

# Fact or Fiction? Hate Crime in Sweden and its Representations in Swedish Popular Culture



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# Abstract

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Sweden's global representation suggests that it is one of the most gender- equal, open and forward- thinking countries in the world. This thesis, however, exposes Sweden's darker side, where hate crime towards immigrants, women and homosexuals is a serious social and political issue. Through a case study analysis of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* and Swedish white power music, this thesis examines the role of popular culture in the dissemination of ideas, protest against cultural and political norms, and the way in which it exposes ideologies which threaten the Swedish global image. This thesis finds that popular culture is a valuable medium through which the ideology of hatred can be studied. It finds that Swedish artists and authors use popular culture to convey their concerns about society but that it is also used as a tool through which hate ideology can be disseminated throughout society too.

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# Declaration

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“This work is substantially my own, and where any part of this work is not my own, I have indicated this  
by acknowledging the source of that part or those parts of the work”

# Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank all of my friends and family for showing such interest in my thesis topic and for being my sounding board for this whole year. Your support and enthusiasm has been fantastic.

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# Contents

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<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
I. The Structure of this Thesis .....	7
<b>Chapter One- Literature Review</b> .....	<b>9</b>
I. Introduction .....	9
II. Selection of Literature .....	9
III. The Background of this Thesis .....	10
IV. General Themes in the Literature .....	12
V. Useful Definitions .....	15
VI. Where this Thesis Fits into the Literature .....	16
<b>Chapter Two- Methodological Overview</b> .....	<b>18</b>
I. Commonly Used Research Techniques .....	18
II. The Constructivist Approach .....	18
III. Quantitative Analysis .....	19
IV. The Case Study Approach .....	19
V. Discourse Analysis .....	21
<b>Chapter Three- Hate Crime: Sweden’s Underbelly</b> .....	<b>22</b>
I. Definitions .....	22
II. The Significance of a Study of Hate Crime in Sweden .....	24
III. The Reality of Hate Crime in Sweden .....	25
<b>Chapter Four- The Importance of Popular Culture in a Study of Hate Crime</b> .....	<b>31</b>
I. Definitions .....	31
II. Common Epistemologies of Popular Culture Scholars .....	33
III. Using Popular Culture to Study Hate Crime .....	36
<b>Chapter Five- Men Who Hate Women: Stieg Larsson’s <i>Millennium Trilogy</i></b> .....	<b>38</b>
I. Introduction .....	38
II. A Background to <i>The Millennium Trilogy</i> .....	38

III.	The Effectiveness of Crime Fiction .....	42
IV.	Popular Culture and Hate Crime .....	43
V.	Constructivism .....	44
VI.	Key Themes in <i>The Millennium Trilogy</i> .....	44
VII.	Language .....	45
	a. Hate Speech .....	45
	b. The Use of Derogatory Language .....	46
VIII.	The Depiction of Violence .....	47
	a. Men Who Hate Women .....	47
	b. Physical Violence .....	48
	c. Sexual Violence .....	49
IX.	Discrimination .....	52
	a. Women in the Workforce .....	52
	b. Discrimination Based on Appearance .....	54
	c. Discrimination Based on Sexuality or Gender .....	54
	d. The Role of the Media .....	55
X.	Conclusion .....	56
<b>Chapter Six- Blood and Honour: White Power Music in Sweden .....</b>		<b>58</b>
I.	Introduction .....	58
II.	The Role of Music .....	58
III.	A Background to White Power Music .....	61
IV.	Defining Factors in White Power Music .....	62
V.	The Reality of the White Power Music Scene in Sweden .....	64
VI.	The Importance of a Study of White Power Music in a Study of Hate Crime. ....	65
VII.	Symbolism in White Power Music .....	68
VIII.	Values and Beliefs in White Power Music .....	70
IX.	Conclusion .....	72
<b>Conclusion .....</b>		<b>74</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>		<b>76</b>
I.	Academic Sources .....	76
II.	Primary Sources .....	83

# Introduction

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Sweden has a reputation of being a world leader in gender equality, welfare state policy, liberal and forward- thinking policymaking and in its openness to immigration. This reputation is actively promoted by Sweden to the world, and the world generally accepts this reputation to be substantially accurate. Part of Sweden's reputation comes from its relatively high acceptance of immigrants and the generous welfare benefits that they receive. Sweden has a comparatively short history of high levels of immigration when compared to other Western European states such as France, however since 1975 Sweden has taken in more immigrants and refugees as a ratio to its population size than any other Western European nation (Sander, 1996).

Sweden is also reputed for its gender- equal policies and low levels of discrimination based on sexual preferences. With generous welfare benefits which allow both parents to take maternity, paternity and parental leave, as well as workplace policies which encourage women to take on extra responsibility in their career, Sweden has a high number of women who participate in the workforce and who are employed in positions of authority. Sweden was one of the first countries in the world to accept same- sex relationships as legitimate relationships and actively celebrates homosexual, bisexual and transgender people in its world- famous annual Stockholm Pride festival.

