The White Extremist Movement: A Metatheoretical Analysis

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THE WHITE EXTREMIST MOVEMENT:
A METATHEORETICAL ANALYSIS

by

Suzanne VanWeelde

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Suzanne VanWeelde
This study is a metatheoretical analysis of the white extremist movement in the United States. Five separate major and several smaller white extremist organizations were examined with respect to updated information as to the organizational levels, membership profiles and activities of: (1) the Ku Klux Klan, (2) the Militia, (3) Skinheads, (4) Aryan Nations, (5) the Neo-Nazi and (6) other organizations.

Several theories developed by foundational, developmental and contemporary sociologists were analyzed for their individual concepts. Pertinent and significant concepts were noted as being applicable to a theory of white extremism. Specific examples of the concepts' usage within the extremist organizations were cited to validate their inclusion. A metatheoretical approach was utilized to specify which of these concepts were considered mandatory for an evolving theory of white extremist behavior.

A significant perspective emphasizing a newly formed sense of collective consciousness among the groups was summarized.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to summarize the current state of knowledge about White Extremist organizations and to identify an effective sociological theory and/or concepts to serve as an explanatory model for the emergence and continuation of White Extremist organizations and the significance of the involvement for their members. Accordingly, the major organizations in the white extremism movement are examined. The organizations' use of communications, resources, religion and a profile of members and leaders of such groups are investigated.

Finally, several viable theories which have historically addressed the issue of social movements are scrutinized. Concepts which are designated as appropriate are selected as being the most suitable perspectives for the explanations of the behavior associated with white extremist organizations and their members.

This research differs significantly from previous studies of white extremists and social movement theories in that it adopts a dual perspective: the organizations' and members' functions, as well as viable concepts for understanding such functions. This study also differs from previous research in that it attempts to utilize a new integrative sociological process--metatheorizing.
Definitions of sociology, sociological theory, white extremism and social movement are offered. The history and apropos illustrations of pertinent organizations are presented. Organizational communication methods and a hypothesized extremist profile are discussed. Various theories of social movement and the possibilities of their application to the white extremist movement are examined. Concepts are discussed so as to be able to identify which are applicable for explaining the behaviors, rather than strictly the theory in total. In conclusion, the matter of which theory—and perhaps more importantly—which concepts are the most appropriate for research on a white extremist social movement, is proposed.

Review of Definitions

Sociology

Eitzen (1991) defines sociology as "the scholarly discipline concerned with the systematic study of social organizations" (p. 502). This brief definition is accurate but not descriptive enough when relating to a theory of white extremism. A social science researcher may also state that sociology is an intricate and exhaustive science. The science of sociology deals with human beings and all the nuances which create the variations within their lives. These variables range from the individual level to the global level.

The individual level which affects people entails ethnicity, religion, family and love/hate relationships. Political environment, sociohistory, community and physical environment are some of the
variables involved at the global level. Sociology investigates the variables' interactions with each other as well as the interaction with individuals and the different societal groups.

Sociology also examines "groups and societies as organisms with common elements to be found no matter what the particular setting" (Lowry, 1969, p. 43). In these terms, the science of sociology allows the researcher to apply whatever is learned to other studies with similar concepts. This thesis deals with extremism concepts, however, what is learned can be beneficial to the discipline of sociology as it is applied to other groups who engage in social movements--such as urban gangs or charismatic church groups.

**Sociological Theory**

Theory has been defined as a "set of interrelated propositions that allow for the systemization of knowledge, explanation and prediction of social life, and generation of new research hypotheses" (Ritzer, 1992, p. 4). According to this definition, theory is a form which puts several--not just one--ideas together. In a logical and rational manner these theories imply, through the hypotheses, expected behavior--achieving expected results. The theories are pragmatic in that the principles are expected to have direct bearing on the sociological world and to also allow testing and further predictions of behavior.

Turner emphasized what he conjectures to be the "building blocks" of social theory: "1. concepts, 2. variables, 3. statements, and 4. formats" (p. 2). To clarify Turner's intent a description of each building block is offered.

Concepts which are used consistently throughout sociological material have been noted as groups, ranks, status and norms, to name some. These labels give an insight into the use of concepts. Concepts are the basic elements of theory. There would be no theory without the underlying ideas which formed it. To understand the concepts of a theory is to actually understand the particular theory. Numerous concepts are developed within the confines of this manuscript. The most applicable concepts—to explain the theory of white extremism—are summarized in the concluding discussions.

Variables are conditions which can be, and are, altered in magnitude from situation to situation. Variables are the issues of causative factors which have significant bearing upon the hypotheses within theory. It is often the actual search for causation which drives the researcher to pursue the study of specific situations—such as particular forms of social movements.

Statement has several meanings. In this thesis, it refers to the statements of relationship used in illustrating causal connections which aid in identifying, explaining, predicting and understanding different phenomena.

Formats are guidelines within which to organize the concepts, hypotheses, statements and understandings which are used during the
process of theorizing.

A sociologist may limit him/herself to a particular perspective or may integrate several different positions to form a significant theory—a theoretical synthesis—or use a metatheoretical application. Metatheory is an attempt to better explain an idea, a concept, not necessarily an entire revision of a theory. It has not been found, in the history of sociological study, that any one perspective is adequate to explain all theories. New methods of dealing with social situations have been sought out—especially in the most recent past. And according to Ritzer (1992),

Such efforts have always occurred in the history of sociological theory...the broader movement toward theoretical syntheses which began at about the beginning of the 1990's...the goal is generally a relatively narrow synthesis of theoretical ideas, and not the development of a grand synthetic theory that overarches all of sociological theory. (p. 85)

The author of this thesis understands that as the world becomes more complex, knowledge is constantly expanded and the discipline of sociology follows suit. This obligates the researcher to explore the idea of integrating perspectives to supply satisfactory explanations for a socially complex world. Metatheory is a usable tool to accomplish this.

White Extremism

An obvious attempt to define white extremism would be to define anyone as white who is of a light complexion and extremism as those who are extreme in their belief systems and actions. More in line with the rationale of people who follow such beliefs is to ex-
plain that not all light complexions are considered to be of the proper white genetic linkage. Only those who are ancestors of God's chosen people qualify to fit the acceptable description. These biocultural groups are those of wholly non-Jewish, non-Asiatic European ancestry.

To accurately define white extremism, is to actually define the ethos of a movement which functions on an ideology of who one is, how things ought to be, and which action will make this ideology a structural reality. Ridgeway (1990) states that

racist right-wing movements--have been traditionally linked to nativism, featuring hatred of immigrant groups, calls for a closing of U.S. borders, and support of strict adherence to the Constitution in its most literal sense, shorn of equivocating amendments, as a remedy for unwanted social change. (p. 17)

In the 1980's and 1990's, these groups have extended this definition by developing into both an apparent political movement--utilizing the court systems, the electoral polls and talk/radio show appearances--and, sometimes, violent, terrorist action/behaviors. White extremism is evolving into a movement--Klansmen joined by neo-Nazis, racist skinheads, and members of intensely racist churches--to form a conservative coalition which is winning over considerable numbers of constituents.

The different factions--Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, neo-Nazis and militias--may disagree about what is wrong with the world. They may disagree about what needs to be done to bring the world to its collective sense, but they do agree that things are wrong. They also agree that something needs to be done to correct these failings and
that they alone have the answers. To quote Thom Robb, from The
Knights of the Ku Klux Klan letterhead, these types of groups are
the "last hope for America."

Another way to define white extremist groups is by explanation
of what they do. A 1992 report from the Center for Democratic Re-
newal informs us that:

that's what hate groups do. They tell people that the nation
is being taken over. Join us, they say, and we will take back
the country. Everything will be alright again. We will build
a renewed, all-white America in which people like you will be
in charge (p. 84).

Social Movement

Social movement refers to the breaking off of a segment of
society when the general society does not meet its standards or
needs. This can occur when a certain segment of the people are not
comfortable with the established order. They find that the existing
values, the opportunities and beliefs are not in line with their own
values, beliefs and needs. Social movements also occur when the old
value systems are not in effect anymore and a certain segment of the
population wants them to be reestablished.

The separating segment--the extremists--do not necessarily re-
move themselves physically from the rest of society, but emotionally.
There is some physical separation during times of meetings and other
exclusionary activities. During this separatist activity another
form of cohesiveness and community is evolving. They come together
to attempt to supply what they need. When they separate from the
general societal group, they are also becoming socially distinct--creating group boundaries. New ideas are formed, new actions are engaged in and approved of. A new social group is formed.

The concept of social movement is dealt with as the researcher examines the emergent and spontaneous norms of white extremist organizations rather than the formal norms set up by institutional organizations. These extremist identity norms--intolerance; violence; excitement; religious extremism and distortion--are not often held in high regard by the society at large, indeed society is often opposed to them.
CHAPTER II

WHITE EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

The white extremist movement is composed of numerous groups and organizations. Each is working in its own way to create a society totally dominated by select white Christians and their values. This society, in effect, will be a society in which the majority of human rights are denied. Some of these groups seek to create an all-Aryan territory; others seek to reinstitutionalize Jim Crow segregation; some are sworn to protect their interpretation of the Constitution. In each case, white extremists believe that the United States government is controlled by non-whites and/or Jews in the form of ZOG. ZOG is the Zionist Occupational Government, a euphemism for this controlled government. In their minds, the idea of any form of racism and discrimination does not exist. They believe that there is a just cause for the angry white male. They seek to change the government through violence or by the use of mainstream political processes.

Some groups—as in the case of the Skinheads—consist of only a few individuals. Other groups—such as the Ku Klux Klan—have tens of thousands of members and collect millions of dollars in contributions. The white extremist movement has enlarged since 1980, especially among those white constituencies most disaffected from the
status quo.

Individuals frequently have multiple memberships in different organizations, financially supporting several groups. The level of ideological agreement and organizational cohesion is actually high, contrary to the assumptions of many who have studied these groups.

The white extremist movement has been in the United States, in some form, since the early 1800's. In 1845, nativists organized the Native American Party "forming into what can be regarded as the first significant hate group in American history, a secret society called the Supreme Order of the Star-Spangled Banner" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 15). Its goal was to rid the United States of foreign ideas and influences. Nativism grew into a powerful political movement, but since "groups like the Supreme Order were secret, members usually denied knowing anything about them. This earned the whole movement the nickname the Know-Nothings" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 15).

The white extremist movement includes both the Doc Marten-booted members of the Skinhead cult, the criminally inclined Aryan Brotherhood, the Klan and neo-Nazis, as well as the sermonizing Christian Identity and the Patriots. Various estimates of memberships have been reported. "Approximately 25,000 activists form the hard core. Another 150,000 to 200,000 people sympathize with the movement, either attending meetings and rallies or buying literature and making donations" (CDR, 1992, p. 41). In 1989, the Klanwatch Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center counted 205 white extremist groups
in the United States. They included "fifty-three Klan groups, twenty-six neo-Nazi groups, thirty-eight Christian Identity groups, and twelve other hate organizations" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 105).

There are various principles which form the fundamental beliefs espoused by the white extremist organizations. Conspiracies are a major focus of the groups, daily reports being given on the Internet. For some, the issues are more basic, such as the belief that there is to be a great race war and they--of the white extremism movement--will be the only ones properly equipped and prepared.

The majority of people who live and work in the United States see the U.S. as a good nation, with improvements needed--in contrast to members of white extremist organizations. The U.S. is not a country where there are mass migrations to other nations. Most see the United States as a place for the oppressed to begin a new life or to escape the injustices of other governments. Members of white extremist groups, however, have a very different view of this country. They (Flynn, 1989) would argue that

but beneath the surface there are a significant number of people to whom its not a melting pot at all. To them, it's a boiling cauldron; not beautiful, spacious skies, but acid rain destroying the land; not amber waves of grain, but the fallow fields of a foreclosed family farmer. It's no longer a land of opportunity, but one of stifling regulation that robs the common folk and is headed toward a centralized economic, if not political, dictatorship. (p. 20).

Ku Klux Klan

The United States fuels the homefire of one of the world's oldest terrorist organizations. For over one hundred years this orga-
Organization has been a secretive, aggressive and powerful terrorist and political machine. This organization, dedicated to preserving white privilege, is the Invisible Empires of the Hooded Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Since its inception, there have been five significant epochs in the history of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States since its inception. The first epoch was the birth of the movement during the post-Civil War Reconstruction era. In the 1920's the Klan re-surfaced for its second epoch. The third epoch began after World War II and went into the 50's and 60's. The 1970's ushered in the fourth revival. The fifth epoch began in the 1980's and grew even stronger in the 1990's. It is during this epoch that perhaps we will see a sixth revival with an increasing numbers of hate crimes being reported.

Starting as a social club, the KKK resembled an outlaw army by the end of its first epoch. "In December of 1865 in Pulaski, near the Alabama border of Tennessee, six young men decided to form a club. They were mainly college men who had been officers during the late War for Southern Independence" (Chalmers, 1987, p. 8). The club was named the Young Men's Democratic Club and set out to have some fun playing practical jokes and scaring the darkies. In April of 1867, a constitution was drawn up, General Nathan Bedford Forrest was elected Grand Wizard and the rules of the game changed. Power, beatings, lynchings and murder were part of their agenda. Shortly thereafter KKK members were both feared and respected and they took
full advantage of it.

The second emergence of the Klan came just before World War I, as a nativist movement. This time they gained millions of members by enthusiastically heralding Protestant religious values. The movement reached its peak in the mid-1920's and their main targets of their hatred and terrorism were the people who they considered to not be 100% American. "Blacks took second place to Catholics and Jews as the Klan's targets" (Tucker, 1991, p. 5). The Catholics were at the top of this list because the Klan thought of their primary role as defending against the menace of the Pope and his Catholic congregations. "The exalted Cyclops of Portland [Oregon] told an audience in the Salem armory: the only way to cure a Catholic is to kill him" (Chalmers, 1987, p. 90).

The Klan and its membership grew. Signs boasting TWK (Trade With a Klansman) popped up in store windows and job promotions and social acceptance were secured with a membership in the local Klan chapter. Towns boasted welcoming signs which expressed the local sentiment: Nigger, don't let the sun fall on you here tonight! Not only did the KKK do well in the deep Southern states, there was even some cynical speculation that the mask and hood might become the official symbol of the Buckeye State (Chalmers, 1987) that there was a time during the 1920's when it seemed that the mask and hood had become the official symbol of the Buckeye State. With a membership of close to four hundred thousand, the Ohio Klan was the largest in the nation. (p. 175)

Over two million members and a series of impressive political victories won by 1924 showed that the not very invisible empire had
some very visible goals. It has been estimated that the Klan, during this time "had raised $75 million and had as many as 4 million members" (Coates, 1987, p. 34).

There were several increases and decreases in the membership roles through the different epochs. There were no more than several hundred thousand members by the end of 1928 as the ruthlessness of the Klan became abhorrent to the public. The depression also took its toll on the Klan. People were too concerned about feeding their families to bother with secret meetings and costumes.

The major concerns of the Klan have hardly ever altered through the years. A primary focus has always been on the educational systems, the protection of the Constitution and pure, white womanhood, maintaining white supremacy, and the separation of Church and State.

The Klan was revived again after World War II, in its usual violent and aggressive manner. "October of 1946, the first cross since Pearl Harbor was burned on Stone Mountain" (Chalmers, 1987, p. 325). Special attention was paid to the returning, restless servicemen who were frightened about their jobs. The Klan enjoyed telling these young men about the niggahs who got all the good jobs while they were away.

The Supreme Court decision against school segregation on May 17, 1954, gave the Invisible Empire a new agenda for action. The Klan was a serious enough threat to be concerned with, but not really effective in counteracting the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. Violence and intimidation were still the mainstay of the Klan, al-
though a new feature was added to the Klan's repertoire of violent action. "Between January 1, 1956, and June 1, 1963, at least one hundred and thirty-eight bundles of dynamite sent clouds of smoke rising upward" (Chalmers, 1987, p. 351). The Klan also turned more and more to anti-Semitic issues and became intertwined with a heavily bible-inspired philosophy. Integration and interracial relation--most particularly, marriage and sexual relations--were denounced as Communist-Jewish conspiracy plots. The main goal of this conspiracy plot, according to the Klan and its ministers, was to overthrow decent white-Christian mankind.

The mid-60's saw some changes in the attitude regarding the Klan's violent tendencies. New laws were enacted making civil rights violence a federal crime. The Federal government began to punish Klan offenders when the state or local law enforcement agencies could or would not. The result was a dwindling membership in the Klan. The FBI became instrumental in securing evidence and testimony which led to prison sentences for some of their overzealous members.

The 1970's saw the fourth epoch of the Klan as a public relations campaign which rallied around the young and handsome David Duke. This visible symbol of the Klan as an educated politician gave the illusion that the Klan was less harmful. The 70's saw a shift in their approach and the beginnings of a new unholy alliance with other white extremist groups. The award-winning journalist, Patsy Sims, elegantly described the state of the Klan in 1976 (CDR, 1992) by stating that
The Klan began popping up like crabgrass: throwing its hood into the vice-presidential race; infiltrating the Marine Corps; protesting busing in Boston and Louisville; joining the textbook fight in Charleston, West Virginia; creating a scandal in the New York prison system; prompting the Illinois legislature to conduct a major investigation; burning crosses from California to Maryland; going to court to sue and be sued, and appearing on national talk shows. (p. 7).

As if to support Ms. Sims claim, there began a dramatic increase in the number of cross-burnings, rallies, marches, and violence. The ranks of the Klan grew during this time.

The fifth epoch involved an openly vocal and armed underground movement along with an aggressive political machine. "Its infamous episodes of night riding and lynching have made way for public demonstrations and forays into a mainstream party as well as the formation of ties with other right-wing factions" (Ridgeway, 1990, p. 20). To keep in step with the times, the Klan continued to shift and refine its strategy and goals as it stepped into the eighties. Its new position was that it was not so much fighting to protect the white privileges as it was trying to regain them. Everybody knew someone who had reportedly lost his or her job because a black or a foreigner had to be hired for it. This was, in essence, an attack on affirmative action and multiculturalism.

Attitudes in the eighties had lost so much ground on the issue of equality that one of the largest demonstrations in the Deep South since the 1960's took place in Forsyth County, Georgia, in 1987. "It is amazing," said Atlanta City Councilman Hosea Williams, who was hit twice by flying stones, "that this kind of racial violence can happen in this country in 1987" (Freidrich, 1987, p. 20). This so-
cietal change in attitude is not diminishing, even as we speak in 1996. Significant proportions of whites have taken a different look at their lost privileges and are acting out their feelings. The form of their aggression is also changing to a new look. The Monitor Group of Klanwatch suggests that the young people are rejecting the old KKK look and supporting the aggressive rebellious new looks of the militias and skinheads.

