria i tankarna vid mitt första blot!" Available online, accessed May 11, 2012, <http://www.nordisk.nu/showthread.php?t=2384&page=2>

imitating her fragility and vulnerability, male nationalists risk compromising their masculinist self-ideals. Saga's concerts, such as that in London on November 8, 2009 (posted online), expose these tensions between prevalent gender identities and established audience practice in the nationalist scene. There, she sang "Ode to a Dying People" to a small, but enthusiastic crowd of nearly 100. The crowd—almost exclusively skinhead men—knew the song and her version of it well, and they sang her words and melody throughout much of the performance.

Despite this, the crowd and Saga were not singing the same thing, and this was particularly evident during the choruses. Saga's live performance of the chorus matched that on her studio recording, where she moves from a full-voiced, loud dynamic and bold character at the beginning of chorus and the line, "If this is the way it ends," to an abrupt, fading retreat at the onset of the line, "I can't bear to witness." The audience at this concert rendered the chorus in opposite fashion. Shouting as much as singing, their dynamic level is relatively static throughout the chorus, though they increase, rather than decrease, their volume at the line "I can't bear to witness." Further, they deliver that line with emphases on the words "I" and "bear."²⁸⁴

The audience's dynamic rise could be a response to Saga's corresponding dynamic drop—it is an opportune moment for the audience to showcase its singing. Additionally, the emphasis on the words "I" and "bear" could stem from the relationship between text and meter. These words fall on beats one and two, whereas the preceding and following words are syncopated and don't fall on beats

²⁸⁴ Available online, accessed 05/18/2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b2KAMZsjto>.

three or four (see Example 15). But a similar metric and textual relationship occurs at the start of earlier lines in the chorus, and the audience does not perform the same articulation there. Rather, it seems, audience members and Saga are expressing two different sentiments in their performance of the line, “I can’t bear to witness.” Whereas Saga articulates defeat and sorrow, the sentiment I hear from the audience is one of disgust, if not anger, of contemptuous disappointment in white decline. The lyric’s vague meaning affords these dueling renditions, and thereby allows male nationalists to mark their distance from Saga while supporting and celebrating her. Similar dynamics between Saga and her audiences occur during other performances of this song, such as that at Nordiska Festival in Sweden, 2007.²⁸⁵ Further, covers of “Ode to a Dying People” with male singers, covers that adopt Saga’s melodic variations, also reverse her dynamic progression in the chorus. Serbian act Sadko & Third Way’s cover offers one example of this.

The key elements of Saga’s performance, her musical displays of suffering, alienation, and dependency, have been put to use in nationalist gender ideologies elsewhere. These same elements are common in lamentation practice—ritual songs of sorrow sung often at funerals, but also at weddings and other occasions. Among often-recurring characteristics in lamentation, scholars like Greg Urban, Steven Feld, and Aaron Fox name (1) imitations of crying and (2) the use of dialogic rhetoric in lament texts without the presence of an actual addressee (Urban 1988:386; Feld and Fox 1994). Singers may imitate crying through vaulted melodic lines, trembling, wavy pitch, and stylized gasps for air. And lament texts may speak directly to the

²⁸⁵ Available online, accessed July 4, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1JY_bxMxvs

deceased, or they may cry to the community at large, the lack of a response to their pleas and questions marking either the deceased's absence, or augmenting the lamenter's display of solitude and despair.

Scholars of lament in diverse settings have interpreted ritual wailing as a form of resistance, a practice, for example, that allows singers to publically criticize society and control interpretations of death (Caraveli 1986; Briggs 1992; Wilce 1998). However, the combined emotionality and social detachment exhibited in practices like lamentation has also supported patriarchal gender identities—including gender identities in nationalist ideological settings. In those instances where women typically perform laments, the musical display of emotionality reinforces ideologies that bar them from rationalism and relegate them to the domain of pre-modern tradition. For example, anthropologist Sascha Goluboff argued that performances of sorrow in funeral laments in the eastern Caucasus helped establish women as emotional rather than rational, as removed from modern society and the public sphere, and that men in turn use these designations to justify women's role as bearers of national tradition (2008).

Saga's music is by no means ritual mourning. But she enlists musical features common in lamentation—stylized crying, unanswered dialogical rhetoric—to perform sorrow and dependency. These performances in turn serve the agendas of nationalism in general, and New Nationalism in particular. By internalizing and personalizing the impact of large-scale demographic transformations, she positions herself as, if not a manifestation of the white race, then as a being that bears the race's collective fate. As a representative of this population, her pain and fears

depict the white race as a people defined by its vulnerability, defined by its suffering. Putting a stop to her pain entails saving the white race from decline and death.

Reactions to Saga's performances, like that mentioned above, suggest that these relationships are salient in the minds of her audiences. Further, some of her fans describe her as a personification of the national people. User "David T.

Baldursson" wrote the following on Saga's facebook.com fan page, on March 1, 2011:

[W]e need Saga in all our countries as her voice is one of pride and survival. We are all facing the same danger: White Genocide. Our people are still too weak and blind to see what really is going on. Saga's voice is waking us up and motivating our folk to stand up. Saga is the embodiment of our pride and purity and should be heard in all our lands.²⁸⁶

On the same facebook.com page, user "John Baker," on October 8, 2011, writes

simply, "Saga you are beauty and perfection incarnate."²⁸⁷ And likewise, Canadian white nationalist George Burdi, author of the song "Ode to a Dying People,"

highlighted Saga's role as an embodiment of the white race and the nationalist cause in the eyes of male activists. He said of her:

For many in the movement, her beauty is the ideal they are fighting for. Being that there is a dearth of women in the movement, Saga's male fans can live vicariously through her music, and she becomes the female urging them on, supporting them through their struggle. She is their Helen of Troy (Interview, George Burdi, April 2, 2012).

While nationalists conceive of Saga variously as figurehead or embodiment of the nationalist cause and the national people, the victimization she displays in her music also permeates their experiences of her. Though he does not write directly

²⁸⁶ Available online, accessed May 8, 2012, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Saga/249159933080>.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

about her embodiment of the nationalist cause, Breivik's discussion of Saga in his manifesto nonetheless dwells on her ill treatment. He writes,

Marxist and multiculturalist character-assassins will claim that Saga is an evil, national-socialist monsterband from hell, due to her success [...] Saga and similar patriotic heroes and heroines of Scandinavia [...] [have] had to face political persecution and demonization for years. Yet they continue their brave struggle to prevent the demographical and cultural genocide of the Scandinavian and European tribes (2011:847).

Here, Saga's persecution provides Breivik a platform to discuss the unjust treatment of nationalists more generally. As regards Saga, it is hard to know exactly what kind of persecution Breivik writes of. As we saw earlier, she tends not to feature her struggle or persecution in her stage performance or promotional material. He may be simply assuming her persecution given that she is a nationalist. Or he could be reacting to the sentiments expressed through her music. And though he concludes his section on Saga by emphasizing her resilience, he, like other nationalists quoted above, presents her as being external to his struggle, yet also an inspiration for it, writing,

Instead of 'physical' revolutionary or democratic resistance, she fights through her music by inspiring the best in us (ibid).

Combined, the quotes above from Dennis, Baldursson, Burdi, Breivik, and others depict Saga as encapsulating the physical appearance, the blood, and the population they champion. Additionally, insiders tend to highlight her victimization, and treat this victimization as an opportunity to talk about the marginalization of nationalists, the threats to white pride, and threats to the white race. Saga's music portrays her in ways that encourage such interpretations. Pieces like "Symphony of Sorrow" and "Ode to a Dying People" paint her as an entity suffering for the wider

white populations' hardships, one who has no political agency, no effective means of helping herself.

This identity channels gender stereotypes long established in diverse forms of nationalism—stereotypes that imagine women as bearers or embodiments of national essence due in part to their separation from the public sphere, cosmopolitanism, and modernity. But Saga's performance also benefits emerging radical nationalist programs. She seldom sings about diversity or love of the self: Her music does not fully embrace the rhetoric of New Nationalism. But she supplies vivid expression of a key precondition for the politics of defiant white self-love. She makes a singular, oppressed, and threatened white race audible. And by presenting her suffering as urgent and unresolved, Saga leaves her listeners at a crossroads. The choice of whether and how to respond to her cries is left to them. A response can be made musically, as it was in the song "Symphony of Hatred"—by a chorus of men screaming to save their kind through hatred. Or, as activists like Burdi, Baldursson, Dennis, and Breivik imply, it may be made outside of the musical domain.

Chapter 6 – Music and the New Nationalism

At 11:00 PM on Saturday, July 28, 2012, I sat on a regional commuter train headed to the town of Nyköping, roughly 50 miles south of Stockholm. It was a return trip. I had spent the day in the capital city attending the fourth annual Identitarian Ideas [Identitär Idé] seminar, and was traveling back, not to Nyköping, but to a countryside field just south of the town's limits. The field was my destination the night before, and on this night, Saturday, I would share it with roughly 2,500 others who had come for the second and final day of the annual Kuggnäs Festival [Kuggnäsfestival].

It was an unusually large crowd—more than double that of the previous year as I remember it—and that was because this year's festival featured an unusual event. At midnight, the band Ultima Thule would give their final performance. Having for decades been the flagship Viking rock band, having ignited an oppositional, nationalist youth culture during the 1990s, and having injected the nationalist message into the Swedish mainstream more effectively than any group before or since, the members of Ultima Thule had decided to disband. The reasons for this decision were many. The rise of downloading culture had made music less profitable for Viking rock groups—as it had for white power rock bands earlier. The skinhead subculture that Ultima Thule once created and played for had grown older, and many had left the scene completely. And, as singer Jan Thörnblom stated to

Sweden's largest newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, the band felt they were no longer needed following the Sweden Democrats' election to national parliament in 2010.²⁸⁸

The group had always asserted that they were non-racist nationalists, and during this final concert, singer Thörnblom would even dedicate a song to a workmate named "Niko." Indeed, leaders of the Sweden Democrats like Mattias Karlsson, Linus Bylund, and party leader Jimmie Åkesson have never felt the need to hide the fact that the band was instrumental in inspiring their political activism. Similarly, Kuggnäs Festival, founded in 2003, began declaring itself a non-political (read non-Nazi) skinhead event during the past five years. But the band's and the festival's relationship with race nationalist and neo-Nazi circles has always been ambiguous, and there have always been suspicions that what is said on stage is not felt beyond.

