Free Spaces, Collective Identity, and the Persistence of U.S. White Power Activism

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Drawing upon participant observation and interviews with white power movement (WPM) activists, this article explains how members materialize, communicate, and sustain white power identities under highly antagonistic social conditions. We emphasize the role of the movement's free spaces in movement persistence. In particular, we contrast the social ties and cultural practices that various types of free spaces in the movement both enable and inhibit. WPM members construct two main types of free space. "Indigenous-prefigurative" spaces involve small, local networks where political socialization, boundary marking, and other cultural practices allow members to participate in relationships that "prefigure" Aryan dominance. These practices are collapsed into otherwise benign, everyday activities in settings such as family homes, Bible study groups, informal parties, and crashpads, where members perform them in relative safety from social controls. "Transmovement-prefigurative spaces" offer opportunities to draw otherwise unconnected local actors and networks into broader webs of white power culture. Intentional Aryan communities, music festivals, and cyberspace connect individuals to extra-local movement networks which help reinforce solidarity and commitment to the WPM. These free spaces contribute to the persistence of white power activism by creating a bi-leveled infrastructure of spaces that support distinct kinds of network ties and practices to sustain collective identity.

Culturalist approaches to social movements emphasize the social construction of collective identity as an essential part of activism (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Collective identity refers to the actors' shared sense of "we"; it is around these perceptions of commonality and solidarity that actors mobilize (Calhoun 1993; Cohen 1985; Friedman and McAdam 1992; Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994; Klandermans 1997, 1994; Larana, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994; Melucci 1989, 1996; Mueller 1994; Pizzorno 1978; Snow 2001; Snow and McAdam 2000; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Touraine 1981). One area of considerable interest is the physical and social contexts within which members forge and sustain their sense of collective identity (Buechler 1990; Evans and Boyte 1992; Fantasia 1988; Hirsch 1990; Johnston and Snow 1998; Polletta 1999; Rupp and Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989; Taylor and Raeburn 1995). As Francesca Polletta (1997, 1999) observes, "free spaces" (Couto 1993; Evans and Boyte 1992), along with "abeyance structures" (Taylor 1989), "protected spaces" (Tetreault 1993), "safe spaces" (Gamson 1996), "sequestered social sites" (Scott 1990), "submerged networks" and "cultural laboratories" (Melucci 1989, 1996; Mueller 1994), "havens" (Hirsch 1990), and "spatial preserves" (Fantasia and Hirsch 1995), all describe small-scale settings that provide activists autonomy from dominant groups where they can nurture oppositional movement identities.

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While the free space concept is useful for highlighting the contexts where members develop movement identities, it remains unclear exactly *how* free spaces facilitate identity work (Polletta 1999). Some scholars suggest that it is mainly the structural isolation from control by the powerful that explains the role of free spaces in generating collective identities (Evans and Boyte 1992; Fantasia and Hirsch 1995; Hirsch 1990; Morris 1984). But, this "simply posits a 'space' wherein [identity work] occur[s], without specifying how, why, and when certain patterns of relations [and cultural practices] produce" (Polletta 1999:8) or sustain oppositional cultures in free spaces. Polletta (1999) proposes that we recognize that different *types* of free spaces play different *roles* in mobilization. To concretize this idea, she surveys prior scholarship on free spaces and identifies three general types—indigenous, transmovement, and prefigurative—which, she argues, are effective in different ways for mobilization.

Although useful, this schema is limited in two ways. First, prefigurative politics—i.e., practices and relationships that model the society a movement seeks to build—is not necessarily a quality constituting an autonomous free space type, but can be understood as a continuous quality of both indigenous and transmovement spaces and critical to sustaining collective identity in those spaces. Second, as she herself admits, the schema is limited because it is informed exclusively by research on left-wing, progressive movements (Pichardo 1997; Polletta 1999). In contrast, the role(s) of free spaces in "regressive," revolutionary right-wing movements remains largely ignored.

This article extends Polletta's formulation by examining free spaces in the U.S. white power movement (WPM) and seeks to understand their specific roles in enabling members to materialize, communicate, and sustain collective identity. Drawing primarily upon observational and interview field data gathered on WPM activities between 1996 and 2003, we contrast the different social ties and cultural practices that various types of free spaces both enable and inhibit. We also describe how these spaces contribute together to enhance movement persistence. Specifically, we observe two types of prefigurative cultural spaces that draw upon indigenous and transmovement networks. "Indigenous-prefigurative" spaces are small, locally-bound, interpersonal networks where members engage in political socialization, boundary marking, and other cultural practices which create prefigurative Aryan relationships. Many of these practices are relatively hidden as otherwise unexceptional, mundane activities performed in private settings such as families and homes, Bible study groups, and crashpads. Local in reach and scope, indigenous-prefigurative spaces cannot alone provide the network connections activists require to maintain their culture beyond the bounds of small local networks. In contrast, the "transmovement-prefigurative space" draws these otherwise unconnected local networks into broader webs of white power culture and identity. Intentional Aryan communities, music festivals, and cyberspace link local activist networks and extra-local movement networks through both physical and virtual spaces, and provide participants with prefigurative experiences. By participating in these spaces, local activists feel they are not alone but rather part of a larger, ongoing movement culture, which helps reinforce their solidarity, faith, and commitment to the cause. These free spaces create a bi-leveled *infrastructure of spaces* that contribute to the persistence of white power activism by encouraging distinct network ties and activities through which members sustain collective identity. Maintaining this infrastructure of free spaces is critical to WPM persistence, for without the contributions of both free space types the networks that sustain activism would atrophy significantly—a point that has implications for social control efforts to dismantle white power networks.

The U.S. White Power Movement

The white power movement in the United States is generally portrayed as a "fragmented, decentralized, and often sectarian network" (Burris, Smith, and Strahm 2000:218) of over-

lapping groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Christian Identity sects, neo-Nazis, and white power skinheads (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997). The Klan is the oldest and, historically, the most influential organization in the WPM, with roots dating to late-nineteenth century Reconstruction. In the 1920s, Klan membership expanded to a high of between 1.5 and 5 million followers of the group's anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, social purity ideals (MacLean 1994; Moore 1991). The civil rights movement of the 1960s sparked another wave of KKK activism and violence (Chalmers 1987; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Wade 1987), which gave way to (mostly failed) attempts at creating a more polished, legitimate, politically viable Klan in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Klan leader David Duke's entry into electoral politics. Also, see Berbrier 1998 on WPM efforts at rhetorical legitimation). The roots of Christian Identity groups can be traced back to nineteenth century British Israelism, which claimed that the "true" Israelites were Anglo-Saxons and that Anglo Christians are God's chosen race (Barkun 1994). The U.S. neo-Nazi branch of the WPM is rooted in the American Nazi Party, which organized around Adolf Hitler's racial purity ideals. Umbrella groups such as the Aryan Nations (AN) have led Klan members, skinheads, and others increasingly to embrace Nazi symbols and ideology, along with Christian Identity theology, as compatible with their white power sensibilities (Burris et al. 2000:218). White power skinheads constitute the fourth, and newest, major wing of the WPM. The members are linked together by such cultural symbols and practices as shaven heads, white power music, racist politics, and a propensity for racial violence (Hamm 1993; Moore 1993).[1]

Although differences exist between these various wings of the WPM, they all agree on fundamental doctrines (Burris et al. 2000). Abby Ferber (1998) explains, they ". . . share common ideologies and goals and an overriding commitment to maintaining white supremacy. There are ongoing debates among the groups, but also sustained efforts to forge shared objectives . . ." (p. 49). Foremost is the commitment to white power and defending the "white race" from "genocide." The future world they envision is racially exclusive, one in which "non-whites" are vanquished, segregated, or at least subordinated to Aryan authority. This is the world imagined, for example, in the "14 Words" statement ("We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children") which has become a "master frame" (Snow and Benford 1992) for the movement (Dobratz 2001). More specifically, many WPM members are strongly anti-Semitic and support Aryan militarist nationalism which seeks to create and defend a white homeland. Members concretize this aim by wearing movement uniforms and symbols (Nazi military dress, KKK robes, national socialist symbols, etc.) which many envision to be parts of the standard dress in the future Aryan state. Members abhor inter-racial sex, marriage, and procreation, and idealize conservative traditional patriarchal family forms and community relations dominated by Aryan kinship. Women are celebrated for domesticity, particularly for rearing committed white power children who will become the early risers of the racial revolution and prominent members of the future Aryan nation. Although the everyday practices and rituals differ across the movement wings (e.g., young skinheads versus veteran Aryan Nations or National Alliance activists) it is this general ". . . agreement on basic ideas [which] is the glue that holds the movement together . . ." (Ezekiel 1995: xxix). WPM members develop these particular social relationships, rituals, discourse, and other practices that we discuss below, as prefigurative experiences of an anticipated Aryan dominated future. By concretizing this vision through everyday activities in the movement's free spaces, members create a powerful social context where they nourish their solidarity and commitment to white power ideals. To be clear, we are not implying that the WPM is without cleavages. As we explain below, members of different wings of the movement construct space in accordance with their specific ideological needs.