Despite its apparent openness and forward- thinking policies, hate crime is a significant social and political issue in Sweden. Hate crime is largely directed at homosexuals, immigrants and women, and comes in the forms of hate speech, hate propaganda, vandalism, and physical violence. This thesis

examines hate crime in Sweden and argues that Sweden is not the open, egalitarian society it claims to be.

Hate crime in Sweden will be analysed through the lens of Swedish popular culture. Whilst popular culture can be viewed simply as forms of entertainment, fashion styles or leisure activities, its political role cannot be underestimated. Popular culture can be viewed as a commentary on social, political, economic and cultural issues within a given society, whether this commentary be implicit or explicit within the text. The consumption of particular products may provide insight into the particular trends of the time, and authors and artists may use their work to reflect on or convey their concerns about society. This thesis is based around the question 'what is the relationship between popular culture and hate crime in Sweden?' It argues that Swedish popular culture provides valuable insights into the mindsets of ordinary citizens and that hatred for particular groups or individuals is found throughout Swedish society.

### *The Structure of this Thesis*

This thesis begins with a review of the existing academic literature and common research methodologies surrounding Sweden, hate crime and popular culture. This chapter notes that whilst there is ample research done on these three topics individually, little research has been conducted on the relationship between popular culture and hate crime, and this thesis fills that gap. The following chapter is an analysis of the concept of hate crime, and actual hate crime in Sweden, suggesting that Sweden's promoted reputation is in fact contradictory to its reality. The next chapter explores the concept of popular culture, examining its role in society and emphasising the importance of including a study of popular culture when examining societal and political issues. Following this chapter, two chapters are devoted to in-depth case studies of two examples of popular culture from Sweden which



examine hate crime and the ideology of hatred- Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* and Swedish White Power music. These chapters find that popular culture is used by authors and artists to convey their concerns about Swedish society, express their hatred of certain individuals and groups, and to implore others to take action. This thesis will conclude with a summary of the relationship between popular culture and hate crime and a suggestion for further research in this field.

# Literature Review

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## *Introduction*

The European Union is facing increasing levels of crime towards marginalised individuals and groups within society (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012). Whilst crime against marginalised groups is not a new phenomenon, in Europe the term 'hate crime', used to describe this victimisation of minority groups or individuals, is new (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012). The term 'hate crime' was first used officially by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2003, indicating a very late response by European institutions to this phenomenon (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012, p. 39). Of particular interest is the level of hate crime in Sweden- a country which actively promotes itself as being a world leader in norm creation relating to high quality of life, peace and equality of citizens (Ingebritsen, 2006). Hate crime in Sweden has been steadily on the increase over the past decade and is the subject of increasing political conversation (BRÅ, 2012). This thesis aims to analyse this more sinister 'underbelly' of Sweden in which hate crime is a growing social and political concern. I will do this by analysing Swedish popular culture and how this is used to portray hate crime. The question I specifically ask is 'What is the relationship between popular culture and hate crime in Sweden?'

## *Selection of Literature*

The following literature was selected on the basis that it has both informed my area of interest and consists of articles which are particularly relevant to this thesis. Whilst some sources simply provide the background or impetus for this thesis, other sources provide a helpful understanding of common research methodologies employed by scholars of popular culture and hate crime. Other sources which are reviewed assess specific issues that are related to this thesis, such as the way in which popular

culture is diffused throughout society or how the community has responded to particular hate crimes. This chapter will first provide a historical background of relevant literature, including sources which have assisted in the formulation of this thesis' research question. The following section will address the general themes covered in popular culture and hate crime literature, with a discussion on commonly asked research questions and common difficulties faced when researching these topics. Common definitions given by scholars will follow, showing how these have been useful for the formation of this thesis. This chapter will conclude with an explanation of where this thesis fits in to the current literature and where this thesis aims to fill the gaps.

### *The Background of this Thesis*

Three texts in particular have provided a background for my interest and research in my thesis topic. Firstly, Hirschman and Stampfl's study on the *Roles of Retailing in the Diffusion of Popular Culture* provides a detailed analysis of the importance of retail in everyday life (Hirschman and Stampfl, 1980). They argue that the process by which products of the manufacturing sector pass through to the consumer sector is in fact the process by which cultural norms are created and diffused throughout society (Hirschman and Stampfl, 1980). They provide a review of sociological literature which addresses popular culture and processes by which norms are manufactured then disseminated, and also conduct interviews with consumers to see the effects that products have on their beliefs. This article, whilst old, shows the importance of popular culture in the way in which people view the world and therefore provided me with an interesting basis for my thesis topic.

Mukerji and Schudson (1986) also reflect on popular culture but focus on how scholars conduct research in this field. It provides a useful framework for understanding common methods used in popular culture research and emphasises that popular culture studies is interdisciplinary and that this is

what defines this area of study (Mukerji and Schudson, 1986). Popular Culture studies is a discipline which attempts to make sense of the world and explain phenomena through looking at ideas and events from an historical, sociological and anthropological perspective (Mukerji and Schudson, 1986).