This year, Ultima Thule's final denunciation of racism early in their program was not met with unanimous applause from the audience. I saw that coming. T-shirts in the crowd told the story: "White Pride World Wide," "Weisse Macht [White Power]," "Blood och Ära [Blood and Honor]," "Midgård Records," and everywhere, "Skrewdriver." The audience was not only skinhead; it contained a large race-nationalist skinhead element. Walking through the parking lot and campgrounds adjacent to the fenced-in field where concerts were held, I heard classic Swedish white power bands like Storm, Odium, and Pluton Svea blasting from car radios. The legacy of Swedish white power would even touch Kuggnäs' stage, living on through,

²⁸⁸ Available online, accessed September 16, 2012, <http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/musik/kampen-ar-over-for-ultima-thule>

among others, Pluton Svea front man Jocke Karlsson who performed with the Viking rock band Völund Smed and in his bad-boy solo act Pitbullfarm.

Attendees ranged in age from early teens through 60, the latter category most often seemed to be accompanying a son. And they were mostly sons—I guessed that there were roughly five to six men for every woman.



Example 16. Ultima Thule at Kuggnäs Festival, July 28, 2012. Photo Benjamin R. Teitelbaum.

In step with the festival's wishes, there were no signs of any political party. A previous year, the Sweden Democrats had arranged an information tent at the festival, but other festivalgoers harassed them as moderate traitors, and they discontinued the tent the following year. The Party of the Swedes had arranged to bus its members to the festival from Värmland in 2011, and reporters for Party of the Swedes and National Democrats newspapers were in attendance in 2012. The only visible organization in the audience was the "Stockholm Skins"—a group committed more to skinhead culture and hooliganism than nationalist politics.

Kuggnäs is first and foremost a skinhead festival, after all. They could be NS skins, they could be Thule skins, or they could be skins from abroad. Visitors at this year's festival had come from Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, England, Australia, the United States, Italy, Poland, and Hungary, in addition to the northern and southern-most extremes of Sweden. At the youth hostel where I slept, skins from Spain surrounded me on nearly all sides. Some may have been politically active, some race or cultural nationalists, and some may simply have been attracted to the decadent, deviant skinhead subculture. But skinheads they were. And looking out at the audience that evening, I wondered at times if there wasn't more hair on my head than on the heads of all the other men in attendance combined.

Though in previous years, the festival erupted in major brawls, this year was relatively calm, with only a handful of reported assaults and cases of drunk driving. There were still confrontations here and there—I almost landed in one myself after having accidentally knocked four cups of beer out of a Finnish skinhead's arms and onto a middle age German couple. And the atmosphere was far from reverent. At the lower edges of the field, nearly as much in the audience's focal point as the stage, men took their turns pissing through the fence, occasionally dropping their pants to their ankles so as to moon the entire audience.

I had spent the day Saturday in a far different environment. It began a little after noon outside of a subway station in central Stockholm, at a meeting place designated for participants in Identitarian Ideas. We were to congregate at this spot, and eventually a representative would lead us on foot to the site for the seminar.

The whole exercise was meant to prevent attacks from left-wing groups, and is standard procedure for nationalist gatherings.

Approaching the meeting place clad in my polo shirt, pressed jeans, and loafers, I felt somewhat formal having come from Kuggnäs. But a number of those waiting at the pre-seminar gathering place had thoroughly outdressed me. Cherry-red sweaters on top of button-up shirts. Pressed khakis and wing-tips. Suits: The dress code here was a far cry from that in the field south of Nyköping, though a disproportionate number of close-cropped hairstyles persisted.



Example 17. Web banner for Identitarian Ideas facebook page. Available online, accessed September 18, 2012, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=355691391151038&set=a.147499795303533.40173.147499668636879&type=1&theater>.

After a long wait in the sun, our guide finally got the call, and began walking us to the seminar location. We arrived after several other groups, as well as some individuals who, because of their high status in the scene, were given the location directly. After yet another long wait outside of the building—a building which nearly all the participants agreed was far more suitable and professional looking than that

of the previous year—the roughly 90-person assembly finally entered the hall, and for the first time we able to get a good look at each other.

Everyone was there. The man in blue with what appeared to be bodyguards (but weren't) at his flanks—veteran skinhead Björn Björkvist of the Party of the Swedes and previously of National Socialist Front and of Gotland Skins. The robust man in red, dressed down for the occasion—Magnus Söderman, formerly of the Swedish Resistance Movement. The youthful figure selling refreshments—Andreas Johansson of Nordic Youth. The quiet, otherwise equally youthful character sporting his new, robust beard—Kim Petrusson, also of Nordic Youth. The slender editor with an equally slender necktie—Vávra Suk of the National Democrats and the newspaper National Today. The tall, blond, ponytailed young man bounding up and down the stairs who I first recognized by voice rather than by appearance—Zyklon Boom. And the man presiding over the operation, the man who is nowhere and everywhere, dapper, with a well-trimmed goatee and a Johnny-Cash bass voice—Daniel Friberg. There were others too, more minor characters in my story like Sanna Hill, Johan Björnsson, and Isak Nygren of the Swedish Defense League in his signature fedora hat. I did not recognize any Sweden Democrats in attendance, or at least no active Sweden Democrats. Johan Rinderheim, booted from the party in 2008, surfaced in the crowd. Other Sweden Democrats knew about the meeting, but they would restrict themselves to only reading about it later on Nordisk.nu, Motpol.nu, or Friatider.se. Save these absences, the nationalist scene's major thinkers and activists were collected in that room. Nearly every organization, party, club, and think tank was represented in some form.

These were also the voices that had shaped the attitudes towards music in the scene, with Björkvist having been an early critic of white power music, Rinderheim having driven major changes to the Sweden Democrats' cultural policy, and Friberg having managed the Nordic League and its many offshoots. It was as close to a real life curtain call for my study as I would get. These were the New Nationalists.

The seminar theme was "Identity and Geopolitics: Towards a Multi-Polar World." This theme, following New Rightist yearnings, was intended to highlight the fast-approaching breakdown of American hegemony in global affairs, the rise of political and military power in the East, and the possible consequences this could have for the future of modernism and racial, ethnic, and cultural pluralism in the West. Featured speakers were Tobias Ridderstråle, Vávra Suk, Alex Kurtagic, and, the main act, former Putin advisor and Moscow University Professor, Alexander Dugin. Kurtagic—an entertaining speaker who schooled us on the various ways modernity's impending violent and sudden collapse might take place—seemed the crowd favorite.

Participants mingled and bought refreshments between lectures. Individuals who officially belong to warring factions of the nationalist scene embraced each other as friends. This was true even for Magnus Söderman who, as we saw in Chapter 2, has been one of the most vocal critics of identitarianism. As I worked my way through the hall, most people noticed that I was wearing a Kuggnäsfestival wristband. I had kept it on from earlier, and would need it to get back into the festival later that night. Many had less than enthusiastic things to say about

Kuggnäs, though I know that many were Ultima Thule fans. Daniel Friberg, after having described how he thought white power music essentially did not exist in Sweden anymore, evidenced this claim by pointing out that Kuggnäs festival (mind you, an officially non-race nationalist event) was one of the only major festivals left, and that its days were likely numbered. Kim Petrusson also saw the band on my wrist and said, “Ah, Kuggnäs; that’s not my scene.” Zyklon Boom, judging from his lyrics and their criticisms of skinhead hooligans, probably would have expressed this same sentiment more harshly.

When I asked Daniel Friberg to describe the people at the seminar, he responded that they were intellectuals and academics—a number with graduate degrees. This was certainly true of a portion of attendees, including Friberg himself. But it did not describe everyone at Identitarian Ideas. His statement would be more valid as a declaration of an agenda: He and others hope to see certified academics become the preponderant faction in the scene. And while in the context of nationalist gatherings, these people did have a refined academic look, there were other signs that distinguished them from the academics I am used to seeing at ethnomusicology or Scandinavian Studies conferences. Traces of these individuals’ past and present, and in some cases their former connection to skinheadism, surfaced from time to time. There was of course the overrepresentation of close-cropped haircuts, as well as a major gender differential, with what seemed to be a lower percentage of women here than at Kuggnäs. And then there was the drink: many listened to the lectures while enjoying one or more 5.2% beers purchased from the refreshment counter. Björn Björkvist drank wine.

I would miss the end of the program, including the keynote lecture by Alexander Dugin. But I needed to get back to the field south of Nyköping for the start of Ultima Thule's final concert, back to the mud, fists, boots, smoke, snuff, blood, and piss.

Sitting on that train headed back to Nyköping, it seemed as though I was traveling between two eras. Most of the individuals at the seminar in Stockholm had their nationalist awakenings in settings like that at Kuggnäs, listening, in some cases, to the very artists who would be performing on that stage. But they had moved on. They had found new selves and new nations, and the resulting organizations and projects, such as Friberg's Nordisk.nu, Motpol.nu, and Metapedia.org, had grown during the past decade, whereas skinheadism had crumbled. Yes, the numbers at the festival were far greater than those in Stockholm. But the skinheads did not go to that field to rally and sing of brighter futures. They were there to say goodbye.

In seeming parallel with the divide between past and future, between delinquency and intellectualism, these two events also prescribed differing roles for music in nationalist activism. At Kuggnäs, music was the reason for the gathering. Members of the audience likely shared political ideals and social backgrounds, and perhaps some would meet again at demonstrations or meetings for nationalist political parties. But nothing would connect them more than music. Theirs is the nationalist scene of the 1990s, a music scene above all else. In contrast, music seemed remarkable in Stockholm only because of its absence. Music was not

featured in the program. The Swedish neo-classical identitarian group Winglord had performed at the 2011 meeting of Identitarian Ideas, to mixed reviews.²⁸⁹



Example 18. Winglord at Identitarian Ideas, 2011. Photo: National Today. Available online, accessed September 21, 2012, <http://www.nationellidag.se/visa/default.asp?dokID=1603&q=winglord&x=0>

They would not perform in 2012, though a number of their music videos were shown during a social hour later in the evening.

Events like Identitarian Ideas are of course crafted to contrast with Viking rock and white power festivals: they are designed to lift nationalism out of immature, uninformed, and self-destructive tendencies, and foster instead a scene of upstanding, self-loving, educated activists. The nature of Identitarian Ideas and its equivalencies online suggests that music has little role in this new scene. These venues do not replace skinhead punk with a new genre friendlier to emerging nationalist ideals. Rather, music appears to have been exchanged for non-music.

This dissertation has questioned such a conclusion. It has shown that, while the number of nationalist music ensembles, producers, and distributors has dropped dramatically during the past decade, music continues to shape the way nationalists conceive of themselves and those they fight for. Indeed, though music garnered miniscule official attention at the 2012 Identitarian Ideas, the room that

²⁸⁹ Available online, accessed September 20, 2012, <http://www.nationellidag.se/visa/default.asp?dokID=1603&q=winglord&x=0>

Saturday afternoon was filled with individuals whose activities during the past five years testify to music's sustaining importance to contemporary radical nationalism. Members of Nordic Youth who spurred one of the largest and most heated discussions in the nationalist scene by producing reggae; *Zyklon Boom* whose music provided a platform for reformism; Daniel Friberg whose Nordic League would produce some of the most celebrated nationalist recordings in Sweden; and Johan Rinderheim who would help set the Sweden Democrats' cultural policy on a path towards folk dance and folk music.

