

# **The role of the music in the German extremist right-wing movements**

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## Introduction

About fifteen years ago, Matti Sundquist, singer of the Swedish extreme right-wing group „Svastika“, affirms:

*„Ich bin völlig darüber überzeugt, dass die Musik der beste Weg ist, um junge Leute aufzurütteln und sie verstehen zu lassen, dass sie einen Wert haben, unabhängig davon, was die Gesellschaft und die Medien behaupten. (...) Mit der White-Power-Musik haben wir eine Kraft, die zu einer Stärke werden kann, von der wir bisher noch nicht einmal träumen konnten. Eine Kraft, die ständig wächst und immer professioneller wird. Die Tatsache, dass immer mehr Plattenläden überall auf der Welt angefangen haben, unsere Produkte zu verkaufen, bedeutet, dass wir ständig neue Zuhörer erreichen, die in den meisten Fällen davon überzeugt sind, dass wir ihnen die Wahrheit präsentieren. (...) Ich bin davon überzeugt, dass, wenn Adolf Hitler, unser spiritueller Führer, heute leben würde, er nicht mit einer Schulterkoppel oder in Reithosen herumlaufen würde. Jede Ära hat ihre eigene Strategie für den Kampf. Heute ist unsere Waffe die weiße Musik und unsere Uniform ist unsere weiße Haut“<sup>1</sup>.*

As the artist states, besides being a means of entertainment, music also constitutes a precious resource used by the extreme right-wing scene to get in touch with young people and to convince them that they count independently from what society and the medias say. White-Power-Music is an increasing phenomenon which has become more and more professional and widespread all over the world, thus reaching new listeners and consumers to whom the truth can be presented. Therefore, music has been the new weapon and strategy adopted by the nowadays extreme right-wing scene to illustrate their ideology and truth.

Similarly, the Neo-nazifascist Manfred Rouhs highlights:

*„Gut gemachter Rechtsrock kann helfen, Menschenmassen wenigstens oberflächlich im patriotischen Sinne zu politisieren. Ist es uns gelungen, einen Fuß in die Tür des öffentlichen Bewusstseins zu stellen, werden wir die Pforten bald weit öffnen für unsere in eine bessere Zukunft weisende politische Alternative zu Marxismus und Liberalismus [...]. Hat der jugendliche erst einmal an Bands, die in ihren Texten patriotische Motive verarbeiten, Gefallen gefunden, dann fragt er sich möglicherweise nach Mehr, nach dem Woher und Warum des Nationalsozialismus. Das ist der Moment, in dem wir [...] zuschlagen, in dem wir ihm Inhalte und Kontakte bieten müssen“<sup>2</sup>.*

Rouhs defines the music as a propaganda means, as an effective way to persuade and politicize the mass, to present a political alternative penetrating into the consciousness. According to Rouhs, if

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<sup>1</sup> Matti Sundquist, „Nordland“ Nr. 3, 1995

<sup>2</sup> Manfred Rouhs, „Europa Vorn Spezial“ Nr. 6, Sommer 1993

the young person enjoys the White-Power-Music and its texts, he is likely to ask for more: and this is the moment when the extreme right-wing scene needs to offer more content and contacts.

Although the relation between music and social movements and organizations is evident, this field of study has not been deeply explored yet. Surely, the most representative work in this field has been written by Eyerman and Jamison who, in their book “*Music and Social Movements*” (1998), point out the central role played by music in making and organizing social movements’ collective identity and who define songs as „significant and largely resources for the academic observer”<sup>3</sup>.

Following Eyerman and Jamison’s example, by using a meso approach which takes into account both the organizational and the individual level, my paper aims to explore the complex phenomenon of the German right-wing extremism through an analysis of its music.

After a general literature review on music, social movements and their collective identity and structure of feeling (Cap. 1), I will specifically concentrate on the German far right extremism and its music: *Rechtsrock* (Cap. 2).

However, talking about White Power music, it is worthy to note that music itself is not politically predetermined. Thus, the need to include in my analysis three other elements which contribute to definition of this music as *Rechtsrock*: the groups, the audience and the events during which this music is played (Cap. 3). In particular, due to the governmental prohibitions and measures (Sections 86 and 130 of the German Penal Code), the concerts represent the privileged socialization moment for new adepts of the scene who can get to know other members of the elected community and feel emotionally and physically part of it.

Finally, Chapter 4 will be dedicated to the analysis of the last CD produced and distributed by the NPD for free within the “*Schulhof Projekt*” (Project Schoolyard): „*Der Schrecken aller linken Spießher und Pauker (veränderte Auflage)*“. The CD dates back to 2006 and involves 15 singers and groups of the German extreme right scene. More specifically, using grounded theory and the qualitative software NVivo, I will analyze German far-right movement’s collective identity and structure of feeling which is made and reproduced in the music of their most representative singers and groups of the scene.

Coherently with a framework that looks at music as significant and largely resource for academic observes, the paper will explore the music life and activities of German right-wing organizations, showing how this means represents an extremely effective strategy for the examination of complex political phenomena such as social movements and organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> Eyerman, Jamison, 1998: 160

# 1. Music and Social Movements

## 1.1. Social movements and Collective Identity

Talking about social movements, Ceri defines them as collective action, conducted beyond the rules of the political and organizational system, which aims to affirm unnegotiable values as normative criteria orienting the structuring of social relations and the allocation modalities of the collective resources constituting the society<sup>4</sup>. According to the author, every social movement is characterized by a collective identity which represents the projection of the movement itself. But, what is then a “collective identity”?

As addressed by Hunt and Benford, “Collective identity is a widely used concept. It is evoked in social science studies on gender, multiculturalism, sexuality, identity politics, ethnicity, nationalism, and social movements”<sup>5</sup> and it represents a precious resource to illuminate the multifaceted nature of participation and our understanding of social movement micro mobilization dynamics.

For Melucci, the collective identity of social movements is an “interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place”<sup>6</sup>. The definition of the SMOs’ collective identity is a process of construction and negotiation which establishes ends, means and fields of action, which happens in a network of active relationships between actors who interact, communicate and influence each other, and which includes an emotional investment from behalf of the individuals in feeling part of a common unity. Collective identity is, therefore, “a learning process that leads to the formation and maintenance of a unified empirical actor that we can call a social movement”<sup>7</sup>, by ensuring the continuity and permanence of the movement over time, by establishing the limits of the actor with respect of its social environment, by regulating membership of individuals and by defining the requisites for joining the movement and the criteria by which its members recognize themselves and are recognized.