1. Not all skinheads hold white power beliefs. We refer only to those involved in white power activities.

A rich WPM culture endures despite the fact that overt white power activism is on the margins of contemporary politics and society.[2] Since the late 1950s, integrationist policies and multi-cultural ethics isolated the WPM by increasing the public stigma attached to racist ideologies and those who espouse them (Barkun 1994; Bennett 1995; Blee 2002; Diamond 1995; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Kaplan 1995; Wellman 1993). Although racist tendencies certainly persist in many forms and among many people (Feagin and Vera 1995), there are now "strong codes against the direct expression of racist views" (Billig 2001:270; Van Dijk 1992). Media accounts and some scholarly work intensifies the symbolic trivialization of WPM activists (Roberts and Kloss, 1979 [1974]) by frequently dismissing them as "buffoons," "wackos on the fringe," and "pathologically evil" (for similar arguments, see Aho 1990; Blee 2002; and Kaplan 1995). Simultaneously, state repression is strong. Infiltration by government agents has been a major concern of activists since the 1960s, when the FBI began the "White Hate Group Program" which included both overt (e.g., search and seizures) and covert (e.g., agent provocateurs, wire taps) strategies to subvert the groups (O'Reilly 1989). Non-governmental organizations (e.g., Southern Poverty Law Center, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Anti-Defamation League) also act as social control agents through infiltration operations and lawsuits, which have resulted in the bankruptcy of influential white power organizations such as the United Klans of America, White Aryan Resistance, and Aryan Nations (Southern Poverty Law Center 2000). Counter-movement demonstrations at white power rallies, marches, and other public events represent some of the most visible expressions of hostility and repression toward white power activism. Anti-racist groups typically mobilize much larger numbers for such events than white power factions (Blee 2002; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Kaplan 1995), and public opinion data indicates low approval ratings among Americans for the most overt racist activities of WPM members (Lewis and Serbu 1999).[3]

Because they are marginalized, WPM members face difficult choices about their willingness to communicate their beliefs publically and engage in activism. Many believe that expressing their ideas publically is risky as it might disrupt their personal relationships with non-WPM members (e.g., neighbors picketing activist residences once beliefs are revealed) and result in job loss (Bjorgo 1998; Blee 2002, 1996; Kaplan 1995; Southern Poverty Law Center 2001a). More than half the participants we interviewed attribute their loss of a job to an employer's opposition to their white power beliefs. While we cannot verify those claims, it is clear that the activists *perceive* themselves to be severely repressed and almost all our informants acknowledged they were worried about losing their jobs, being shunned, or even put under surveillance and arrested, if their activism became known (for similar findings, see Blee 2002; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997:23). As Blee (2002) notes, many activists now see "those who use overtly racist symbols in public or who adopt an exaggerated racist style

2. The WPM was popular in earlier periods, especially the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s. For more on early white power activism, see Chalmers 1987; Moore 1991; and MacLean 1994.

3. Ferber (1998) argues that mainstream racial thinking shares some important assumptions with white supremacist ideology. We agree, but there are some important distinctions to be made. As Blee (2002) explains, "the difference between everyday racism and extraordinary racism is the difference between being prejudiced against Jews and believing that there is a Jewish conspiracy that determines the fate of individual Aryans, or between thinking that African Americans are inferior to whites and seeing African Americans as an imminent threat to the white race" (p. 76). Moreover, notions of an impending "race war," a "Zionist Occupational Government," and the current "genocide of the white race" are core beliefs that are widely shared by WPM adherents, but have little salience with the general public (Blee 2002; Kaplan 1995). Indeed, as one white power activist explains, part of the WPM goals is, "to wake people up. We're trying to make people realize who they are and the place that they need to take in their society" (qtd. in Blee 2002:67). Perhaps the most telling indication of the WPM's marginalization from the mainstream is the tendency among "everyday" racists to disavow and disassociate themselves from the Klan, skinheads, neo-Nazis, and other openly racist groups (Blee 2002; Feagin and Vera 1995). "The paradoxical phenomenon of whites who claim not to be racist perpetrating racially harmful acts can be explained in part by the fact that 'racism' has come to be held in such opprobrium that few whites are willing to accept 'racist' as a personal trait" (Feagin and Vera 1995:13).

as movement novices . . ." (p. 167). Yet white power activism persists. Some studies even suggest a gradual growth in the total number of WPM organizations over the past decade, and rising membership in groups such as the National Alliance, World Church of the Creator, and Hammerskin Nation (Anti-Defamation League 1998; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997:25; Southern Poverty Law Center 1999, 2002). The recent growth of white power music during the late 1990s (Center for New Community n.d.; Southern Poverty Law Center 2001c) also suggests an enduring white power movement culture. Our own data also confirm the persistence of WPM networks and a rich, albeit hidden, activist subculture. At first glance, such persistence seems to contradict expectations. Repression, stigma, and fear ought to raise the costs of movement participation and diminish people's disposition to participate in it, especially when that repression is considered legitimate and warranted by most (Della Porta and Diani 1999:211). The crucial question then is precisely *how* white power activism persists.

Free Spaces, Collective Identity, and WPM Persistence

One useful strategy to explain the persistence of white power activism is to focus on the settings where members forge and sustain their movement identities. Lying at least partially outside the direct control of dominant groups, free spaces are environments where participants nurture oppositional identities that challenge prevailing social arrangements and cultural codes. Free spaces are critical for cultivating the social networks that anchor oppositional subcultures, as participants feel safer to openly express and enact their beliefs than in other settings (Larana, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994; Polletta 1999). The WPM persists largely because of the intense commitment, rich and variegated culture, and strong activist networks that members cultivate in the movement's free spaces. But to claim that free spaces are important for developing and sustaining collective identities in the WPM, or any other movement, does not explain much beyond the opportunities they provide for identity construction (Polletta 1999). As Polletta (1999:8) points out, furthering our understanding of free spaces requires a better sense of their various *subtypes*, their specific cultural and structural arrangements, and, we argue, their respective contributions to movement *persistence*.

Polletta (1999) provides a starting point for addressing these issues. Drawing widely from prior scholarship on free spaces, she distinguishes between three types of free spaces—indigenous, transmovement, and prefigurative—which differ by the type of associational ties that characterize them, and by the practices they support. First, indigenous spaces are comprised of dense ties among small, locally-based cadres of activists. Highly-integrated interpersonal networks provide strong solidary incentives and facilitate recruitment based on preexisting ties (Polletta 1999:11). At the same time, however, the local reach of these spaces limits their effectiveness in fostering connections that tie local activists to wider movement networks. For example, Polletta (1999) notes that while the Southern black churches in the U.S. civil rights movement provided early leaders, strong solidary incentives, and mobilizing frames that anchored local movement identities, alternate structures were required to draw locals into a broader coalition that could coordinate actions beyond individual locales (see also McAdam 1986; Morris 1984). Second, transmovement spaces draw together activists from across existing local movement networks, thereby facilitating contacts between them and providing newer activists exposure to movement veterans and other historical links to the movement (Polletta 1999:9). These are spaces where activists regularly congregate for training in organizing and protest strategies and solidarity-building events (e.g., Highlander Folk School in the civil rights movement or Belmont House in the feminist movement). The extensive network contacts members cultivate in transmovement spaces are important for linking isolated actors and local cadres into broader activist networks. Third, prefigurative spaces are settings where actors attempt to "prefigure the society that the movement is seeking to build by modeling relationships that differ from those characterizing mainstream society"

(Polletta 1999:11). Prefigurative action is critical for transformative social movements as it anticipates the ways and means of the new society they seek and incorporates those practices into movement spaces as, for example, did the egalitarian democratic relationships that prevailed in the New Left (Breines 1989). Other examples range from the women's only spaces of 1970's radical feminism to a broad array of social experiments including organic farms and alternative service organizations such as food coops, community credit unions, health clinics, and schools which have become some of the most enduring movement institutions from the 1960s and 1970s protest cycle (Polletta 1999:11–12).

Polletta's three-part schema is an important step toward distinguishing differences among free space types, as it gives significantly more analytic hold on understanding the distinct roles and effects of free spaces on mobilization. Yet, some issues are undertheorized. For instance, her rigid distinctions among free space types obscure the issues we highlight below—specifically, the ways that prefigurative practices may be tightly-coupled with indigenous and transmovement spaces, and what this means for movement persistence. By relegating prefigurative politics to a wholly separate *type* of free space, Polletta neglects the ways that prefiguration can play a critical role in cultural practices that occur in indigenous and transmovement spaces. This distinction reflects a longstanding tendency in social movement scholarship to separate cultural (or expressive) dimensions from structural dimensions of movements. As Steven Buechler (2000:209) points out, this separation often obscures more than it reveals about movement dynamics (see also Breines 1989). Instead, we should be exploring both the range of cultural expressions in movements and the interplay between their cultural and structural dimensions (McAdam 1994). If, as Wini Breines (1989:6) explains, prefigurative practices "create and sustain within the live practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that prefigure and embody the desired society," then these practices should be analyzed as part and parcel of the activist networks and activities in indigenous and transmovement spaces, rather than existing apart from them. Prefigurative politics recursively builds movement goals into the members' daily activities and movement networks in ways that symbolize who they are and what they want not just as an end, but as a daily guide to movement practice (Buechler 2000:207). It is important, then, to explain how members' prefigurative practices nurture, reflect, and sustain collective identity within both the dense, isolated activist networks of a movement's indigenous spaces, and in the transmovement spaces that draw members from across movement networks.