In the U.S., the Klan people are forming new alliances with other extremist groups. For these folks this seems to be a positive swing. "Reported hate crimes, from painting swastikas on synagogues to racially motivated murders have steadily risen over the past four years; cross burnings alone doubled in 1991" (Riley, 1992, p. 25).

Thom Robb, who in 1989 assumed the post of Grand Wizard in David Duke’s Klan group, made known the plans to begin a new type of training for its more promising members. He wants to open a facility for white extremists who show promise to be effective politicians for the sake of the cause. Robb exclaimed, "Louisiana has one David Duke, we plan to give America a thousand of them" (Landau, 1993, p. 72).

The actions of the Klan and its right-wing partners have become so intertwined that a sixth epoch can be predicted for the Klan. Klan members have become so professional as to sell themselves with business cards which are emblazoned with three large red K's. Even the little Klan youngsters can show their loyalty to their heritage with balloons depicting a hooded night rider on horseback.
Some of Robb's other ideas for preservation of America are:
(a) post soldiers at the Mexican border to stop illegal immigrants;
(b) to quarantine all AIDS patients; and (c) to put an end to affirmative action. If one thinks that the Klan has become softer in their approach, consider what has happened in California with Proposition 87 or how affirmative action has been abolished. If one questions how threatening the Klan's ideas may really be, we only need to look as far as the past months in the state of Michigan. Are we seeing the birth of the sixth epoch?

In June of 1995, the Grand Rapids Press ran an article on a Klan demonstration in the small town of Hillsdale, Michigan. The journalist described a t-shirt worn by a Klansman with a picture of a hooded Klansman and the words Boys in the Hood. The article went on to say that David Neumann, who is the state's Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, emphasized that his group is incorrectly portrayed as a hate group. "We are a white civil rights organization" (Loechler, 1995, p. C3).

Very recently, in October of 1995, in downtown Grand Rapids, this researcher heard Thom Robb exclaim, "I'm here to tell you that the last hope for America is the Ku Klux Klan" (VanWeelde, 1995, [film]). At the conclusion of his speech, Robb approached the crowd, putting his right arm forward in an open-handed salute, and shouted, "White Power, White Power" (VanWeelde, 1995, [film]).

The Klan has learned to adjust and adapt to social and political changes. The Klan has, consequently, learned to Survive!
The Militia

According to Harbert (1995),

the U.N. plans to conquer the U.S. using the National Guard and L.A. gangs to disarm the public. The Amtrak repair yards in Indianapolis will be used as a huge crematorium to dispose of political dissidents. Black helicopters have been buzzing Western states on missions of surveillance for the invading U.N. troops. Small color bar-code stickers found on the back of road signs will help direct the invading troops. The government has installed electronic devices in car ignitions to stall autos on the day the new world order takes over. (p. 63)

Such statements are the voice of reason for an estimated 100,000 members of various militia organizations throughout the United States. The worn-out phrase of angry white male can be best illustrated through this group. Gun control, affirmative action, corrupt politics, the women's movement, environmental issues and taxes are some of the important issues which these folks feel obligated to address. The representatives cry that militias have been around since the formation of the United States.

Sociologists and political analysts, although recognizing the history of militia movements, have proposed that the modern-day militia members are actually offshoots of the Posse Comitatus and the Christian Patriot Movement. Whereas the traditional militia was founded to defend the country's freedom, today's militia is arming themselves against their own government, their own countrymen. The militias' agenda has more to do with politics and retaining white privilege than protecting their freedom against a real physical threat.

According to congressional testimony brought forward by the
Center For Democratic Renewal, the militias are "part of the white supremacist movement. Their agenda is racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic. They are linked to mainstream politicians who legitimize their points of view" (CDR, 1995, p. 1). Conspiracies, constitutional interpretations and patriotic martyrdom are among the salient elements which fuel this social movement.

The internal structure of militias is filled with generals, commanders, lieutenants, camp followers and chaplains. Gun shows are a popular connecting point along with shortwave radios, fax networks and the internet. Large gatherings have drawn the KKK, the militia and the neo-Nazi groups together—such as at the Mountain Church of Christian Identity leader, Robert Mile's farm in Choctah, Michigan. Montana has also hosted various meetings under the direction of John Trochman, of the Militia of Montana (MOM).

The majority of activities for these groups are related to guerrilla warfare, survivalist training, stockpiling weapons and food and keeping abreast of current events which are discriminately fed to them through the politically well-versed funnels of leaders and Christian Identity ministers.

Up to the time of the Oklahoma bombings, the militia groups in this country had gone quite unnoticed, except for the knowledgeable groups and individuals who monitor extremist groups. Since that time there has been publicity surrounding these organizations through press releases, interviews, sociological investigations and the various media sources. As a result of previous knowledge and the cur-
rent publicity, a picture of more than big boys playing in the woods has emerged. The connections between terrorist-type organizations, racist groups and aggressively militant groups have been exposed and substantiated. The question of the influence of these groups connecting with each other is answered affirmatively by simply looking at the now famous photo of the fireman holding the dead child from the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

Skinheads

"121 known murders, 302 assaults, and 301 cross burnings in the mid-1980's alone" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 79). Violence such as this is reason to investigate any group which may be supporting or encouraging such actions. Members of the Skinhead groups in the United States were the perpetrators of these crimes. Where did these folks come from? Why do they feel they are justified in their actions? We will look briefly at the origins of these cults before explaining their history in the United States.

There were two groups in England during the 50's and 60's called the Hard Mods and the Teddy Boys. The Teddy Boys were working class youths who experienced hard times as a result of the decline in the industrial employment. They were guilty of many unprovoked attacks on the community of non-whites, primarily Black West Indians, whom they blamed for their hardships.

The Hard Mod was a cult of dressed down guys who favored boots and suspenders. They sought a clean look as a rebellion to the pop-
ular hippie style. They, too, adapted an overly aggressive manner. The close shaved heads, boots, and suspenders merged with the Teddies' factory garb to form a new cult, the skinhead. The boots were for kicking, the factory garb was for clothes which would not easily tear in a fight, the shaven head was so the enemy could not pull his hair. These were practical reasons for this costuming. Britain's legacy of football violence was from the preoccupation of these gangs to attend their favored team's game and end it in a skirmish with rival team supporters.

These were the sort of youths who were recruited by the National Front, Britain's National Socialist party, as street soldiers--using their violent reputation. Racism became apparent and was made the central focus. Rather than being a working-class struggle, the skinhead cult became a racist political cult.

Out of Chicago, Illinois came the first skinhead organization in the United States. According to Hamm (194), a prison convict, former member of the American Nazi party, an artist interested in Mein Kampf, a proponent of Oi music, Clark Martell, was the organizer of the first twelve young men to become a skinhead cult in the United States, Chicago's Romantic Violence. This group, Romantic Violence, was built around the Aryan philosophy of white supremacy.

The second skinhead group came out of the Haight-Ashbury district of California. "In 1984, an ex-con named Robert Heick, changed his name to Bob Blitz, sported suspenders, Doc Marten boots, Fred Perry shirts and Levis" (Hamm, 1994, p. 5).
Blitz began a gang of a dozen young white youths called the American Front. From these youths came several organized groups throughout the state. The skinhead movement has grown rapidly in a short time. It has appeared on the East Coast and the West. It is in Grand Rapids, Michigan (Pit Bull Boys) and in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Confederate Hammer Skins of Tulsa). The individual groups are small, numbering eight to 20 members.

It has been speculated that were it not for an adult influence, these small groups would have disappeared from the United States. This will never be known for sure. What we are sure of is that there was a heavy influence from a former Klan member, a former Minuteman, the organizer of the White Brotherhood, a minister of the New Christian Crusade Church, organizer of the Border Patrol, a television repairman, the founder of the White Aryan Resistance (W.A.R.), Tom Metzger. Ridgeway (1900) states:

Tom Metzger, as the head of the 2,000-member White Aryan Resistance (WAR), is the single person most responsible for drawing young people into the far-right political movement. He is the foremost West Coast Klan leader, a peer of far-right paragons Bob Miles and Richard Butler. In 1978, Metzger ran for County Supervisor; in 1980 he won the Democratic primary for Congress. In 1982, he racked up more than 75,000 votes statewide in the race for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate. (p. 169)

He took over a small group called the Aryan Youth Movement, put his son, John, in charge of it and began his crusade to gather storm troopers for the Neo-Nazi movement. Tom Metzger has often been quoted for using an infamous proclamation: "Whoever has the youth, has the future."
One of the key elements of organizing to maintain and recruit members into the skinhead cult is through the use of music. Punk rock, or White Power rock, is the format for the white extremist music scene. They favor the bands of Skrewdriver, U.S. Chaos and Anti-heroes. The umbrella network of Blood and Honour supports and promotes such punk bands. According to the Dignity Report in its Summer of 1995 publication, there are 13 bands which are formed with the neo-Nazi philosophy, including Rohowa out of Canada.

The Internet is the source of some interesting stories from skinheads. A well written page expressed what a skinhead felt he was and what being a skinhead means. This skinhead (Skinhead, 95/07/26) gave a frightening perspective of his movement:

Being a skinhead is about a way of life, one that lives on in your heart long after you've hung up your boots and braces. No other cult offers the same sense of belonging, of brotherhood, that skinheads offer each other across the globe. And that's why we'll still be hanging about on street corners in 25 years time. ([on-line])

The Monitor newsletter from the Center For Democratic Renewal has estimated that there are approximately 4,000 young people involved in skinhead cults. The largest skinhead group is Tom Metzger's, "which may have as many as 1,400 members (nationwide)" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 80).

The skinheads are a colorful group with their clothes, music, and aggression. One part of the costuming which can not be easily concealed is the nazi-type tatoos--thunderbolts and swastikas. The style changes according to how noticeable members want to be. Some observers have stated that some skinheads are letting their hair
grow and they are wearing regular clothes to be more acceptable for recruiting purposes.

They are a group, not large in number, that most people do not take too seriously. Others, are fearful of the effect that these groups can have. People who monitor extremist activities feel that there is a need for concern. "What you have here is not the last dying remnants of an old problem. What we have here is just the embryo of a future problem" (Ross, 1988, p. 13).

When considering the violence attributed to this group and the goals of other older organizations, such as the Klan and the Aryan Nations, this association could be seen as a lethal combination. Young people attract more young people. Music attracts young people. Guns and promises of excitement attract young people.

The other white extremist groups use the skinhead cult as recruiting grounds for the grown-up clubs of the Militias and KKK's and the Neo-Nazis. Since these are terrorists in training it would do well to probe the organizations which are grooming and nurturing these young minds. We will look at the organizations which supply the philosophy and ideology for the skinhead cults, the Aryan Nations and the Neo-Nazi groups.

Aryan Nations

"A Hayden Lake, Idaho, organization that is one of the preeminent racist groups in the nation, preaching the anti-Semitic Identity religion" (Flynn, 1989, p. xi). A very simplistic definition of
a powerful organization, Aryan Nations is more than an organization. It is a way of thinking, a way of living with an ideology which some are willing to give their lives for. The Aryan Nations began long before the Lake Hayden complex was formed.

Aryan is a term favored by those of the neo-Nazi persuasion, who believe in the superiority of the white race. It supposedly signifies the white people of Europe and their descendants.

There are ready definitions of Aryan, to be found by the researcher who surfs the Internet. Aryan organizations (Storm-front, 04/17/95) "recognize individuals as biologically Aryan if they are wholly of non-Jewish, non-Asiatic European ancestry. In every Aryan there is an instinctive drive to rise above mediocrity and decadence" ([on-line]). In white extremist literature and speeches there is a constant reference to the Aryans as being the only true descendants of God, that the Bible was written only for the whites and how all of the improvements, inventions and discoveries were made by white people.

Richard Butler is the acknowledged founder of the United States formal organization of Aryan Nations. The year of 1974 is the date recognized as the beginning of the compound in the state of Idaho. "In 1974, Butler established a large compound near the town of Hayden Lake, Idaho, which he called the Aryan Nations" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 71). It was meant to be the political arm of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian. One of the interesting accomplishments of this group was the formation of The White Bastion. This was an ac-
tual map illustrating how the U.S. territory should be divided and delegated for specific races. Among others, there is an all white section, an American Indian section and a Negro section. All people of certain non-white races would be required to live in these restricted areas.

Butler intentionally targeted the prison systems to expand his membership of the Aryan Nations. He felt that a natural segregation was evident in the prisons (as there is unnatural segregation in U.S. cities and residential areas) and therefore would promote the ideology of the Aryan race. Aryan Brotherhood spread rapidly, enchanting the prisoners with propaganda about their actually being prisoners of war and how they are victims of a Jewish-dominated system that favors blacks and other minorities over whites. The Aryan Brotherhood refused to die, even when Butler officially disbanded the organization within the prisons. There are still numerous and very strong chapters in the prisons throughout the United States. There is even a mutation of this group within the prisons, the Aryan Resistance Movement. It formed as an ideological unit of the Aryan Nations. It publishes a newsletter, Whitefire and keeps tabs on those who are joining the organization of Aryan Nations. The purpose of this task is to police the new members to insure that they are not law enforcement informants.

The Aryan World Congress is an annual event and probably one of the largest, drawing members of several racist groups together to share brotherhood and ideas. An interesting activity happens at this
get-together. It is a blessing of the guns, signifying the groups' focus. These meetings attract a wide attendance, including members from Europe and Canada.

Butler's ideology best expresses their beliefs and intentions. Examples of their declarations (Sargent, 1995) follow:

The Aryan does not have a sexual union outside his own race, but seeks always the improvement of his own species. Where property is concerned, the aid will be towards the nation's citizens in ownership and benefit rather than alien private ownership and benefit. The financial system of International Jewish capitalism will be ended. There is no unearned income, or reward without service. To steel the body, to prepare and fortify the mind in order to serve race and God, is the creed of Aryan youth. Every child that an Aryan mother brings into the world is a battle waged for the existence of her people. The thoughts of Aryan woman are dominated by the desire to enter family life. The army is for the defense of a country and of a Divine ordained racial concept, not for the protection of a political and economic system. Philosophy, God's chosen Aryans are to rule forever over the mud people; God's chosen Aryans are to struggle to death against the spawn of Satan. (pp. 150-154)

This organization, like the others, has an Internet connection through the Aryan Nations Net computer page. The ease with which they can communicate between themselves and with other groups makes it understandable how the movements can grow so rapidly.

**Neo-Nazi**

Followers of Hitler came to the United States and attempted to establish Nazi groups and, in 1924, realized that goal. In Chicago, a society known as Teutonia was the first such success. It was able to establish a few cells in some major cities, keeping ties with overseas groups and sending monetary contributions back to Hitler.
It’s membership was estimated to be only about one hundred, but more importantly, other Nazi groups were formed—and as a result—the Nazi propaganda spread throughout the states and remains in societal and political groups today.

The early 1930’s saw the proliferation of associations called the Swastika League, the Friends of the Hitler Movement, the Friends of Germany and the German-American Bund. The German-American Bund was the most aggressive and successful movement. The movement was seen as a purely social organization to many people who were interested in a tie to their homeland. The social group was more than what most had bargained for. According to Bell (1973),

there were two established goals for the American chapters: establish an effective power base by nazifying the German-American community and to sway the American public opinion in a pro-German direction in order to prevent the United States government from offering significant opposition to Nazi policies. (p. 13)

There was a division of the group known as Ordnungsdienist (Order Service) which was a paramilitary unit. The members were uniformed in typical Nazi garb with a Sam Brown belt and swastika arm bands and engaged in military drills and weaponry skill.

Another chapter was founded for the youth. This group was modeled after the Hitler Youth, complete with the swastika belts, thunderbolt insignia and dagger worn at the hip—inscribed with Blut und Ehre (Blood and Honor). All divisions of the organization had their own publication as their means of communicating and disseminating propaganda. The basic propaganda was that only the true German people could enable America to attain it’s total greatness. Recruitment
was aimed at the "young, arrogant, resolute, fanatics firmly committed to promoting National Socialism in America" (Bell, 1973, p. 8).

The movement was concerned with identifying friends and foes alike. Card files were kept on active and former members, sympathizers and enemies. The ideology promoting these tactics is a belief that only the Germans within the organization are united by a common blood and race community. It was believed that these very people were the hope of American greatness.

When the origins of the Bund became known to the general public, society reacted to it. The government began investigations, counter-demonstrators appeared, law suits were filed, veterans invaded their meetings. The movement was rather defunct by the end of 1941.

The harassment suffered by the Nazi groups in America was not enough to put their ideology out of existence. The death of Hitler, himself, did not put it out of existence. In the 1940's, another movement took the place of the Bund.

"The first American neo-Nazi organization to form after World War II, the National Renaissance party (NRP), was led by James Madole of Beacon, New York, from its founding in 1949 until his death in 1978" (George, 1992, p. 352). The NRP was regarded as a comic book style organization with its aggressiveness and excess in dressing and acting. The organization of less than 75 people drifted into occultism just before the death of the leader and the movement itself. From its ranks, however, sprang several other smaller groups which
have aided in keeping the fires burning in the Nazi movement.

The American Nazi Party is a group which many folks remember as a negative symbol of Nazism. It was founded in 1959 by George Lincoln Rockwell, who was a living symbol of the uniformed Nazi with an arrogant mannerism and love of publicity. Rockwell changed the name to the National Socialist White People's party in 1966, although his flamboyant manner did not change. He created publications for the movement; he authored; he lectured; and he created a hate bus in counter protest of the freedom riders of the 60's. George Lincoln Rockwell died in 1967, a victim of assassination, by a disgruntled party member. Several variants of his group took form after this, such as the White Party of America, the National White People’s Party, and the National Alliance. Rockwell’s old party was changed also to the New Order. The party has since moved to New Berlin, Wisconsin with a small membership.

The National Socialist Party of America was the third and highly recognized Nazi organization with impact in America. It was created as an alternative form of the Nazi party after the founder, Frank Collin, was ejected from the former Rockwell group when it was discovered that he was half Jewish. The goals of the party were similar in their aspirations. They believed in laws of territory, biological integrity, law of status and motherhood for females. A subsequent leader retired from the movement when it became known that he was actually an Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms informant.