The centrality of collective identity for social movements is also stressed by Passy, for whom “people engage in collective action because they share certain norms and values related to a specific area of political contention: in this perspective, participation in collective action is an

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<sup>4</sup> Translated from Ceri, 1994: 423

<sup>5</sup> Hunt and Benford, 2004: 434

<sup>6</sup> Melucci, 1995: 43

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 49

identification process”<sup>8</sup>. According to the author, by interacting the actors create the social relations and networks through which collective identities are built up and solidified and the actors’ cognitive frames shaped, thereby enabling them to interpret social reality and to define a set of actions that involves them in this perceived reality. Once individuals have been integrated into formal or informal networks, they find themselves in an interactive structure that enables them to define and redefine their interpretative frames and facilitates the process of identity-building and identity-strengthening, thus creating or solidifying political consciousness towards a given [protest] issue.

Finally, talking about social movements and their collective identity, Snow introduces the concept of “framing” as a “sense of tying together the various punctuated elements of the scene so that one set of meanings rather than another is conveyed, or in the language of narrativity, one story rather than another is told”<sup>9</sup>.

Frames are bounded in the broader culture and political context; rather than static cultural entities, they are subject to change historically and may alter and transform the meaning of the objects of attention as well as its relationship to the actions. Additionally, frames succeed in guiding the individual in locating, perceiving, identifying and labeling occurrences and events within their life spaces. As Snow affirms, “Framing processes and personal and movement collective identities are linked, with the former playing a critical role in the development and maintenance of the latter”<sup>10</sup>.

As it will emerge from the next pages, music represents one effective way in which social movements articulate and institutionalize their frames, contributing in the definition of meanings and in the creation and consolidation of their collective identities.

## **1.2. Social Movements, Music and Collective Structure of Feeling**

Talking about social movements and collective identity, Eyerman and Jamison propose the idea of a “collective structure of feeling”, pointing out the central role played by music in its formation and reproduction.

In their book “*Music and Social Movements*” (1998), the authors highlight that social movements utilize the media of artistic expression to communicate with the larger society and, by so doing, often serve to (re)politicize population culture and entertainment. In music, social movements periodically provide an important source of renewal and rejuvenation, by implanting new meanings and reconstituting established aesthetic forms and genres. At the same time, through music social movements lean to the reconstruction of processes of social interaction and collective identity

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<sup>8</sup> Passy, 2003: 23

<sup>9</sup> Snow, 2001: 384

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 391

formation. As they affirm, “The construction of meaning through music and songs is a central aspect of collective identity formation [...] and collective structures of feeling are actually made and reorganized through music”<sup>11</sup>.

Talking about the power of music in the creation of collective identities, Bohlman explains how nationalistic music plays a central role in the formation of an ethnic consciousness. In particular, music can serve a nation-state in its competition with other nation-states and can be symbolically used in the struggle over contested territory such as border regions: thus, “Possessing music becomes possessing land”<sup>12</sup>.

Nationalist music relies on the symbolism of structures that defines the nation and enters into public and political ritual, in this way giving “nation” an identity. It comes into being through top-down cultural and political work: rather than representing something pre-existent and quintessential – culturally prior to the nation – nationalist music represents cultural boundaries with political purposes. It creates and fabricates an image of the state, mobilizes the residents of the state through musical ideas and narrates an historical or political struggle. Nationalistic music identifies the entity against which the nation struggles and draws the battle lines, taking the people of the state into battle, both abstract and real. Finally, nationalist music generates an aesthetic and musical language that allows the nation-state to compete for abstract ideas as well as the specific ideologies<sup>13</sup>.

Looking at the nationalist movements and the Youth European movements (Young Italy, Young Poland, Young Poland, Young Turkey, etc.) of the past century, Johnson and Klandermans (1995) highlight that they drew heavily on (poetry, literature and) songs as expression of nationalist and generational discontent and that songs in national language are common in mass mobilizations such as those of Quebecois chansonniers Pauline Julien, Felix Leclerc, and Gilles Vigneault.

Going back to Eyerman and Jamison, German extreme right-wing organizations represent a powerful example of the mechanism they describe: not only music is used for propagandistic goals and recruitment but it also deeply contributes to the creation of a sort of *imagined community*<sup>14</sup> based on a specific and distinct collective structure of feeling.

Following along with these authors, since music is key element in the construction of the collective identity of social movements and organizations, I will explore the complex phenomenon of the German right-wing extremism through an analysis of its music.

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<sup>11</sup> Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 160

<sup>12</sup> Bohlman, 2004: 119

<sup>13</sup> Bohlman, 2004: 121

<sup>14</sup> See Anderson 1983

## 2. *Rechtsrock*: a definition of the phenomenon

### 2.1. The German right-wing extremist scene

Right-wing extremist ideology is characterized by nationalistic and racist beliefs and attitudes. It is governed by the idea that ethnic affiliation with a nation or race determines the value of human being.

Because, according to right-wing extremist thinking, human and civil rights are subordinate to this criterion, right-wing extremists fundamentally contradict Germany's constitution (the Basic Law) and especially Art. 3 which accords these rights special priority and protection.

A look at the following chart will help understanding the extent of the German right-wing extremist phenomenon.

**Table 1: Right-wing extremist following**

	2006		2007		2008	
	Groups	Persons	Groups	Persons	Groups	Persons
Subculture-oriented and other right-wing extremists with a propensity to violence	2	10,400	2	10,000	2	9,500
Neo-Nazis	108	4,200	107	4,400	87	4,800
Political Parties of which NPD DVU REP	3	21,500 7,000 8,500 6,000	3	14,200 7,200 7,000 ---	2	13,000 7,000 6,000 ---
Other right-wing extremist organizations	69	3,800	69	4,000	65	3,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>49,900</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>32,600</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>31,100</b>
After deducting multiple membership		38,600		31,000		30,000

Source: *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2008*, p. 55

NPD (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) and DVU (*Deutsche Volksunion*) are the only two right-wing parties in contemporary Germany (since 2007, REP has not been defined *rechtsextrem* anymore). According to the *Verfassungsschutzamt*, in 2008 *Hammerskins* and *Furchtlos&Treu* (Fearless and loyal) were the only two extremist skinheads groups active nationwide and collected about 9,500 members, whereas 156 was the number of the regional right-wing extremist associations and organizations; 31,100 was the total number of right-wing extremists (total of affiliated and unaffiliated).