Referring to case studies from earlier chapters, I organize this concluding chapter around answering a question posed at the beginning of this dissertation: To what extent does music constitute the Swedish difference New Nationalists champion? The question is complicated. As I argued in Chapter 2, the New Nationalism encompasses contrasting, and at times contradictory directives for the uses of music. Such conflict builds from the coexistence of New Nationalism's pluralist and metapolitical agendas. Under the pluralist frame, nationalists work to ensure racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and political diversity throughout the globe. This cause involves engaging on behalf of others' right to difference, but it also includes projecting one's own difference. In this latter sense, nationalists call on themselves to be uniquely Swedish.

The metapolitical frame, in contrast, relates to the making of nationalist politics and the production of propaganda. Here, in order to reach new audiences, and to build grass roots political sentiment, nationalists are to inject their message into various realms of cultural production and consumption. Metapolitics can take

multiple forms. It can be based upon infiltrating existing institutions and channels, or it can aspire to create a parallel cultural infrastructure. It can, for example, seek to penetrate the media establishment, or it can call for the creation of a separate, nationalist media. Metapolitical initiatives can also vary based on the types of channels that are targeted. Some campaigns appear interested in seemingly limitless forms of cultural production and behavior, whereas others focus on a select group of phenomena—the latter often centering on major arenas of popular culture.

But whatever form metapolitics takes, it proscribes a behavior that can be experienced as counter to the ethos of rigid New Nationalist pluralism. Here, activism involves breaking free from one's entrenched behaviors and channels and making contact with new audiences. This outward, expanding posture counters pluralism's call for a return to the tokens of one's difference: pluralism's call to connect, not with the institutions and arenas that dominate the public and cosmopolitan spheres, but instead with that which makes one unique, which provides one's identity.

Nationalists have multiple methods for negotiating this conflict. The most common is that they assign different forms of social and cultural behavior and markers of their identity to different frames. Typically, these allocations are made based on whether nationalists think a domain contains elements indispensable to their difference. If a category—be it food, clothing, spirituality, education, journalistic media, etc.—has a distinctly Swedish variant, insiders may feel obliged to rally behind that variant in the name of living up to their Swedish distinctiveness. If, conversely, a category has no such obvious variant, or if the category as a whole is

deemed irrelevant to determining identity, nationalists may consider it ideal for metapolitical activism. For example, if there is no distinctly Swedish version of online social networking sites, they will not be betraying the pluralistic imperative to difference by participating in Facebook.com, Lunarstorm.se, Flashback.org, etc. Alternately, if they regard Swedishness as composed partially by particular clothing styles, they will not aspire to make and distribute nationalist kaftans, headscarves, etc.

This study has attempted to understand how New Nationalists regard the category of music, how they imagine its role in campaigns of metapolitics or the demonstration of difference. And in this final chapter, I synthesize the material examined throughout the rest of this study. I identify three, internally varied responses to this issue: Those who exclude music from the campaign for Swedish difference, those who include music in this campaign, and those who, though they might not champion Swedish music, claim that their musical choices impact their activism and vice versa.

National Difference without Music

“[W]e won’t need to sing about ‘great olden days,’ we are going to live in them.”

In this line from the conclusion of his speech at The People’s March [Folkets marsch] on June 6, 2008, Magnus Söderman painted a future where nationalists achieve their goals. Though he gave the speech at an event that would be cancelled the following year, to an audience that had and would continue to dwindle, and for an organization that he today no longer belongs to, Söderman’s speech communicated a supreme optimism. In euphoric, almost manic, tones he

prophesized a day when nationalists would drive their enemies from Sweden's cities and countryside, winning for themselves the race-conscious, pure Swedish society of their dreams. As a result of this process, he said, nationalists would be able to progress from a defeated existence defined by ineffectual, conciliatory activism, to pursuit and attainment of their real objectives. Or, as he chose to express it, they would progress from "singing" to "living."

Söderman's statement speaks to a regard for music exposed at various points, and in various ways, throughout our case studies in this dissertation. It is an imaginary in which music does not constitute a vital element of the national people's essence. Here, the New Nationalist imperative to protect and project Swedish difference, and to respect and appreciate the difference of other peoples, does not impinge on music. Instead, other features—be they race, religion, language, or political and social values—define the national people. According to such imaginaries, to sing is not to be. Those nationalists who embrace this way of thinking nonetheless diverge as to why, and to what extent, music is external to the content of national difference. Further, while at times this regard for music is congruent with their broader ideological positions, others experience difficulty reconciling their specific views on music and their general attitudes towards culture, ethnicity, and identity. Music's exclusion from the realm of national traits does not necessarily render the expressive form unimportant to activists' cause. Rather, music here provides insiders respite from their self-imposed obligation to exhibit Swedish difference.

Nationalists with varied ideological allegiances endorse the notion that music is unsuited to function as a marker of national difference. Often, these sentiments entail a deconstruction of the notion of purity in music, the likes of which nationalists would seldom tolerate in questions of race, ethnicity, or culture at large. Consider the following exchange during an interview I had with nationalist singer,

Saga:

S: Looking back at music, everything originates from something, there are always influences in every music, because rap is a really new music style, it's a lot newer than reggae, and pop and stuff like that. It all originates from something. [...] Unless you play folk music, it is not Swedish, I mean pop is not Swedish. Rock is not Swedish, but I'm Swedish – I'm singing, I make it my version, but I can't claim that for my country.

BT: But is that a problem, to go out and play, and speak and be part of a movement that is aiming to preserve the Swedish.

S: With pop music? Well, then I think they'd have to ban all music styles except for, as I said, folk music. And I mean who listens to that? Seriously? Seriously? You do [referring to author]? [laughs] No offence (Interview, Saga and Dennis, July 28, 2011).

Music, according to Saga, is a domain defined by mutual exchange and influence, and is therefore resistant to agendas of purity and isolation. Swedish folk music seems an exception to this scheme. But because so few people enjoy this genre, it need not be taken into consideration. Notwithstanding her thoughts on folk music, Saga's description of music as being thoroughly fluid and always open to redefinition—as never containing any distinct, unchanging essence—places her close to the conceptual framework many nationalists claim to oppose. In one sense, it is a denial of the existence of the distinctly Swedish. In another sense, it is a statement that the Swedish is undesirable and insufficient.

Whereas, for insiders like Saga, undermining music's role as a marker of Swedish difference appears unproblematic, for others, doing so sits uneasily with their wider ideology. We can find an example of the latter in my interview with cultural nationalist Linus Bylund. Bylund is Political Secretary for the Sweden Democrats and co-author of the party's two "election songs" produced for the 2006 and 2010 national parliamentary campaigns. Each of these songs followed a basic pop format, with light drums, guitars, smooth vocals, and catchy, upbeat melodies. Like Nordic Youth's reggae song, these election songs were also aimed at attracting new participants and breaking with the previous molds for nationalist music making. But given that the Sweden Democrats also aim to promote Swedish music, I asked Bylund about the style of his songs. His response, where he refers to popular 1960s, 70s, and 80s, singer songwriter Cornelis Vreeswijk, followed a progression similar to Saga's. However, as we continued to speak, his confidence in his positions began to waver.

BT: I was thinking about the election song, is it important that the music itself is Swedish?

LB: I guess it isn't. Like, it is hard to say what is and isn't Swedish in terms of music, modern music that is. Cornelis Vreeswijk, he used a fair amount of old folk twists, but it was still a modern guitar by a Dutchman – and that is very Swedish today. I see Cornelis' songs as being very Swedish. And he captured a lot of – he was very Swedish in his soul, apparently, because he captured a lot of that melancholy [...] And therefore it is very hard to say what in modern music is Swedish. You can't really say that about any music – modern – because even if we say that 'we are now being globalized,' in the world of music, globalization has been going on since the 1600s, 1500s. I mean a symphony, a melody written by someone in Austria or someone in Tokyo, it isn't certain that there will be a big difference. [...] But, for me, it is really unimportant, because that type of music – but, it isn't unimportant – but – I

can't think of any music genre that would be impossible to use (Interview, Linus Bylund, May 24, 2012).²⁹⁰

Exchange the words “Swedish culture” or “Swedish people” for “Swedish music” in Bylund’s statement, and you will have a classic example of the argumentation nationalists of all stripes rage against: Were a prominent non-nationalist public figure to say ‘[I]t is very hard to say what in modern [culture] is Swedish. You can’t really say that about any [culture],’ it would most certainly appear in nationalist blogs and magazines followed by words of condemnation. It would be treated as yet another example of elites’ efforts to deny and erase Swedishness. Perhaps sensing this potential conflict, Bylund hesitates towards the end of this statement. And while affirming that he is open to using any kind of music for his activism, he seems to retreat from the statement that musical style is not important. As we continued our conversation, however, he expanded his justification for his own musical creations. Again, this justification parallels Saga’s:

BT: Those who were very upset by the reggae song – Nordic Youth’s – they thought that the song writers have betrayed Swedishness, because they had said, ‘no, what is Swedish isn’t enough.’

²⁹⁰BT: “Jag tänkte på vallåten, är det viktigt att själva musiken är svensk?”

LB: “Det är det väl inte. Alltså, det är svårt att säga vad som är svenskt och inte när det gäller musik, alltså modernare musik. Cornelis Vreeswijk, han använder ganska mycket gamla folkslingor, men det var fortfarande en modern gitarr av en holländare, och det är väldigt svenskt idag. Jag ser Cornelis sånger som väldigt svenska, och han fångade mycket av - han var ju väldigt svensk i sin själ, uppenbarligen, eftersom han fångade mycket av det här vemodet, kanske inte alltid jätteglad men, ah, jag vet inte - en del sorg inblandat i glädje, och det är väldigt svenskt. [...] Och därför är det väldigt svårt att säga vad av modern musik är svensk. Det går egentligen inte att säga om någon musik, modern, eftersom, även om vi kanske säger nu att vi håller på att bli globaliserade - i musikvärlden har globalisering pågått sedan 1600-talet, 1500-talet. Jag menar, en symfoni, en melodi skriven av någon i Österrike eller någon i Tokyo, det är inte säkert att det blir någon större skillnad. Men däremot, vill vi [i Kopröga] gärna bejaka en del folkliga delar i vår musik. [...] Nej, men, för mig är det egentligen oviktigt, för att, den typen av musik - eller inte oviktigt heller, men, jag kan liksom inte se någon musikgenre som skulle vara omöjlig att använda.”