Numerous splinter groups have been born from these three Nazi
organizations. Several are still in existence, most are gone. A few of these groups are worth a minimal description.

National Alliance, founded by Dr. William Pierce--author of the National Vanguard and The Turner Diaries is one such group. Several members of The Order were members of this group. The group was still active in 1991.

The SS Action Group was formed in 1979 in Detroit and is known for its clashes with counter-demonstrators. They publish two newsletters, S.S. Action Group Michigan Briefing and Aryans Awake. This group was still functioning in 1991.

The United White People’s Party was based in Cleveland, Ohio and attempted to form a coalition of all the various neo-Nazi groups, but was not successful. It is now defunct.

Other Organizations

Other organizations which have been instrumental in keeping the white extremist ideology alive in the United States were: The Silver Shirts; The Mountain Church; The Order; Posse Comitatus; Christian Patriot Movement; White Aryan Resistance and Christian Identity, which is the religious foundation and provides the ideological substance needed for justification of the actions of the members.

Silver Shirts

According to Ridgeway (1990),

when Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933, [William] Pelley announced the formation of the Silver Legion, better
known as the Silver Shirts, modelled after Hitler's own Brown Shirts, the Silver Shirts openly supported Hitler, cooperated with the pro-Nazi German-American Bund, and embarked on a program of vicious anti-Semitism. (p. 45)

The Silver Shirts engaged in aggressive anti-Semitism, sent monetary support to Hitler and worked with the German-American Bund organization. At one point, Pelley declared that Jesus Christ had accepted an honorary Silver Shirt's commission. Ridgeway (1990) describes the end of the Silver Shirts. "In 1942 President Roosevelt charged Pelley and others with violation of the Espionage Act. Pelley was sentenced to fifteen years in prison, becoming, thanks to the Roosevelt administration, a political martyr" (Ridgeway, 1990, p. 46).

The Mountain Church

In 1971, Robert Miles, founded the Mountain Church in Michigan. According to Ridgeway (1990),

from near Flint, Michigan he brought together the leadership of the often warring klans and other white racist groups for well over a decade. A former Republican leader and insurance executive, he became a grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in Michigan and headed up George Wallace's 1968 presidential campaign in that state. (p. 22)

Miles publishes a newsletter, From The Mountain, and uses his church as one of the largest gathering places for the white extremist movement. He uses a dualism theology--God and Devil, good and evil, life and death--in the Christian Identity beliefs.

The Mountain Church draws heavily from all the different facets of the movement, the KKK, the Neo-Nazis and the Aryan Nations.
It has been reported that Miles has closed down his activities, in 1990, due to the ill health of his wife.

The Order

Otherwise known as the Silent Brotherhood, The Order was formed by Robert Mathews, in the state of Washington. According to Flynn (1995),

in September 1983, in a barnlike shed on his farm in the northeast corner of Washington state, Mathews formed a group he later named the Silent Brotherhood. Over fifteen months it became the most dangerous right-wing underground group since the Ku Klux Klan first rode more than a century earlier. (p. 20)

This organization was actually an underground splinter group of the Aryan Nations. The Order became widely recognized after their successful assassination of a controversial Jewish talk-show host, Alan Berg. After a crime spree of robberies, totaling in the millions of dollars, they contributed to several white supremacist organizations throughout the United States. "Eventually all members of The Order were apprehended, except for Mathews, who died in a shootout with FBI agents in December 1984" (George, 1992, p. 371).

Posse Comitatus

"A prominent organization, the Posse Comitatus, was formed in Portland, Oregon in the late 1960's" (Ridgeway, 1990, p. 20). The Posse Comitatus began their existence as The Minutemen in the 1960's, which was formed by Robert DePugh. The name, Posse Comitatus, is Latin and means Power of the County. The Posse functions under the
belief that all white men between the ages of 18 to 45 belong to the posse and "believe that the government should be of the county and that the highest government official should be the county sheriff" (Sargent, 1995, p. 345). The Posse is also entranced with the law and have been the source of many county clerks' nightmares as they file lawsuit after lawsuit with the county offices, in regards to their insistence that the law applies according to their perception of it. "The organization gained national notoriety in 1983 when one of its members, Gordon Kahl, killed two federal marshals in a North Dakota shootout" (Landau, 1993, p. 63). Gordon Kahl's death led to his becoming an extremist martyr for the movement.

Christian Patriot Movement

"The basic tenet of the Christian Patriot Movement is that the current government is in violation of the Constitution" (Wassmuth, 1995, p. 1). Members of this organization believe that the tax system is incorrectly set up; that only property owners can vote; that the United States has a special agreement with God and the white people; and that whites and nonwhites should perform different functions as citizens. Tax resistance and silver/gold bartering are functions they justify. Many of the members have turned toward the Christian Identity movement and have begun "training with weapons and living in communal encampments preparing for nuclear cataclysm, race war, economic disaster, or all three" (CDR, 1992, p. 48).
White Aryan Resistance

White Aryan Resistance (W.A.R.) is the creation of Tom Metzger and his Third Position politics. Third Position politics professes "no allegiance to either the Capital West or the formerly Communist East. Instead, they focus their propaganda attacks against white economic and political elites" (CDR, 1992, p. 46).

Metzger places a special emphasis on the importance of using skinheads for street warriors for the neo-Nazi state and uses technology to his benefit. Race and Reason, a cable television production, is one source of propaganda he uses. An internet page also aids in keeping all of America in touch with W.A.R.

Although this organization was heavily fined, after the murder of a young Ethiopian man, W.A.R. is still very viable and strong.

Christian Identity

According to Ezekiel (1995),

for several decades the major energizing element in the movement has been the theology of Christian Identity. This religion teaches that the whites are the only true children of God, a being who is white. Identity teaches that the whites are the people described in the Old Testament as Israelites. The tribe of Judah became Germany, the tribe of Dan became Denmark, and so forth. Ultimately, the white God in-gathered His people to the United States and Canada, where they draw strength and fulfill their destiny to rule the world. (p. xxvi)

Furthermore, the people who are referred to as mud people are said to be the spawn of Satan and not fully human. Jesus, according to the teachings of Christian Identity, was not Jewish, but an Aryan from one of the lost tribes of Israel.
Dr. Wesley Swift is credited with being the promoter of Christian Identity to the masses of white extremists in the early 1960’s. Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations, and Robert Miles of The Mountain Church have been two strong advocates using Christian Identity as their base.

Swift, Butler and Miles have been instrumental in gaining dedication for these beliefs within the workings of other white extremist groups.

Communication

This section will name some of the forms of communication utilized by the various white extremist organizations. Coates (1987) states that

in 1905 Thomas Dixon, Jr., a Southern minister who had grown to manhood during Reconstruction, was so enamored of what he considered the nightly exploits of the Klansmen that he published what turned out to be a best-selling novel, The Klansman: An Historic Romance of the Ku Klux Klansman. (p. 31)

Dixon’s novel was transformed into a film entitled, The Birth Of A Nation. The white extremist ideology, with this beginning, has been reinforced through the decades with various publications ranging from books, newsletters, guide journals, to periodicals. Numerous other sources of the movement’s propaganda are delivered through the radio and television, and the new mecca of communication--the internet.

The circulation of The Holy Book of Adolph Hitler was an effective form of bonding for the extremist movement. Written in 1951 by James Battersby of Southport, England, this book became the basis
for the elevation of Hitler to supposed sainthood.

One of the leading propagandists for the extremist movement was William Pierce, author of The Turner Diaries (under the name of Andrew McDonald). It was an influential, 1974 novel giving a somewhat glorified account of a future (1990) world revolution carried out by a neo-Nazi-style guerrilla group called The Order. Kronenwetter (1992) states that

although it is a work of fiction, the NA considers the book a 'handbook for white victory'. Although the story it tells is unlikely, it does seem to have provided a model for a band of would-be revolutionaries who also called themselves The Order. (p. 60)

William Pierce was also editor of the American Nazi Party’s guide journal, The National Socialist World. The creator of the organization, National Alliance, Pierce continued to be a major factor in the world of white extremist propaganda through the bimonthly sheet, National Vanguard, while also publishing hundreds of flyers, bulletins and magazines through the organization.

Lyndon LaRouche, of political extremist fame, besides running for the presidency during the 1970’s, 1980’s, and 1996, was responsible for various publications, magazines and newspapers. His contributions toward creating bonds between the different supremacy groups through the printed word including the following manuscripts: New Solidarity; Campaigner; Executive Intelligence Review; Investigative Leads; and Fusion.

The Spotlight, a newspaper of right-wing power broker, Willis Carto, was published by an "ideologically similar but stylistically
dissimilar far-right organization, the Liberty Lobby" (Langer, 1990, p. 85). Carto, also founded the revisionist Institute for Historical Review and the contemporary Populist Party. The Institute for Historical Review publishes a quarterly journal, eight newsletters annually and publishes and distributes dozens of books to support their beliefs.

Instead of handing out homemade fliers and making street-corner speeches, white extremists often disseminate their messages by newer and more modern methods. According to Chidley (1995),

their medium is on the cutting edge of technology, but their message is a throwback to darker times. They are the Holocaust revisionists, neo-Nazis and...militia members who regularly vent their claims and exchange information on the Internet. (p. 37)

Sophisticated personal computer bulletin boards, such as the Aryan Nations Net; American Patriot Fax Network; The Boot Boys; White Power Faq; or about a dozen other web sites which can be reached through the geo.pages on the Internet. These webs of information can be called up with a home computer, a modem and a telephone.

In addition to the Internet connections there is: (a) public access television, such as The Informed Citizen in Northern California, produced by militia leader, AnnaMarie Miller, a schoolteacher; (b) radio broadcasts like that which Mark Koernke, Mark From Michigan, sends over the airwaves; (c) home videos that allow the faithful members, as well as potential converts, to watch speeches on their own TV sets; (d) "Several racism publications list 'Dial A Number' which gives information on how to obtain hate material or how
to join various hate movements" (Miller, 1988, p. 149); (e) audio cassette tapes by some of the more notorious figures of the movement; and (f) telephone hot lines that interested parties can call to hear the latest tape-recorded conspiracy message.

There are several other noteworthy communications. An interesting publication is The Primrose and Cattlemen's Gazette, published by the Posse Comitatus' leader, Roderick Elliott. The tabloid's name itself is in reference to Elliott's assertion that Jewish-controlled banks lead American farmers down the primrose path.

Aid & Abet is the newsletter of Jack McLamb, a retired police officer, which specifically targets law enforcement officers for membership enrollment. McLamb has also published Operation Vampire Killer 2000, "McLamb's handbook for recruiting police officers into the movement" (Gardner, 1995, p. 19).

For a time, Tom Metzger of White Aryan Resistance, published a major racist newspaper, having an estimated circulation of thirty thousand in the early 1990's. WAR's newspapers and pamphlets printed articles about people of color, illustrating them as subhumans.

The literature circulated by the various factions of the white extremist movement at conventions and rallies reveals a great deal of insight into the nature and scope of a white extremist. A typical list of some usual seminars can read: Handgun Use for Personal Defense; Concealment of Valuables and Weaponry; Street Action; For Fear of the Jews; The Negro and the World Crisis; and A Straight Look at the Third Reich.
By far, one of the most profitable aspects of their communication network—monetarily and recruitment-wise—is the musical end of the propaganda spectrum. The network of Blood & Honour is the main organization within which the neo-Nazi skinhead bands have formed and operated. Racist rock was reborn in 1994 with the emergence of George Burdi’s Resistance Records label. Resistance publishes professional magazines and has managed to sign the majority of the American and Canadian neo-Nazi and white power bands, including Bound For Glory; Nordic Thunder; Max Resist; the Hooligans; and Burdi’s Toronto-based Rahowa. Staff (1995) states that

since its formation Blood & Honour has been one of the crucial elements of the neo-Nazi scene. Not only has it been an umbrella network within which the neo-Nazi skinhead bands have operated, but it has also been the focus of attention of other Nazi groups. (p. 12)

Currently, there are 13 bands either playing or in formation. Screwdriver; No Remorse; Squadron; Razor’s Edge; Chingford Attack; and Celtic Warrior are the most popular names.

Music has been a sore spot with many a teenager and parent through the decades, however, if we picture a scene through the eyes of a reporter, we might understand the ramifications of this type of music, and visualize the long-term consequences of the politics involved. CDR (1995) relates to a scene in the St Heliers Arms in December with Dutch and German nazis sieg-heiling, while Stuart and his friends belted out allegedly patriotic songs, was a clear indication of the nature of the people and politics involved. In 1987 the best known of the nazi bands, Skrewdriver, celebrated its tenth anniversary. (p. 17)
Profile

Who are these people who join the organizations under scrutiny? Are they normal people like us? Do they act differently? Do they have families? Do they attend the P.T.A. meetings? Would I recognize them in a restaurant? Folks who study other folks' actions--within segments of society--as well as the other people of the world, have a tendency to think of the subjects under study as odd or unique. Sociological research dictates that we study and analyze these subjects within the context of a select portion of society. A sociologist must study the people as an entirety, rather than as individuals. This fact lends a distinct flavor to answering the questions preceding. According to Kronenwetter (1992),

one of the main motives that brings people to these groups is the need to belong. According to Morris Dees, an anti-white-supremacy lawyer who has had many clashes with hate group figures in court, says many are 'looking for something to join.' They long for the chance 'to be a part of something.' (p. 86)

Some ex-members have revealed tactics used by the organization when recruiting. They explain how the recruiter represents himself as just a friend, concerned with helping a person out. After the person has become involved in the friendship, the rationalizing of the group's actions and the racism is brought in. The recruiters are using friendship to gain members. As Kronenwetter (1992) explains,

they simply try to present themselves as friends. 'They talk about helping [potential recruits] out,' he says. 'The racism comes in later.' Even then, they rationalize everything. They make it sound acceptable.' Eventually, many recruits simply accept racism as a necessary condition for belonging to the group. (p. 86)
Those who have studied white extremist groups have speculated that ambition to achieve power or glory lies at the center of joining. They remark on how many times people who they have interviewed have mentioned how a member, or themselves, have failed at attempts to achieve their life goals before they became involved in a white extremist organization. "Some people look to the hate movement as an opportunity to make something of themselves--to be important. Many are people who have failed at everything else they've tried to do" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 88).

A desire for excitement is another often mentioned reason for membership. "They are like little boys who have never grown up. They still dream of being Rambo" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 88). The anticipated clashes and arguments and sometimes brawls are a draw for a bored person. Rather than work at other adventures which life has to hold, it seems easier and quicker to join a group which has a reputation for excitement.

Self-hatred is another concept brought to the attention of researchers which brings a number of potential members to the groups' rolls. It is interesting to note how many people have very troubled lives when they join. Alcoholism, domestic violence and trouble in school are all topics which frequently come up in discussions between researchers and members.

Anger is an action which is seen as being associated with these groups. A question might be posed--was the anger already there within the person, or if it was brought out after joining. Kronenweit-
ter (1992) states that

Gordon Allport, a scholar who has studied the way prejudice develops in individuals, believes that insecurity is the real root of bigotry. The bigot—the kind of person most likely to join a hate group—is emotionally crippled. He (or she) 'seems fearful of his own instincts, of his own consciousness, of change, of his social environment. Since he cannot live in comfort with himself, or with others, he is forced to organize his whole style of living, including his social attitudes, to fit his crippled condition.' (p. 89)

A hate movement does give people something to belong to, a ready-made set of new friends awaits the individual with a membership. The feeling of power, with weapons, accommodates the needful person. There is always an element of excitement within these networks. The anger and insecurity which troubles many folks finds an acceptable place within the ranks of the white extremist movement. It is here, among these groups, that a person can display his unacceptable social behaviors, without punishment—usually even finding reward. George (1992) states that

most social psychologists and sociologists feel that one of the more important elements related to psychological make-up causing one to join a movement is the desire for recognition and favorable regard by others. For some people, if favorable attention is unattainable, perhaps notoriety will do. (p. 76)

Most members are not affluent; have troubles; are fearful of the future; and have stored up a lot of anger. These people needed relief from their emotional turmoil and found somewhere to get that relief. Many of these people could have opted for other methods of relief. According to Ezekiel (1995),

they did not have to be Nazis. Most were members in this extreme racist group because the membership served a function, not because they had to enact their racism. Given another format in which they could have relieved their fears, given an
alternative group that offered comradeship, reassuring activities, glamour, and excitement, they could have easily have switched their allegiances. (p. 159)

There is also an interesting parallel between the type of group and the average age of memberships. The skinhead group, which is also the youngest group in the United States, has an average membership age of 16 to early 20's. The next youngest—in its present form—are the Militia groups with an average age of 18 to 45. The Nazi groups—which have been in this country second longest to the Klan—are also second to the Klan as far as their average age of members, early 20's to late 30's. The Klan, the oldest organization, has the oldest average membership age of mid-20's to late 30's. Further research would be worthwhile to see if this social psychological assessment is truly accurate. These findings suggest that the oldest group has the oldest members and the youngest group has the youngest members.

Education is another variable. When speaking of members, not leaders, there is a belief that an 11th grade education is the norm for members of white extremist groups. There is considerable effort to change this perception by the organizations, but currently it holds up. Most members of extremist groups do not hold a professional occupation; they are blue-collar workers in skilled or semi-skilled positions—if employed. One of the most heated arguments will come from members who insist that their jobs and opportunities for advancement are being taken by undeserving nonwhites.

We will take a moment to review the common picture of the
leaders of these organizations, as they are strikingly different
from the masses they lead. Ezekiel (1996) states that the
leaders of today's white racist movement are very different:
They are smart men who have risen to the top of a highly com-
petitive vocation. They are good with words and body lan-
guage, and they can act out the emotions in which their follow-
ers revel--especially righteous indignation and contempt. (p.
B3)

The charisma of these leaders warrants discussion as an important
factor of the movement. An investigation into what is seen as cha-
risma is necessary. Ezekiel (1995) states that
at least cunning--is needed in greater quantity. Sheer per-
severance is highly important. You must be able to inspire
some trust. Most important, you must have audacity. The
appearance of courage is critical. Most important of all, a
leader must have a personality that allows followers to be-
lieve. He has confidence. (p. 145)

Ezekiel explains the importance of these characteristics of the
leaders by stating that the members, who are already insecure, are
ready and willing to give their allegiance to a leader--to share in
the leader's confidence.