We focus on WPM free spaces to evaluate how the cultural practices that support them help *sustain* activist communities anchored in white power political identity and ideals. We find that prefigurative practices in the WPM cut across indigenous and transmovement spaces in ways not captured by the mutually exclusive categories that Polletta provides. While the degree of prefiguration varies across the spaces we observe, it is always present. WPM prefigurative practices include the communication of revolutionary racist discourse; the promotion of traditional patriarchal gender relations; participation in solidarity rituals such as cross-lightings and commitment ceremonies; and the wearing of racist regalia. WPM members envision each of these actions as facets of the future white power society they imagine—i.e., a racially-exclusive, male-dominated society centered around white militarist nationalism and celebrated in ceremonies and rituals. Thus, instead of the three discrete free space types described by Polletta, we see prefigurative practices collapsed in the WPM's indigenous and transmovement spaces (see Table 1). Whether such free space formations are exclusive to the WPM or other highly-marginalized reactionary movements, or are an overlooked dimension of many social movement spaces, is an issue we take up in the conclusion. For now, the crucial point is that the spaces we identify contribute to movement persistence by creating a bi-leveled infrastructure of free spaces in which prefigurative practices are woven into a variety of indigenous and transmovement spaces.

Table 1 • ***Free Spaces in the U.S. White Power Movement (adapted from Polletta 1999)***

	Character of Ties and Practices	*Role in Movement Persistence*	*Examples*
Indigenous-prefigurative	Dense ties, insular networks. Private, local narratives and practices that prefigure the specific white power visions/relationships active in the local network.	Reinforces collective identity through strong interpersonal ties. Opportunities to recruit through local networks. Sustains movement in varied locales.	Intergenerational family socialization, homeschooling, informal gatherings/ ritual parties, Bible study groups, skinhead crashpads.
Transmovement-prefigurative	Extensive ties, sporadically organized. Practices prefigure general WPM goals.	Network intersections that link otherwise isolated activist networks through physical and virtual spaces. Demonstrate WPM continuity to members.	Intentional Aryan communities, music shows, cyberspace.

Method and Data

Our analysis is grounded primarily in the ethnographic data we collected on a variety of white power activists and groups between 1996 and 2003. We used a multi-method approach (Snow and Anderson 1993) which included participant observation in a variety of settings and one to three hour in-depth face-to-face and telephone interviews with 56 WPM activists.[4] Of those, 14 were movement leaders and 42 were rank-and-file activists. We conducted 39 follow-up interviews with the primary movement contacts, for a total of 95 interviews. We also performed a content analysis of WPM texts such as newsletters, websites, Internet discussion groups, and radio broadcasts. In addition, we collected information about the WPM from public authorities such as law enforcement sources, research groups (e.g. Anti-Defamation League, Southern Poverty Law Center), and both print and broadcast media (newspaper articles and television segments).[5]

We conducted participant observation with Christian Identity activists in the Southwest, Aryan Nations activists in Idaho, and a variety of WPM participants in Southern California, including major leaders such as Tom Metzger (originator of the White Aryan Resistance), and several white power music promoters and band members. The range of events we observed with the skinheads in Utah and Arizona included 23 house visits lasting from one to three days, social gatherings (e.g., parties), other leisure activities (e.g., hiking), and various other forms of interaction and participation (e.g., court hearings). Additionally, we visited the

4. Of the 56 interviewees, 40 were with male activists, 16 with female activists. The activists' ages ranged from 15–25 years (n = 7), 26–35 years (n = 26), 36–45 years (n = 8), 46–55 years (n = 9), and 55 and over (n = 6).

5. Newspaper articles on the WPM were drawn primarily from the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, *The Spectrum* (St. George, Utah), and the *Las Vegas Review Journal*. Articles were selected through a structured, exhaustive search of the Lexus-Nexus database and microfilm indexes of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Las Vegas Review Journal* to 1985 using search terms such as skinhead, neo-Nazi, white supremacy, white power, and hate (including hate-crime, hate group, etc.). Other articles are drawn from data provided by watchdog groups (e.g., Southern Poverty Law Center, Political Research Associates). We also examined 48 white power movement websites.

Aryan Nations former headquarters on four different occasions for three to five days in length, which provided us with the opportunities to observe three Aryan Nations World Congresses, cross lightings and other Aryan rituals, a wedding, numerous prayer services, speeches, press conferences, marches, and rallies. Our contacts with Southern California WPM groups included two live website/radio broadcast productions, additional social gatherings, white power music concerts, and 21 home visits with activists ranging from one to four days.

We selected interview subjects through snowball and purposive sampling strategies which enabled us to access a wide range of activists, networks, and groups within the WPM. The sample included members of networks active in 18 states.[6] Specific organizations represented include White Aryan Resistance, Aryan Nations and local branches of Aryan Nations (AN), Hammerskins, National Alliance, Ku Klux Klan, Southwest Aryan Separatists (SWAS), and various smaller skinhead groups (e.g., Aryan Front, Bayside Skins, Independent Skins, L.A. County Skins, and Orange County Skins).[7] Our interviews focused on the types of activism individuals had engaged in, the movement strategies advocated within and across the groups, and the meanings activists attached to various types of movement participation. Participant observation and interviewing allowed for the close examination of a wide-range of political activism which is not available through sole reliance on secondary sources and movement propaganda (Blee 1996). We also analyzed secondary sources for evidence that would either corroborate or contradict the insights about the movement we gleaned through primary interview and observational data. Our multi-method approach allowed for triangulation across an array of data (Denzin 1978).

While our data is rich, it is not perfect. We encountered methodological difficulties which we mainly attribute to WPM members' preference for secrecy and, at times, for illegal activity. We relied on non-probability sampling due to the hidden character of the population (see Heckathorn 1997, 2002, for an alternate respondent-driven sampling approach for hidden populations). Entry into the movement's groups is difficult and we obtained many of our interviewees through introduction by our initial movement contacts. In addition, as the white power movement appears to be diversely structured with multiple centers and levels of activism, our generalizations about the movement will remain modest and tentative. At the same time, we accept Val Burris, Emory Smith, and Ann Strahm's (2000) remark that there do not appear to be sharp doctrinal cleavages across different factions of the movement and that there is a significant degree of ideological continuity among its various wings. Accordingly, we find that there are affinities across white power groups that allow us strong analytic hold on the nature and role of free spaces in the WPM.

Sustaining WPM Identity in Indigenous-Prefigurative Spaces

Indigenous-prefigurative spaces in the WPM are characterized by dense, interpersonal ties and insular, hidden networks where members reinforce their collective identity by participating in various prefigurative symbolic practices. We include here families and a range of small informal domestic gatherings, such as study groups, ritual parties, and skinhead crashpads, as the main settings where members reaffirm and transmit commitment to the movement's goals and discourage sympathy toward mainstream cultural codes. These settings share similar structural characteristics: they are small in size, exclusive, intimate, and rooted in enduring relationships—all qualities that encourage members to safely and openly express their radical racist ideologies. More concretely, many members see the family as one of the

6. The states are: Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

7. In the case of widely known white power groups, the names of the organizations and their representatives are left unchanged. In other cases, pseudonyms are used.

earliest means of racial socialization and thereby assign it a critical role in ensuring the persistence of white power identity across generations. Family and home constitute a space where parents unequivocally trace in-group-out-group boundaries and transmit white power sentiments across generations. Other types of informal gatherings provide a space where members enact prefigurative relationships that reinforce commitment and boundaries between WPM activists and nonmovement "others," and also recruit new members.

Family and Intergenerational Movement Socialization

That family plays a central role in political socialization in the WPM should not be surprising, as primary ties are generally fundamental to socialization. As Hank Johnston (1991, 1994) has shown, the intergenerational transmission of collective identity is essential for movement endurance in repressive contexts, and the control and anonymity available in the home ensures that identity work can proceed relatively unchallenged. Likewise, Richard Couto (1993:61) notes that when the chance of repression is high for overt resistance, identity work occurs "in carefully guarded free spaces, such as the family." The importance of the family as a free space vital to movement persistence is also clear to WPM activists.

> [The role of the family] is central, no doubt about it. You can't get anywhere without a solid foundation. The movement has to have stronger families to survive. If we can raise our children to be racially conscious and white families pull together, then maybe there's hope. It's really the only hope we have. (AN activist, 5/23/97a)

Naming children, and even pets, with symbols of Aryan ideology is one of the earliest means of instilling parents' vision of "racial politics" to their progeny. For instance, a skinhead parent we interviewed named his first-born son Hunter after a fictional character in William Pierce's white power fantasy novel of the same name. Hunter is a sniper who murders interracial couples and Jews to "cleanse" America and save the future of white civilization (McDonald [Pierce] 1989). In this case, parents have assigned Hunter a symbolic anchor in order to establish links between his individual sense of self and the collective WPM identity. Similarly, names associated with Nordic mythology are also common among our respondents. Examples include Valkyries (winged warriors of Nordic mythology), Thor (mythological Nordic warrior), Valhalla (Nordic heaven in Odinist mythology), and other names rooted in the "Aryan" word (e.g., Ariana). As a veteran white power activist explained:

> It's not gonna start a revolution or anything, but names are like a lot of other things, it's what they symbolize that's important. They tell you something about what's in a person's heart and they help remind us what's in our own hearts and what the future holds. It's kind of like the 14 Words, they may just be words but they're also a lot more than that. (Orange County skinhead, 8/20/02)

Embracing a collective identity requires merging the self with a wider set of shared attitudes and commitments (Friedman and McAdam 1992). Names that signify movement ideals not yet attained and prescriptions for future action can be exceedingly powerful when assigned to children who may carry out future actions in support of the heritage to which they are so overtly linked. Naming family pets with symbols of Aryan resistance further extends these symbolic connections. A SWAS activist boasted, "We [have] a full-blood German Shepherd. We named him Deutschland Glory, call him Dutch for short" (Interview, 1/17/99a). Like Hunter, the meaning of Dutch is not obvious to the uninitiated, but can be invoked as a symbolic referent of the WPM among family and in other situations where those meanings are openly supported.