LB: Yes, I can accept that point, but then I would want to know what you would do instead. Because in that case it is nyckelharpa and flute, if you want to be very strict (ibid).²⁹¹

Here, Bylund shifts to accept the notion that some music is essentially Swedish.

However, he also insinuates that using Swedish folk music to produce public campaign songs, like the Sweden Democrats' election songs or Nordic Youth's debut song, was unrealistic. After our taped interview had ended, we continued to talk about the attacks on Nordic Youth's reggae song. I described how one critic had compared that organization's actions to former Social Democrat Prime Minister candidate Mona Sahlin and her statements that Swedes have no culture of their own and need importation. When phrased in this way, Bylund paused, and said, with more earnestness than before, that he agreed with that criticism.

Bylund thus seemed somewhat discontent with his earlier statement that musical style did not matter in nationalist campaigning. He seemed open, in other words, to the possibility that music should be included among the target items in nationalists' efforts to preserve Swedishness. We may be tempted to attribute both his and Saga's dismissal of Swedish folk music wholly to these activists' interest in reaching new audiences and recruiting new sympathizers—to metapolitics. But were this their only motivation, they would not have needed to deconstruct the notion of pure music genres. What the above examples instead suggest is that these nationalists tolerate a degree of cosmopolitanism in music that they reject in other

²⁹¹BT: "De som blev väldigt upprörda över reggaelåten - Nordisk Ungdoms - de tyckte att låtskaparna, att de hade typ svikit det svenska, för att de hade sagt att, 'nej, det svenska duger inte.'"

LB: "Ja, jag kan ta den poängen, men då skulle jag vilja veta vad man skulle göra istället. För i så fall är det nyckelharpa och flöjt då, om man ska vara väldigt strikt."

domains, even though, in Bylund's case, this instinct simultaneously appears problematic.

Another example of music's exclusion from nationalist campaigns for Swedish difference came following the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest—an annual, televised competition among countries throughout Europe and bordering regions. Sweden won the 2012 contest with its entry “Euphoria” by the singer Loreen. “Euphoria” is an electro pop dance piece that, like most entries from Sweden in the past, was sung with English texts.

Shortly after “Euphoria” was announced as the contest winner, viewers in Sweden began celebrating the victory on Facebook. Sweden Democrat Björn Söder saw such a Facebook post celebrating Sweden's victory, and he responded with the comment, “Sweden?” Word of the post spread to Swedish mainstream media, and various voices accused Söder of racism: The singer Loreen, whose real name is Lorine Zeineb Nora Talhaoui, was born in Sweden to Moroccan immigrants. Additionally, during her stage performance at the contest, she was backed by African-American dancer, Ausben Jordan. Because of this, when non-nationalist commentators saw Söder's post, they alleged that he was referring to the ethnicity of those performing “Euphoria”—that the performers' ethnicity rendered the performance non-Swedish in his eyes. Söder responded to such attacks through radio interviews and the following written statement:

[The Eurovision Song Contest], which ended yesterday with the Swede Loreen's victory, is not a competition I personally care about. When it comes to the competition, I think it is regrettable that, these days, it is unusual for the entries to be performed in the country's own language, and that the competitions' earlier function as a display of Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity has been lost. Entries are becoming more similar. It was against

that background, as well as the costs facing the country hosting the event,²⁹² that I made my statement in social media yesterday.²⁹³

Söder claims that, rather than reacting to the lack of ethnic Swedes on stage, he opposed the fact that the lyrics were not sung in Swedish. It was the song's linguistic profile that defined it as non-Swedish. In the statement above, he additionally ties his preference for pieces performed in Swedish to a larger interest in preserving linguistic diversity in Europe. However, not in this or any other statement did Söder comment upon the nature of the music in "Euphoria." Given the music's standard pop character, claims of musical homogenization and non-Swedishness were available to him. But he did not see the lack of musical Swedishness in "Euphoria" or musical diversity in the contest as a whole as distasteful or concerning.

Music thus occasionally forms an arena where nationalists depart from their broader ideological convictions. This is true, not only for those activists who otherwise pursue an agenda of promoting and embodying Swedish difference, but also, in another sense, for cultural nationalist Sweden Democrats who avow their distance from race and ethnonationalism. As we saw in Chapter 2, members of this party listen to ethnonationalist and anti-Semitic music, particularly the groups Fyrdung and Svenska Ungdom. Further, throughout my research, I have encountered a handful of individuals in the Sweden Democrats who listen to rapper

²⁹² The home country of the winning entry hosts the event the following year. Thus Söder was referring to the fact that Sweden will host the contest in 2013.

²⁹³ "ESC som igår avslutades med svenska Loreen som segrare är ingen tävling som jag som person bryr mig om. När det kommer till ESC som arrangemang tycker jag att det är tråkigt att det numera är ovanligt att bidragen framförs på ländernas egna språk och att tävlingens tidigare funktion som förmedlare av Europas kulturella och språkliga mångfald därmed till stor del har gått förlorad. Bidragen går mot att bli allt mer likriktade. Det var mot den bakgrunden, samt de kostnader som möter arrangörslaget, som jag uttalade mig på sociala medier under gårdagen." Available online, accessed August 24, 2012, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/bjorn-soder-i-blasvader-om-loreens-svenskhet>.

Zyklon Boom. In Chapter 2 we saw Mattias Karlsson's explanation for such behavior: He claimed that the lack of cultural nationalist music in Sweden forces his ideological partners to seek out music in ethnonationalist circles.

These Sweden Democrats are willing to venture into ethnonationalism via music. Party members also consume online media and scholarship produced by ethnonationalist forces—particularly writings by identitarians. But while they tolerate such border crossing in music and intellectual literature, they would typically be unwilling to make this leap in other domains. For example, Sweden Democrats would not join in a street demonstration held by the militant neo-Nazi Swedish Resistance Movement on the grounds that, while they opposed the Resistance Movement's race nationalism and anti-Semitism, they share in its opposition to immigration, and could therefore demonstrate with them in solidarity.

These are not the only instances where nationalists allowed music to escape their stated ideological programs. In Chapter 2, we saw how the white power music magazine *Nordland* faced criticism from its readers for promoting music that espoused violence and endorsed the Holocaust as historic fact. In response to such criticisms, editors at the magazine responded curtly:

First of all, you should not treat music as political propaganda that always is 100% correct. We must remember that even the artistic part remains in music (1997, no. 9).²⁹⁴

The editors here grant art the right to follow its own creative program. Accordingly, white power music, itself an art form, had license to stray from the ideological

²⁹⁴"För det första ska man inte betrakta musiken som politisk propaganda som alltid är 100 procent korrekt. Vi måste tänka på att även den konstnärliga biten återfinns i musiken."

guidelines of the magazine and the nationalist scene.

Nationalists today similarly claim that music's status as a form of free expression hinders attempts to shape, not only its production, but also its consumption in the scene. Such a sentiment is reflected in the following statement from Nordic Youth activist, Andreas Nyberg. I asked Nyberg what music people would listen to in his ideal society. He replied by rejecting the terms of my question:

We don't want to see a society where there are tons of prohibitions, instead, maybe we would like to justify for people why it is good to listen to something in particular. But music is something personal, you can't really influence it. [...] You can't say to people, 'you can't listen to this type of music,' because music is so incredibly personal. Maybe you listen to like one type of music, maybe just a few bands, while others listen to all sorts of artists and bands. So you can't enact such an agenda, it would be incredibly negative for the thinking person (Interview, Andreas Nyberg, July 4, 2011).²⁹⁵

Whereas the editors of *Nordland* defended bands that produce nationalist music, here, Nyberg defends the ability of individuals, even presumably nationalists, to listen to any type of music. According to him, musical taste lies beyond the reach of social engineering. It is, as he puts it, a phenomenon of personal taste antithetical to the type of mass organization and standardization Nordic Youth seeks in ethnic politics.

The sentiments Nyberg expresses in the above statement are not uncommon among other, principally younger, activists. They appear in the following excerpt from my interview with National Democrat activist, and leader of the think tank

²⁹⁵ "Vi vill inte se ett samhälle där det är en massa förbud mot saker, utan kanske vi motiverar för människor varför det är bra att lyssna på en viss sak. Men musik är någonting individuellt, det går ju liksom inte att påverka. [...] Det går inte att säga till människor att de inte kan lyssna på den här typen av musik, för musiken är så oerhört individuell. Man lyssnar kanske typ till en typ av musik, kanske bara ett fåtal band, medan andra lyssnar till alla möjliga artister och band, så det går inte att genomföra ett sådant beslut, det skulle vara oerhört negativt för den individuella tänkande människan."

Swedish Opposition [Svensk Opposition]²⁹⁶, Rasmus Gårdebrink. I posed the same question to Gårdebrink that I did to Nyberg. Gårdebrink's initial response was quite similar to Nyberg's, though he goes on to qualify his position:

It is not my job to decide what music people should listen to, that is up to each individual to decide. That doesn't mean that I do not consider some music unhealthy and despicable.

To respond to your question, I would hope that no Swedes listened to unhealthy music that spits upon themselves and leads them into the gutter. That is, music that describes narcotics, consumerism, disrespect to women, and hostility to their origins. In a nationalistic society, I think that it is natural that people avoid music with that type of message.

The music that I wish all Swedes listened to could be any type of music, as long as it is healthy. Everything from dansband on the dance floors and folk music in the barns, to hardcore at the gym and ballads for laid-back evenings. But then I would like, in contrast to today, to hear pro-Swedish music in public. Music with lyrics that lift up the positive aspects of our people, our history, our nature, and our place in the world. Further, I would like it if people sang more together, especially nationalists (Interview, Rasmus Gårdebrink, September 5, 2011).²⁹⁷

At first, Gårdebrink appears to, like Nyberg, reject my question. But he moves to express his hope that individuals will chose to listen to music with lyrical messages in line with nationalist values.

²⁹⁶ Not to be confused with the organization with the same name founded by 1940s Nazi sympathizer Per Engdahl.

²⁹⁷ "Det är inte min uppgift att avgöra vilken musik som människor skall lyssna till, utan det är upp till varje individ att bestämma. Detta betyder dock inte att det finns musik som jag anser vara både osund och förkastlig. För att tillmötesgå din frågeställning så skulle jag önska att inga svenskar lyssnade till osund musik som spottar på dem själva och drar dem i smutsen. Alltså musik som handlar om narkotika, prylhets, kvinnoförnedring och fientlighet mot deras ursprung. I ett nationalistiskt samhälle så tror jag att det faller sig naturligt att människor väljer bort musik med den sortens budskap. Den musik som jag önskar att svenskar lyssnade till skulle kunna vara vilken musik som helst, så länge som den är sund. Allt ifrån dansband på dansbanorna och folkmusik på logarna till hardcore på gymmet och ballader på myskvällarna. Sedan så skulle jag, till skillnad från i dag, vilja lyssna till Sverigevänlig musik i det offentliga. Musik med texter som lyfter upp det positiva med vårt folk, vår historia, vår natur och vår plats på jorden. Dessutom så skulle jag önska att människor oftare sjöng tillsammans, inte minst vi nationalister."