Eric Hoffer, in his publication of The True Believer, describes
what he considers to be the importance of the leader, as well as the
charismatic features of a social movement leader. He states, "with-
out him there will be no movement" (Hoffer, 1951, p. 113). Hoffer
discusses Hitler and Mussolini as examples. "In the case of Mussolini
and Hitler, without them there would have been neither a Fascist nor
a Nazi movement" (Hoffer, 1951, p. 113). He illustrates the charis-
matic features.

The uncanny powers of a leader manifest themselves in his ab-
ility to dominate and almost bewitch a small group of able
men. These men must be fearless, proud, intelligent and capable of organizing and running large-scale undertakings. The most decisive for the effectiveness of a mass movement leader seem to be audacity, fanatical faith in a holy cause, an awareness of the importance of a close-knit collectivity, and, above all, the ability to evoke fervent devotion in a group of able lieutenants. (p. 115)

Aldon Morris offers a sensitive view on the subject of charisma and leadership in his discussion of the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King, Jr. Using Weber as the measure of charismatic characteristics, Morris discusses how Martin Luther King, Jr. was considered to be charismatic and how that influenced the movement. Morris (1984) describes how his analysis favors the stream of thought that King possessed both charisma and organizational skills, both of which are mandatory to a successful social movement.

King had precisely the type of personality that Weber conceptualized as charismatic. He [King] was viewed as extraordinary by large numbers of people; he was competent at his tasks; many people identified with his visions of a beloved community devoid of racism; and King had the talent to articulate this view forcefully through powerful oratory. (p. 279)

It is evident that leadership charisma and skills are pre-requisites for success of a social movement. Metzger, Butler and Robb have illustrated their finesse in these areas by their continued existence within the movement and their dedication, in spite of adversities. As long as there are potentially charismatic leaders to head the movement, it will be extremely difficult to curb the desire of people to join such groups.

The strong leaders and the wistful members have found each other, during stressful times, to create what might be regarded, by them, as a hope for the depressed, life for the discouraged, and
excitement for the bored.

To summarize this segment on the membership and leadership profile, we will close with a statement from Coates, the author of *Armed and Dangerous* (1987):

It behooves all, then, to examine what extent the selfsame background noise that pushed these people over the brink is being heard by millions of others who encounter the Survivalist credo with increasing regularity, as its proponents become ever more sophisticated as political organizers and manipulators of the mass media. (p. 192)

This quote should give food for thought about the potential for these groups to reach many more vulnerable people and how this may impact the future of race relations within the United States.
CHAPTER III

THEORY

Collective Behavior

Definition

The term, collective behavior, has been defined and used in so many different contexts that it is necessary to agree upon a definition for this particular investigation. This research project deals with a specific theoretical application, therefore, a definition will be presented which is consistent with that perspective—that of organized white extremism.

The Harper and Collins Dictionary of Sociology (1991) uses this definition of collective behavior:

the action or behavior of people in groups and crowds where, as the results of physical proximity, and the protection and contagion of the group, the action of individuals is out-of-the-ordinary, tends to depart from routine standards of social demeanor, and may be more than usually explosive and unpredictable. (p. 62)

This contemporary version of collective behavior is adequate for a general sense of the concept. Collective behavior is characterized by the presence of the conditions offered above. This description is also correct in that it details the type of action which is engaged in by people who join extremist groups—people often seen as volatile and quite unpredictable.

Smelser defined the concept of collective behavior in a rather
descriptive manner. In *Theory of Collective Behavior* (1963) he states that

in all civilizations men have thrown themselves into episodes of dramatic behavior, such as the craze, the riot, and the revolution. We stand amused by the foibles of the craze, ag­hast at the cruelties of the riot, and inspired by the fervor of the revolution. The nature of these episodes has long ex­cited the curiosity of speculative thinkers. This curiosity has evolved into a loosely defined field of sociology known as collective behavior. (p. 1)

Concerning white extremist groups, there are several elements which are essential to a definition of the specific type of collective behavior, namely: action; violence; contagion; anger/frustration and propaganda.

Groups is a concept which has import in understanding collective behavior. The issue of groups is mandatory in defining collective behavior, as the actions of collectivity cannot be explained by simply focusing on the behavior of a single member. Therefore, the unit of analysis is the group, not the individual.

Action is another important concept. The actions of those involved in collective behavior are usually of varying degrees of ab­normality. They are judged as being abnormal since the actions are not those which are normally engaged in by the mainstream society. This brings us directly to the issue of violence.

Violence is a concept which comes to mind when discussing the issue of social movements. Rebellion, aggression and revolution are synonymous with violence, and these are the terms which repeatedly present themselves in the social movement literature. Violence is one of the concepts which separates collective behavior from other
forms of social expression.

Contagion is of the utmost importance in the understanding of collective behavior because it is the glue that holds the movement together. This is what the leaders and recruiters designate as most important. A person, as an individual, comes under the influence of mainstream societal norms and is more hesitant to act out in an antisocial manner. However, if there is the support, encouragement and the likeness of mindset with others, there is a greater likelihood that actions will be carried out in antisocial ways. This encouragement of violent behavior has a two-fold effect. Action by one member simply reaffirms another’s convictions, and consequently, the more action that is taken is just that much more affirmation for each member.

Anger/Frustration is a concept which this researcher defines as being a viable part of the theory of collective behavior. The crowd or group acts in violent ways because of the contagion of the group, but the actors are exhibiting anger and/or frustration with something—not necessarily the particular issue which is being addressed at that particular time. Anger and frustration must enter into the theory, or violence would most likely be removed as a concept—as the actions of the group would more than likely take an avenue more in line with the expected norms of society. It is recognized that contagion, inflamed by experienced leaders, directs the group’s actions towards violence.

This thesis contends that some degree of anger and/or frustra-
tion must be within the members prior to their commitment to particular actions. The anger/frustration can come from any disassociated source. The source of that anger is not the pertinent issue. The important issue is the fact that the anger/frustration is present, from the beginning.

Propaganda is a dimension of collectivity which refers to the fact that "in any contest between individuals or groups for public approval or support, measures must be taken to influence and affect public opinion." (Lowry, 1969, p. 254) Propaganda is vital to collective behavior theory as it is part of the glue which is bonding the networks of the various individuals and groups together. The foundation of all the belief systems; the theology of the religious faction; the communication between the factions; the factor which incites the members into action; all have to do with the propaganda aspect of the collective behavior of the white extremist organizations. The conspiracies would not have any fuel if they were not dispersed and reinforced by propaganda. There would not be a collective consciousness among the various factions without propaganda--as the ideologies are constantly reinforced and affirmed.

Propaganda is central to creating a common belief system throughout the available networks. All the differing factions must have a commonality, a common cause/belief, in order to stay viable and in order to be able to call members to action. The tool of propaganda supplies this need.

Collective behavior is defined in this thesis as the action of
a group which takes on a violent tone, as a result of the contagion spread by propaganda during a sensitive time when members are ineffectively dealing with a certain element of anger/frustration in their personal lives. In other words, collective behavior a group activity, worked up to an agitation, acted out in socially unacceptable manners, encouraged by selective propaganda, by people who have an unhealthy supply of anger from some unidentified source.

Social Movements

Definition

Collective behavior, as defined previously, is an aspect of social movements. A social movement is the result of the collective behavior which comes together to form organizations. These organizations might be defined as reactionary, such as those already discussed in this thesis (although others may be seen as progressive, i.e., civil rights movement). The specific behavior of a social movement can be symptomatic of an elementary form of organization or of a highly sophisticated form of organization. The ultimate goal of social movements is to either create a new form of society (revolution) or to reinstate a previous (conservative) one--a more appropriate form for their interests. A condition of unrest begins a movement, motivation fuels the movement and support keeps the movement alive. Social movements are comprised of beliefs, leaders, propaganda, action, passive and active support.

Turner (1978) treated collective behavior in the context of
social movements quite well in his Sociology: Studying The Human System. He argues that social movements have stages of progression from an elementary form of organization to a more sophisticated form. The four stages are defined as: (1) The preliminary stage, where some type of discontent is acknowledged, but is unfocused; (2) the popular stage, when the leaders emerge and form a collective conscious with group members; (3) the formal stage, when the beliefs are formed into an ideology and adopted by the members. This is when different roles are established. Forms of action take place, propaganda is disseminated and legal avenues are formed; and (4) the institutional stage, when some success has been attained, which, in turn, encourages more action. This is also the stage when the new ideology becomes more accepted within many segments of society.

There are also different types of movements--from reform movements, like the women's movement to reactionary movements, such as the white extremist movement. The white extremist movement is considered to be a reactionary movement as it is actually attempting to stop change, to maintain current society or restore a romanticized previous state of society. The reactionary groups are opposing social changes which have been advocated by other movements, such as the progressive Civil Rights movement.

There has not been an abundance of sociological research in the area of social movements until the 1960's. The consequences of not understanding what promotes and sustains violent mass behavior were very obvious during the times of the riot-torn cities. Social sci-
entists observed the obvious negative impacts of ignoring a certain aspect of social behavior—that of organizing social movements. Sociologists began to understand that many forms of social movements were evident throughout all aspects, and all times, of society.

Although many sociologists and philosophers were aware of, and wrote about the various movements throughout history, the sophistication required to deal with the social movement issues was not evident. The late 1980's has seen a renewed interest in social movements and the emergence of new and revised theorizing. The approach to social movements is distinct from the past with different perspectives of what is actually occurring. Hall (1995) states that

fortunately, the sociological community has long since emerged from the bog of despair concerning collective behavior and social movement. The change of thought is evident in the progression of terminology from mob to crowd to mass movement to social movement. They show a change in perspective from a view that emphasized the irrational to one that emphasizes the more rational element of movements and movement participants. (p. 1)

This thesis is a step forward in further developing the understanding of social movements, through an analysis of the actions of organizations collectively known as white extremists.

Significant Sociologists

This thesis contends that the theory of collective behavior has a history of development through significant persons and their theories. This thesis further contends that Emile Durkheim and Gustav La Bon laid the foundations of the theories of collective behavior, also that Herbert Blumer, Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian, and
Neil Smelser are some of the theorists who have taken those foundations and developed applicable theories specifically dealing with social movements. This thesis argues that other more contemporary theorists, such as M. Omi and H. Winant and Joe Feagin have revised and extended the foundational concepts and introduced newer perspectives.

This section examines these significant sociologists and their theoretical perspectives of social movement. Each theory is then examined in the context of its applicability as a viable theory useful in explaining white extremism. Certain important concepts from each perspective are emphasized as being significant in a model of white extremism.

**Foundational Theorists**

**Emile Durkheim**

Durkheim laid the foundation for the theory of collective behavior through his classical functionalist approach by stating that science must study groups as a whole, rather than restricting the study to a summing up of individual cases. Durkheim saw (Ashley, 1990) an immense difference between the study of the individual and the study of the collective group.

Society is not the mere sum of individuals, but the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics. The group thinks, feels and acts entirely differently from the way its members would if they were isolated. If therefore we begin by studying these members separately, we will understand nothing about what is tak-
ing place, in the group. (p. 109)

Durkheim also professes that when people interact to form a society, it leads to an emergence of collectively shared beliefs, values, and norms. These collective representations form a new set of social rules and a new collective conscious. The members who comprise the group will see and understand the world in a new and different way because of the collective mind. We are never only individuals, according to Durkheim, as we are born into a social world. We are educated and socialized by this world which instills the collective mindset into the individual. No one is ever their own person. When an individual dares to step outside of the world which formed its conscious, the individual is punished—socially speaking. This has a constraining effect on the individuals.

Durkheim further contends that the moral action of each member is aimed at achieving societal ends and is never focused on purely individual goals or desires. Durkheim insisted that individuality relinquishes its needs and goals to those of the social whole. He (Lemert, 1993) stated that

the individual at least obscurely takes account of the fact that above his private ideas, there is a world of absolute ideas according to which he must shape his own; he catches a glimpse of a whole intellectual kingdom in which he participates, but which is greater than he. (p. 102)

Durkheim used a dualistic approach to explaining the individual and his/her actions. Each person is composed of an individual self and a social self. The social self is always in control of the individual self, therefore, the person is driven to fulfill societal
goals.

Durkheim also expressed that the more simple the society, the more completely the social self governs the individual self. The simpler the group, the more the individual's actions are controlled by the society. To keep the society in a harmonious state, and the individual happy and well adjusted, the societal relationships must be kept group oriented. The larger and more modern societies are able to allow more individualism, but only to the extent that a disruption of the collectivity is not obvious or threatening. It is, in turn, the obligation of the society to nurture and meet the needs of the individual, so as not to promote disharmony among the individual members of the society.

Theoretical Application

Durkheim's viewpoints must be regarded as the theoretical foundation for studying social movements. His perceptions of collective conscious and action to achieve societal goals, whichever form they take, must be seen as the initial concept of collective behavior and social movements. Sociologists may coin different terms to illustrate these same concepts, but the concepts cannot be ignored as an instrumental part of social movement theorizing. Collective mindset, collective conscious, collective thinking, all relate to Durkheim's classical thoughts on social movements.

The principal idea behind collective behavior and social movements is the fact that people are not acting alone. White extremist
activities have an integral component—the collectivism of ideology, mindset and action. Therefore, the foundational concept of collectivity, according to Durkheim, is a viable one.

Durkheim's idea, pertaining to action for achieving societal goals, is applicable in white extremist theory. The organizations of the Ku Klux Klan, et al, are collectivities in the literal sense of the word. Current publicized incidents where an individual is cited as a racial antagonist are almost always accented with the discovery of the person's participation in an extremist group. The recent incident of the murder of an African American couple in Fayetteville, North Carolina is an example.

The shock associated with the identification of the young men, who committed this crime, (Marines) was difficult enough to comprehend. Upon further investigation, the facts regarding their ties with a skinhead cult was brought to light.

Domestic violence has been shown to be perpetrated by a single individual who has an acquaintance with the victim, but racial violence is shown to be engaged in by more than one person, unknown to the victim, and who has some affiliation to an extremist-type organization. The case of the soldier who killed an African American couple is illustrative of this (Staff, 1996).

...three soldiers at Fort Bragg, NC, self-avowed skinheads and neo-Nazis, killed a black couple. The victims were shot in the back of the head, execution style. Police later found a Nazi flag, a West German flag, a bomb-making book and white supremacist literature in the home of one of the accused men. (p. 10)

Durkheim's theoretical perspective is not a comprehensive one re-
garding a white extremist theory. There are several limitations. For example, he regarded the individual as not worthy of intense study. Without the individual aspects which may have led to forming a group or joining a group, the researcher may be misled into dismissing some important variables which are brought into a social movement by individuals. The varying degrees of life experiences and/or biological traits are ignored.

Durkheim's insistence that the function of a part for the social whole "must always be examined sometimes led him into questionable reasoning" (Turner, 1991, p. 41).

Durkheim can be considered to be a conservative when dealing with new phenomenon. The modernity of social movements requires new outlooks and innovative reasoning--such as a conflict perspective. "Coser views Durkheim as taking a conservative orientation to the study of society, an orientation that 'prevented him from taking due cognizance of a variety of societal processes, among which social conflict is the most conspicuous'" (Turner, 1991, p. 217).

The foundational concepts presented by Durkheim are mandatory to the theory of white extremism--collective consciousness and action for societal goals are necessary components, but these two concepts are insufficient to explain the complexity of the entire phenomena.

**Gustav Le Bon**

Le Bon is a major contributor to the theory of collective behavior through his book, Crowds. Le Bon is credited with beginning
the modern study of the crowd, which is usually considered the prototype of collective behavior.

Le Bon had an interesting view of individuals and their relationship to collective behavior. Consistent with assumptions of the conflict theorists, he visualized crowds as destroyers of civilization. He saw the law of the mental unity of the crowd as replacing the individual's conscious personalities with a collective mind.

Le Bon theorized that people possess hereditary elements of savage and destructive instincts, which are brought to the surface during the phenomenon of collective behavior.

He (Pugh, 1978) stated that "by the mere fact that he forms part of an organized crowd, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilization. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual, in a crowd, he is a barbarian" (p. 26). These insights may not be very appealing to most theorists, but there lurks some truth to Le Bon's observations. Simply by virtue of the support from a crowd, an individual is more likely to act in an antisocial manner. The support can be through verbal encouragement, rewards or silent approval.

The beginning elements of the contagion concept can be derived from Le Bon's theory. Le Bon is definitely insisting that the crowd's exuberance and excitability motivates the behavior of the individual within the crowd setting. This crowd-suggestion perspective is an integral part of collective behavior and social movements. It is especially important in the context of violence within reactionary
movements.

Theoretical Application

Le Bon delivers a rather elitist statement pertaining to the reduction of people to a savage state when they are incorporated into a group. There is as element of truth to the idea of people acting more aggressively when in a group. The idea of collective consciousness refers to the fact that people act in a different way from their actions as an individual. An individual who took action—with pleasing results—without the benefit of the crowd or group, would not have a need to join other individuals to accomplish what they feel needs to be accomplished. Le Bon’s words may be harsh, but the idea of crowd aggressiveness is viable.

Taking the same example from the Durkheim passage, evidence of the level of violence which people can achieve under the influence of the group is revealed in the following incidents (Staff, 1968).

In Santa Barbera, Calif., skinheads attacked a Feb. 7 demonstration by advocates of the homeless and hungry.... In Chicago, six racist youths were indicted on Jan. 25 for attacking a white woman who had associated with black people. On Jan. 7 skinheads in San Diego attacked a group of Vietnamese immigrants. In Atlanta two from Philadelphia were arrested in mid-March for attacking two women as they left a restaurant. (p. 11)

The influence can be of a form other than an active, visible one. Influence can come from a passive, non-active source. The important factor is the support of others, not what type of support is involved in the actual act of violence. This is illustrated by the example of the white extremist skinheads and their relationship to their sup-
port group--Tom Metzger’s WAR.

The skinhead cult is supported and continually reinforced by the Aryan Nations--Tom Metzger, in particular--without actively taking part in the violent assaults which documentation has proven to be at the hands of these young extremists. Metzger voluntarily states that these young racist skinheads are the stormtroopers for the white extremist organizations. The CDR (1992) states that

Metzger and WAR were the pre-eminent adult influence among the youthful neo-Nazis which increased their influence among skinheads after Tom Metzger, his son John and WAR were fined $12.5 million in damages for their part in the murder of Mulgeta Seraw. (p. 46)

Le Bon’s explanation for violent group behavior is a justifiable starting point for the theory of white extremism. Violence is an applicable concept for white extremist theorizing. This is, however, the only concept which is applicable for this purpose, from Le Bon. Violence is only one of several concepts needed to explain white extremist movements.