Activists also establish family rituals which promote racial politics in their private family space. Before-meal prayers in Christian Identity families typically celebrate patriarchal family ideals, promote racial separation and the white homeland, and reveal expectations of an

impending race war. Members also use birthday celebrations and other rites of passage such as graduations, hunting trips, and commitment ceremonies to initiate children into adult white power groups and further link individual and collective Aryan identity. Birthdays are particularly infused with Aryan symbolism; cakes are decorated with swastikas, KKK images, and the phrases "14 Words," or "white power." Members also frame birthday gifts within an Aryan ideology when, for instance, they refer to toys such as G.I. Joe as "G.I. Nazis who will help save the white race" (SWAS activist, 3/6/98), or when they explain that gifts such as guns and camouflage are survivalist equipment essential for the race war. Relatedly, hunting trips are particularly significant rituals fathers use to educate their sons about an idealized Aryan vision of naturalism and about the need for survivalist skills in racial conflict.

Movement memorabilia around the home, such as pictures, posters, cards, newsletters, racist comic and coloring books, and movement uniforms (e.g., adult and children's Klan robes, T-shirts, fatigues), also reinforce political identity in unambiguous ways. Family members wear T-shirts emblazoned with Hitler, Nazi soldiers, hooded Klansmen, and insignia of white power music bands to signify their affiliation with the WPM. Also, photos or paintings of Adolf Hitler often hang on living room walls, and pictures of children wearing Aryan garb or photo collages of children surrounded by WPM insignia are also common. For instance, in a SWAS member's living room, a display of a newsletter showed his daughter's picture on the front page. He explained,

> This . . . is our collectors item. It has a picture of my daughter, we tell her she's a poster girl for the movement (next to the baby picture of his daughter on the front page, the headline read "Life—The White Choice"). (SWAS activist, 6/27/97b)

Like naming, children's pictures constitute frames of reference which parents use to reinforce their identification with the movement and, hence, to guide future political sensibilities. Similarly, at another house several Ku Klux Klan holiday cards were displayed, one of which read:

> "Have a White Christmas and a Jew-free New Year"
> "Wishing you all the blessings of this beautiful holiday season." (SWAS activist, 6/28/97c)

Articulating a racial discourse, such messages are a form of bricolage whereby members tinker with dominant objects, practices, and ideas in order to subvert their traditional meanings and impose the central WPM ideological beliefs on them (Hebdige 1979). Like naming, these symbols are used by members to establish a radically racist, Aryan dominant setting to aid intergenerational socialization of WPM children.

The most systematic approach to political socialization engineered in WPM families is homeschooling, which allows WPM families both direct control over the dissemination of white power ideology and practices and the suppression and/or delegitimation of alternative worldviews. Women are typically responsible for the duties of homeschooling as part of their idealized domestic role. All those we spoke to enthusiastically saw the rearing of ideologically-aligned children as their essential contribution to sustaining the movement. Discussion on the Stormfront listserv is indicative of the general sentiment toward homeschool:

> Education is a key component to our survival, however, the conventional ideas of education, i.e.: one provided by an institution such as college or university is not sufficient, because of the liberal, Jewish bias that is imposed on most learning materials, as well as assignments, with questionable content. (Stormfront.org, listserv, 1/7/01)

According to this view, "proper education" requires free spaces where adults can teach children WPM ideals and negate multicultural ones.

> For our children to be properly educated we must have places to teach them the accomplishments of white Europeans, and the greatness of their cultures, survival skills, morality, and the importance of staying true to one's race, because almost all of these will be ignored or discouraged in [secular]

> schools. If we don't take the time to show them the way, they will be brainwashed by ignorant liberal teachers . . . that encourage race-mixing and degeneracy. (Stormfront.org, 1/3/02)

WPM members argue that homeschooling is intended to protect their children from mainstream schools which they perceive as brainwashing institutions that perpetuate myths about the "wonders of race-mixing" and force a "Jewish-liberal ideology" upon children. Parents consistently expressed to us their worries about school officials victimizing ideologically-aligned Aryan children because of their racist views, and about non-whites bullying their children because of their "whiteness." In fact, many adult activists described to us their own school experiences as those of "racial dispossession" which ignited their interest in white power politics and homeschooling for their children (also see Blee 2002, 1996). Homeschooling provides adults and children the opportunity to "re-center" European-American racial consciousness, while simultaneously subverting multicultural values, thus prefiguring core white power ideals, practices, and relationships within the privacy of their homes.

> Homeschool is the best. You provide the information, they live it. I'm not about to put my child in public school. Homeschool allows me to know that my children will get the truth and not all this liberal propaganda. (SWAS activist, 1/19/99d)

While many WPM families live in urban and suburban settings, others make concerted attempts to withdraw from "the system"—to escape both physically and psychologically from the mainstream. Accordingly, geographic isolation is another strategy activists use to carve private family spaces where they can more easily submerge themselves in the white power worldview and practices that prefigure that world. Many activists explain their withdrawal as motivated precisely by the sort of freedom that most analysts argue free spaces provide.

> [The biggest joy out here in rural Utah is] living free, the freedom. I just wanna live off the land, live by the scripture, raise my family, raise my crops, just live . . . I'm doing what it takes to get out of the system, it takes a lot more than saying forget the system or the system sucks, you know everyone knows that, but unless you got a plan B then you're gonna go with the system. (SWAS activist, 8/13/97e)

Like homeschooling, members opt for geographic isolation in order to insulate the family, resist incursion by mainstream authorities and anti-Aryan perspectives, and nurture the survivalist sensibilities required for the expected race war.

White power families are, then, ideological shelters where minorities are excluded, patriarchal gender relations are maintained, ideals and practices of militant Aryan nationalism are promoted, and, ideally, a supply of young adherents to the WPM is created. Naming, rituals, and other movement symbolism, homeschool, and physical isolation help to prefigure a world in which radical racist meanings are normalized and become a basis for understanding fundamental relations between oneself and others—i.e., between self, movement members, and the movement's many designated "others." According to James Aho (1999), this racial socialization reifies racial hierarchy and "embed[s] . . . race consciousness in the minds of new generations" (p. 67). One of the most remarkable and potentially powerful features of these practices, and those we discuss below, is the degree to which they are interwoven with the mundane items and routines of daily life. This interweaving reduces the psychological distance between everyday life and virulent racist activism. Thus, it is not merely the practices, but what they intend to symbolize, that is critical for sustaining collective identity. For instance, while there are many recreational hunters, few hunt explicitly to practice survivalist training for an expected race war. Likewise, homeschooling is a rapidly growing alternative to established educational settings, but few homeschool with the explicit purpose of instilling and preserving Aryan nationalist identity among young WPM members.

There is some debate among scholars on the role of the family as free space. On one hand, some argue that the small size and intimacy of family increases safety and the possibility of free expression (Scott 1990). Especially among the most marginalized groups, "narratives

are preserved in the most private of free spaces, the family . . . " (Couto 1993:77). However, Polletta (1999:6) observes that intimacy offers no guarantees that families will be free spaces where activism is encouraged. Indeed, family pressures are likely to restrict radical political action among members, especially activism that may bring repression of the activist or their kin (Polletta 1999:35). Our findings support the former view. As an indigenous-prefigurative space, WPM families clearly preserve narratives, symbols, and experiences of white power resistance in ways that are hoped will further the movement by nurturing new cadres of white power activists. Moreover, WPM families knowingly encourage the type of virulent racist identity and practices that may well bring reprisals from authorities and others opposing Aryan activism.

Identity Work in Informal Gatherings: Boundary Marking and Commitment

Informal symbolic gatherings represent a second type of indigenous-prefigurative space in the WPM. Members purposefully design these gatherings as interaction sites where they can nurture white power identity. These gatherings provide opportunities to meet with other local movement members and to participate in "cultural havens" (Hirsch 1990) where prefigurative relations abound and where activists reinforce the boundaries between themselves and the mainstream. While deeply imbued with white power ideology and ritual performances, these encounters are most often organized under the auspices of, or combined with, mundane social functions such as parties and Bible study groups. The casual and private nature of these spaces reduces the possibility of external social control, thereby increasing members' sense of safety and, thus, participation.

Many white power activists depend upon small independent churches and Bible study meetings in activists' homes for gatherings where participants can practice what they believe is the "true" Biblical insight inspired by Aryan ideals, and undiluted by the watered-down "*Jew*deo-Christian" rhetoric found in other religious settings. In these contexts, members experience a great deal of autonomy to elaborate and refine white power ideologies and enjoy the affective support of like-minded activists under the guise of ordinary theological study. Members often pledge their allegiance to the movement in elaborate rituals that bestow a sacred quality to their racist practices. While some Bible studies are organized in formal church settings and draw up to 50 members, smaller gatherings that join between 5 to 20 members are conducted in members' homes or combined with outings to places identified as spiritually and racially pure.