Examples like these—Nyberg’s statement in particular—provide insight into why some nationalists feel comfortable exempting themselves from the task of championing Swedish music. Music, according to such nationalists, belongs to a personal, emotional, and expressive realm that cannot be steered by ideology. In my experience, activists react in similar fashion when faced with the prospect of being Swedish in terms of religious faith. Though I have met a handful of nationalists who identify as believing Christians or Pagans—and consider that faith a token of their Swedishness—the vast majority tend to consider themselves agnostic. A common response when I ask them about religious faith is, “I want to believe, but I just don’t.” Perhaps because of this reason, most activism in religious matters, be it the Sweden Democrats’ advocacy of the Swedish Lutheran Church and opposition to Islam, or New Rightists’ celebration of Paganism, often deal with the social and cultural models allegedly tied to a religious faith—not the truth claims of the faith itself.

As we saw in Chapter 2, agents and organizations of reform in the nationalist scene have been framing music as emotional and irrational since the turn of the twenty-first century. Leaders of the Nordic Press and the Nordic League juxtaposed the broad spheres of literature and music, claiming that whereas the former equips activists intellectually, the latter inspires passion. Given the rising currency of intellectualism in the scene at the time, this opposition motivated some insiders to deemphasize music. Recall how skinhead activist, and current Party of the Swedes member, Björn Björkqvist, described music’s role in nationalism. In a letter to *Nordland* Magazine in 1997, he wrote

Music is and will remain a strong weapon in the fight for the white race's survival, but it alone is not enough. Music recruits new, emerging fighters, but it does not provide any ideological schooling. (1997, no. 6).²⁹⁸

Such nationalists typically spoke of music as a tool to recruit and rally rather than as a manifestation of Swedish essence. Nonetheless, by relegating music to the realm of the irrational, these voices provide a platform for understandings of musical taste and musical practice as involuntary phenomena.

Activists' tendency to not seek out Swedish difference in music likely also stems from the persistence of rigid race and ethno nationalism. According to such ideologies—which inform the platforms of a plurality of nationalist organizations—being Swedish entails inherited genetic traits. Though most of these groups seek the preservation of Swedes as a biological and cultural community, some tend to prioritize the former. This is clear from the fact that some nationalists, while aspiring to racial or ethnic purity in one's self and one's community, claim that a degree of cosmopolitanism is unavoidable in the realm of culture. Such a stance appears when, in response to a small number of criticisms against the use of English-language music in a nationalist promotional video, race nationalist and passionate anti-Semite Richard Langéen wrote the following on *nationell.nu*:

Most of what is around you is probably 'non-Swedish,' your computer, your tv, your clothes, the food you eat, etc. So take off all of your clothing, starve, don't move anymore in case you rub against something that isn't pure-bred Swedish.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸"Musiken är och förblir ett starkt vapen i kampen för den vita rasens överlevnad men det räcker inte med den. Musiken rekryterar nya blivande kämpare men den ger ingen ideologisk skolning."

²⁹⁹ Det mesta omkring er är förmodligen "icke-svenskt", er dator, er tv, era kläder, maten ni äter osv. Så ta av er alla kläder, svält och rör er inte någonsin mer, för ni kanske nuddar vid något som inte är renrasigt svenskt. Available online, accessed 09/24/2012, <http://www.nationell.nu/2011/11/02/tv-reklamliknande-film-infor-demonstrationen-den-10-december/>

Cosmopolitanism in music seems, to some nationalists, so unavoidable that one ought not bother transferring into it the purism they aspire to in other domains.

Race or ethno nationalism appears to enable cultural cosmopolitanism, not just among militant neo-Nazi groups like the Swedish Resistance Movement, but also among leading members of the comparatively less dogmatic Nordic Youth. For example, when asking Andreas Nyberg to defend Nordic Youth's reggae song, he said,

Reggae, it is not a part of Swedish culture, right? It doesn't have anything to do with it. It is something that came later. But at the same time, you must understand – My goal is to preserve the Swedes as a people, that is the most important. The country isn't as important as the people. And to get there, you have to try different [methods] (Interview, Andreas Nyberg, July 4, 2011).³⁰⁰

When he speaks of “the Swedes as a people,” he refers to an ethnic community. He does not refer to a political community dependent on a state (or country), or to a cultural community whose existence would be undermined by the spread of foreign music. In this sense, Swedes can listen to whatever they want, so long as they are ethnic Swedes.

A World of Musical Difference

In contrast with those voices mentioned above, other nationalists recognize and champion a distinct Swedish essence in music. Further, some of this advocacy follows an agenda that appears a musical translation of the New Nationalism: Just as activists seek to maintain a homogenous Swedish people for the sake of world diversity, so too do some nationalists motivate the preservation of Swedish music by

³⁰⁰ “Reggae, det är liksom ingen del i den svenska kulturen, den har ingenting med den att göra, det är något som kommit senare, men samtidigt så få man tänka att - mitt mål är att bevara svenskarna som folkgrupp, det är det yttersta. Landet är inte lika viktigt som att vara just folkgruppen. Det är det absolut viktigaste. Och för att nå ditt så måste man gå olika vägar, man måste prova olika saker.”

citing an agenda to protect musical pluralism throughout the globe. But among those for whom music constitutes an element of national difference, understandings of the relationship between music and the national people vary. Much of this contrast relates to insiders' stances on two issues: the extent to which music's essence remains constant throughout ethnic, cultural, and political transition, and the extent to which music may or may not spur changes in each of those realms.

Nationalists' attitudes towards these questions can be traced along a spectrum, ranging from those who imagine music in a purely reactive position relative to other social developments, to those who claim music forges new behaviors, sentiments, identities, and peoples. One example of the former position comes from advocates of nationalist reggae, particularly Nordic Youth member Andreas Johansson. In contrast with individuals like Saga and Linus Bylund, quoted above, Johansson accepts the notion of distinct Swedish music as legitimate. However, rather than tracing this distinction to a particular tradition—to a particular sound—he locates the identity of music in the ethnicity of those who produce and consume it. Recall the following statement he made on February 3, 2010 in a frihet.nu online forum devoted to reggae:

Swedish culture, according to me, is that which Swedes do. That is, if many listen to reggae in Sweden then it is a part of Swedish culture, assuming that it is ethnic Swedes who are listening.³⁰¹

³⁰¹ "Svensk kultur är enligt mig det som vi svenskar lever. Alltså skulle många lyssna på reggae i Sverige så är det en del av den svenska kulturen, förutsatt att det är etniska svenskar som lyssnar." Available online, <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>. Accessed 05/27/2011.

Though he diverges from Saga's and Bylund's broad rejection of "Swedish music," Johansson does appear to deny the existence of Swedish musical sound. If he is to consider a music Swedish, it is due not to that music's sonic structure, but to extra sonic features, like the ethnicity of its champions. Further, like Saga and Bylund, Johansson moves close to a conceptual framework that nationalists abhor. Whereas above we saw how these other activist musicians deconstructed the notion of difference, here, Johansson presents cultural phenomena as interchangeable. In step with New Rightist critiques of Marxism and capitalism, virtually all nationalists oppose the notion that individuals, cultures, and peoples are blank slates that can be filled with any meaning or essence, that, for example, any person can move to Sweden, behave in any way, and that they will have become Swedish. Along these lines, when Johansson's comments on music opened the door to potentially any cultural expression or behavior becoming Swedish, he received swift rebuke from fellow nationalists in the discussion forum (see Chapter 3). Johansson's thinking stands to redeem itself in these circles by pairing nihilism in music with rigid ethno materialism: an ideology where ethnicity holds the power to transfer identity to any expressive or behavioral practice. Were Johansson's position more widely acted upon, it would affirm Martin Stokes' assertion that, in music, "it is always the categories [Celtic, Swedish, etc.] and not the content that remain important" (1994:6).

Whereas Johansson argues that people can imbue music with identity, other nationalists make the opposite claim—that music can cause people to adopt new definitions of themselves, and that it commands the attention of nationalists for this

reason. This latter perspective prevails among certain members of the cultural nationalist Sweden Democrats. Unlike ethnonationalists, the Sweden Democrats assert that national identity is constructed: They believe that those residing in Sweden, both immigrants and non-immigrants, have a choice to become or not to become Swedish. Music, according to some ideologues, participates in that process, both by constituting the Swedishness that one assimilates into, and more frequently, by inspiring social actors to choose one identity over another. For this reason, ideologues like Sweden Democrat Mattias Karlsson argue that a Swedish Sweden requires Swedish music. Alternately, a Swedish Sweden is threatened by the proliferation of non-Swedish music. The following exchange from the floor of Sweden's national parliament (Riksdagen) on December 15, 2010, reveals Karlsson's thinking. The exchange is between Tina Ehn of the Green Party (Miljöpartiet) and Karlsson. Earlier in the debate, Karlsson accused all other parties, including the Green Party, of showing contempt for Swedish traditions, and of hindering immigrants' assimilation into Swedish society by funding immigrant expressive culture. Ehn responded:

Mr. Speaker! It feels strange to be attacked for not wanting to protect Swedish culture. [...] I have great respect for the fact that the Sweden Democrats think Swedish culture is important. You may of course think that. I myself enjoy dancing schottis med turer, and I enjoy eating blodplättar, kalvsylta, and pitepalt. I listen to folk music and think it is exciting. I have a background in Swedish farming, and have worked with cultural landscape. A lot of things are important.

What I do not understand is when you talk about human beings' right to an identity. How are we supposed to stand up for people who come here and their right to an identity when you will take away that understanding between identities?

My belt is from Cuzco in the Peruvian Andes. I visited a textile school there where they work with dyeing. Because I've been dyeing in Sweden it was easy to communicate. Exchanging culture and understanding each others' varied means of dealing with culture is interesting and very important for creating understanding. But instead you want to cut back global culture, cultural diversity, and understanding between cultures (Culture, Media, Faith Organizations, and Leisure, proposition 2010/11:1).³⁰²

In other words, Ehn argues not only that immigrants have a right to maintain their difference inside of Sweden, but also that allowing immigrants to perpetuate their cultural practices will facilitate communication and harmony between groups. Karlsson's rebuttal avoids talk of immigrants' rights to difference, and instead challenges Ehn's enthusiasm for promoting immigrant expressive culture in Sweden.