Developmental Theories

Herbert Blumer’s Theory

Blumer considered conditions of social disorganization to be the societal state from which collective behavior emerges. He contends that without social unrest, there is little reason to expect the development of collective behavior. Blumer argues that a society which is not in conflict has no need or desire to form a new set of collective beliefs and actions. It is through the conflict or social
unrest that the group feels the need and motivation to engage in collective behavior.

Blumer, influenced by Mead's interactionist perspective views the symbolic language and behavior of those engaged in social movements as representative of the interactionist perspective. This representation is seen in Blumer's three main characteristics of social unrest which give rise to forms of collective behavior. Pugh (1978) states that

first, people move about in an erratic and aimless way as if they are looking for something or, alternatively, as if they are trying to avoid something. Second, behavior during periods of social unrest is generally characterized by excitement associated with exaggerated opinions, distorted perceptions, and rumors. The third general characteristic is increased irritability and suggestibility. (p. 30)

The first stage is symbolic of people's actions when confronting a disruption in their social process. Often people will become withdrawn or turn to escapist behavior when confronting stress. They may be in a state of shock or are at a loss as to what to do.

Secondly, people become quite excited about what they believe has happened to disrupt their world. They may embellish upon what they consider to be true. They may need to accomplish this with convincing opinions and distortions of the truth. This is often the time when one feels justified to apply the adage of, if a little is good, more is better. Paranoia develops as a result of this stage.

Thirdly, the excitement felt is then enhanced by the distortions and exaggerations. This, in turn, further excites the people. Consequently, there is further adding to the exaggerations and dis-
tortions, creating a vicious cycle.

Blumer has contributed to the theory of collective behavior and social movement through this example of the creation of group action. It contains the element of social disruption, excitability and paranoia. It explains the continual motion of the crowd sentiments by observing the cyclic activity. This contributes to the understanding of what motivates groups to continue their endeavors and specific actions.

Theoretical Application

Herbert Blumer's theory of collective behavior has great utility for the theory of white extremism. The social unrest concept— which Blumer contends must be there for the behavior to take place—is applicable, within the boundaries of this thesis. It may be said that it is difficult to move members to action without the motivation of unrest, as this is the avenue leaders take within the movement. The unrest can be fabricated for the sake of the members, however. The question is whether the unrest is causing the actions or if the excitement generated by the actions is used to justify the subsequent social unrest. As Kronenwetter (1992) states,

that’s what hate groups do. They tell people that the nation is being taken over. Join us, they say, and we will 'take back' the country. Everything will be alright again. They don’t understand the social conditions that they see around them, because they don’t understand the past that created them. This tragic ignorance makes them ready to believe the distortions of history. As Leonard Zeskind explains: 'These kids have come to social consciousness in the age of Reagan, when affirmative action is a bad word and race relations are going backwards. They are alienated and fed up, and no one has
reached them except for the right-wing crazies. (p. 85)

The distorted perceptions and the exaggerated opinions, which are used to embellish the facts and to enhance the belief system is integral to the white extremist movement. The organizations' literature and propaganda contain a hint of reality rather than substantial factual information. The plot of the U.N. to take over the United States; the Jews being responsible for pornography; the surveillance of black helicopters; and the promotion of intermarriages as a scheme to eliminate the white race, are all so-called facts which are highly publicized by the white extremist groups. According to Ezekiel (1996), the

most depressing finding was the degree to which ordinary people are perfectly happy to believe nonsense, as long as it makes them feel good. The youths I studied lacked an organized sense of reality that would let them judge whether what they were hearing was sensible or not. (p. B3)

This excitability factor within Blumer's theory helps explain behaviors associated with the extremist social movement. Although this condition may be addressed by other theorists under differing labels, the condition of excitability is a primary motivator to call the ranks of the members to action. The distorted facts and exaggerations have worked to ensure that the members have arrived at the fever pitch necessary to ensure action, under the leaders. The excitability factor is then introduced to motivate the action. The excitability factor also embraces the hope that some action might actually be taken, in favor of the white extremists, by the governing powers.
There are some criticisms of Blumer in regards to applying his perspectives to the extremist social movements. Blumer does not, for example, explain how a society is susceptible to social unrest, or how the movement causes its anti-status quo actions and becomes an accepted segment of society. Other issues which are not addressed are the importance of the propaganda and the leadership within the organization. Turner (1991) states:

I find that much of symbolic interactionism, especially Blumer's advocacy, consists of gallant assertions that 'society is symbolic interactionism' but without indicating what types of structures are created, sustained, and changed by what types of interaction in what types of contexts. (p. 409)

Blumer's theorizing about exaggerations and distortions, as well as the concept of social unrest are concepts which are imperative within a white extremist theory.

**Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian's Emergent Norm Theory**

Turner and Killian's interactionist perspective of collective behavior produced an emergent norm paradigm. The emergent norm perspective is derived from the belief that people develop common standards of behavior, simply from exposure to each other. The theory also assumes that although differing viewpoints may be represented within a group, this is quickly changed as a new participant becomes immersed in the excitement of the group's activities. "The theory assumes that the crowd is made up of people with different opinions and motives who are drawn together by the excitement of the event" (Stewart, 1978, p. 304). After exposure, the individual adopts the
standards of the group.

Also, according to this perspective, all organized groups are usually dependent on regular normative controls, no matter what the type of organization. The group will create new and appropriate norms, designed for a specific unusual event, only when the need arises. The regular behavior is not recognized as abnormal, only the special needs activities, which can then be rationalized.

This theory also discusses the role of the silent supporter who advocates the extreme activities of the groups with their silence, even though they may not agree with the action. This, also gives the impression that all members of a group are of a collective mindset. Turner and Killian addressed this issue, "the conspicuous actions of a few individuals are attributed to a whole group, and sentiments appropriate to the behavior and the situation are imputed to all the members" (Turner, 1964, p. 390).

This emergent norm perspective is mostly a look at the behavior of defined and spontaneous crowds. The exposure of the group's excitement is often looked at as provoking aggressive behavior. The emergent norm approach, as an example, can also be seen as a method of containing or subduing a crowd. Civil Rights crowds were often held in control by the leaders by anticipating that the crowd would accept their example of the value of peaceful demonstrations.

Theoretical Application

The emergent norm perspective offers the concepts of collect-
ivism through exposure, silent supporter, collective mindset and new norms for unusual events.

The idea of collectivism through exposure can be seen, to an extent, when onlookers join the ranks of protestors. This may be the case when the ideologies are similar and the activists simply afforded the onlooker an opportunity to voice their sentiments. The idea that the onlooker will adopt the ideology of the activists simply because of exposure to it, however, is debatable. When Thom Rhobb, national director of the Ku Klux Klan, was in Grand Rapids—September of 1995—he yelled at the crowd that "although you may boo and heckle us, it has been my experience that some members of the audience will inquire about joining the klan after the rally" (Van-Weelde, 1995. [film]).

This example would support this emergent norm approach, somewhat. It is still debatable, however, whether the joiners are actually involved in a convergence or an emergent norm form of behavior.

This theory also states that a group uses regular norms, except for unusual circumstances. This would also be debatable when considering the norms of white extremist organizations. The norms of these groups have not been viewed as ordinary, such as the actions of lynching and beatings and harassment. In fact, it is the hope of many of the leaders to mainstream their ideology to appear as more average. Landau (1993) says that

they’ve tried to strategically place their members in mainstream society for maximum effectiveness. ‘We’re embedded now,’ White Aryan Resistance leader Tom Metzger asserted, describing the movement’s pervasiveness ‘We’re in your armies,
we’re in your police forces. We’re in your technical areas. We’re in your banks. Why do you think a lot of skinheads have disappeared? ‘Cause they grew their hair out and went to college. They’re going. They’ve got the program. We planted the seeds.’ (p. 78)

Turner and Killian’s concept of the silent supporter is highly important within the white extremist movement. An example is how the silent supporter does indeed aid in embellishing the actual membership numbers of these organizations. Also, the fact that passivity lends a type of encouragement to activists is evident through viewing any type of behavior. Rape, murders and beatings happen throughout these United States, often as others are looking on. Although people express horror at the occurrence, it does happen too frequently. By not actively stopping a violent action, it says to the victimizer that they can get away with it. The passivity concept helps to explain the different types of so-called members of white extremist groups. They are an integral part of the support system.

It may also be assumed that there may be people who join a certain group after a demonstration. It has not been proven, however, that these individuals did not possess the same ideology before the activity. Turner and Killian’s emergent norm theory contributes to the study of social movements with the concepts of collectivity by exposure, normative control measures, the silent supporter and an aspect of social control. The concept of passivity—the silent supporter—is the single component of the emergent norm approach, however, which is applicable to a white extremist theory. However, the emergent norm theory has limitations as an explanation of white ex-
extremism movements. The emergent norm theory "does not explain why collective behavior emerges, nor what may facilitate or inhibit it. This theory offers no more than a piece of a large puzzle" (Goode, 1984, p. 490).

**Neil Smelser's Value-Added Theory**

Smelser is a major contributor to social movement theories with his structural functionalist approach to collective behavior. His book of 1962, Theory of Collective Behavior, was regarded as one of the most important theoretical statements in the discipline.

Smelser argues that there are six stages during the process of collective behavior. This approach is referred to as Smelser's value-added approach (Pugh, 1978) and involves the following:

The first step is structural conduciveness: the structure of the society must be conducive to a manifestation of collective behavior. The second stage of the value-added model is structural strain which occurs when various parts of a system are not well articulated with one another. In the third stage the generalized belief emerges. The generalized belief explains the source of structural strain and its consequences for society. The fourth stage called precipitating factors occurs when something happens and it acts to confirm the generalized belief. This gives concrete and immediate substance to the generalized belief and direction to collective action. Fifth comes mobilization of participants for action. Crowd action or panic begins, or there is agitation for reform or revolution. At this point, the behavior of leaders becomes extremely important. In the last stage, the operation of social control, counter determinants operate to prevent or deflect collective action. (p. 40)

The key concepts will be elaborated on.

Structural conduciveness simply means that the social structure must allow and/or promote collective behavior. There must be a con-
lict of opinions, beliefs or goals for the action to take place and the likelihood of a successful movement is weighed. Smelser (1963) states that the "conditions of structural conduciveness, then, is the presence of channels for affecting normative arrangements which are open, but within which the chances of success and the chances of failure are balanced precariously" (p. 284).

Structural strain occurs with the lack of problem solving expertise or commitment to dialogue or negotiation in a system. It appears when all the working parts in a subsystem are not functioning well with the other parts. Smelser states that some form of strain must be present, or collective behavior cannot occur. He also states that, "The more severe the strain, moreover, the more likely is such an episode to appear" (Smelser, 1963, p. 48).

Generalized beliefs are those beliefs which are held within the confines of the specific group. Generalized beliefs become obvious after the structural strain has occurred, a problem is identified and there is a general consensus that there is a certain way to solve the problem. The generalized belief may take the form of restraining the behavior of the perceived enemy. The beliefs take form in rules and laws which are created to control this object of punishment.

Precipitating factors are the truths which confirm the beliefs and prompt the group to action. It is an I told you so situation, which delights the group. These are not actually causes, but motivators of action. These factors confirm to the group that the normative means of constraint are not working, therefore, it is their
responsibility to create new methods of restriction and punishment.

Mobilization brings the factor of propaganda and communication into the picture of collective behavior and social movements. It also takes into account the leaders who inspire the groups, "who take initiative or by the mass media, which can spread attitudes beliefs, and rumors throughout" (Goode, 1984, p. 487). The individuals within the organization may be quite different with differing views of appropriate action. Propaganda is utilized to unite these views. Communication is utilized to get the word out to all those who need to be involved; to all those who need to be fed the propaganda; to all who are a necessary part of the movement. The goal is to unify, to excite and mobilize the people to action according to the designs and desires of the folks in charge—the folks who are really making the decisions.

Social control ensures that there is cohesiveness to a movement. Without it, the result would be chaos and no solidarity. Social control can be thought of as a gate to be opened and closed by the movement leaders. Social control is the umbrella for the other five concepts within Smelser's theory. The gate is opened or closed, depending on what is needed and structural strain or generalized beliefs can be let in or, if the time is not right for action, the leaders must let some of the conduciveness or strain diminish or be delayed. To encourage action, the leaders are sure to let in a sufficient amount of generalized beliefs and mobilization, leading to action by the members of the movement.
Social control can also work in other ways. Social control is a factor within groups involved in social movements. If the social controls do not produce the desired results of the collective, another strain could be produced and another set of collective behaviors could be initiated—even against the present leaders or the movement itself.

Smelser's concepts of structural conduciveness and strain, generalized belief, precipitating factors, mobilization and operation of social control have value within social movement theories.

Theoretical Application

Smelser contributed several important concepts which can be applied to a white extremist theory with his value-added approach. An analysis of the individual concepts aids in determining if each has validity for extremism theorizing.

Nearly all social movements have a condition of social conduciveness which is what promotes the movements (Staff, 1996).

The right has gained enormous power in the U.S., because its leaders understand how to exploit 'social chaos,' economic inequities and popular fears to attain their own ends. Those goals include the desires to 'establish more rigid social control' and to 'redefine and dismantle civil rights'—in fact, to undermine democracy. (p. 23)

Tension or strain is introduced to a segment of a society in various forms and types. Whenever a group's ideals conflict with the realities it is experiencing, strain will occur. Problem-solving techniques, which are not working, are cause for strain. White extremists consider themselves to be in a constant state of strain.
They consider not only the rights of nonwhite people to be a strain, they consider the very existence of nonwhites to be a strain in their everyday life.

People develop explanations for the strain in their lives. They develop and disseminate generalized beliefs which help to bond the group into a collectivity. The more widely held the beliefs, the more consistent is the group's actions to combat the strain. The widely held generalized belief that the white race will be extinct in another 50 years has led to promoting various forms of actions by the white extremists.

There are several precipitating factors which might be regarded as triggers for mobilizing the various groups. These triggers can take the form of a newsworthy event, such as the Ruby Ridge tragedy, or the Waco assault, or a less dramatic event, such as legislation of gun control. An assault on a white woman and crimes committed by a black person are favored triggers commonly used among the extremist organizations. Such events lend credibility to the exaggerated truths which are espoused through their propaganda. These triggers are used to prove them right.

The beliefs, embedded in the propaganda and passed on by way of their various forms of communication, are used to mobilize the group members. Resources are attained and rationed through the activist channels, decided upon by the leaders. These resources include arms, money, shelter and the guarantee of noninterference by the law enforcement agencies. Communication between the various factions of
the white extremist groups is at an all time high in the 1990's. The telephone hot lines and the access to the Internet have put the members in closer contact than ever. There are presently 100 Web pages on the Internet, spreading white extremism ideology (CDR, 1996).

The most evident trend in 1995 was an explosion of white supremacy presence on the information superhighway. Web pages and news groups ranged from Stormfront, established by old-time Klansman Don Black; Resistance established by skinhead-led Resistance Records; and the Aryan Corps, 'an alliance of Net activists, united in an effort to disseminate and promote the message of Aryan salvation and progress. (p. 11)

To control the mobilization of the members of the various white extremist organizations, the leaders of the groups must maintain tight social control. If members were allowed to just do their own thing, the bonding and collaboration within the movement would be lost. If members were allowed to take action when and how they saw fit, there would be no need for large numbers at the crucial times.

All of Smelser's concepts: structural conduciveness, structural strain, generalized beliefs, precipitating factor, mobilization and social control have a viable application to the theory of white extremism. Although Smelser's concepts are necessary to construct a model of white extremism, it is not a complete model. Smelser (Lowry, 1969) believes his exact steps must be followed, in sequence, for the process to take place.

Most would agree with Smelser that all these social determinants do play a part in the build-up for collective action. Some scholars raise the question as to whether the steps in the value-added process need always occur in the sequence as presented by Smelser. (p. 211)
A further problem with Smelser's stages of a social movement is the fact that he insists that a social movement must occur when these factors are evident. "Actually, most of the factors at work in the 1960's are probably with us now. Why then, have there been no riots in recent years?" (Stewart, 1978, p. 308). Stewart poses a good question at the same time illustrating that a movement does not always occur when all the factors are in evidence. Stewart is not, of course, considering the more current displays of collective action, such as the L.A. riots and the Oklahoma City bombing.

These incidents had more motivational groundwork than is explained by Smelser. The act of the riots is more of an action of crowd spontaneity, rather than a social movement and was a result of structural strain, but the perceived rights of the activists' freedom of speech for all citizens was a contributing factor.

Smelser has come so close to a full explanation of social movements that it this author is tempted to utilize this theory for a white extremism model. However, the previously mentioned problems with the model cannot be excused, in regards to creating a successful model of white extremism. The concepts of structural conduciveness, structural strain, generalized beliefs, precipitating factors, mobilization and social control are viable concepts useful as a theory of white extremism.

Resource Mobilization Theory

It had become apparent to Zald and McCarthy that many scholars
had recently become disenchanted with the collective behavior perspectives in studying social movements. They saw the community of sociologists moving towards resource mobilization as an alternative, as stated in The Dynamics of Social Movement (1979):

Sociologists, with their emphasis upon structural strain, generalized belief, and deprivation, have largely ignored the ongoing problems and strategic dilemmas of social movements. The resource mobilization approach emphasizes both societal support and constraint of social movement phenomena. (p. 1)

According to Zald and McCarthy, resource mobilization theory examines the various resources which need to be mobilized, also the association with other groups within the movement. They also stress that resource mobilization deals with the organizations' dependence upon third parties and the methods used by the leaders to control the members of the groups.

Resource mobilization theory is examined by Aldon Morris who stresses that this theory emphasizes that certain resources are needed for the creation and the development of a social movement. Social movements require various levels of money, organization, leaders, people and communication networks. Morris (1984) states that

it is the ability of groups to organize, mobilize and manage valuable resources that determines whether they will be able to engage in social protest. Resource mobilization theory predicts that social actors who have access to resources and who are well integrated within the institutions of a community are more likely to engage in protest than individuals who are marginal and uprooted. (p. 279)

Morris also contends that third parties are an important aspect of the success of social movements. These outside elites are composed of influential people and organizations which can grant
affirmation by monetary compensation, legal assistance, passivity--to actions which would restrict the behavior--and propaganda dissemination. These influential supporters "include governmental leaders, courts, affluent liberals, [or conservatives] and philanthropic foundations" (Morris, 1984, p. 280).