## **2.2. *Rechtsextremismus* and the music**

German extremist movements provide a significant example of political propaganda through music. In the past decades, right-wing parties have registered a dramatic decrease in youth participation and trust in traditional political models. To contrast this tendency, a new strategy was adopted and several small groups and organizations were created at a regional level. Nonetheless, the governmental prohibition of reconstructing any organization which could remind of the Nazi party and, especially, the 2000 ban for the skinhead organization *Blood&Honour* made particularly hard the survival of the scene.

All the nation-wide fragmented extreme right-wing units needed a common ideological denominator as well as a way to keep in touch with each other without being bothered by any legal complication. And, it was in this context that music was chosen as effective means of propaganda, as powerful homogenizing element, as privileged way to reach young and potentially new adepts of the scene. As confirmed also in the *Verfassungsschutzbericht* 2005, „[Right-wing extremist] skinhead music plays an important role in the violent right-wing extremist subculture and beyond. The xenophobic and antidemocratic lyrics influence and reinforce the vague right-wing extremist attitudes of those who belong to this milieu. The music also fosters a sense of identity and helps mobilize supporters; right-wing extremists also use it outside the scene to attract young people to their events and organizations”<sup>15</sup>.

### **2.2.1. *Rechtrock***

The first example of extreme right-wing music dated back to 1977 when some members of the *Nationaldemokratische Hochschulbund*, an NPD student organization, founded the “Regnaröck” band. A couple of years later, the German group “Böhse Onkelz” published the Lp “Der nette Mann”, whose lyrics were clearly far right-wing oriented.

These were the first examples of *Rechtsrock*.

For a long time, far-right music was exclusively associated with the extreme right-wing Skinhead scene but, in the last years, extreme-right tendencies seem to have established themselves in other subcultures as well (See also Dornbusch and Raabe 2005).

Even if most of the German far-right rock bands still prefer a mix of hard rock and raucous German-language singing, today *Rechtrock* includes several styles which range from the Pop-Covers to Hate-Core, from Ballads to Techno, from Rock Against Communism to Hip Hop.

Talking about *Rechtsrock* it is worthy to note that music itself is not politically predetermined. As Ruoppolo stresses, “a chord is neither right nor left; it shows neither contempt

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<sup>15</sup> Federal Ministry of Interior 2005: 54

for, nor solidarity with, mankind. Music is nevertheless shaped by the way in which it is used and can thereby be a neutral form of dissemination for ideologies”<sup>16</sup>. Thus, not the music itself but the content and texts of the lyrics, the context where the music is played and the actors who take part in its production and consumption cycle make this music *Rechtsrock*.

In the following chapter, I will firstly focus on the main actors involved in the production and consumption of White-Power music (the groups and the audience) and on a peculiar context in which these actors meet and interact with each other (the concerts), contributing to the creation of music’s meanings and to the definition of the movement’s collective identity.

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<sup>16</sup> Ruoppolo 2005

### 3. Groups, audience and concerts: the politicization of music

#### 3.1. The Groups

Talking about far-right groups, it is of pivotal importance to distinguish between two kinds of commitment to the far right-wing scene: an ideological and a more instrumental one. In fact, besides the bands who belong to this milieu for ideological reasons and a strong identification with its ideals and values, there are also several artists who rely on the right-wing scene only for practical advantages as, for example, the inclusion in privileged commercialization channels.

Nonetheless, during a performance the groups present themselves as first supporters of the scene and its principles: they celebrate its values and ideology and are perceived as models to follow and imitate.

As addressed by Dornbusch and Raabe, *“Die Bands sind eine gruppenpsychologisch, ideologisch und eben auch musikalisch bestimmte eherne Einheit, in der es keinen Platz für Individualität gibt”*<sup>17</sup>: the groups are a psychological, ideological and musical unity where there is no place for individuality and this is also visible in the way of performing. The group presents itself as a one-entity: the center role is played by the singer who, with his words and poses, reminds of the *Führer* figure, charming and fascinating the audience; at the same time, instrumental solos are absolutely banned.

Talking about social movements, Goodwin et al. affirm: “successful leaders embody the moral ideals of a group, crafting a way of living that resonates with their followers”<sup>18</sup>. In a similar way, Backe, Farin and Lauffer stress that the main feature of far right-wing musicians is their credibility. In fact, *„Rechtsrocker sind Stars zum Anfassen, Idole mit Bodenhaftung”*<sup>19</sup>,: Rechtsrockers are stars that you can touch, idols who have kept their feet on the ground. So, “there is both identification with and admiration for leaders, who are both similar to their followers and at the same time superior”<sup>20</sup>.

One of the main features of the White-Music Bands is their direct relation with their fans: they communicate with them by letters and emails, sell them CDs, and directly give them information about concerts and events. And after their concerts, they even talk to and drink with their fans. This direct relationship dramatically reinforces their success and increases the effectiveness of their message.

Let’s take a look at the number of active far right-wing groups in the past ten years.

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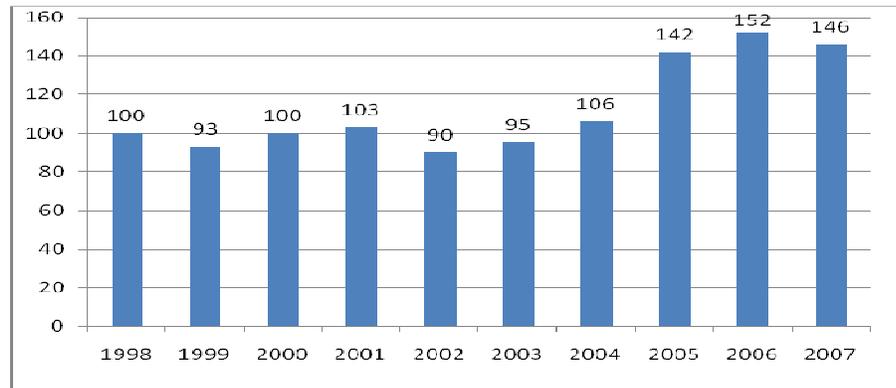
<sup>17</sup> Dornbusch/Raabe 2002: 135

<sup>18</sup> Goodwin, Jasper, Polletta 2003: 419

<sup>19</sup> Backe, Farin, Lauffer 1999: 78

<sup>20</sup> Goodwin, Jasper, Polletta 2003: 419

**Graph1: Number of active Rechtsrock groups, 1998-2007**



Source:[http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/arbeitsfelder/af\\_rechtsextremismus/zahlen\\_und\\_fakten/zuf\\_re\\_skinhead\\_musikszen.html](http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/arbeitsfelder/af_rechtsextremismus/zahlen_und_fakten/zuf_re_skinhead_musikszen.html)

From 2002 to 2006, the number of *Rechtsrock* groups steadily increased from 90 to 152; in 2007, it dropped to 146.