Mr. Speaker! What Tina Ehn and many others do not seem to understand is that there is a link between seemingly harmless habits, practices, and traditions, and identity, and with that also foundational norms and values. It is because one sees her or himself as belonging to another nationality than the Swedish that they begin to sympathize with religious movements in the Middle East, for example, which leads to problems.

For how many generations will multicultural policy continue? Shall we keep saying to fourth and fifth-generation immigrants that they have another culture, another history, another language and another background, and that we will invest in strengthening it? How then can we compromise? How should we approach those cultures that Swedes have difficulty coexisting with? Shall we say that it is ok to hit your wife every other day so as not to upset fundamentalist Muslims?

³⁰² "Herr talman! Intressant att bli påhoppad för att man inte vill värna den svenska kulturen. [...] Jag har stor respekt för att Sverigedemokraterna tycker att den svenska kulturen är viktig. Det får ni gärna tycka. Själv tycker jag om att dansa schottis med turer, och jag äter gärna blodplättar, kalvskylta och pitepalt. Jag lyssnar på folkmusik och tycker det är spännande. Jag har en bakgrund i det svenska jordbruket, och jag har jobbat i det svenska kulturlandskapet. Det finns mycket som är viktigt. Vad jag inte förstår är när ni talar om människors rätt till identitet. Hur ska vi kunna stå upp för människor som kommer hit och deras rätt till identitet när ni vill ta bort den och förståelsen mellan identiteter? Mitt skärp är från Cuzco i Anderna i Peru. Där besökte jag en textilskola där man växtfärgar. Eftersom jag har växtfärgat i Sverige var det lätt att kommunicera. Att utbyta kulturer och förstå varandras olika sätt att hantera kultur är intressant och jätteviktigt för att skapa förståelse. Men ni vill tvärtom dra ned på världskulturen, mångkulturen och förståelsen mellan kulturerna."

We must understand that culture is something much more serious and foundational than only dances, food, and dyeing. It deals with basic norms and values and approaches to society, democracy, and human rights.³⁰³

In his rebuttal, Karlsson begins and ends by asserting a link between expressive culture, notions of belonging, and political sympathies. He suggests that when the state provides support to minority dance or handicraft organizations, for example, it encourages minorities to identify as non-Swedes and form allegiances with foreign communities and causes. In the middle of his statement, he then describes these foreign forces as being fundamentally incompatible with Swedish society.

Thus, music and expressive culture have the potential to support or undermine efforts to assimilate immigrants. As we saw in Chapter 4, Karlsson also believes that music can be used to Swedify ethnic and non-immigrant Swedes, to inspire in these individuals a self-consciousness and pride. Most official presentations of the Sweden Democrats' cultural policies, as well as in outsider commentary on those policies (e.g. Matsson 2009:106-107), describe this agenda to restore a collective Swedish identity as an effort to restore the country's welfare system. Should Swedes feel that they share an identity with their neighbors—according to this logic—they will be more willing to share their wealth. However,

³⁰³ "Herr talman! Det Tina Ehn och många andra inte verkar förstå är att det finns ett samband mellan kultur, i bemärkelsen ganska harmlösa seder, bruk och traditioner, och identitet och därmed också grundläggande normer och värderingar. Det är för att man betraktar sig själv som tillhörande en annan nationalitet än den svenska som man börjar sympatisera med religiösa strömningar i Mellanöstern, till exempel, vilket leder till problem. Hur många generationer ska den mångkulturella politiken fortsätta? Ska vi fortsätta säga till fjärde och femte generationens invandrare att de har en annan kultur, en annan historia, ett annat språk och en annan bakgrund och att vi ska satsa på att stärka den sidan? Hur ska vi då kunna kompromissa? Var ska vi möta de kulturer som svenskar har svårt att samexistera med? Ska vi säga att det är tillåtet att slå frun varannan dag för att inte förarga fundamentalistiska muslimer? Vi måste se att kultur är något mycket mer allvarligt och grundläggande än bara danser, mat och växtfärgning. Det handlar om grundläggande normer och värderingar och syn på samhälle, demokrati och mänskliga rättigheter."

Karlsson also seeks an identity renaissance among ethnic Swedes because of a parallel concern, one that has little to do with the welfare state or assimilation of immigrants, and one that has slipped out of the view of outside commentators. He described this concern in one of our interviews:

Were my worst fears to come true, that Swedes, those who see themselves as Swedes, become a minority in Sweden – it probably won't happen during my lifetime, or I will be very old when it happens – then I think it will be even more important to have a strong collective identity, because other ethnic groups who come to Sweden have either a religious or a national-cultural identity that is often very strong. If they cooperate with each other and try to advance their interests, then we have to do it too. If we just see ourselves as individuals we will be very vulnerable. We will have very little influence on the government and our own lives. We will have a hard time defending ourselves against assaults. In the United States there are pretty strong tendencies of what we call identity politics, where different lawmakers constantly need to be in touch with many different groups, link different groups to themselves. But [groups] couldn't have had that influence had they not organized themselves, and that organizing is based on a collective identity. Otherwise, they would not have united. If Swedes become a minority in Sweden, among all others – where there are maybe four, five big minorities, no majority population – then identity is absolutely central so that we can uphold some form of involvement and maintain basic rights. So I see that as part of my long-term strategy as well (Interview, Mattias Karlsson, May 20, 2011).³⁰⁴

At the same time as Karlsson pursues the return of the welfare state—the famed Swedish people's home—he is also bracing for failure. He envisions a day when

³⁰⁴ “Om mina värsta farhågor skulle besannas, att svenskarna, de som uppfattar sig som svenskar, blir en minoritet i Sverige - det kommer kanske inte hända i min livstid - eller, jag kommer vara ganska gammal när det händer - så tror jag att det blir ännu viktigare att man har stark gemensam identitet, därför att andra folkgrupper som kommer till Sverige har antingen en religiös eller nationell kulturell identitet som oftast är väldigt stark. Om de samverkar med varandra och försöka gynna sina intressen så måste vi också göra det. Om vi bara ser oss själva som individer så kommer vi bli väldigt sårbara. Vi kommer ha väldigt lite inflytande på makten och vårt inre liv. Vi kommer ha svårt att försvara oss mot angrepp. I USA finns ganska starka tendenser till, vad vi kallar för identitetspolitik, där de olika makthavarna hela tiden måste förhålla sig till en mängd olika grupper, [måste] knyta olika grupper till sig. Men de hade inte kunnat ha det där inflytandet om de inte hade organiserat sig, och deras organisering baseras på en gemensam identitet, annars hade de inte gått samman. Om svenskar blir en minoritet i Sverige, bland alla andra, där det kanske finns fyra, fem stora minoriteter, ingen majoritetsbefolkning, då är identiteten helt central för att vi ska kunna hävda någon form av intressen och bevara grundläggande rättigheter. Så jag ser det som en del i min långsiktiga strategi också.”

Swedes in Sweden become one minority among others, albeit one oblivious of that fact, and therefore unable to mobilize for the promotion of its own interests.³⁰⁵

Karlsson's agendas, as well as those of like-minded cultural nationalists, treat expressive forms like music as being at most intertwined with his ultimate concerns. Dances, food and dying are here not ends in themselves: It is not musical or artistic diversity within Sweden that alarms him, nor a degree of musical homogeneity that excites him. Rather, his interest lies with ideas and allegiances these expressive forms inspire.

By treating music as only a means to a non-musical end, Karlsson echoes the thinking of activists like Nordic Youth's Andreas Nyberg and Andreas Johansson. Unlike Johansson, however, he nonetheless asserts the existence of inherently Swedish musical sound. We encountered these claims in Chapter 4 when he argued that herding music evolved in dialogue with the Swedish landscape—this music being suited to carry a sonic signal through the vast valleys and open spaces of northwestern Sweden. Further, Karlsson asserts, this connection to Sweden's natural world predisposes herding music to nourish a national identity that is characterized by nostalgia for the rural countryside.

Still other activists combine a belief in music inherently tied to the national people with a deemphasized role for such music. For example, also in Chapter 4, we encountered Norwegian white nationalist Thorgrim Bredesen's race materialist

³⁰⁵ Karlsson's experiences as a high school student in Växjö reverberate as he describes his fears for the future (see Chapter 1). Then, he also found himself in a social situation defined by solidarity among immigrant groups while Swedes remained fragmented, and thereby impotent. Then too, his solution was also to unify Swedes to compete with other groups for resources and social capital.

analysis of musical style. He claims that authentic, distinct Norwegian folk music exists, but that it is a by-product of a pure white Norwegian society. Musics, in other words, emerge organically in correlation with the racial composition of a society. Therefore, nationalists should not pursue activism in musical domains, but rather look for the return of Norwegian music after they have restored the national people's racial integrity.

Whether or not they believe that musical sound can have an essential link to the national people, most nationalists do not regard music itself as a target for their activism: Most do not, in other words, describe an inherent and independent value in the preservation of Swedish musical difference. However, a small minority in the nationalist scene departs from this position, and we encountered them in Chapter 4. Nationalists like folk music fiddler Marie Stensby and dancer Erik Alhem celebrated the existence of musical diversity throughout the world, and called on Swedes to contribute to that diversity by rallying behind Swedish music—Swedish folk music in particular. Though these activists occasionally tie folk music to other social agendas, they also describe their support for the genre as being part of a purely musical concern. Recall Stensby's statement from a P2 radio debate on October 17, 2010,

I love different cultures, and I want to hear the different national, regional, and local characteristics that exist. And I think that it is every country's responsibility to promote and give economic support to their folk music.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁶ "Jag älskar olika kulturer, och jag vill höra de olika nationala, regionala, och lokala särarter som finns. Och jag tycker att det är varje lands ansvar att stötta och ekonomisk stödja sin folkmusik."

Such statements reveal that, whereas most activists seek the preservation of Swedish cultural or ethnic difference, some carry this agenda into the musical domain. Further, such nationalists occasionally advocate a pure Swedish music without reference to additional political objectives. Stensby and Alhem appear concerned principally with the maintenance of Swedish musical difference and musical diversity throughout the world.

Though we may be tempted to interpret these positions as reflections of a separate strain of New Nationalist thought—an ideology that sees particular significance in musical Swedishness—such interpretations may be misguided. Stensby and Alhem are, by a wide margin, the outspoken nationalists most active in Swedish folk music and dance. Whereas various other activists celebrate Sweden's folk music scene, few can claim to routinely participate in that scene, let alone to the extent that Stensby and Alhem do. These individuals are insiders in both nationalist and folk music circles. And while their thinking is eccentric in the former scene, it is somewhat common in the latter.