Resource mobilization, therefore, theorizes that within social movements, collective behavior is not possible without third parties and their outside resources. Groups of people who want to force some change in the societal structure depend upon parties--other than the main core group. This approach insists that social movements would not happen if the groups were left to their own devices. It contends that the isolated organization does not have the necessary resources to activate social movements.

The method of using ministers, during the period of the Civil Rights movement, is an illustration of the need for outside resources. Ministers were regarded as charismatic speakers and had easy access to large numbers of people. Another example were the business owners who had much to lose, financially, and were often sought out for monetary support during the Klan days of the 1920's. They gave large sums of money to the local Klans to keep the Black people in line. The businessmen were fearful of black businesses opening and the possibility of competition--competition of everything from the local lumber store to the voting polls.

Resource mobilization also addresses the issues of members, communication and leaders within its framework. In regards to mem-
bers, contact with the movement is defined as a continuing exposure to the community which is involved in the movement. Resource mobilization explains the involvement of the member in rather simplistic terms. "The more integrated the person is into the aggrieved community, the more readily he or she can be mobilized for participation in protest activities" (Smelser, 1988, p. 715). Exposure to other movement members is integral to the success of retaining enrollment. The constant reiterating of ideologies and beliefs justifies their actions.

Members who are fervent about their beliefs (provided by the movement) are more prone to act when called upon by the leaders. Blind obedience is evidenced by this behavior. The more contact there is with the movement's organization the better the possibility that the individual member will have a strong commitment to the movement and act accordingly.

The concept of communication, within the resource mobilization perspective, is of vital importance. Communication is perceived as determining the shape and success of the social movement. It is the main link bringing together the individual members by disseminating information and propaganda throughout the aggrieved community. The call to action is through communication. Facts and figures are dictated by means of communication.

Leadership is an important issue within the resource mobilization perspective. It might be common sense which dictates the importance of leadership, but the approach can vary from theory to
theory. Resource mobilization views the attainment of the leadership role as a natural process. Those who become leaders of social movements are those who are already an integral part of a dissatisfied community. "It may well be that established leaders are among the first to join a new movement by virtue of their central position within the community" (Smelser, 1988, p. 716). Resource mobilization takes the position that leadership is mandatory to the success of the movement.

Theoretical Application

The theory of resource mobilization is useful as an explanation of how movements are able to organize their activities with sometimes limited resources. It provides a good explanation of the external sources and significance of funds and support. This perspective illustrates the importance of outside or third parties which help enable the movements. "Mobilization contexts serve as the organizational staging ground for the movement. It is within these contexts that a wide variety of resources essential to collective action are mobilized" (Smelser, 1988, p. 715). These essential resources include those which are held by the power elites from outside the movement. There is a need to establish ties with the powerful individuals and groups within the mainstream society for a movement to launch an activist agenda in these post-industrial times. Through monetary resources and legislative processes, it is not difficult to contain any segment of the society. By passing legislation
which benefits the white, radical right there is a consigning of
disadvantage for those who are not of that segment of society. No
law can be all things to all people and there are those who strive
to not be on the disadvantaged end. The radical right, by ingra-
tiating themselves with the powerful legislative forces are guaran-
teeing their privileges not being taken away.

If a population of society is not being guaranteed privileges,
it becomes contained. Education is limited to the legal limit, hous-
ing is only adequate, business opportunities are very limited, num-
erous possibilities are just not made available to the folks who are
not privileged. Therefore, this portion of society is contained.

There must be at least passive support for movements to be vi-
able. Even if senators, congresspeople and other mainstream influ-
ential people are not actively involved in the conferring of privi-
leges to a certain segment of society, they are offering their sup-
port by not stopping, or even attempting to stop, the unfair prac-
tices. For a movement to gain strength, there only need be good peo-
ple who do nothing. The Ku Klux Klan, during its early history, had
the support of the important people in the local towns. Today the
various factions have monetary, communication and legislative support
and apathy to keep their movements alive.

Communication within social movement organizations is also ad-
dressed in the resource mobilization theory. It stresses the impor-
tance of communication and the differing methods which communication
can be used to aid a social movement. (So as not to be repetitive,
this concept is explained in length in a future chapter).

The initiation and retention of members, however, is not stressed adequately within resource mobilization theory. It does discuss the importance of contact and exposure to keep the memberships up and the members ready for action. It does not address other important dimensions of membership, such as explaining why a person who has had no exposure, would seek out a certain group. It also does not delve into the different types of members, the passive and supportive members. Resource mobilization is primarily concerned with the active member, who cannot achieve the movement's goals in isolation.

The resource mobilization theory "is a structural theory in that it downplays the importance of culture, charisma, and belief systems while emphasizing 'hard, measurable' factors such as organization and money" (Morris, 1984, p. 280). Resource mobilization puts so much emphasis upon the mobilization aspect that several requirements of a viable social movement are not included.

One of the aspects omitted is the issue of leaders. Resource mobilization does stress the importance of the leader within the movement, but not all the different possible ways of becoming a leader. This theory does not explain the arrival of a new individual who has a natural tendency toward leadership. Simply being part of an aggrieved community is not enough to create a leader: talents and charisma, circumstances of opportunity and timing are all factors involved in a person becoming a leader.
Joe Feagin’s White Racism Theory

The new theory of White Racism, promoted by Joe Feagin, might be better classified as a theory of Societal Waste. Feagin’s (1995) theory emerges from his definition of racism, which he defines as "a socially organized set of attitudes, ideas and practices that deny African-Americans and other people of color the dignity, opportunities, freedoms and rewards that this nation offers white Americans" (p. 7). This is not necessarily a unique approach. This explanation of terms has been utilized, to some extent, whenever the concept of racism is defined. Feagin’s perspective is useful in the discussion of social movements as an explanation for what is promoting the specific social movement and collective behavior associated with white extremists. What makes his perspective truly different is the concept of wastefulness. The wastefulness which Feagin (1995) cites refers to the influence of George Bataille. Bataille proposed that human societies generate more energy and human resources than are necessary for the normal individual engaged in ordinary activities.

The extreme wastefulness of racism is influenced by some ideas of George Bataille, who in The Accursed Share developed Karl Marx’s social surplus product concept by proposing that human societies ordinarily generate more energy and human resources than are necessary for sustaining life at a minimum level. The excess energy can be used for positive personal growth, or to enhance the social system, or it can be wasted: 'It must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically.' (p. 8)

There is an excess energy generated which is used for personal crea-
tivity or mental growth. From this comes the new inventions, intellectual pursuits, art, music, technological achievements.

This energy can also be wasted. Bataille states that any excess energy must be used up in some form, whether through negative forces or positive ones. War might be regarded as a negative form of utilizing this energy. Beautiful artwork might be regarded as a positive way of dispensing this excess energy. Feagin regards racism as being an example of such excess energy.

Feagin also utilizes concepts of passive and active supporters, collective ritualism, mobilization and racism. He states that there is a system of officiants, acolytes and passive observers. Those who yell racial epithets and light crosses function as officiants in racist rituals. The active officiants require a large number of acolytes and passive participants for support. The acolytes sign petitions and buy racist literature. The passive participants observe racist acts without protest and do nothing to voice opposition to the actions of the officiants. All three, the officiant, the acolyte and the passive participant are equally important in the staging of the racialized rituals.

Feagin believes that there is a ritualistic nature to racism. This ritualism, according to Feagin (1995), takes the forms of burning a cross, Whites spitting at black children or adults and yelling 'niggers, get out,' those who tell or laugh at 'nigger jokes' and those who refuse service to black customers. Such actions define socially acceptable practices and socially relevant knowledge for the community, including its youth. Whites acquire tactic understandings about black and white people and about racist attitudes and actions through these rituals. Those lighting up crosses functioned as 'officiants'...
Other examples of this ritualism might be the undignified treatment of people perceived to be the enemy. Another example might be when one member of an organization reacts in a certain way and other members continue this action in similar circumstances. Moreover, Feagin posits the existence of a range of subtle to overt forms of racism. He insists that there are various instruments used in racism—employment applications and cross burnings. He believes that myths and stereotypes serve as qualifiers to justify actions of hatred.

Feagin also argues that the rituals and mobilization for supporters are not often openly encouraged and advocated, but they are accepted subtly within the mainstream population. This quiet acceptance, even through apathy, can shift an ideology from a reactionary movement into an accepted norm.

**Theoretical Application**

The perspective of white racism encompasses the concepts of negative excess energy resulting in wasteful, racialized rituals, officiants, passive participants and acolytes, subtle and overt racism.

The idea of a negative energy flow created by wastefulness can be embraced in a theory of white extremism. It is an abstract concept, but a probable concept. A practical example might be illustrated by parents insisting that their children be kept busy work-
ing and playing sports, as they feel it will keep them exhausted and out of trouble.

An example of excess human energy may be illustrated by the fact that during financially hard times organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan became almost extinct. People were so concerned with just surviving that they did not have an interest in these racist groups.

The white extremist philosophy recognizes that there are officiants who use violent actions and acolytes who support these activities through encouragement and monetary aid, and passive participants who believe in the cause but do not actively participate. The group leaders know well how to recruit and keep a constant number of these necessary members within the ranks. An example is how Metzger is so openly vocal regarding his feelings about his organized skinheads that it is amazing that the skinheads are not offended. He openly calls them his street warriors and stormtroopers, and says they are needed as young and strong members to do the dirty work as many members of the traditional organizations—the KKK and the Neo-Nazis—are getting older now.

Feagin has also theorized how white extremists are officiants in racist rituals, wearing ritualized dress and symbols, such as shaved heads. Feagin (1992) asserts that racist rites are acted out at propitious times and places. Racist rituals are usually formalized and full of well-known symbols. The century old cross-burning ceremony is often undertaken under cover of darkness and in ghost-like dress. (p. 10)

Feagin evokes deep feelings when confronting the extreme exam-
ples of hate which are often symptoms of mainstream racism. He noted that white extremist groups may represent a modest number of Americans, but they are only "the extreme end of a continuum of racist thought and action along which many other white Americans can be placed" (Feagin, 1995, p. 80). Feagin states how racist actions and thoughts have been deeply rooted in the dominant culture of American society since the establishment of the United States. Many people do accept some part of the ideology of the extremists. Many have an "I disagree with the violent tactics, but agree that people of color are" Many people are victims of their environment. They are not exposed to another way of thinking until later in life, after they have already seen passive acceptance of racist practices. The motivators within the ranks of the white extremist movement are simply bringing these beliefs and attitudes to the surface.

Feagin's concepts of wastefulness through negative energy; racialized ritualism; officiants, acolytes and passive participants; subtle, overt and mainstream racism are viable concepts within a framework of a white extremist theory. However, Feagin's theoretical model does not adequately address the issues of leadership, communication and contagion. Social movement needs these components to succeed.

Racial Formation Theory

M. Omi and H. Winant have developed a theory based on the conflict perspective labeled as the Racial Formation theory. This the-
ory is based on the importance of political influence and a socio-
historical process. It attempts to define the structural organiza-
tion of varied groups within a society and explains race and its
relationship to inequality, power and oppression.

The sociohistorical process suggests that all people have been
categorically organized and symbolized throughout history. As a re-
sult there is an acceptance of prejudices through the use of stereo-
types. This creates a ready-made target for whatever hostility in-
dividuals might possess.

The power/oppression element is another way of justifying ha-
tred. According to some beliefs, it is acceptable to mistreat those
of lesser rank. Survival of the fittest and class stratification
have lent support to the thought that not all people are equal.

Race has, and continues to, signify inequality. It has been
an easily identifiable method for dividing people into the differ-
ent classes and the different levels of value of those classes. This
is conditional upon the power/oppression element. The exercise of
power and the acts of oppression have been justified on the basis of
race and the supposed sociological differences between the races.
The color line divides groups of people. There are other dividing
lines, such as neighborhoods, schools, professions or religious af-
filiations, but the color line is the most visible and strongest di-
vider.

How this is actually enforced needs to be explained. American
society is composed of many institutions such as law, religion, eco-
nomy and education—to name only a few of them. These institutions make, enforce and support policy and, consequently, establish policies privileging white over non-white peoples. Through these institutions—which are necessary in every society—it is possible to control the structure of peoples' lives.

According to Omi and Winant, there have been many periods of social transition. These different periods of change in the racial order have been subtle and static, sudden and violent. During these times of crises, racial movements tend to experiment with a variety of activities, from submission to revolution. These crises times can be defined as times when the existing racial ideology is challenged and one segment of society demands a response by the political and power forces. If the existing racial order is not forcefully halted, then the policy makers generally respond by adopting new policies. These new policies are not seen as totally yielding to the demands, but rather as a pacification of the angry voices.

The process of creating change, according to Omi and Winant, is usually a disorderly and tense process, and creates a new ideology. Whenever a movement has taken place, new definitions occur. A new meaning of beliefs, of ideology takes place. The groups have new ways of looking at things. According to Omi and Winant (1994), social movements create collective identity by offering their adherents a different view of themselves and their world; different, that is, from the worldview and self-concepts offered by the established social order by the processes of rearticulation, which produces new subjectivity by making use of information and knowledge already present in the subject's mind. They take elements and themes of her/his culture and traditions and infuse them with new meaning. (p. 99)
Racial formation theory explains the oppression issue as being the result of political and sociohistorical processes, with oppression thriving as a result of the power elite maintaining control. The how of inequality is dealt with, along with discrimination and stereotyping. This theory takes into account the why's and how's of racial stratification, explaining the political involvement. It illustrates the actions of the power brokers and how they use power to maintain control.

Theoretical Application

Omi and Winant’s theory of racial formation has much to offer for a perspective of white extremism. The sociohistorical and political approach has brought the conflict perspective into post-industrial sociology. The sociohistorical process lends substantiation to the historical acknowledgement of generation-to-generation racism. It entails the prejudices, biases and categorizing of people, which has been used since the beginning of time. Power and oppression have a prominent place within this theory.

Looking at the sociohistorical process through the eyes of one of the many white extremist organizations gives validity to the concept. The Ku Klux Klan is one of the world’s oldest terrorist organizations and has used this sociohistorical process throughout the 131 years of their U.S. history. After the Civil War, it was a widely-held belief that the coloreds were not fully human and the group was formed to taunt these less than humans who had attained freedom.
The fact that these darkies were able to choose their own life was appalling to many whites. It was felt that they should be put in their place. Through several avenues, this attempt at seizing power and maintaining racial oppression was made. Each of the main methods of this exercise of power and oppression concept is detailed in the next paragraph. The KKK mentality is alive yet today, in spite of all the obvious evidence to the contrary of the value of people of color.

Power and oppression, whatever the reason, have been methods of maintaining control for the dominant culture since the beginning recognition of differing class levels and categorizing. This control can be maintained through various subtle and overt means. Using the tactic of fear has always been an effective tool in establishing and maintaining control. White extremist groups began with ghost stories during 1865 and moved on to beatings and lynchings. The agenda was changed to rhetoric through the media and communications networks--talk radio and the internet as their most dangerous method of intimidation. According to Groppe (1994),

the study ranked talk radio alongside call and letters to congressional offices as the most wide-reaching and effective expressions of public sentiment. The number of radio stations that describe themselves as news or newstalk has increased in the past 10 years from about 200 to 850. (p. 854)

The mainstreaming of extremist, white, young people into the colleges and high schools and places of work is a relatively new approach to control. It is easy to identify a person who believes in violence and hatred when he wears a hood and mask or shave their
heads and wear Doc Marten's and suspenders and tattoos. When these same people have put away the costumes, let their hair grow, and cover up their tattoos, it becomes difficult to identify someone who is dedicated to hating another person. Hatred, itself, can be difficult to identify when the real focus is disguised by factual information regarding the person or the action, which is the target of condemnation.

By recruiting college students and/or sending young extremists to institutes of higher learning, the white extremist movement is disguising their real goal of education. Educated and supposedly intelligent people are entering into the mainstream with distorted facts and figures, with their college acquired polish convincing others to listen to their rhetoric. Considering the respect which most college graduates can garner from the general population, there is a large portion of people who are listening to these educated radicals. These unsuspecting people are listening to the distortions without having the knowledge of the true intent of these college educated individuals--the true intent of promoting societal intolerance for those who are not of the privileged few--racial hatred. Ridgeway (1990) says,

like Johnny Appleseed, we've sowed the seeds. I told the FBI in the presence of my lawyer one time, I said 'It's too late. We've done the work and you can't reverse it. And out there these seeds we know will grow into apple trees and they'll bear fruit.' (p. 24)

The political concept follows a similar vein. The government, the institutions and people in office themselves have rather soph-
isticated forms of power and mechanisms of oppression. Passing legislation, such as easing restrictions on gun purchasing for the extremists and gang members alike, is a seemingly freedom seeking right, but it is also a way of ensuring that the militias and free­men will continue to have access to their weapons. Not passing laws against the production, distribution and transportation of products useful for making bombs ensures that militant groups will carry out more heinous crimes, such as the Oklahoma City bombing.

Race and racism is a determining factor in all of these methods. Relying on incomplete history, a few past experiences and unusual events is not enough to promote the movements of hatred which are popular. Race is an easily identifiable marking so as to provide a hating person easy targets for the hatred. It is the only way of identification which needs no effort or intelligence.

Omi and Winant discussed the different ways in which social transition has taken place through the years. Some of these times have been subtle, some have been sudden, some have been violent. The different groups have employed a variety of methods over time. Some times there were killings, some have seen the subtleties of not purchasing goods from liberals or trying to have Catholic teachers fired from the public schools. There have been demonstrations for white power and there have been the David Dukes running for public office.

The efforts being put forth by the various extremist groups, during the 1990’s, are obvious attempts at changing laws and rules of behavior, reverting back to a time of fewer rights for nonwhites.
Given enough time, these folks will be so ingrained into our daily life that their racist ideology will be accepted as normal, simply by exposure and apathy. Enough damage will be done to keep some people from ever attaining their full rights or be able to develop to their full potential. Through the processes of political propagandizing, sociohistorical distortions, racism, exercise of power and oppression, the rights and privileges of non-white people will be stifled.

Although the important and in-depth issues of socio-history, politics and racism are discussed indepth within this perspective, there are some basic issues which are omitted. Two of these--leaders and communication--need to be included within a theory of white extremism for the theory to be viable.