### 3.2. The consumers

According to Zurcher and Snow, “people power is the most important resource movements need in order to advance their interests. They need to secure participants and then transform at least some of the new recruits into committed members or devotees”<sup>21</sup>.

As it has emerged from this paper, nowadays German far-right groups has adopted a new and innovative recruitment strategy based on *Rechtsrock*. But then, what kind of relation exists between music consumption and real commitment to the far-right scene?

For Baacke et al., *Rechtsrock* fans can be divided into three categories:

- „Ein Teil hört die Musik aus ideologischer Überzeugung“<sup>22</sup>: some consumers listen to *Rechtsrock* for ideological reasons in order to confirm and reinforce their political identity: their interest is focused on texts and content of the lyrics;
- „Ein kleiner Teil ist an der Musik interessiert“<sup>23</sup>: a small part of them are interested in the music itself, independently from its message;
- „Ein weiterer Teil ist zwar an den Texten interessiert, aber selbst nicht unbedingt klar rechts(radikal) orientiert“<sup>24</sup>: other consumers pay attention to the content of the songs but they don't necessary identify themselves with the extreme right scene and listen also to groups coming from other political milieus.

<sup>21</sup> Zurcher and Snow, 1981: 449

<sup>22</sup> Baacke, Grueniner, Tier, Lindemann 1999: 78

<sup>23</sup> Ebs. 78

<sup>24</sup> Baacke, Grueniner, Tier, Lindemann 1999. 78

The typical *Rechtsrock* consumer is male, white, below 30 years of age, from Eastern Germany and feels „sozial und wirtschaftlich benachteiligt“<sup>25</sup>: socially and economically disadvantaged.

In order to understand far-right music consumption, it is necessary to take into account the concept of individual and collective identity.

As Baacke et al. highlight, „der typische Konsument hat massive Probleme mit seiner sozialen Anerkennung und seiner Akzeptanz“<sup>26</sup>: the *Rechtsrock* consumer has massive problems with his social identity and acceptance and very often finds in the right-wing scene the solidarity and a sense of belonging that he is not able to obtain in his daily life.

*Rechtsrock* allows the consumer to get in touch with an *imagined community* which offers him a strong collective identity based on values such as communion, friendship, and solidarity: youth people can finally feel part of and integrated into a “second family, a substitute for the social and associative life society no longer offers anymore.”<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, the consumption of White-music makes possible another distinction between those who listen to this music (and therefore belong to this “elected family”) and those who do not (and therefore are excluded).

Since this scene is characterized by extreme male chauvinism and machismo and in *Rechtsrock* production women are defined as „Objekte für sexualisierte (Gewalt)Haltungen“<sup>28</sup> (sexual Objects ) und „in bezug auf den Mann“<sup>29</sup> (with reference to man), women are underrepresented in this milieu: they constitute only about one third of the members.

### 3.3. The concerts

According to Baacke et al. (1999), music consumption is a complex process which speaks to the body, emotions, cognitions and spirituality and “a certain degree of emotional investment enables individuals to feel part of a common unity: passions and feelings, love and hate, faith and fear are all part of a body acting collectively, particularly in areas of social life like social movements that are less institutionalized.”<sup>30</sup>

As I have pointed out throughout this paper, music is used by German far-right movements and organizations as means for political socialization and several studies have showed that the possible effects of music can be reinforced through socio-psychological mechanisms (see also

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<sup>25</sup> Verfassungsschutzbericht 2002: 41

<sup>26</sup> Baacke/Farin/Lauffer 1999: 114

<sup>27</sup> Klandermans 2004, 367

<sup>28</sup> Baacke, Grueninger, Thier, Lindemann 1994: 133

<sup>29</sup> Ebd. 78

<sup>30</sup> Melucci, 1995: 43

Dieter et al. 1999) and that its effects can be intensified by the context where this music is performed: the more music is associated with a sense of belonging and alcohol consumption, and the deeper it affects and influences the consumer and his personality. Thus, the importance of the concerts.

For the far-right movements and organizations, music events represent the only moment when the scene can march out: in fact, due to government bans and prohibitions, it usually acts in the shadow. Concerts constitute the most important socialization place where new adepts can come into contact with the scene, its representatives, its members, and its ideology.

During the concerts, it is possible to create a *temporary* community of people having in common the same music interests and tastes and sharing the same musical experience interpreted as „*Unterbrechung des Alltages*“<sup>31</sup> (break of reality). At the same time, in these events it takes place a process of exclusion towards those who do not listen to this music and, therefore, do not belong to the scene and to the elected community. As the group *Sturmtrupp* states, „*weil wir andere Musik hören als ihr, fühlen wir anders; weil wir anderes sagen als ihr oder zumindest Ähnliches sagen als ihr, sind wir auch anders*“<sup>32</sup>: because we listen to different music, we are also different; because we say different things, we are also different.

This exclusion mechanism allows the creation of a strong group-identity in which the individual disappears and is replaced by “we”, “*das Volk*” and the elected white race which becomes the new protagonist. A sense of collectivity triumphs over individuality and values such as solidarity, friendship, comradeship are exalted. As celebrated by the band 08/15, „*Sind Freundschaft und Treue keine Werte, zählen in dieser Zeit nur noch Schwindel und Trug?*“<sup>33</sup> (Are friendship and loyalty not values anymore? Do only lies and betrayal matter?) and also „*Einer für alle und alle für einen, vereint bis in den Tod*“<sup>34</sup> (One for all, all for one, together until death).

*Rechtsrock* plays a double role in the German far-right extremism: besides disseminating elements of nationalist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic ideology, it also confers cohesion and coherence to this widespread scene. *Rechtsrock* represents an effective „*Identitätstiftendes Element*“ (element which founds an identity) and is expression of a distinct extreme right-wing subculture.