A sizable number of folk musicians believe that Sweden has a responsibility to support its traditional music. Such voices typically speak freely about the need to preserve music styles and the virtue of some degree of musical purity. In my experience, such sentiments do not derive from any political orientation, but may instead appear throughout the generally left-leaning folk music community. Further, some individuals tie this agenda with a broader goal to make Sweden musically Swedish for the well being of Swedes and non-Swedes alike. Ethel Weislander's post in a Yahoo! discussion group from 2002 captures many of these sentiments.

[I]ncreased knowledge about our own culture gives less negative views on other cultures. Racism and anti-immigration sentiment are built largely on fear. If I don't know so much about my own culture, I feel less worthy and more insecure compared to other groups with stronger cultural identity. Insecurity breeds fear. Furthermore, many immigrant groups have a greater necessity of expressing their cultural identity since they are strangers in a strange land – no more peculiar than that we like to play Skåne tunes in Dalarna, for example. That is: the more we Swedes can be proud of our own culture, the more generous we can feel about other cultures!

This involves one other thing: If an ever-growing part of folk culture in Sweden becomes multi-cultural (that's the only thing you get funding for) the possibilities for us to strengthen our own identity as Swedes diminishes, and all the well-wishing multi-cultural endeavors I think can bring about some misdirected effects. Sometimes I get the feeling that 'just' Swedish folk music isn't fine or trendy enough, and that's not good. For anyone.

Support Swedish folk music! Make us proud, secure, and open to other things! (quoted and translated in Kaminsky 2005:220-221).

David Kaminsky rightly regards Weislander's overtures to anti-racism as being a tacit acknowledgement of the potentially problematic nature of her message—acknowledgement that her calls for (presumably ethnic) Swedes to discover "their" music, her championing of unfused Swedish folk traditions, and her allegations of funding agencies' favoritism to multicultural projects, could mark her as xenophobic (2005:221).

However, such rhetoric is somewhat common among folk musicians. This is especially true when considering the assertion that folk music is in some way the music of ethnic Swedes, and that Swedes' ability to function harmoniously in cross-cultural encounters will improve if they first become conscious of this music. For instance, as of June 16, 2011, Ingela Thalén—president of the Swedish Folk Dance Ring and former Social Democrat politician—was using the following signature in all of her official e-mails:

The Swedish Folk Dance Ring defends democracy and justice. We want to preserve our cultural heritage and do it with the conviction that all people are equally valuable and shall be received with respect for their distinctiveness. Secure in our cultural heritage, we can cooperate with culture from the entire world.³⁰⁷

By arguing for a musically Swedish Sweden in a world of musical diversity, Stensby and Alhem could be making a thus far uncommon extension of the ideology of New Nationalism. They could be carrying prevailing nationalist sensibilities into the musical domain. But while Stensby and Alhem would here be thinking oddly as nationalists, their statements are far less remarkable when we regard these individuals as folk music enthusiasts. It would appear that their ideology of music derives, less from an adaptation of New Nationalist thought, and more from an importation of values, rhetoric, and claims endemic to large parts of the folk music community. Such an explanation, in turn, underscores the current marginalization of agendas of musical Swedishness in the contemporary nationalist scene.

But while explicit calls for a musical New Nationalism are rare, nationalists' behaviors and interactions suggest that activists beyond Stensby and Alhem might be concerned with the Swedishness/non-Swedishness of actual musical sound. Such sentiments appear in the online forums devoted to Zyklon Boom, Juice, and the topic of nationalist hip hop. There, however, those voices most vividly devoted to the notion of Swedish musical sound were not hip hop's opponents—who often assailed the genre for its social connotations—but instead, a faction of its supporters. This faction sought to justify the use of hip hop in the national scene by indigenizing the

³⁰⁷Svenska Folkdansringen värnar om demokrati och rättvisa. Vi vill förvalta vårt kulturarv och gör det med övertygelsen om att alla människor är lika mycket värda och skall bemötas med respekt för sin särart. Trygga i vårt kulturarv samverkar vi med kulturer från hela världen.

genre, by presenting it as part of Nordic or European culture. Further, this indigenization focused, not on lyrical content, social connotations, nor on the ethnicity of hip hop performers or consumers, but rather on the genre's musical structure. Recall Nordisk.nu user "Bockas" who, on April 21, 2007 wrote:

[Y]ou can draw pretty strong parallels between creating rap and old ancient Nordic balladry, and if you have heard *rímur* (which I doubt), that is exactly what you hear – Icelandic old men who 'rap,' even without music, or by sitting and stamping the beat (that can be compared to 'beatbox' if we would like to). Another phenomenon in the world of hip hop, that also interestingly enough is represented in the Nordic culture, is 'battles;' that is, that you without preparing and in verse shall taunt each other in the cleverest way possible in front of an audience. There are many examples of these 'nidvisor,' for example, Lokasenna in The Edda is one big display of 'battle skills' from Loke's side.³⁰⁸

"Bockas" attempt to locate hip hop musical structure in Nordic traditions is carried further by user "Oliver" who on January 15, 2007 stated succinctly in a comment on motpol.nu blogger Oskerei's page,

[Zyklon Boom] is not 'rap,' but instead rhyming poetry, which according to European tradition emerged among British poets during the Middle Ages.³⁰⁹

We could interpret these indigenizing strategies as evidence of nationalists' disregard for musical structure. Having gone so far as to deem hip hop Nordic or European, these activists may now listen to hip hop guilt free. However, the ideas

³⁰⁸ "I övrigt så kan man ju dra ganska starka paralleller mellan uppbyggnaden av rapmusik och gammal fornnordisk skaldskap, och om du hört *rímur* (vilket jag tvivlar på), så är det precis vad du hör - gamla isländska gubbar som 'rapper', och det dessutom utan musik, eller genom att sitta och stampa takten (det kan vi jämföra med 'beatbox' om vi så vill). Ett annat fenomen inom hip-hopvärlden, som också lustigt nog finns representerat i den nordiska kulturen, är 'battles'; dvs. att man utan förberedelser och på vers skall smäda varandra på skickligast möjliga vis inför åskådare. Det finns åtskilliga exempel på dessa 'nidvisor', t.ex. så är Lokasenna i Eddan en enda uppvisning i 'battle skills' från Lokes sida." <http://www.nordisk.nu/showthread.php?t=269>. Accessed 02/19/2012.

³⁰⁹ "Japp, dessutom är ZB inte "rap" utan rimmad dikt, vilket enligt europeisk tradition uppfanns av brittiska diktare på medeltiden." Available online, <http://oskorei.motpol.nu/?p=349>. Accessed 02/19/2012.

expressed by “Bockas” and “Oliver” differ fundamentally from those of Saga and Sweden Democrat Linus Bylund. The entire exercise of indigenization reflects a belief in the potential Swedishness of musical structure. The very adventurousness of their effort testifies to a bracing anxiety regarding whether the music they consume is Swedish. Were musical structure irrelevant to their conception of Swedishness, there would be no need to attempt such daring, unorthodox explanations. These efforts testify to the fact that, while nationalists may not consume music with deep roots in Swedish society, some remain deeply committed to the idea that they do so.

In sum, among those nationalists who assert the existence of Swedish music, not all claim that Swedishness is coded in actual musical sound. Actors like Andreas Johansson argue that such identity is to be found in extra-sonic features, like the ethnicity of a genre’s consumers. Save those attempts to indigenize rock and metal musical structure (see George Burdi in Chapter 3), many Viking rock and white power punk and metal enthusiasts adopt Johansson’s basic conceptual framework. They may or may not believe that rock is part of a pre-modern Nordic music tradition, but they acknowledge that the community surrounding it is composed predominately of white Swedes.

Those nationalists who, in contrast, observe ethnic or cultural essences in musical sound can disagree as to which genres qualify as Swedish. Here we have seen how multiple nationalists regard Swedish folk music as essentially Swedish. It is through folk music that activists like Mattias Karlsson seek to remind Swedes of the existence of Swedish identity, and Stensby and Ahlhem seek to forge Sweden’s

contribution to a world of musical diversity. Further, it is through folk music that activists like user “Lennart B” on Nordisk.nu aspire to find a style where “the music itself, regardless of the lyrics, [...] can strengthen an ethnic consciousness.”³¹⁰ But other nationalists have argued for the existence of a Swedish, or Nordic/European essence in hip hop’s musical structure. Such moves included renaming artists like Zyklon Boom as performers of “rhymed poetry” rather than hip hop. Regardless of whether activists treat folk music, metal, or hip hop as inherently Swedish musical sound, all seek to limit this category to those musics that they imagine as having roots in a pre-modern Swedish society.

If not Swedish, than Nationalist

Though most nationalists may not think that the Swedishness they fight for contains a musical component, that does not mean that they see no political significance in music. This can be true even for those nationalists who admit they celebrate music that is inherently un-Swedish. We saw such claims in Chapter 3 from Nordic Youth activist Kim Petrusson. Petrusson listens to reggae, and when I asked him to justify his appreciation for this ostensibly non-Swedish music, he did not deny the existence of ethnic specificity in music, nor did he argue that reggae was in some way Swedish. Rather, he celebrated the music for, at times, advancing social and cultural conservatism, as well as for being distinctly black. As distinctly black music, Petrusson claims that reggae advances the New Nationalist agenda of promoting a world of difference. He says of reggae,

³¹⁰“där kan även själva musiken, oavsett texterna, på ett helt annat sätt stärka en etnisk medvetenhet.” Available online, accessed 05/21/2012, <http://www.nordisk.nu/showthread.php?t=269&highlight=zyklon+boom>

[I]t's black, plain and simple, but in its form it is an expression for ethnopluralism, like Nordic folk music (Interview, Kim Petrusson, August 10, 2011).³¹¹

Like Andreas Johansson, "Bockas," and "Oliver," Petrusson affirms the notion that particular musics belong to particular peoples. However, by embracing nationalism as a global cause, he frames his activism as one of promoting ethnic specificity in the most general sense, such that he is justified listening to non-Swedish music so long as that music belongs to another clearly defined, clearly separate people.

The opposite music, the music that Petrusson would likely exclude from his nationalism, is rootless music, music that belongs to no place and no people. Though Petrusson himself did not describe what this music would be, other nationalists do. These insiders speak of a third category of music beyond the Swedish and the non-Swedish. This category is defined as neutral, a musical territory that transmits no particular ethnic or political character. Most often, nationalists who speak of such music describe it as nondescript pop music. And whereas, in Petrusson's thinking, this music might be seen as running counter to nationalist values, other insiders see pop music as a domain receptive to their activism, especially metapolitical activism.

One example of this type of thinking comes from German nationalist, and Saga's boyfriend, Dennis. As Dennis and I discussed Saga's ability to appeal to an audience wider than that of white power punk acts, Dennis noted that her music, in contrast to virtually all other nationalist music, was light pop. He claimed that this distinction helped render her less offensive to outsiders and individuals on the

³¹¹ "[D]en är svart, kort och gott. Men i sin form ett uttryck för etnopluralismen likt nordisk folkmusik."

margins of the nationalist scene. Later, as we began to discuss nationalist rap artists, he offered further clarification of his views.