Other Concepts

We have examined a number of concepts in the context of specific theories. However, there are some individual concepts--not elaborated on in the former perspectives--which possess the explanatory power to be included in the final metatheoretical analysis.

An examination of the merits of these concepts are presented here. Although they do not constitute holistic theoretical models, they contribute to the theories discussed above and can be integrated into a specific theory.
Relative Deprivation

When people see an inconsistency, either real or imagined, between what they have (material acquisitions, for example) and what they believe they should have—a situation of relative deprivation—they may feel a need to begin a social movement to correct the imbalance. When groups believe that they are suffering from relative deprivation, it implies, to them, that there is a strong sense of injustice toward them. This creates a feeling of being deprived of those things which one has been, or thinks one has been, entitled to have—a sort of white privilege.

Deprivation is not only a feeling of being deprived of money and/or goods. It can be deprivation of various needs and opportunities.

"Groups of people can feel deprived of (1) material goods, (2) social recognition or self-esteem, (3) behavioral restrictions, [and] (4) unequal opportunities" (Pugh, 1978, p. 237).

Concept of Reordering

Reordering is a concept used to explain groups working to create change and is often mentioned in discussions of collective behavior.

Efforts to create a new order or a desire to return to a previous social situation is a significant goal for some of these groups. An intolerance with certain segments of the existing social order will provoke some individuals to confront and change the order
to one more comfortable for them. Kronenwetter (1992) says that

a different kind of drastic social change helped set off a new
wave of racism in the 1980s and early 1990s. This time the
upheaval was economic. Thousands of middle-class families saw
their incomes plunge. Some dropped all the way into poverty.

The children of these families provided many of the best re-
cruits for the hate movement. This is the first generation of
white kids who don't expect to live better than their parents.
Like some white southerners of an earlier time, they clung de-
sperately to any group that promised to stop the changes—-to
hold back the future or, better still, restore an imaginary
past. (p. 84)

Concept of Identity

The third concept, identity, is regarded as an individualistic
and psychological concept but is applicable to the explanation of why
some people join white extremist groups. Bettelheim (1964) explains
the significance of identity formation and the consequences for inse-
cure or unstable individuals in situations of racial group subor-
dination.

As a person develops his need for securing his identity, this
need may feed ethnic hostility and prejudice. As many persons
seem to get stuck permanently in adolescence because they fail
to establish their identity, so many get stuck in prejudice in
our society where, for many persons and for particular social
groups, finding one's identity is very difficult in modern so-
ciety, reasons persist which tempt a person to seek to secure
this identity (or in its absence, at least a feeling of iden-
tity) in various ways, including the devious ways of prejudice.
(p. 57)

Summation

The concepts which have been demonstrated to have explanatory
utility within a white extremist theoretical perspective are: (a)
Durkheim's collective conscious and action for social goals; (b) Le Bon's collective violence; (c) Blumer's social unrest, distorted perceptions and exaggerations and excitability; (d) Turner and Killian's Emergent Norm's silent supporter; (e) Smelser's structural conduciveness, structural strain, generalized belief, social control, precipitating factors and mobilization; (f) Resource Mobilization's group interdependence (third party involvement), communication and mobilization of mandatory resources; (g) White Racism's wastefulness through negative excess energy, racialized ritualism, passive and active supporters of officiants, acolytes and passive participants, and subtle and overt racism; (h) Racial Formation's political and sociohistorical process, racism and politic process; and (i) Individual concepts which are applicable are relative deprivation, reordering and identity.

These concepts will be discussed in the next section—the metatheoretical analysis section of this thesis.
CHAPTER IV
A METATHEORETICAL APPROACH

"There is a powerful love-hate relationship between sociologists and their theories and theorists, sociological theorists, love to attack sociological theories" (Ritzer, 1990, p. 1). Ritzer's assertion provides ample justification for metatheorizing. Metatheorizing is an alternative to selecting an established theory or constructing a new theoretical model, for a complete sociological explanation of the white extremist movement. Through the use of a metatheoretical approach this thesis is able to examine and compare theories and theorists and their significance to the social movement of white extremism.

Metatheorizing can be defined as a tool for analyzing theories or as a method of studying theory. Metatheorizing is a contemporary approach in the discipline of sociology which attempts to clarify the contradictions, limitations and omissions in existing theories. According to Ritzer (1992), it is a process used to create new theoretical models:

Metatheorizing involves the systematic study of sociological theory as a postmodernist development demystifies and relativizes all theoretical approaches. Metatheorizing is not focally concerned with analyzing what sociological theory ought to be but rather with studying and gaining a deeper understanding of what it is in all its branches. To some metatheorists such increased understanding is an end in itself, while to others it is a means to the creation of a new theory or an overarching theoretical perspective. (p. 496)
To serve the purposes of this thesis, metatheorizing will be used to analyze various sociological perspectives, which will in turn, enable a theorist to incorporate the applicable concepts to construct a new theory of white extremism, or extremist identity.

The justification for metatheorization—beyond Ritzer's statement—becomes apparent when reviewing the different perspectives for explaining social movements. New theories are necessary because, as yet, no comprehensive perspective has been constructed which explains the many facets of a social movement. There have been statements made pertaining to the lack of a holistic theory of social movements: "there is no singularly effective theory of social movement phenomena; all still need to proceed with more comprehensive analyses of the types and styles of collective action" (Hall, 1995, p. 3).

This is a compelling rationale for the use of a metatheoretical approach. The overarching question is, why do we need to integrate theory? Many sociological theorists have alluded to the need to create integrated theory. The need to develop theory beyond the classical foundations has been acknowledged. It has also been acknowledged that the process of metatheorizing has been a part of sociological theorizing since the very beginnings of theoretical formulation. According to Ritzer (1992), the

most important classical and contemporary theorists developed their theories, at least in part, on the basis of a careful study of, and reaction to, the work of other theorists. Among the most important examples are Marx's theory of capitalism developed out of a systematic engagement with Hegelian philosophy as well as other ideas such as political economy and utopian socialism, and Habermas's (1987) communication theory, based on his examination of the work of various critical theo-
The ability of the present perspectives to amply explain the current trends of social movements has been questioned. As society changes, new explanatory theories are necessary. The society of 1996 is not the same society of 1956. Plausible explanations for the post-industrial society may find foundational bases from the pre-industrial society, but they can not offer a complete analysis. A single explanatory model cannot contain all the pieces of a sociological puzzle. A theory cannot merge all the different perspectives—the classical, the conflict, symbolic interactionism, etc. Some perspectives will be neglected within the process of theorizing a given situation. "It is argued that social movement theory of the last twenty years has neglected or minimized the more expressive, spontaneous, and disruptive role of conflict and violence" (Morris, 1992, p. 18).

The new movement toward metatheorizing has been a major development among contemporary sociologists. There is an acceptance of the creation of new metatheoretical applications within the study of sociology. Recognition of the application of metatheorizing by respected scholars in the field serves as justification for utilizing this tool. Ritzer (1992) states that

it is abundantly clear that many sociological theories are now borrowing heavily from one another and cutting across multiple levels of social analysis, with the result that the traditionally clear borders between theories are growing increasingly blurred and porous, the diverse body of work pointing in a synthetic (and integrative) direction, of the new movement toward syntheses within sociological theory. (p. 508)

This thesis has established the foundation for a metatheoretical
approach, to explaining the white extremist movement. This section shall bring forward the concepts discussed earlier and illustrate their relevancy to a metatheoretical perspective of white extremism.

Metatheoretical Approach--Extremist Identity

This thesis has examined several white extremist groups and highlighted the pertinent factors which enable them to organize, survive and grow. This thesis has also critically examined several theories and concepts used to explain or account for the emergence and continuity of social movements. Several concepts have been identified as significant for constructing a metatheoretical approach.

Within the process of metatheorizing, the most beneficial individual concepts from these perspectives, are examined. They represent the building blocks for constructing a new theoretical model. This thesis does not purport to actually create such a model, but it does present the necessary components to build such a future theoretical model.

Utilizing the information accumulated on the beliefs and practices of various white extremist organizations, the characteristics of these groups can be examined in their connection to individual concepts which were previously analyzed. Certain of these concepts have proven to be strong predictors of social movement behavior and thus mandatory in this context. This section is devoted to discussion of the concepts, in the order of significance and level of abstraction for explaining the emergence of the white extremist move-
Structural Conduciveness

Smelser's concept of structural conduciveness refers to the social, economic and political context of a society. It is created by instilling certain values, such as the value of material goods, the normative processes of categorizing and labeling, and by accepting and tolerating the abuse of freedom.

Instilling beliefs on the value of nonaccessible material goods is an effective means of creating structural conduciveness. Not every person can attain these goods and a climate of frustration is created. These values are promoted through the media and the people who profit by making certain products or goods available to a society, which are not always items of necessity.

The environment which produces white extremists is one where people have been socialized to desire certain goods. These desired goods are not accessible to everyone. Not every person is able to achieve prestigious goals and acquire the precious, valued items. Sufficient evidence of this is seen on a daily basis. In the USA Today newspaper, a front page article reveals the feelings of the baby boomers in today's economy. "Like millions of baby boomers approaching middle age, Rick doesn't always feel he's better off than his parents. In fact his prosperity has fostered an economic anxiety his parents never experienced" (Belton, 1996, p. B1).

In an environment which allows prices of necessary items--
automobiles, telephone service, paper products, cleaning supplies, food staples, etc. to escalate to outrageous levels--extremism can flourish. In an environment where the places of business keep moving away from the mass population, extremism can flourish. In an environment where high quality schools are inaccessible to the masses, extremism can flourish. This is the context (Robles, 1996) for structural conduciveness.

Early Tuesday--hours before the school year began in Detroit, 11,000 elementary students began their school year without district transportation, an overflow crowd directed their anger and want the board to restore the $8.4 million in cuts. An empty school bus stood by, its driver leisurely waiting to be called into service if another bus broke down. (p. Bl)

Another element of structural conduciveness is assigning of pejorative labels to differing segments of the society. When this occurs, there is a less than and a better than value judgement inherent in the categories and labeling. As a result, inequality is produced within the society. The society which implies that one person's value is greater than another's has hierarchically arranged all of the differing segments of the society. These segments of society are not really so different until they are defined as such.

The acquisition of valued material goods previously mentioned is required by U. S. society for a person to receive social recognition. All those who can not have the good education, the automobile, the job, the cleaning supplies and food staples are given a negative label. They are put into a category of lesser importance. Although prevalent today, this labeling began even before the existence of the Ku Klux Klan or any of the current extremist groups.
According to Feagin (1995),

these anti-African images were imported by the colonies where images born in European ignorance were used to justify the subjugation of Africans bought and sold as slaves. Writing in Notes on Virginia, [Thomas] Jefferson argued that what he saw as ugly color, offensive odor, and ugly hair of African American slaves indicated their physical inferiority and that their alleged inability to create was a sign of mental inferiority. (p. 68)

Where such categorizing and labeling is accepted, extremism can flourish. This process of dehumanizing is still utilized today, producing the same negative effect. Feagin (1995) also says that

white racism transforms the black self, the other-outsider, into something less than the white self and reduces the black individual's humanity. Black individuals become 'they' or 'you people.' Black men, women, and children become hated objects instead of subjects which involves a massive breakdown of empathy. (p. 16)

This adds to the condition of structural conduciveness.

Another important component of this concept is that there is an acceptance, even an encouragement, of white privilege and superordination.

Another aspect to consider is that in any societal group, when an individual is given freedom, there is a certain element of responsibility that accompanies it. The responsibility is in the form of the individual's speech, attitudes and control of resources. If the freedom is not utilized to benefit the entire society, an environment of discontent will emerge.

If the responsibility factor is denied and not practiced, the freedom can become a negative force. This same freedom actually fosters a climate of structural conduciveness by allowing people to
voice their dissatisfaction with the policies and general make-up of the society. The unhappiness can be encouraged which further adds to the unstable environment.

The society in which white extremists live is also a society which has many freedoms. Some freedoms are those given by government, such as citizens' rights. Others are unwritten freedoms, such as the white privileges. These freedoms and the misuse of them leads to structural conduciveness. An example of such privileges might best be illustrated by the national employment scene. White males are still the most favored employee. According to the Grand Rapids Press, "Ninety-nine point nine percent of the white men I send out get hired," says Marc Whitehead, an Atlanta recruiter for major corporations (Kaufman, 1996, p. A16) Freedom, as positive as it may seem, may also be used to create structural conduciveness.

The societal climate where people are attempting to function is wrought with freedoms, values, labeling—all of which contribute to structural conduciveness. Any society has the potential to create this climate. The fact that society is, itself imperfect, lends itself to a condition of structural conduciveness.

Social Unrest, Structural Strain and Relative Deprivation

Structural strain, social unrest and relative deprivation are concepts which have an immense effect on social movements. These factors exist within the network of white extremism. The strain and deprivation is felt by the white extremist, producing their environ-
structural strains associated with economic, social and political inequality are predominant in U. S. society, and are reflected in several sources. They are, in essence, manifest in the state of mind of the individuals within a segment of society who are disproportionately affected by negative influences, such as unemployment or underemployment, lack of education, dysfunctional families, poor social skills and lack of prospects for upward mobility. Professor Robert Lifton of John Jay College of City University of New York (Landau, 1993) describes this process:

You get that kind of interconnection between the primary haters and ordinary people who themselves feel victimized and are hungry for a scapegoat. It can be very frequently economic duress, but it can also be some degree of social fragmentation, or the loss of family stability, job stability, community stability, all interacting social and economic factors. (p. 80)

These conditions create an environment where individuals become hostile and angry--an environment of social unrest. These individuals are experiencing feelings of relative deprivation--believing that they have not received their fair share. Ezekiel (1995) summarized this perspective in The Racist Mind, with his concluding sentence of the book. He quoted an extremist male whom he had interviewed.

Reciting one more time all the things that had been denied him, squinting his eyes one last time, peering down his nose through the tiny lenses of the wire-frame glasses, he intoned, 'I want everybody to get what I got: Nothing!' (p. 326)

The success goals which have been instilled as appropriate, and indeed their inalienable right in these frustrated and unhappy people
are not forthcoming in the immediate future, causing the unrest. The sons of factory workers, who had planned on a middle-class lifestyle and a retirement package as their fathers had, are now turning to the extremist groups. They are looking for a rationalization for not having achieved these goals. The inequalities of their existence becomes apparent to them. These socially discontented young people perceive others as taking away that which was rightfully theirs. They develop a desire for revenge against those whom they feel have done the taking.

Within any segment of society, at any time, there is the possibility of an environment of social unrest by the mere fact of society being created and maintained by human beings. Human beings cannot reach a state of perfection, therefore, they make errors--though they may not be perceived as errors by the originators. Errors lead to dissatisfaction for some segments of the society. An error might be enslaving a certain segment of the population, or not allowing education to some portions of the society, or one segment having unlimited power over another. Any of these structural injustices are capable of causing social unrest.

In this modern day of fewer white-skin advantages some people are dealing with loss of material goods and other benefits. They know they are not guaranteed anything, simply because of hard work or education or contacts. It has been quoted often that the great American dream, is dead. Members of these extremist groups are fighting this reality, rather than searching for a less violent alternative.
White extremists do not truly acknowledge the material poverty of others, only for themselves. Any inequalities suffered by others, are rationalized by assertions that others don’t truly deserve equality because of the many stereotyped social traits attributed to them. People of color are lazy; they’re all on welfare; single black women never marry the fathers of their babies; they are not brought up properly; are some of the distorted, biased, popular beliefs which they use to justify their own beliefs and actions. Ezekiel discussed this issue in his book, The Racist Mind. Attempting to explain how the racist mind comprehends reality, Ezekiel (1995) provides a vivid portrait of the extremists’ state of mind.

What they know is jumbled chaotically in their heads. They have put information together from haphazard sources in unorganized fashion; they really don’t have any structured conception of reality, any organized body of knowledge that would allow them to recognize absurdity. There was almost nothing that these people knew for sure; there was almost nothing that they were not willing to believe. (p. 313)

When attempting to relate to the issues of structural strain, social unrest and relative deprivation, it is interesting to note the historical similarities between the current social, political and economic climate and that of the Reconstruction Era, when the Klan was formed to fight the perceived loss of white privilege. The reconstruction era was a time for rebuilding, after a difficult economic time, caused by the Civil War. The 1990’s are a time of rebuilding, after the devastating Reagonomics era. As in the 1860’s, the 1990’s have seen many people become discouraged by their change of lifestyle, their economic downward mobility.
There is, however, a significant difference between these two eras. White extremism is now a national response, rather than a smaller regional one. These similarities are the result of structural strain and are the causes for social unrest.

**Negative Excess Energy and Identity**

Negative excess energy and identity are two key elements when referring to white extremism. Excess energy relates to the opportunity afforded to individuals according to the energy levels available for use. The varied amounts of activities which are engaged in on a daily basis consume a certain amount of energy. The left-over energy must be dissipated in some manner. This can be illustrated with a practical application.

People who work 40 hour weeks have more time and energy left for other uses. People who need to work two jobs have that much less energy and time at their disposal. People who do volunteer work are people who have an excess of time and energy. This excess in time and energy can also be used in negative ways, such as gossiping with a neighbor or filing frivolous lawsuits. Excess energy can also be used in ways which cause harm to others.

People who join white extremist organizations have excess energy to dissipate and have chosen to use it in this way. During the Depression, the extremist groups almost died out. People were so concerned with survival that they did not have the time and energy to be active in these groups. The idea of keeping busy and staying out
of trouble, might have some measure of validity to it. The book, *Hooded Americanism* verified this explanation of decreased membership. The book's author writes, "with the growing misery of the Depression, the klan ranks throughout the nation became thinner there was no disguising the hard times that had hit the Invisible Empire" (Chalmers, 1987, p. 305).

Identity is a much debated concept in social movement theory. Is identity formed before the individual becomes involved in a movement, or after? Do individuals have a propensity for the specific types of actions committed by a group to cause them to join a social movement, or is this formed after contact?

The identity of members of white extremist groups have been analyzed by scholars in the field of psychology, which has predictably ignored the social context and influence of the group. The identity of the members, as Durkheim stated, cannot be studied on an individual basis. The identity of these folks must be studied in the group setting. The individual's identity is altered by the group, and consequently, reformed.