As I have already pointed out, the *Rechtsrock* phenomenon has acquired its centrality in the past ten years: in fact, after having recognized the potential of music and concerts to reach and politicize young people, the New Right started using the strategy „*Politik mit Emotionen zu*

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<sup>31</sup> Dieter, Grueninger, Thier, Lindemann 1994: 172

<sup>32</sup> Dieter, Farin, Lauffer 1999: 154

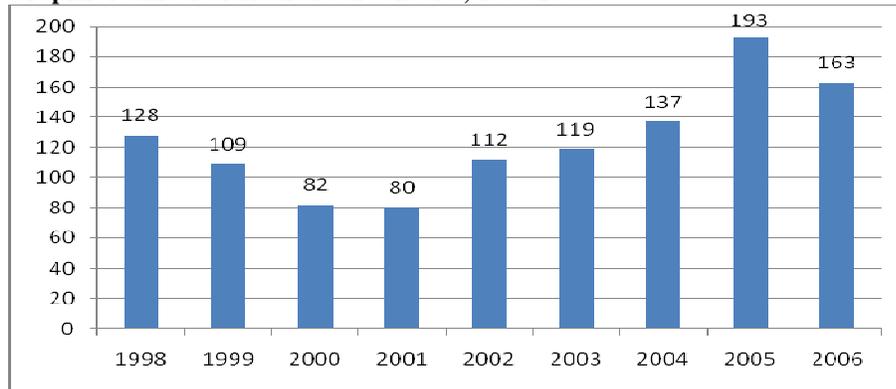
<sup>33</sup> 08/15, „Schlag zurück“

<sup>34</sup> Sturmtrupp: „Die Zeit wird kommen“

*machen*“ (doing Politics through Emotions). In particular, after the ban of the organization „Blood & Honor – Division Deutschland” in 2000, several ex-members were forced to a new form of political engagement, getting involved in the organization of (political) music events and concerts. The concerts are usually given at the end of political events and demonstrations, in order to involve politically music fans waiting for the performance of their favorite artists. In other cases, *Rechtsrock* is integrated in the program of political meetings as for the NPD Press Celebration „*Deutsche Stimme-Verlages*“.

After the Neo-Nazi organization *Blood&Honour* was banned in Germany in 2000, the number of right-wing extremist (skinheads) concerts initially dropped, but since 2002 it grew steadily until 2005.

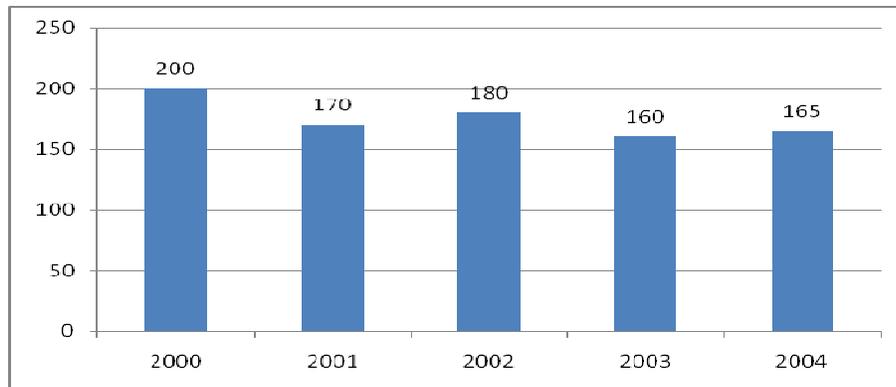
**Graph2: Number of Rechtsrock concerts, 1998-2006**



Source: Verfassungsschutzbericht 2002-2005

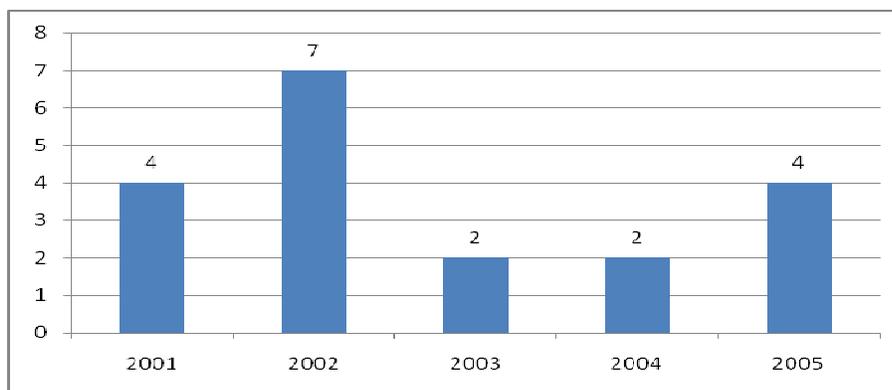
Let’s take a look at the average number of participants per event between 2000 and 2004 and at the number of events with more than 500 participants between 2001 and 2005.

**Graph3: Average number of participants between 2000 and 2004**



Source: Verfassungsschutzbericht 2002-2005

**Graph4: Number of *Rechtsrock* concerts with more than 500 participants**



Source: Verfassungsschutzbericht 2002-2005

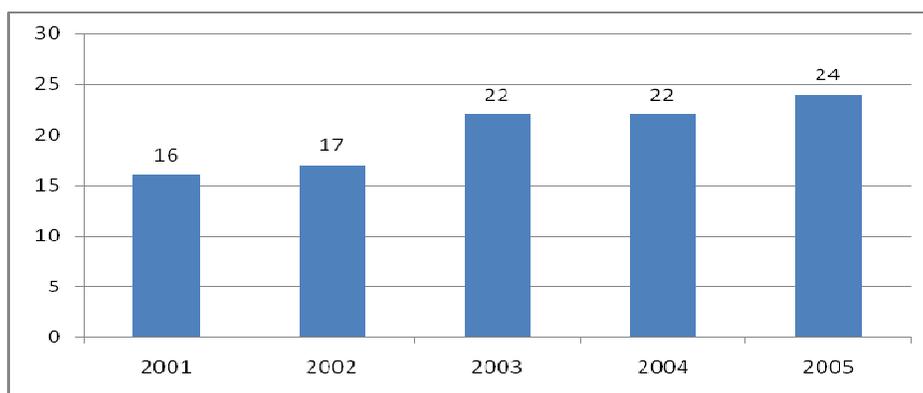
As showed above, the average number of participants per event between 2000 and 2004 ranged from 160 to 200 while the number of *Rechtsrock* concerts with more than 500 participants reached the peak of 7 in 2002.

During *Rechtsrock* concerts, two kinds of crime are usually committed: Propaganda offence according to Section 86 and 86a of the German Penal Code and Incitement of the people according to Section 130 of the German Penal Code.

In order to avoid governmental prohibitions, the far-right scene has adopted new conspirative strategies: only few organizers are informed about the place of the concerts and the names of the performing bands which remain secret until the event itself. Only selected people are contacted through word of mouth propaganda or SMS and invited at specific meeting points (for instance, petrol or highway stations) where they finally receive detailed information about the location of the concerts.