> We have Bible study classes once a week or whenever I can get people together. You know we meet at someone's house or go to Zion [National Park] and study the scripture. (SWAS activist, 1/21/97d)

Zion National Park is especially charged with ideological meaning for Southwest Aryan groups because of highly racialized religious meanings they invest in the area, as well as the freedom, anonymity, and purity this space provides for their activities. When asked about the importance of Zion, a SWAS member explained,

> It's when you come here and stop and look around, that's when you realize your racial destiny and heritage. This is what we struggle for. For the right to maintain this kind of purity. You know, the way things are going, thanks to the multi-cultural third world invasion, if it continues there won't be places like this for much longer. That's why I'd sacrifice my life to keep that from happening. (SWAS activist, 3/13/99b)

Similarly, Aryan Nations activists invest areas of northern Idaho with racialized and religious meanings, and describe them as free spaces which are both physically and ideologically isolated from the "polluted" mainstream.

> This part of the country is still white and we're trying to keep it this way. We appreciate the tranquility. These are God-fearing people who don't live like the rest of the country, like a sewer. You come up here and you thank God there are still a few places like this. . . . (AN activist, 7/9/97b)

Members construe excursions into these areas as bonding and commitment rituals that enable them to transcend what they perceive to be an overly constraining, "impure," multiethnic society.

> We consider the hikes and campouts like a kind of racial and religious retreat. We look at them as much more than just having fun on the side of a mountain. These are our opportunities to come together. It's a time for us to be together, understand ourselves, and each of these trips helps our commitment grow more and more. (SWAS activist, 1/21/97f)

Although the particularities of place wherein identity work occurs is significant for many white power activists, this aspect of collective identity is not yet well understood in the literature (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Our observations suggest that these places are important to members both on strategic and symbolic grounds. Strategically, because they allow members to discuss white power themes and openly bond with other racists away from the public eye. Symbolically, because of the particular meanings members invest in them, especially regarding the "purity" of racial separation that members reportedly experience.

Parties, from backyard patio get-togethers to bonfire gatherings, are also spaces where activists explore, experiment with, and enact various dimensions of white power ideology. These informal gatherings typically draw between 15 to 50 WPM sympathizers, with most typically averaging 20–25 members. As we describe below, members attend them to establish and nurture common ideological ground with fellow activists through talk that dramatizes their plight and ritual performances intended to model the type of racially-exclusive relationships they seek. In short, these parties ensure a space where members can freely discuss Aryan ideas and enact prefigurative Aryan relationships.

> When you live in a world like we do, you have to find places where you don't have to hold back on being racist; where other people feel and act the same way you do. The parties are definitely part of it. The parties, the dinners. You get a chance to come together in a small setting where it's easier to know people and build friendships. (SoCal skinhead, 9/7/02)

> To have people over, get the bonfire going, the more people come around the more they want to be here. We're building the community we desire. (SWAS activist, 6/13/98)

Freeing up discussion around movement themes is a primary part of the oppositional cultures that free spaces encourage (Polletta 1999:6). Talk is integral to identity work in WPM parties. Movement "fortifying myths" (Voss 1996:252), which celebrate the efficacy and persistence of the WPM, are customary, as are stories of racial dispossession and the emergence of racial consciousness. The excerpt of conversation below between a long-time white power skinhead and two initiates is a typical and concise example. The experienced activist explains,

> We are the warriors . . . that's our God-given racially determined destiny. We have to remain strong. We have to keep healthy. That's why I love hanging out with my brothers because that's what this does, it keeps me proud, it keeps me strong. (Hammerskin, 7/19/01c)

Aspects of fortifying myths like this offer strong beliefs about the movement's efficacy through ideas about inevitable destiny, righteousness, and preparation to struggle for Aryan dominance. These sentiments are often validated and reciprocated by others. A young activist confirmed the message and offered examples of racial dispossession that fueled her Aryan activism.

> It was in school . . . it was always these poor blacks, these poor so and so. I got so sick of hearing all this shit and then when I started seeing these signs on the side of the freeway that show how we have to watch out for the illegals running across the roads, oh my God, what the fuck! And now

> they're dropping these food and first aid kits in the desert so if they get stranded. (Women's Aryan Unity activist, 7/19/01e)

And a third member contributed his own stories of perceived injustice regarding space for cultural expression to illustrate his experience of Aryan racial dispossession.

> Yeah and everyone else is able to play a show [music concert], the blacks, the Asians, the Mexicans, but when we try and create our music and try and find a place where we can get together, drink a few beers and actually listen to the music, we're committing a federal offense, the media gets involved, the police are all over the place, and of course the JDL (Jewish Defense League) and those fucks start screaming racism . . . Hell, these rappers can go around talking about killing cops and that's o.k. We just want the simple rights that everyone else is able to exercise. (Aryan Front skinhead, 7/19/01d)

The multigenerational character of many informal gatherings allows younger activists to interact with more seasoned members who act as role models as they share stories of their white power activities and visions. Like family gatherings, these spaces also function as sites for intergenerational movement socialization.

Identity talk also defines racial boundaries and the parameters of white power lifestyles. Many members find these parties to be safe places where they can not only express white power ideals, but also explore, question, and clarify specific features of white power identity. For instance, in a discussion over the proper racial boundaries for intermarriage, an Aryan activist claimed that he "might be willing to marry an Indian or Mexican, but not a Black that's just wrong" (SWAS activist, 8/7/98). Others immediately countered that the practice would be "disgusting" and proceeded through extensive discussion and negotiation to clarify the boundaries of exogamy along strict Anglo lines. Through such vigorous identity work members not only clarify group norms and bring the offending member back into the fold, but also prefigure the group's vision on marriage to all those involved.

Ritualistic performances, elaborate morality tales, and jokes are also prominent aspects of the identity work members perform in these informal gatherings. At some parties, time is allocated to WPM commitment pledges, group "Sieg Heil" salutes, and dramatic performances such as hanging Blacks, Hispanics, or Jews in effigy, or hooded executioners symbolically beheading WPM "actors" who have painted their faces black. The morality tales typically revolve around non-whites' culpability for societal problems and small victories for Aryanism, and often have a ritualistic character. Prominent activists are the center of attention as they recount events that idealize commitment to the white power vision. The storytelling cues others to offer similar tales as mutual reinforcement of white power norms and group solidarity. These stories also instruct listeners about unobtrusive tactics of recruitment and resistance, which others can adapt in their repertoire of white power activism. The racist jokes that permeate conversations also provide a language for activists' understandings of racist politics. As Michael Billig (2001) notes, such jokes intentionally dehumanize the subjects and often compel tellers and listeners to imagine extreme racist violence against them, the type of which is seen as both precursor to and normative activity in an Aryan-dominated world that activists foresee. Jokes also communicate ideological themes to less experienced activists in more accessible and less demanding formats than formal speeches. In this sense, humor expresses the same political sentiments as more serious forms of rhetoric, while sparing members the usual gloom and doom tone.

Some informal gatherings occur in more public settings, and have a more tentative, emergent quality than the private gatherings described above. Particular bars and restaurants that are accommodating to white-power activists, although not always explicitly aligned with the WPM, have become "safe spaces" (Gamson 1996) for activists. Some of these settings have overt symbolic importance. For instance, "Deutschland Restaurant" (pseudonym) in Southern California offers neo-Nazi activists a symbolic connection to a cultural heritage they identify with white power ideals; some have designated it as a *de facto* gathering place for the

faithful. Although this restaurant neither openly publicizes nor advocates the patronage of this clientele, some Southern California activists understand that there is a good chance of finding like-minded people under its roof. A young skinhead recalled an evening at the restaurant where interaction between two groups slowly progressed from modest introduction and conversation, to rounds of animated storytelling, and culminated in open expressions of white power rituals.

> We were at Deutschland's once and there was a table of old WWII vets from Germany. We bought a few rounds of beer and later they also told us about their time in the German army. By the end of the night they were giving us sieg heils. (SoCal skinhead, 8/7/01f)

Taverns in other communities sometimes also function as *de facto* public gathering places for WPM sympathizers. While in the field, one author observed the emergent nature of racialized interactions in a Utah tavern. While standing at the bar with two activists, an unidentified man approached and asked one of the activists for a white power newsletter. The activist left and then returned shortly thereafter with several documents which he sold for five dollars. After thanking this man for his purchase, the activist then proceeded to engage him in a lengthy discussion about the Ruby Ridge saga. After the man left, the activist commented, "see we're a household name around this town. They know where to find us" (SWAS activist, 1/16/97a).

Skinheads typically converge on core members' homes, or "crash pads." Like family and parties, these "pads" are spaces where members develop, enact, and sustain an elaborate and expressive white power culture through talk, rituals, and symbolic displays (see also Hamm 2002). Typically, 4 to 12 skinheads will converge at any one time on members' homes to commiserate and live there for a few days, sometimes a week or two, and occasionally longer. Crashpads are usually decorated with Nazi banners and movement slogans such as 14 Words, 88 (i.e., "h" is the eighth letter in the alphabet, 88 is code for "Heil Hitler"), and SWP (Supreme White Power). Racist media (literature, music) is available for reading, listening, and distributing, and racialized talk is pervasive.

While an Aryan lifestyle is promoted at all times in the free space of crashpads, one of the most prominent ritual occasions is tattooing. Being tattooed with white power insignia is one of the most important means of initiation and commitment to both the group and the larger movement. A swastika on the temple or forehead, a German iron cross, a Confederate flag, Hitler, German soldiers, crossed hammers, a clenched fist with slogans such as, "White Power," "White Pride," "SKIN," "14 Words," and "Proud To Be White" underneath are all common. Like many exclusive groups that dominate members' identities and roles, commitment is anchored symbolically through visual symbols (Coser 1974). Strikingly similar to the college sorority members who take on totems of their group as a symbol of their rebirth as members of the organization (Arthur 1997), white power tattoos demonstrate skinhead initiates' commitment, consciousness, and degree of self-completion as Aryan skinheads.