Sociologists believe the self-concept is formed by the social influences of the environment. Factors present themselves during stages of an individual's life. If a factor is present and important to an individual, it can alter the individual's choices. A set of circumstances serves as a connection between a movement and an individual who has a specific social need. They come together and identity is then altered through the exposure.
An individual who comes in contact with a religious cult during a low point in her/his life may be more inclined to make a commitment to that organization. One who makes a contact with another type of group, if it fulfills a need, will be committed to that group. These individuals (George, 1992) become involved in a process of groupthink which eventually replaces their individuality.

The term 'groupthink' as a quick and easy way to refer to a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action. The relevance of 'groupthink' to extremist group behavior is obvious and is a powerful factor in the operations of these groups. (p. 84)

Leaders/Members, Communication and Organization

Leaders/members, communication and organization are the additional concepts necessary for this metatheoretical approach to social movement theory. Included in the numbers of leaders and members are those who have been termed as active and passive supporters--officiants, acolytes and silent participants.

This includes the leaders and members who are actively supportive, as well as those who are passively supportive. Active supportive members are the leaders and those who actively participate--attending the meetings faithfully, attending the demonstrations, and assisting the leaders in a variety of activities. They take part in actively supporting and promoting the group's beliefs. They take part in communicating through the internet, publications, and personal appearances at rallies.
The members (non-leaders) exhibit or model a belief in the collective mindset, purchase materials and take part in some measure of activity. They are not as committed as the leaders, but participate enough to offer support to the leaders. They also support the movement financially and play a role in influencing other people about the issues of the movement.

The actual number of passive members is what usually causes the greatest confusion when computing enrollment numbers in extremist groups. This number is thought to be exaggerated and distorted when leaders are asked for membership numbers. These passive participants are not highly visible and play a minimal role in the active movement. Although minimal, it is an important role. They offer encouragement to the active supportive members. They provide the much needed resources (financial, volunteer labor, physical presence at demonstrations—though quietly in the background) and support to keep the movement alive.

Another supportive population is the apathetic individuals in the society who pretend ignorance of these groups or refuse to engage the issues. By doing nothing to prevent the activities of the various hate organizations, they are actually supporting them. It is a simple role; that of condoning the actions of another. They may not speak out, but their silence speaks loudly. According to Feagin (1995),

active officiants require, indeed even recruit, a large number of acolytes and passive participants. Those who sign petitions or who passively observe aggressive racist acts without protest are as much a part of the racialized rituals as those who
Across the United States millions of whites become passive participants in white racism as they witness antiblack violence. (p. 31)

The organizational levels of the white extremist groups range from the most elementary to the most sophisticated. The skinheads are an example of the simplest, most elementary form of organization within the movement. The groups are small in number without set rules. Members are transient and nonconforming for the most part. Some do not even have a designated leader, "the smallest consist of nothing more than a few fanatics with an impressive-sounding name and a mailing address" (Kronenwetter, 1992, p. 105). They only meet and organize actions which are particularly appealing at the moment. The only real control exerted over these groups is through the more formal organizations which support and encourage them.

A middle range level of organization may be illustrated by the groups comprising the neo-Nazi affiliations. Neo-nazi groups have been appearing around the country since pre-World War II. They have a variety of organizational goals, are more organized than the skinheads, but not as organized as the older Ku Klux Klan. The result of this level of organization is interesting to note. "The appeal of American Nazism has been limited by the movement's inability to develop a concrete set of attainable goals" (Bell, 1973, p. 126).

Leaders of neo-Nazi groups are often strong, although frequently changing. In-group fighting occurs on a regular basis. Organizational goals and guidelines change with the transition of the
leaders and members. Contact and support among the different indi-
individual groups is fairly strong, but fluctuates.

The Ku Klux Klan, the oldest of the organizations, is the best example of the most sophisticated form of organization among the white extremist factions. The growing pains for these KKK groups were visible during the early 1900's, with scandals associated with misappropriations of funds and leadership transitions and changes in fear tactics and supportive resources.

The KKK has used the sociohistorical and legal processes effectively throughout the years of their survival. They are experienced at all the different types of racist behaviors and practices, from overt to subtle, physical attacks to the use of double-speak in the media, through individuals and institutions. They know how to communicate through coded language. They know how to use ministers to spread the word and convince people of their christian values. They have come to realize the importance of mainstreaming in today's world. They have progressed from riding through the night with horses and skulls, to winning political elections. They have come full circle in organizing. Kronenwetter (1992), author of United They Hate, made the following observation regarding the sophisticated organizational strategies of the Ku Klux Klan.

Farrands is less extreme, claiming to be a fighter against drugs, crime, and unemployment, he sometimes sounds more like a right-wing political extremist than an old-style Klansman. And he has, in fact, tried to rally Klan support around right-wing political candidates. (p. 52)
Collectivity, Generalized Beliefs, Action for Societal Goals, Exaggerations/Distortions and Excitability

This section discusses the elements which fuel the excitability and the collective consciousness shared by individual members and groups with each other. This occurs when the collectivity is affirmed among them, directed by the leaders of the movement. A togetherness (collective identity) is reinforced through the various forms of communication, such as the white power punk bands and the Web pages of the Internet. Collective identity is communicated by means of preaching from the pulpits, reading propaganda and organizing demonstrations.

The generalized beliefs and organizational goals are affirmed through activities. The paranoia which is so prevalent within the movement is produced here, through exaggerations and distortions. It is what makes it all work. Examples of why they are right are espoused. Terrible injustices to the white male are proclaimed. Solutions to their perceived problems are presented with authority and confidence. According to Sargent (1995), "National Socialists, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Aryan Nations...racism is not the only plank in their political platforms. It generally plays the role of explaining why the world is in the mess it is" (p. 116)

Excitability is expertly utilized to energize the members. It is used to keep the groups' monetary support from dwindling and to call members to action at appropriate times. Most members are lost if these activities are not operationalized. The excitement is what
reminds them that they are alive. The previously discussed feelings of deprivation and repression of their freedoms are all used and elaborated on.

The belief in the white males' privilege is strongly reinforced here. Members are exposed to sermons and text readings which certify that the white people are the true children of God. The children of Satan are the Jews and the mud people. The philosophy is expressed in religious terms. Besides the confirmation of their rightness, there is also the confirmation that whatever they do, is blessed by God. They believe that they cannot be wrong in what they do, because they are doing God's will (CDR, 1992).

Identity uses the bible as the source of its ideology. It teaches that people of color are pre-Adamic, that is, not fully human and are without souls. Followers believe that Jews are children of Satan and that the white people of northern Europe are the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel. (p. 43)

An often quoted phrase, white pride, is used when justifying their actions. It is a way of reaffirming their belief system and a way of adding more fuel to the fire.

The exaggerations and distortions, the reaffirmation of beliefs, the justification for their actions, the affirming commonalities, achieving the goals of the society and the excitability factors are all important building blocks for an understanding of the white extremist movement.

Mobilization, Third Party Involvement

The importance of mobilization of necessary resources and third
party involvement is becoming evident. The leaders have been appointed, the members have been recruited, the collective beliefs have been internalized and the groups have been basically organized. For the social movement to progress beyond this point, resources need to be garnered for the benefit of the groups. Without monetary and social support, the movement would evaporate at this point. Resources are necessary to the viability of social movements.

Necessary resources are in the form of money, publicity, communication, promoters, public expressions of support from influential groups and individuals, noninterference from government agencies and officials, encouragement from the pulpits, biased legislation, and appeals to the correctness of racism and oppression. These can come through various sources. They can come from the mainstream. Talk-radio shows are some of the biggest promoters and supporters of the white extremist groups. It is not usually an overt act of support, but an encouragement, by espousing a similar ideology, reinforcing stereotypes of certain people, and reiterating the sense of hopelessness which people have. The exposure to large numbers of people and the charisma of the talk-radio hosts, along with their celebrity status, guarantees a reasonably positive response and acceptance by the general public and the extremist population. This resource has been utilized in a variety of ways not the least of which is as a political platform. Groppe (1994) states that "Senate hopeful, Ronna E. Romney, listened to her audience and developed an understanding about how they felt. She developed a strong following
among anti-tax groups and grass roots organizations who realized she was fighting for them" (p. 853).

The National Rifle Association and the American Rifle and Pistol Association have provided ample resources for white extremist groups. According to Hamm (1994),

investigations of the American far right have led Morris Dees and James Coates to conclude that gun ownership and membership in the National Rifle Association and the American Rifle and Pistol Association are standard practices within the American racist underground. (p. 159)

They heartily vocalize the groups' rights, openly support the extremist groups through financial contributions, and politically lobby for right-wing biased legislation.

Organizations such as the NRA have been a mainstream American symbol for so long that their influence is wide-spread--including as members and supporters people who are the victims/objects of their racist attacks. Other business organizations, such as weapons suppliers, which profit from biased legislation, lend the same type of support to the white extremist groups.

Any powers that be which profit by oppressing a specific segment of the population have much to gain by supporting these groups. Employers who hire people for minimum wage see large profit margins with the uneven distribution of wealth. Corporations which employ the contemporary equivalent of slave labor are able to pay below minimum wage to people who live under the threat of being exposed as a noncitizen or an ex-con.

The dragging of feet in passing legislation to protect people
from hate crimes and terrorism is a subtle racist approach. When people are not found guilty of hate crimes because the juries are all white; when people are not even prosecuted for hate crimes; when the sentences are suspended for the few who are convicted; when guns are not designated as being illegal; when a known mentally ill person may buy guns and keep them in her/his house; when the states' militia bans are not enforced; when all this occurs within the institutions which are supposedly enforcing the law and protecting the innocent, there is no legal incentive to rethink the actions of these groups.

Government can talk a good talk to calm the victimized segments of society, but until truly effective measures are enforced, it is only talk. A court case in Ohio (CDR, 1996) is a typical example of this expression.

The Ohio Ku Klux Klan won its 1993 Supreme Court case when the court ruled 7 - 2 that they had a First Amendment right to erect a cross in an Ohio public park gives hate groups the right to continue their tactics of intimidation and threat. (p. 10)

There is the expanded use of some of the same methods of communication previously discussed, such as the Web pages, telephone hot lines and hate literature. These forms of communication are also open to the public. There are volumes of hate passages being distributed throughout the United States. There is no censorship of this hate material. There is only a minimal attempt at censorship through the regular uses of the Internet. The hot lines are not restricted. Hate is spread, on a daily basis, promoting violence
against certain segments of society.

There is free publicity for these groups through the media. After the publicity of the militia involvement in the Oklahoma City bombing, the memberships in militias swelled to an all time high, even in states where they are banned. The different militias came together to reaffirm their bonds, in spite of the death and destruction for which their thinking was responsible. The names of white extremists and places of contacts are openly displayed on television programs, further aiding in increasing membership counts.

The Christian Identity is a recognized supremacist religious organization. The spread of hatred from their pulpits is not illegal. The publications of this distorted religion in the name of religious freedom are not illegal. Even the mainstream religions promote the philosophy in at least two ways. One way is by simply ignoring the problems and results of hatred. Another way is to code the language from the pulpit with messages of hate through interpretations of religious doctrine.

Censorship and/or denying people their freedoms are highly debatable solutions to this method of spreading hatred. Looking for a remedy to the problem of exposing more and more people to these hate ideologies is a challenging pursuit. These illustrations of communication usage are evidence of a serious problem, requiring serious attention. These illustrations are all examples of real occurrences, happening on a daily basis. One may need to look deep within everyday institutional practices to see the reality of this racism, but it
Racialized Ritualism and Overt/Mainstream Racism

The racialized ritualism which includes both subtle and overt racism is a key process within the white extremist ranks. The power/oppression element which includes sociohistorical processes and violence, producing overt and mainstreamed racism, are also important elements to activate a social movement formation. Ridgeway (1990) states that

in 1865, the Ku Klux Klan rode through the countryside on their horses with skulls hanging from their saddles. Members would turn up at town gatherings dressed in outlandish outfits. They put together a group for playing practical jokes, like draping themselves in sheets and wandering about town, spooking the public. (p. 33)

The nightriders are now on the front of t-shirts and bomber jackets, symbolizing the same ideology. The first cross, now a symbol of the KKK, was burned on Stone Mountain. "In the fall of 1915, Thanksgiving Eve, the top of Stone Mountain, touched a match to the cross. Under a blazing fiery torch the Invisible Empire was called from its slumber" (Chalmers, 1987, p. 30). In 1996 there have been numerous fiery attacks on pre-dominately southern Black churches, "more than three dozen in 18 months" (Belton, 1996, p. 3A).

In the early 1900's, lynching was a fear that all black males lived with. In the late 1990's, fear of a Skinhead attack is something which any person of color has to live with.

In 1900, a person of color could not live where they wanted. In 1996, a person of color knows that they won't be treated equally
if they choose to live in a white neighborhood. In the late 1800’s, children of color could not attend school. In 1996, children of color go to schools which have not received the same amount of funding, as the white suburban schools. The sociohistorical process is followed.

Violence is part of the expected activities of these groups. Costumes and rituals are displayed during demonstrations, with their swastikas and shaved heads. The same Heil, Hitler is heard. These are the overt forms of enacting racism.

The subtle forms are increasing and being mainstreamed. The more subtle forms of enactment have been cited throughout this portion of the text. Examples of subtle racism are abundant. The subtleties of unfair employment, housing and education are all facets of this subtle form of racism.

The acceptance of these different forms of racialized rituals and racist practices by the general population is the best illustration of how these have been mainstreamed into society. Acceptance of these practices is reflected in the apathy and non-acknowledgement of the injustices. This happens every day as we enjoy our own lives and are not actively working to prevent the racist transgressions. Society, as it ignores ritualism and racism, is losing ground to the white extremists. The result is a passive acceptance of societal injustices and, consequently, of mainstreaming extremist values into the general society.
Social Control and Reordering

Social control and reordering—the objective of transforming U.S. society into a white bastion—are part of the political process by which the members of white extremist groups are kept motivated and loyal, and goals are defined.

Social transformation is the real goal of the social movement. There is the goal of new legislation aimed at prohibiting certain segments of society from having the same privileges as those who are involved in the movement. There is the goal of restricting the accessibility of precious resources for these same people. The goals which are biased in favor of the disgruntled white power groups are established and sought after.

Transforming their own lives may be the true ultimate goal for white extremists. They seek a life which they think has been taken from them, but actually has never existed except in their own minds. This country has never been an all-white country with only white people being responsible for all the inventions, discoveries and progress. They are looking for something that never existed.

The concept of social control is utilized in two ways by white extremist leaders. The leaders maintain control over the members by increasing or decreasing the excitability and contagion of the consciousness level. To accomplish this, the leaders may add distortions and exaggerations to their propaganda at appropriate times to generate excitement. On the other hand, the leaders may proclaim a need for a united front and proper timing of activities, which will
keep the loyal members in check and awaiting orders for action.

There are also the small victories which are used to bolster the members. The standoff of the Freemen in Montana is a good example of the use of social control. Various members had wanted to rally around the Freemen, but were contained by the leaders, asking the members to allow a select few of them to negotiate. The leaders' hope was to win a victory for their side and accomplish that which the law enforcement officials have not been able to do--end the stand-off on a peaceful note. As the stand-off has been successfully ended and there was no loss of life, this point will be used as an example of their effectiveness or expertise. If there had been a loss of life as the stand-off concluded, the martyrs would have been used to bolster the excitability factor of the movement.

Social control is utilized within, and outside of, the white extremist movement. It is used to control the public’s access to the inner workings of the extremist groups. It is used to activate or subdue their own members. Social control (CDR, 1996) is mandatory to the flexibility and viability of the social movement of white extremists.

The right has gained enormous power in the U.S. because its leaders understand how to exploit social chaos, economic inequities and popular fears to attain their own ends. Those goals include the desires to ‘establish more rigid social controls’ and to ‘redefine and dismantle civil rights’-- in fact, to undermine democracy. (p. 23)

Transformation is the ultimate goal of the white extremist movement. A reordering of their own unhappy and unfulfilled lives is the psychological goal. Oppression and rejection of certain groups within
society is the political goal. Attainment of more valued resources is the economic goal. This (unrealistic?) goal of reordering of society is illustrated by a portion of an article in the 1983 newsletter of the National Association for the Advancement of White People (Langer, 1990).

A social upheaval is now beginning to occur that will be the funeral dirge of the America we love. I shudder to contemplate the future under nonwhite occupation; rapes, murders, robberies. The exploding numbers of nonwhites are slowly wrapping formerly white nations in a dark human cocoon. Shall a butterfly emerge, or the beast that has haunted the ruins of every great white civilization that submitted to invasion by immigration and racial miscegenation? (p. 95)

Conclusion

The metatheoretical approach has been useful in explaining white extremism. It has allowed a unique interpretation of the formation and maintenance of white extremist groups. Metatheorizing demands that the reader focus on the separate concepts, such as resources, rather than on the entire mobilization theory. This focusing on the individual concepts is an important step in building a foundation for theory.

Through metatheory we have viewed how white extremist groups have become part of the societal picture of the 1990's, as a result of economic structural strain. Metatheorizing leads to an explanation of why the members have feelings of relative deprivation. Using a metatheoretical approach provides the researcher with analytical tools for exposing the feelings of those who are not able to achieve the American dream. Metatheorizing is useful for identifying the
abuse of excess energy and its relationship to white extremists who use this energy with negative activities. The focus on the organizational levels of the different extremist groups was accomplished through the process of metatheorizing. Also accomplished was the analysis of outside resources and how talk-radio hosts and other mainstream media contribute to the maintenance of white extremism. Metatheoretical analyses have also allowed the reader to focus on the historical process of racism and how it permeates the mainstream society—eventually becoming accepted as the norm.

As previously stated, there has not been a theory or theorist who has offered a comprehensive explanation of the white extremist movement. This thesis has critically assess the theoretical utility of individual concepts which enables the formation of a new theoretical model of white extremism. Through the process of metatheorizing there has been a step toward that ultimate objective.

This thesis and the use of the metatheoretical approach has also contributed to a better understanding of white extremist groups. A new and more complete picture of white extremism has emerged. This unique portrait is one of dis-contented people who have no hope of bettering their conditions in life through societally approved, legitimate means. It is a portrait of groups which reinforce such feelings and encourage negative action to compensate for their perceived losses. It is a portrait of a mainstream society which is easily and readily influenced by a biased media and supported by third party resources who profit monetarily by oppressing certain segments of
Lastly, this thesis documents the continued acceptance of racism as it is ignored or treated passively, remaining a part of society's norms.


Center For Democratic Renewal. (Spring, 1995). *The monitor*. Portland, OR: Center for Democratic Renewal.


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