Now in Germany, we have nationalist rap. I will not hear it! That kind of music will never get in...it's black music. Rap – that's black music. Pop, it's everyone's music, that's the reason, when I say, that she is non-threatening (Interview, Saga and Dennis, April 11, 2012).

The notion that certain genres are “everyone’s music” surfaced, in greater detail, among apologists for nationalist reggae. One example comes from user “Peace” in the online nationalist forum Frihet.nu. On February 2, 2010, after first arguing for a type of musical autonomism with the claim that “pitches do not have [moral or political] values,” and after stating that music cannot be “‘Swedish,’ ‘Nordic,’ or ‘Multicultural,’” “Peace” qualified these claims,

There are of course different, particular styles that have historically been played in different countries, like our folk music, Irish folk music, or the Middle East’s jalla jalla music. These music styles [...] have rooted themselves in cultures for hundreds of years. I would have understood the strong reactions, and reacted just as strongly myself, had [Nordic Youth’s] song been of the jalla jalla type, like those howling Arabs from the Middle East. But there is a big difference between these classic cultural music styles and today’s. Modern music styles, like rock, pop, reggae, etc., that have existed a few decades, don’t have the same anchoring, but are instead quite open.³¹²

Contemporary popular music here appears ethnically, politically, and culturally uncommitted. The antithesis to such music is traditional folk music. And unlike Petrusson, “Peace” criticizes the embrace of musics that belong to other people.

³¹² “Sen finns det givetvis olika typiska stilar som historiskt har spelats i olika länder, som vår folkmusik, den irländska folkmusiken eller mellanösterns jallajallamusik. Dessa musikstilar [...] har ju dock rotat sig i kulturerna under århundraden. Jag hade förstått starka reaktioner och reagerat lika starkt själv om låten hade varit av jallajallatyp som de ylande araberna från Mellanöstern. Men det finns en stor skillnad mellan dessa klassiskt kulturella musikstilar och dagens. Moderna musikstilar, som rock, pop, reagege mfl som existerat ett par årtionden har inte alls samma kulturella förankring utan tvärtom, en enorm bredd.” Available online, <http://www.frihet.nu/forum/1421414548/1325828286.html>. Accessed May 27, 2011.

Dennis and “Peace,” as well as Petrusson, thus observe a bifurcation between those musics that have definite ethnic, political, or cultural associations, and those that do not. This thinking is also apparent in the quotes from Sweden Democrat Linus Bylund above, where he first declared all music to be unbound to any people, and then moved to think that some forms, like Swedish folk music, had established associations. From such a perspective, some, but not all musics constitute a domain where the imperative to practice Swedish difference is void. Indeed, part of the discussion of Nordic Youth’s “Imagine” (see Chapter 3) centered on whether reggae was an unmarked popular music, or whether the genre held unbreakable ties to a specific place, politic, and people.

Framed as a neutral medium, unmarked pop music also becomes ideal for a particular type of metapolitics. Those nationalists who create and rally behind projects like Saga and Frigg, as well as the election songs for the Sweden Democrats, follow a metapolitical model centered on accessing the most popular forms and mediums in society. It is a type of metapolitics opposite those that seek to implant nationalist sentiment in every arena of social life, however obscure or specialized. Daniel Friberg and the leaders of the Nordic League adopted this model when they started projects like Metapedia.org and Nordisk.nu. These projects were not part of a larger agenda to penetrate or recreate with a nationalist flavor every online information database or social networking site. Instead, they chose to copy those venues most important to the production of knowledge and the social contact in popular society: they chose to create nationalist-friendly versions of Wikipedia.com and Facebook.com. And just as this effort assumes that the mediums and the

structure of these sites holds no appreciable ethnic or cultural allegiances, so too do nationalists like Dennis consider pop music ideal to spread nationalism because it is so firmly entrenched in the mainstream.

Nationalists' appreciation for non-Swedish music can serve an additional political goal. As we saw in Chapter 2, an overriding aim of reformism has been to recast nationalists as normal members of society rather than extremists secluded in the margins. Activists would not be achieving this goal were they to exchange skinheadism for some new subculture. Instead, the truest contrast with subculturalism would come from nationalists adopting thoroughly unremarkable cultural behaviors. The process of rendering the scene mainstream would have its limits, however. Activists might be unwilling to endorse certain established institutions like the media and higher education, and many base their identity as nationalists on an alleged ability to look past the foolishness of the masses. But of all those social phenomena nationalists can turn to in order to mark themselves as mainstream, musical practice may be one of the most appealing. The reasons for this were presented above: Nationalists living in different eras, and espousing different ideologies see music and musical practice as residing beyond the boundaries of what may be steered by political and ideological engineering. Some further claim that it, as an art form, does not hold any noticeable racial, ethnic, or cultural essence. Because of this, nationalists can be mainstream in music, and most will not feel that they have betrayed their ideological convictions in the process.

The preceding three sections have summarized multiple ways in which nationalists conceptualize music and its relationship to racial, ethnic, or cultural

identity. Some claim that music lacks any essential link to identity, while others argue that music can have inherent racial, ethnic, or cultural associations. Still others claim that some musics are bound to particular peoples, while other musics have no such link. Nationalists envision disparate uses for music, often depending on which of the above positions they endorse. Music can provide a means of demonstrating reform—either by showing that an activist has united with their Swedish self, or by marking their lack of variance from mainstream society. Alternately, nationalists may use music to retain their pre-reformist tendencies, to transcend political and social boundaries within and beyond the national scene, and escape obligations to behave and identify in certain manners. In the concluding section of this chapter and this study, I seek to offer some generalizations about music's role across these various functions.

Conclusion

Being a nationalist involves formulating, articulating, and acting upon perceived differences between people and peoples. Some draw the boundaries of their target communities along racial lines, fighting on behalf of a pan-Nordic, Aryan, or transnational white community. Some instead champion an ethnic people, a collectivity understood as possessing shared biological traits, as well as a cultural heritage bound to the Swedish nation. Other nationalists may retain this nation-state-centered frame, but define their primary community as a cultural one, a community potentially composed of many races and unified through its adoption of traditions, behaviors, and values endemic to Sweden. And still others may base their activism on the promotion of smaller peoples, sub-national identity groups distinguished by their particular racial, cultural, and spiritual composite. Each of

these conceptual frameworks corresponds to another set of boundaries among nationalists, between race nationalists, ethnonationalists, cultural nationalists, and identitarians respectively. Nationalists typically also imagine a boundary between themselves and non-nationalist fellow Swedes, between the enlightened dissidents and the ignorant conformists.

We might expect that, to the extent contemporary Swedish radical nationalists use music in their activism, such use would be aimed at constructing and maintaining these various identity boundaries. Music frequently serves such a function in other subcultures and communities. Accordingly, the bulk of theory on the relationship between music and identity during the last two decades has rejected those models that relegate music to the position of reflecting established identities, and focused instead on the art form's ability construct new ones. Embracing the notion that identity is "a becoming, not a being (1996:109)," Simon Frith advocates this approach, arguing that music often participates in such ongoing processes of becoming.

Without doubt, music has played such a role in Sweden's radical nationalist scene. It did throughout the 1990s with the rise of Viking rock and white power music, and it still does today at events like Kuggnäs Festival. Musical practice in those subcultures serves to separate insiders from outsiders, and it is in part this function that has made the music a powerful recruitment tool. During the 2011 Kuggnäsfestival, the band Heidrun performed the Swedish national anthem. Most Swedes can sing by heart the first verse of the anthem, and a minority can sing the second verse. But few know that there is a third verse, let alone a fourth verse (just

as few Americans know that the Star-Spangled Banner has four stanzas). But at Kuggnäs, after the band had played the first two verses of the Swedish anthem, they stopped playing and turned the lights on the audience. Skinheads rushed towards the stage, and with their hands in the air, they boldly sang the third verse from memory—knowing that this was one of the only gatherings in Sweden where such a phenomenon could take place. Here, and in similar moments, nationalists used music to mark who was and was not an insider to their scene. Music here was helping maintain an identity boundary.

The same is true in some of the case studies examined here. Most notably, activists like Mattias Karlsson and Vávra Suk refer to folk music as an avenue towards constructing and projecting an identity as more authentic nationalists. Karlsson thought that a true nationalism ought to connect with the culture of the true Swedish people, and in order to link his party with this agenda, he began investing in folk music. Vávra Suk argued that true nationalists did not just dislike immigration, they also had to love Sweden. And as evidence that such a maturation process had occurred in the nationalist scene, Suk pointed to instances where activists celebrated folk music.

Most often, however, musical practice serves another function in the New Nationalism. It is a function also relating to identity, but one that is not focused on constructing, affirming, and maintaining an encompassing self-image. Rather, the model exhibited in most of our case studies, and in the discussions examined in this chapter, is one championed by scholars who argue that the identities accessed in musical practice can differ radically from those we experience outside of music.

Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh refer to this function as musical “psychic tourism” and contrast such experience with those that only confirm our existing senses of self (2000). Here, agents are able to escape their former identity and adopt a new one in music. Keith Negus and Patria Roman Velazquez take this claim a step further, and argue that, often, music allows us to escape identity all together.

Whatever identity might be gained through music is not a lasting one. They write,

There is a temporality and impermanence to musical experience that renders links to the identity of a person, collectivity, and a specific time and place in an extremely tentative way, unless we are assuming a very temporary state of ‘identity’ or sense of belonging (2002:143).

Whether nationalists are assuming a new identity, or eschewing identity all together, music can offer them an opportunity to part with key imperatives they place on themselves. Those imperatives include being thoroughly Swedish, or avoiding all association with ethnic or racial others. They may also include limiting oneself to cultural nationalism, and avoiding all forms of anti-Semitism and race-consciousness. Nationalists are willing to break these boundaries through music. This occurs when members of the Sweden Democrats listen to ethnonationalist or anti-Semitic music like Svensk Ungdom, Fyrdung, and Zyklon Boom. It occurs when nationalists listen to and create hip hop and reggae, or when they turn to pop music, not to unite with some clearly defined new pop community, but to paint themselves as unremarkable. And it occurs when, in music, nationalists adopt discourses problematizing and deconstructing the Swedish, discourses they otherwise loath. Though Sweden is no longer the leading producer of white power music, though the number of nationalist record labels, bands, and festivals have dwindled to almost nothing, music continues to allow nationalists to do and be things and they cannot

do and be otherwise. And it is for that reason that music has remained vital to Swedish radical nationalism.

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