> Why do skinheads want tats? We want to tell a story, to establish who we are, and what we've done or will do. We want people to know we're down for our race and down for the cause. (Hammerskin 8/17/02)

Tattooing is neither a one-time ritual nor for initiates only. Long-time members are often tattooed on repeat occasions in crashpads as a bonding experience with the group and the wider movement; every successive tattoo is a physical symbol of their intensifying identification with the movement, and their increasing separation from the mainstream.

> Well, they're (tattoos) about displaying your racial pride, making sure there's no doubt. As you get more and more, it's a way of reinforcing who you are and drawing that line a little harder each time. (SoCal Skin 11/17/02)

> This was my first tattoo (German Iron Cross). I have seven since that one and with each one you feel a little more committed. You know you're never going back, that you're never going to lose your racialist feelings. (SWAS activist 6/23/99)

Fellow WPM members typically etch these tattoos in crashpads, and some white power tattoo artists consider Aryan tattooing as their most important contribution to the movement.

> I'm most proud about the work I do on other skins. I get to see young ones who are getting their first one and will always remember that one, but I also get to give my brothers who've been out here for years their fifteenth or whatever tattoo. Either way, I'm doing my little bit to help the movement where I can. In the world we live in we have to use symbols. We use this art to fuel our love for our race. (L.A. County skinhead 8/19/02)

The free space of crashpads is critical for the ritualistic aspects that are not allowed in most licensed tattoo businesses. For instance, white power tattoos are often completed in the company of other skinheads who, as a form of hazing, will slap the tattooed area to cause pain and, combined with chants and songs, help to reinforce ideals of rugged masculinity and brotherly solidarity with other skins. Finally, while many Aryan skinheads hide tattoos with their clothes in settings where the symbols might evoke unwanted attention, in the free space of the crashpads, they openly model them for others and converse about the meaning and the commitments the symbols represent.

All the gatherings identified here enable individuals to enact and participate in white power culture largely through otherwise innocuous everyday practices within submerged networks (Melucci 1989, 1996). WPM free spaces cannot be separated into indigenous and prefigurative spaces. Instead, activists blend prefigurative practices in their indigenous "networks of recognition" (Emirbayer 1997; Pizzorno 1986) to intensify members' commitments and forge a shared racist agenda. Aryan narratives provide members historical precedents of individual and collective resistance, explanations of the group's conditions, and an exposition of group virtues to legitimate their efforts. Rituals and excursions enhance solidarity by nurturing exclusively Aryan relationships that predict the future they envision. Yet, these indigenous-prefigurative spaces cannot sustain an activist culture beyond their local boundaries. The WPM's transmovement-prefigurative spaces fill this void as members tie local networks to broader ones and create opportunities to participate in prefigurative relationships with a wider range of members. As we discuss below, intentional Aryan communities, music festivals, and cyberspace represent the other layer of the bi-level infrastructure of free spaces that sustains the WPM.

Transmovement-Prefigurative Spaces in the WPM

Transmovement-prefigurative spaces play a critical role in sustaining the WPM because they gather adherents from across the movement's fragmented networks and branches together in both physical and virtual spaces; here, members engage in prefigurative practices and develop broad-based "cultures of solidarity" (Fantasia 1988). In these spaces, adherents whose activism is otherwise limited to the private orbits of home and immediate networks of friends find opportunities to participate in wider movement networks. These networks typically increase members' perceptions of an ongoing, vibrant movement "out there" that they can access and support. Members learn the full extent to which their claims and ideals are shared by others with whom they are not in direct contact (Scott 1990). Intentional Aryan communities and white power music events are concrete settings where extended networks of activists congregate and elaborate prefigurative relationships and rituals. Cyberspace provides myriad virtual networking sites which are unconstrained by the space and time limits (Gamson 1996) of indigenous and other transmovement spaces. Both forms establish the type of network intersections which are crucial for sustaining broad-based movement identities.

Solidarity Networks in Intentional Aryan Communities and Music Shows

A small number of intentional Aryan communities organized over the last few decades serve as transmovement-prefigurative spaces. These settlements contain as few as a dozen members to around 100 activists, and are located in various spots across the country including the 20 acre Aryan Nations compound in Hayden Lake, Idaho, the 346 acre National Alliance grounds near Hillsboro, West Virginia, and in Elohim City, a 1,000 acre white separatist community in eastern Oklahoma. The prefigurative dimensions of most communities are unambiguous, as they are organized as model Aryan societies. Devoutly racist, they typically exclude non-whites, provide Aryan worship centers, archives of white power literature, music and movement paraphernalia, and paramilitary training. They are also hubs for white power networking. Activists outside the communities often pilgrimage to them to attend large gatherings held at some of the sites or simply to visit and experience an active Aryan settlement. Many are also way stations for traveling WPM activists or those eluding authorities (Hamm 2002). The communities differ in their insularity, economic autonomy, and the degree to which members express their racism to outsiders. For instance, Elohim City maintains an extremely low public profile and, according to Somer Shook, Wesley Delano, and Robert W. Balch (1999) "is close to being institutionally complete," with a sawmill, trucking company, school, church, community medical service, calendar, armed patrol unit, and construction firm supporting the 85-person community (see also Southern Poverty Law Center 1997). Elohim City community members do not proselytize and instead prefer to shield their racialism from outsiders (Shook et al. 1999). By contrast, the Aryan Nations settlement draws much more notoriety, especially during the annual Aryan World Congresses which at their peak in the mid-1990s drew up to 300 WPM leaders and activists and widespread media attention. Between congresses, the Aryan Nations settlement housed a very small number of permanent community members (6–15 during our research) but provided a haven for WPM activists to retreat, worship, and invigorate their racist commitments. On the whole, WPM members create thorough prefigurative experiences by establishing intentional communities where white dominance is paramount. As one activist explains,

> Living here (Aryan Nations) is the best thing we can do. It's so peaceful and white. We're able to teach our daughter the way we see fit, and we live next to the Pastor (Richard Butler) and get to be around him which is a real gift. Pretty soon we'll start building another home here. (Aryan Nations community member, 4/22/97)

The Aryan Nations (AN) settlement, once known throughout the WPM as the "international headquarters of the white race," is the community where we collected most of our observational data. Between the early 1980s through 2000, World Aryan Congresses brought WPM activists from a wide range of domestic and international groups together at the AN property. Our data indicate that WPM members attending the AN compound originated from various National Socialist organizations (e.g., National Socialist Vanguard, National Socialist Workers), Aryan Nations, National Alliance, KKK and skinhead groups from more than 18 states and several European countries. Regarding international connections, Jeffery Kaplan and Leonard Weinberg (1998) explain:

> [Aryan Nations and their annual congresses] provide a relatively stable communal experiment. . . . Pastor [Richard] Butler established important connections with European movement activists, especially in Germany, that will continue to flourish long after the Hayden Lake compound is but a memory. (P. 150)

Accordingly, the congresses were one of the few places where movement activists could experience a large, extended community of white power adherents who exemplified the qualities of the "racially-cleansed" society they imagined. Speeches by WPM leaders would

stress the "normality" of racism, which attendees could immediately experience in the free space of the compound. Seminars offered lessons in movement ideology, recruitment strategies, and for a time even guerilla warfare. In short, the AN congresses joined together WPM activists from many wings of the movement and encouraged the concrete articulation of the white power vision in the company of supportive peers (Blee 2002:196; Kaplan and Weinberg 1998).

The rituals performed in these settings intensify activists' prefigurative experience by providing opportunities to practice the virulent racist relationships and routines that are to be normative in the future Aryan nation. Singing racialized hymns, wearing regalia symbolizing the respective white power beliefs present at the congress, playing Aryan national anthems, and engaging in sacred cross lightings, commitment ceremonies, and crude military exercises are all parts of the congress' internal spectacle. This spectacle is aimed at strengthening activists' commitment by producing excitement, reaffirmations of collective grievances, and the type of solidarity "high" which Doug McAdam (1988) describes as an integral part of sustaining activism in the face of high risks (for a similar description of Aryan National Congress rituals, see also Aho 1999, 1993).[8]

> These [congresses] are a good time for us to come together in one place where we can feel some comfort being around proud white people. These few days make it possible to get through the rest of the year. With good speakers and all the literature, I feel real fortunate to make these. (AN activist, 7/22/98c)

> Right now we're here together as a people and, you know, that's what's going to allow us to defeat the Zionist occupational government. These [congresses] help us build our solidarity and bring people together. It gives us time away from everything else. (AN activist, 7/2/99d)

According to Aryan Nations leader, Richard Butler, the gatherings are one of the few places where WPM members openly enact and experience what they perceive as their essential whiteness.

> [The Congresses] allow us to be *true* white men. We can say nigger and not have to worry about losing a job and having someone scream racist. It used to be this way in all of America not just places like here. (AN leader Richard Butler, speech at Aryan Nations Congress, 7/8/97)

As the congresses gained notoriety during the 1990s, surveillance and repression increased, making it increasingly difficult for the AN compound to insulate attendees from external social controls. As William Gamson (1996) points out, "one of the most effective means of social control is the prevention of autonomous space" (p. 27). Legal actions against Aryan Nations by local civil rights activists and the Southern Poverty Law Center stripped the group of its compound in 2000, forcing a hiatus on the annual events. But in late June 2003, approximately 75 activists from Aryan Nations, KKK, National Socialist Movement, and White Revolution reorganized the World Congress in a state park near the former Aryan Nations compound (Huus 2003).