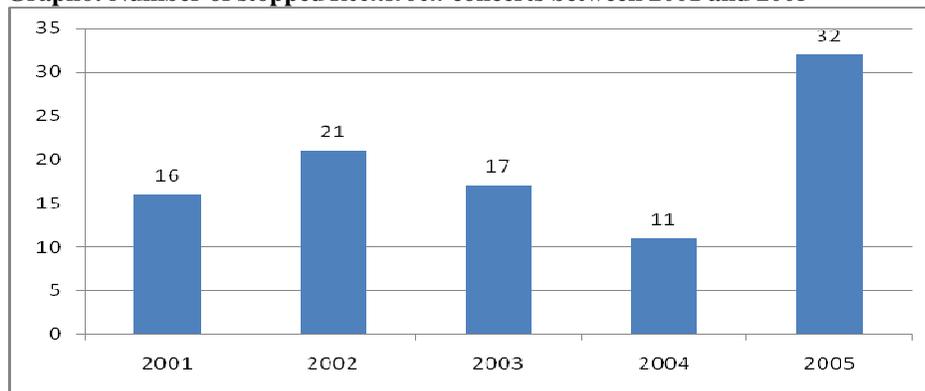
Despite the use of strategic measures, in the last years the police has increased its ability both in preventing and stopping *Rechtsrock* events.

**Graph5: number of prevented *Rechtsrock* concerts between 2001 and 2005**



Source: Verfassungsschutzbericht 2002-2005

**Graph6: Number of stopped *Rechtsrock* concerts between 2001 and 2005**



**Source: Verfassungsschutzbericht 2002-2005**

In 2005, 24 where the *Rechtsrock* concerts prevented by the police whereas 32 where the events stopped while taking place.

After having analyzed the main actors taking part in the production and consumption of white-power music, the following chapter will be focused on *Rechtsrock's* lyrics and, more specifically, on the collective identity of far-right organizations produced and reproduced in the songs.

#### 4. The *Schulhof-Projekt*

In 2004, the *Freie Kameradschaften* started adopting a new recruitment strategy: they produced a CD collecting the most representative songs of the far-right scene and distributed it in schoolyards for free. According to the Office for the Protection of the Constitution of North Rhine-Westphalia, 50.000 was the number of CDs illegally distributed nationwide.

Following the pilot project of the *Freie Kameradschaften*, in the same year also the NPD began conducting a similar project named *Schulhof Projekt* which includes four different CDs: “*Anpassung ist Feigheit. Lieder aus dem Untergrund*” (2004), “*Schnauze voll? Wahltag ist Zahhtag!*” (2004), „*Der Schrecken aller linken Spießer und Pauker*“ (2005) and „*Der Schrecken aller linken Spießer und Pauker (veränderte Auflage)*“ (2006).

The final chapter of this paper will be devoted to the analysis of the last CD of the *Schulhof Projekt*. In particular, using NVivo qualitative software, I will explore the far-right scene’s *collective structure of feeling* made and reproduced through its music and songs included in the CD (see Eyerman and Jamison, 1998).

##### 4.1. „*Der Schrecken aller linken Spießer und Pauker (veränderte Auflage)*“

The Schulhof CD of 2006 involves 15 singers and groups<sup>35</sup> and it is composed by 16 songs which range from ballads to (hard) rock.

Table 2 presents the most frequent words recurring in the lyrics (excluded conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns).

**Table 2: most recurrent words in the lyrics of the CD „*Der Schrecken aller linken Spießer und Pauker (veränderte Auflage)*“**

Word	Recurrence in the lyrics
Deutschland	14
Deutsche	13
Macht	13
Welt	13
Volk	12
Zeit	12
Völker	9
Widerstand	9
Riede	8
Leben	8
Nazi	8
Verbote	8

<sup>35</sup> 1. Michael – Widerstand; 2. Carpe Diem – Europa, Jugend, Revolution; 3. Faktor Deutschland - Es lohnt sich doch; 4. Faustrecht – Die Macht des Kapitals; 5. Nordwind – Leb’ dein Leben; 6. Noie Werte - Wer Wahrheit spricht, verliert; 7. Faktor Widerstand – Wenn der Wind sich dreht ; 8. Odem – Frieden durch Krieg; 9. Agitator - Ich bin ...; 10. Annett & Michael – Julien; 11. Nordwind – Mein Land; 12. Sleipnir – Wille zum Sieg; 13. Frank Renniecke – Sehnsucht nach Zuhause; 14. Funkenflug - Verbietet nur; 15. Annett - Es ist Zeit zu rebellieren; 16. Deutschlandlied

As it emerged above, *Deutschland* is the most recurrent word in the songs (14 times). Other very important concepts are *Deutsche* (Germans, 13 times), *Macht* (Power, 13 times), *Zeit* (Time, 12 times), *Volk und Völker* (people, 12 and 9 times), *Freunden* (Peace, 8 times), *Leben* (Life, 8 times), *Nazi* (8 times) and *Verbote* (bans, 8 times).

The songs' topics are manifold but it is possible to distinguish two main fields:

- A celebration of the German past in opposition to the present and its degeneration;
- An exhortation to revolt against Germany's enemies for a better country and life.

Let's start with the first main issue represented in Graph 7.

The songs contained in the CD "*Der Schrecken aller linken Spießer und Pauker (veränderte Auflage)*" present the German past as a glorious time, characterized by unity (*Einigkeit*), Peace (*Frieden*), Freedom (*Freiheit*), Humanity (*Humanität*), Fidelity (*Deutsche Treue*), Honour (*Ehre*), and Loyalty (*Loyalität*).

In particular, the *Deutschlandslied* exhorts the „*Deutsche Treue*“ (German fidelity) and asks for "*Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit für das deutsche Vaterland!*" (Unity, Justice and Freedom for the German Fatherland!): here, the use of the term *Vaterland* is significant and reminds on a great and legendary German past.

At the same time, the present is described as a catastrophic moment characterized by a "*Krankes system*" (sick system) and "*Tyrannie*" (tyranny): as sung by the group *Faktor Widerstand*, the current situation is going to make Germany cry ("*Wenn bald unser Deutschland weint*").

Who is then responsible for this degeneration? As highlighted by *Michael* in his songs *Widerstand*, „*Deutschlands Feinde haben unser Deutschland als Pfründe aufgeteilt*“ and „*unsere deutschen Werte in ihrem Blut ertränkt*“: Germany's enemies have divided the country as a sinecure and German values perished by drowning in their blood.