White power music festivals are now a leading form of large white power activist gatherings. Although initiated in the late 1980s, the festivals did not become a consistent part of the WPM until the late 1990s. Since 1998, they have increased in both frequency and size. The two most prominent festivals are *Hammerfest*, which is sponsored by the skinhead group Hammerskin Nation, and *Nordic Fest*, which is organized by Imperial Klans of America. Both occur annually and reportedly draw between 300 and 600 activists from both the U.S. and Europe (Anti-Defamation League 2002). The 2002 *Rocky Mountain Heritage Festival* featured bands and activists from various skinhead groups, the National Alliance, and KKK affiliates

8. For instance, although we did not observe this, Aho (1999) describes another prefigurative practice, "Nigger Shooting" contests, during which Aryan World conferees shot at, "among other targets, crude facsimiles of running black men and enlarged photos of despised Jewish faces" (p. 68).

based in 12 states, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands (field notes, 7/15/02). The festivals explicitly cater to several generations of white power activists, from teens and young adults to much older veterans, thereby creating a powerful context for the transmission of movement identity and practices, as well as for the recruitment and retention of nascent members (for similar findings, see Hamm 2002:85–93). These gatherings typically feature up to a dozen bands, speeches from WPM leaders, white power merchandise vendors, and ritual swastika and cross lightings.

Organizers attempt to limit attendance to WPM sympathizers. Skinhead groups, such as the Hammerskins, who organize many of these festivals, welcome all Aryan activists regardless of affiliation, but especially those who might be wary of attending a predominately skinhead event. As one organizer explained:

> Everyone seems to understand how important it is for us to be able to leave behind any confrontational mindset to come together with our people and celebrate the growth of the white racialist movement. (SoCal skinhead, 8/13/00)

Like the Aryan congresses, these events are opportunities for fellowshipping with a wide range of activist peers in a free space devoted solely to white power ideals. The festivals are often organized on remote, private lands, the exact location of which is announced via movement websites only days before the event to help ensure privacy from authorities and counterprotesters. For instance, tickets and information about *Hammerfest 2000* were available to activists only through a password-protected website. Tickets were required for entry and all patrons were thoroughly observed at the gates to insure the festival was a safe haven. As a California skinhead explains, these gatherings offer an intensity of experience in a vibrant white power culture that might otherwise be unavailable to recruits.

> Going to *Hammerfest* was the best thing I could have ever done. Before that, I really didn't know anyone [outside my small group]. I knew what I wanted to be doing, but I wasn't part of anything big. When I went there, I met a bunch of bros. After that my life really started changing. (SoCal skinhead, 1/25/02)

Another remarked,

> Before '93 I didn't really hang out with others [in the WPM] much. I pretty much did my own thing and hung out with [white power] people around the neighborhood and in college. But then I went [to a festival] and that's when it started to change. That show helped build so much unity. We really came together after that. There were people from all over. California, Arizona, Nevada, from all over, even from other countries. It was all 'cause of this show. (L.A. County skinhead, 3/28/02)

More frequent, albeit smaller, than festivals are bar concerts, which usually draw between 50 and 200 people. Most events are organized as private parties where attendees' names are checked by bar and WPM security personnel against a list compiled by the show's organizers. Typically, the concerts include 4 to 7 bands playing a set each, with brief speeches from WPM activists between sets. Most of the audience is composed of young male and female adults (under 30), although some veteran activists also attend. At the concerts we observed, attendees were members of diverse movement networks such as the Hammerskins, KKK, National Alliance, Women for Aryan Unity, Aryan Front, Orange County Skins, World Church of the Creator, Blood and Honour, and Aryan Nations. White Aryan Resistance, Panzerfaust Records, Vinland, and National Alliance provide attendees with direct access to movement materials by stocking the bar with literature, white power CDs and cassettes, and other paraphernalia. While organizers attempt as much as possible to keep the concerts secret, they still sometimes draw protesters and media attention. At the concerts we attended, media and hostile outsiders were never knowingly allowed into the shows in order to maintain ideological continuity and safety within the space.

Intentional Aryan communities, congresses, festivals, and bar concerts provide a level of organization, camaraderie, and extensive networking that smaller informal gatherings and the family simply cannot. The events bring a much wider range of people together in settings that create a sense of movement strength and endurance. WPM members preserve ideals such as racial exclusivity and the open expression of racism by recursively building these utopian goals into the relationships they routinely advocate and practice in these spaces. Music events are especially important as one of the few settings where WPM activists participate in collective prefigurative relationships anchored in Ayran ideals which help reaffirm their ties to the wider movement.

> When you're at a show you get to do things you normally can't do and it just feels great to let go and be what you are [audience members are simultaneously sieg heiling during the performance]. You know, be a racist with everyone else who's here. We're all here because we're white and we want to be somewhere where that's not a crime and you don't have to be ashamed of it and that's hard to find today. It's hard to find places where you can do that. (Aryan musician/activist, 7/15/02)

Virtual Networks in Cyberspace

The transmovement-prefigurative space which has shown the most significant growth over the last decade is cyberspace (Southern Poverty Law Center 2001b). Cyberspace enables a wide range of white power groups and activists to create dense interorganizational channels through which information about the movement travels quickly and unimpeded (Burris et al. 2000). Links are especially common between Klan and neo-Nazi skinhead websites, and between Christian and non-Christian websites, both nationally and internationally (Burris et al. 2000). Aryan websites provide information about the movement, white power music, literature, and other movement symbols. Importantly, many of these websites are not just information clearinghouses, but provide space for real-time communication through list-serves, chat rooms, and bulletin boards where virtual members create and sustain virtual white power communities. Some sites intersect very closely with the home to enhance the racial socialization that occurs there. For instance, sites offer opportunities for white singles networking, homeschooling newsletters and discussion groups, and a "Mothers of the Movement" website provides parenting advice and a space for parents to discuss strategies for indoctrinating their children into the movement. Other virtual spaces are designed explicitly for children and provide racist crossword puzzles, coloring pages, children's white power literature, and acidly racist interactive video games (e.g., Shoot the Blacks, SA-Mann). The latter have become particularly popular, attracting both young and old Aryan members to interactive role playing in an explicitly violent, racist virtual environment where whites rule. Set against medieval or contemporary urban backdrops, the games focus on themes of racial holy war, genocide, and attaining a white homeland. Participating in these games alone or with others helps activists sustain their commitment to the movement and offers a strategy to draw in potential recruits.

> [Virtual games] are a great idea for the movement. We need more of it too. It's planting a seed. It's like pollination. When we make these games we're like bees. [The games] may not cause every person who plays to get active, but a certain percentage will realize that it's not just a game this is the real shit, that we already live in cities with black savages raping white women and children, it happens everyday, and that the race war is coming, no doubt about it. . . . [We] need these games, it helps keep us going. . . . there's just something about the video games that's awesome . . . the visual part and being able to really get into it. . . ." (Southeastern Aryan Activist, 6/28/03)

Many WPM members see cyberspace as the most critical free space for overcoming obstacles that prevent greater communication among Aryan activists.

> The technological restrictions that have kept us from communicating with other Whites is rapidly coming to an end. . . . Broadcasting stations own or at least control the transmission of media between sender and receiver, but Internet radio uses the common infrastructure of the Internet for transmission which is not controlled by anyone. . . . Radio broadcasting is usually restricted to a certain geographic area, the Internet is a global network, making Internet radio stations available to every [white power activist] in the world who has access to the Internet. . . . (Stormfront.com, 3/13/03)

> We need access to our own people through any medium available, music, the Internet, television, literature, personal outreach . . . We think a lot about how to reach a wider audience with the [mainstream] media pushing all this anti-white propaganda. We can't let that media define us. We've got to find ways to get the message out and with the Internet we've had some success. [Aryan websites] are forums that help connect people to something larger that's out there. Some will be happy sitting home in comfort and surfing the web, but for others [Internet participation] will serve as a springboard. (Southeastern Aryan activist 12/15/02)

In addition to advocating Aryan values and linking indigenous movement networks, several sites also provide space for logistical planning of movement events, such as festivals, concerts, and congresses. According to the Anti-Defamation League's (2002) review of sites selected for the planning of music event *Nordic Fest 2000*, the messages "evinced a spirit of cooperation among extremists, and it seems that those who posted [them] would not have connected with each other had they not gone online." More generally, the Anti-Defamation League argues that the Internet presents opportunities for networking that simply did not exist before by offering a private form of communication and "bring[ing] distant isolated groups and individuals together. [It] has the potential to reach an audience far beyond any they could reach with their traditional propaganda" (Hoffman 1996:72). WPM activists express similar ideas:

> Since we've been able to access the Internet and email Hammers in other countries it's changed everything. We really see ourselves as part of an international movement. We communicate with each other on a regular basis, we coordinate events, we share our views on issues and what we're doing to fight for the cause. The Internet has helped us in the direction of seeing other skinheads as international brothers fighting for the same cause. I've been around a long time and it is really a lot different than before we had the Internet. We knew about [skinheads in other parts of the world], but it was more word of mouth and now we're actually working together. (Northern Hammerskin, 7/13/02)

Streaming Internet radio stations, such as Radiowhite.com and Resistance.com, broadcast white power music and interviews with movement leaders to a wide range of WPM networks.