Moreover, also the power of capitalism and the Americanization have corrupted the country. In particular, in the song "*Macht des Kapitals*", the groups *Faustrecht* presents the power of capitalism as "*der Feind der freien Welt, das Schicksal aller Völker*", the enemy of the free world and destiny of all the people. In a similar way, in the song *Frieden durch Krieg* by *Odem*, the USA are depicted as responsible for different "crimes": from bombing civilians to ruination of states, from profit maximization to an homogenization of the world.

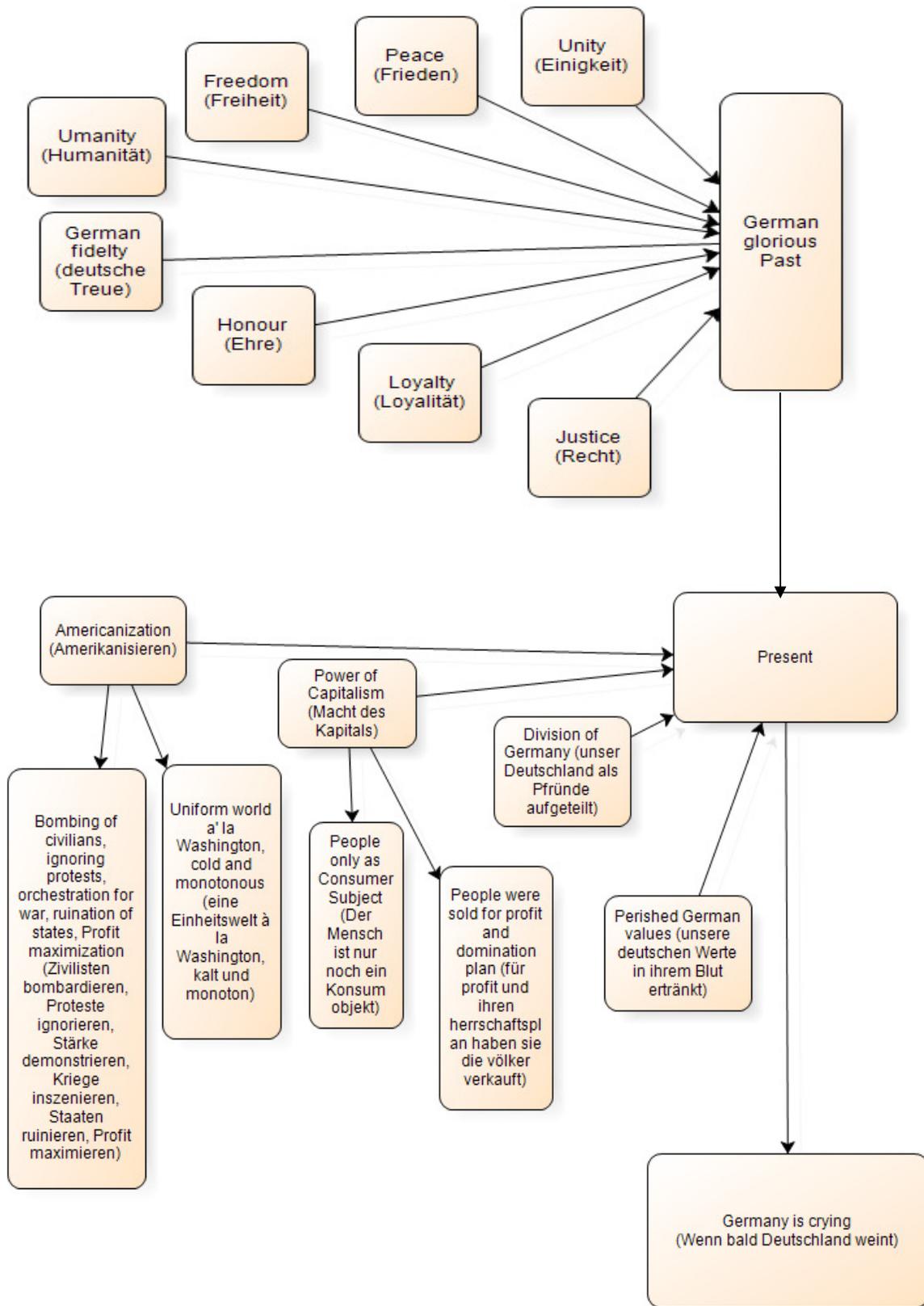
Instead, Graph 8 deals with the second main topic recurring in the lyrics: an exhortation to protest and revolt against Germany's enemies and for a better country. According to the songs, it is time to rebel, to stand up and make noise (as stressed by *Annett*, "*Es ist Zeit, zu rebellieren, es ist Zeit um aufzustehn, [...]Es ist Zeit, endlich zu lärmen*"). By invoking *Kameradschaft* (comradeship)

and solidarity („*Gemeinsam machen wir uns frei*“), the artists urge upon protest, rebellion, and revenge from below.