> You can really do a lot with the Internet. With our website we're trying to combine different aspects so that we don't just appeal to younger or older racists. We want it to be both educational and entertaining and that's why we have the music but also do interviews with people who are respected role models for our movement. I love doing our show live online and talking with all these people about white power music, about the movement. We get instant messages from all over the world, we're always getting free CDs and interviewing [movement leaders] like Metzger and Butler. We just sit back, let them talk, and take it all in. (SoCal Skinhead and Radiowhite DJ, 8/17/02)

The growing range of white power websites from "soft-core" to "hard-core" enables potential recruits to find their way into the movement through the group whose ideology they feel most affinity with (Burris et al. 2000:231). Kaplan and Weinberg (1998:159) describe the importance of the Internet for building movement networks.

> The popularity of [cyberspace] as a medium of communication has, by the mid-1990s, brought the transnational movement online and into constant communication. . . . The availability of a mode of communication that connects the continents instantaneously opens a number of fascinating possibilities undreamed of . . . but a scant few years ago. . . . No longer do even the most

> isolated individuals . . . need to feel alone [as] they may become an interactive part of a seemingly vast community of adherents.

Yet observers are divided on the effectiveness of the Internet for the purposes of recruitment and identity reinforcement. For instance, Devon Burghart (1996) argues that cyberspace cannot effectively substitute for face-to-face interaction and doubts that it adds much to building WPM ties. More generally, Gamson (1996) also suggests that cyberspace is "not a particularly useful kind of space when it comes to building commitment, solidarity, and a strong sense of collective identity" (p. 35) because it lacks direct physical contact and concrete action settings that he feels are crucial. But the WPM creates other indigenous and transmovement spaces that do provide for precisely the type of face-to-face encounters that cyberspace lacks. Thus, we agree with David Hoffman (1996), and Burris, Smith, and Strahm (2000), who argue that cyberspace is a qualitatively new and effective channel for reaching existing members and potential recruits. WPM websites tie members into broader movement networks which, *in conjunction with other free space forms,* create a submerged infrastructure of movement spaces where white power identity persists.

What cyberspace offers, then, is opportunities to participate in white power activism relatively free from the risks posed by publicly identifying with the WPM. Internet forums are not time-bound (Gamson 1996) and they allow for discussion and dissemination of information with a high degree of discretion and anonymity. This drastically "reduce[s] the perceived risk of contacting these groups. If you have to go to a [white power] rally or actually write to [white power groups] to get involved in hate, that's a big barrier to overcome" (Todd Schroer, qtd. in Southern Poverty Law Center 2001b). As a result, virtual transmovement spaces may play a crucial role in attracting new activists, pulling peripheral members closer to the movement, and maintaining the commitment of already active participants. It seems certain, however, that if "virtual activism" (Back, Keith, and Solomos 1998) became the primary form of movement participation, we could well see a dissolution of face-to-face movement networks resulting in a withering of the movement (Kaplan and Weinberg 1998). Presently, indigenous and other transmovement-prefigurative spaces provide the contexts for face-to-face interaction which is lacking in cyberspace.

Together, WPM's physical and virtual transmovement-prefigurative spaces establish the network connections required to sustain activist culture beyond the bounds of indigenous networks. Indeed, these spaces draw otherwise unconnected local networks into much broader webs of white power culture and identity and, importantly, convey to members a sense of participating in a much larger movement culture, which helps reinforce solidarity and commitment to the cause. They also offer members some of the very few prefigurative Aryan relationships and experiences available to them. Combined with the WPM's indigenous-prefigurative spaces, these transmovement-prefigurative spaces create a bi-leveled *infrastructure of spaces* supporting distinct kinds of network ties and activities that enable activists to sustain collective white power identity.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, we have discussed the issue of precisely *how* free spaces contribute to the persistence of the U.S. White Power Movement. Our study shows that the WPM relies upon an infrastructure of free spaces to maintain activist networks and movement identity within a generally hostile context. The idea of an infrastructure of free spaces is important for highlighting the undertheorized issue of how different types of free spaces contribute to movements in different ways. In the WPM, indigenous-prefigurative spaces allow for the kind of network connections that help nurture strong interpersonal solidarity among small, local cadres of activists, thereby increasing participation in white power culture.

Prefigurative practices in these spaces establish intergenerational movement ties and build commitments among adherents through symbolic rituals that mark boundaries between activists and their opponents. Embedding these practices in otherwise innocuous activities (e.g., homeschooling, study groups, hikes, parties) reduces the distance between daily life and white power activism which, in turn, helps "normalize" these practices and the beliefs they articulate. However, the insular character of these spaces reduces their effectiveness in maintaining an activist culture beyond the bounds of the local network. Transmovement-prefigurative spaces create network connections that link otherwise disconnected local networks into broader webs of white power culture. Participation in these spaces links activists to a more widespread, vibrant, and enduring movement culture in ways that indigenous spaces cannot do alone. Maintaining the indigenous pockets of collective identity and linking them through transmovement spaces is critical to the WPM's ability to sustain a rich variegated movement culture. In other words, for the WPM, these free spaces *are* the movement.

Our observations also suggest that rather than understanding prefigurative politics as characteristic of a wholly separate *type* of free space, prefigurative cultural practices may instead permeate activities in indigenous and transmovement free spaces. In the WPM, prefigurative practices are built upon, reflect, and sustain collective identity and member commitments within activist networks participating in indigenous and transmovement spaces. Social relationships predicated on ideals of racial exclusivity, anti-Semitism, patriarchy, and Aryan nationalism, and articulated in talk, symbolism, and movement rituals, exemplify to members the types of people, ideas, and experiences they should seek in their desired social world. These ideals are materialized in the WPM's free spaces recurrently, if only briefly, not just as ends, but as guides to daily practice. It is likely that this intertwining of prefiguration with indigenous and transmovement spaces is also a characteristic of many other movements. There is some evidence that indigenous and transmovement spaces in the women's movement (Buechler 2000:205; Ferree and Hess 2000), the U.S. Civil Rights Movement (e.g., activist homes, churches, freedom schools) (McAdam 1988; Morris 1984), and the New Left (Breines 1989) always included strong expressions of prefigurative politics. Advancing our understanding of free spaces requires more research on the linkages between the cultural and structural dimensions of free spaces in movements on both the right and left. Likewise, we should develop more precise distinctions between the various intensities of these linkages and their various effects on movement mobilization and persistence.

While the WPM presently persists within its indigenous and transmovement-prefigurative spaces, long-term endurance is precarious. Betty Dobratz (2001) predicts that ideological schisms internal to the movement may be the most difficult obstacle members will have to overcome if they are to sustain the movement over the long-term. While we do not disagree that these internal conflicts are important, we also wish to point out that the movement's infrastructure of free spaces may help to mitigate this destabilizing trend. The wide range of physical and virtual spaces in the movement appear to provide ample room for variation on specific beliefs and practices, while still promoting the basic doctrines that anchor white power identities across the movement's wings. Our analysis leads us to suggest that long-term movement persistence may be just as threatened by limitations of the types of free spaces that members are able to create. Indigenous and transmovement-prefigurative spaces create strong contexts for identity work and provide network intersections that join together otherwise fragmented activists. The WPM's marginality works strongly against activists' ability to establish the type of autonomous prefigurative spaces that Polletta (1999) notes are critical for sustaining movements over the long-term.

Not surprisingly, agents of social control and countermovement groups aim at eliminating the WPM's transmovement spaces. The successful efforts by federal authorities and the Southern Poverty Law Center to strip Aryan Nations of their compound and halt the Aryan World Congresses will undoubtedly lead to more concerted efforts to eradicate other transmovement spaces. Whether such efforts are justified is a political question outside the scope

of this article. But it appears that, if successful, these efforts may eliminate an element of the movement critical to its persistence. Without the robust network intersections (Polletta 1999:2) created by transmovement structures, the activist base nurtured in the WPM's indigenous spaces would further fragment and deplete much of the movement's remaining vitality. On the other hand, if this infrastructure of free spaces can be sustained, WPM mobilization could increase in a less hostile climate (Taylor 1989).

While the persistence of the WPM is precarious, it seems unadvisable to discount the enduring viability of the movement—a tendency suggested by most social movement scholarship, which pays little attention to contemporary radical right-wing movements (Esseveld and Eyerman 1992), especially regarding the dimensions of free spaces (Polletta 1999) and collective identity (Pichardo 1997). Movements such as the WPM that have been "more successful at [cultivating free spaces and] structuring their own activities along [ideologically-appropriate] lines than at restructuring the larger society along such lines" (Buechler 2000:208) are too often dismissed by social movement scholars as not worthy of serious attention (see also Taylor and Whittier 1992:105). But an important variable in assessing movement viability is the capacity to establish free spaces where members communicate, reinforce, materialize, and celebrate their ideology and collective identity. As Buechler (2000) observes, the free space concept precisely emphasizes that "the sheer maintenance of a cultural community of activists who [sustain radical discourse and practices is an inherently political act and sometimes] the outer limit of what is possible under some . . . circumstances" (p. 208; see also Johnston 1994; Taylor 1989). In our view, social movement scholars will advance the field by paying more attention to right-wing movements generally, especially the most radical ones, and particularly to the various contexts in which members cultivate their commitment and develop networks which sustain a broad movement culture.

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