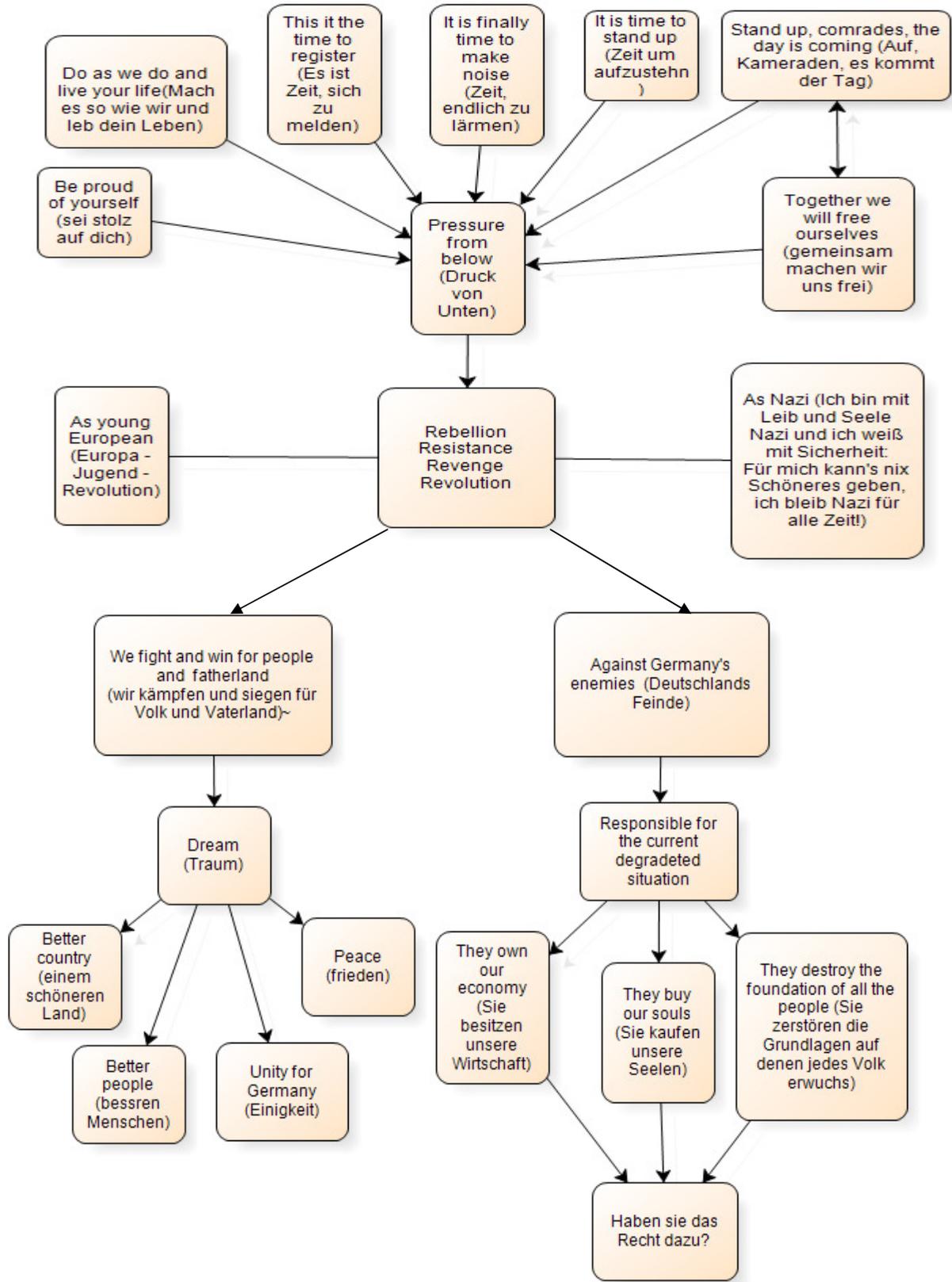
Particularly interesting are the addresses of this exhortation: young Europeans (as the group *Carpe Diem* sings: „*Europa – Jugend – Revolution*“) and Nazis. In this regard, it is worthy to note the self-description and definition of the Nazi-identity presented by the band Agitator: „*Ich bin mit Leib und Seele Nazi und ich weiß mit Sicherheit :Für mich kann's nix Schöneres geben, ich bleib Nazi für alle Zeit!*“. In its song *Das Lied (Ich bin ?????)* [translated This song (Am I???)], the singer proclaims: I am Nazi in my body and my soul and I know for sure that there can not be anything better than remaining Nazi.

The aims of the rebellion are the fight for and the victory of the German people and Fatherland and the defeat of Germany's enemies. While the fight for the Fatherland is described in aleatoric ways, by referring to the dream of better people and a better country (as the band Nordwind says, „*Du träumst von bessren Menschen, einem schöneren Land*“), of German unity and freedom (as sung by Carpe Diem, „*Den traum von frieden und einigkeit*“), Germany's enemies are represented in more realistic terms, as those who own German economy and souls and destroy the foundation of all the people („*Sie besitzen unsere Wirtschaft und kaufen unsere Seelen*“ „*Sie zerstören die Grundlagen auf denen jedes Volk erwuchs*“: *Faustrecht in Die Macht des Kapitals*) and those who rule blindly the country and are spiritually sick („*Laß dich nicht von Blinden führen, von geistig Kranken kontrollieren*“: Nordwind in *Leb Dein Leben*).

**Graph 7. Schulhof Project and the construction of a collective identity: between past and present**



Graph 8. Schulhof Project and the construction of a collective identity: Rebellion and Revolution



## Conclusion

Aim of this paper was the exploration of contemporary German far-right extremism through an innovative and peculiar perspective, by looking at its music.

In the past decades, right-wing parties have registered a dramatic decrease in youth participation and trust in traditional political models. Moreover, the governmental prohibitions and measures (prohibition to reconstitute any organization which could remind the Nazi-party as well as Section 86 and Section 130 of the German Penal Code) has made particularly difficult the survival of these organizations whose activities are punishable by law.

As I have pointed out, music has represented the new propaganda strategy adopted by the far-right scene in order to hack all these governmental restrictions and the paper has described two of the main contributions of music to the scene.

First of all, music fulfills what I have called a socialization function: that is, *Rechtsrock* plays a central role in promoting the right-wing scene among new and young listeners who, by listening to White-Power-Music, get virtually in contact with a strongly politicized ideology and *imagined community*. Once they like and identify themselves with this music, they are more likely to search for a real contact inside the far-right scene.

Secondly, *Rechtsrock* dramatically confers cohesion and coherence to a milieu that is *ortlos* (without a real location) and that is forced to operate in the shade and this happens in two ways. On the one hand, *Rechtsrock* constitutes the network which links and connects with each other far-right organizations and units which are widespread all over Germany (and all over the world). On the other hand, music takes part in the process of formation of the collective identity of the German far-right scene and in the creation and maintenance of its structure of feelings.

Central role in this propaganda strategy based on music is played by the concerts which constitute the only moment for the far-right scene to march out. The concerts represent an exclusive socialization event, during which new *Rechtsrock* consumers can get to know other members of the *elected community* and be part of it in real term<sup>36</sup> and old members can reinforce and intensify their identification with and belonging to the scene. As already highlighted, music involves body, emotions, cognition and spirituality and its effects increase significantly if it is consumed collectively.

Finally, looking at the last CD of the *Schulhof Projekt* produced and distributed by the NPD in 2006, by using the NVivo qualitative software, I analyzed the collective identity of German far-

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<sup>36</sup> While, listening to *Rechtsrock*, the consumer can feel part of the elected community in a virtual sense, the participation to a *Rechtsrock* concert transforms this feeling in reality

right organizations, thus highlighting the contribution of the most representative singers and groups of the scene in making and reproducing their collective structure of feeling.

Going back to Eyerman and Jamison, music represents a key instrument for the study of social movements and their collective identity, allowing scholars to explore their collective identity and complex structure of feeling. But, at the same time, music can also be conceived as a network connecting different actors and units belonging to the same but widespread political scene. Surely, the role of the music in social movements and organizations' life and the dual nature of its contribution deserves further investigation.

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