Both Hirschman and Stampfl, and Mukerji and Schudson's articles provide useful information as to preferred methods of research when researching popular culture. Both suggest the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, allowing the researcher to code answers and make generalisations about behaviour; interviews, to allow for in- depth analyses of personal opinions about popular culture's societal and political roles; and case studies, also to gain an in- depth understanding of the research topic (Hirschman and Stampfl, 1980; Mukerji and Schudson, 1986).

Finally, Ingebritsen's article on Scandinavia's role in the world provides a Scandinavian perspective on how important this region is to the rest of the world (Ingebritsen, 2006). This provided a background for my thesis topic, which was eventually narrowed down to an analysis of Sweden. This article reflected how Scandinavia portrays itself to the world and its important role in 'norm entrepreneurship' within not only Europe but for the rest of the world (Ingebritsen, 2006). Such 'norm entrepreneurship' includes world- first legislation legalising same- sex relationships, as well as generous parental leave allowances- both of which have encouraged the ideology of equality (Eger, 2010). This article provided a basis for my thesis question, with my interest in how Scandinavia portrays itself versus the reality where hate crime is a growing concern.

## *General Themes in the Literature*

Four general themes emerge from the literature. These include Scandinavia's, specifically Sweden's global reputation; the second issue is the increase in European right-wing politics; thirdly, hate crime and its prevalence in society; and finally, the theme of popular culture.

Scandinavia's reputation in the world is a common theme in much of the literature relevant to this thesis. Scandinavian countries promote themselves as being liberal, forward-thinking and where people are considered equal (Eger, 2010, p. 203). For example Sweden was one of the first countries in the world to allow legalised civil unions between homosexual couples (Rydström, 2008) and is recognised for its extensive welfare system. Sweden promotes itself to be an open and peaceful country and this reputation is generally accepted to be true (Ingebritsen, 2006).

The second common theme addressed in the literature reviewed is of right-wing politics and extremism. Many scholars note the rise in populist right-wing parties in Scandinavia and attempt to explain this phenomenon (Eger, 2010; Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup, 2008; Moore, 2010; Rydgren, 2004). Many attribute this rise in right-wing politics to the population's gradual tiring of high levels of immigration (Schierup and Ålund, 2011). The rise in popularity of right-wing parties in Scandinavia is documented by many scholars who look both at issues which parties politicise, such as immigration (Arter, 2010; Bille, 2006), as well as structural factors which have allowed for the formation of new parties such as local level institutional factors and socioeconomic factors (Kestilä and Söderlund, 2007). The rise in popularity of right-wing political parties is significant to this thesis as it reflects a general concern in the population with policies regarding immigration, conservatism and welfare state benefits. These are issues raised in the popular culture case studies of white power music and Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* later in this thesis. The issue of welfare state benefits being given to unemployed or

'unworthy' immigrants is a highly political issue in Sweden- an issue which is discussed by extreme- right parties such as the Sweden Democrats- and is also raised repetitively by white power musicians. Both case studies discussed later in this thesis relate to right- wing politics- white power musicians generally support these political parties, whilst Stieg Larsson was vehemently opposed to them (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 52).

Hate crime is another theme of the literature I have reviewed. Scholars have assessed both reasons for increasing levels of hate crime and also definitions of hate crime. Issues surrounding immigrants such as housing segregation, increasing unemployment and the stigmatisation of big- city areas in Sweden led to policies that were both "initiated and legitimized by the worrying reports about immigrants' situation in Sweden" (Bunar, 2007, p. 176). In this way immigration issues were politicised in Sweden. Bufkin and Wilets argue that structures created by society inform how people act, including structures which situate people in particular gender and race roles (Bufkin, 1999; Wilet, 1997). It is these gender and race roles that define which 'group' a person is placed into in society, and whether or not this group is marginalised or not. There is also intense debate about the meaning of hate crime amongst scholars. Whilst some provide a clear definition of hate crime and debate that it is a method of emphasising the outsider status of some groups (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012), others cannot agree that hate crime is a legitimate sub- type of crime (Pollack, 2009). Many scholars have argued that crime against a person or persons is unacceptable no matter whether or not the motive is hatred for that person's gender, ethnic group or so on, and that therefore, whilst some crimes contain elements of 'bias' or 'prejudice', they are still in the same category of a normal crime against a person or persons (Tiby, 2007). At the same time as there is debate about whether or not 'hate crime' is a legitimate and distinguishable type of crime, there is also much discussion about differing interpretations of international laws which mention hate crime. Wilets conducts an analysis on the linguistic interpretations of international laws and notes that different countries have interpreted these laws very differently, resulting in different

treatment of victims and perpetrators of hate crime depending on which country they live in (Wilets, 1997). There is a call for policy makers to create a transnational definition of hate crime which can be used in all countries to achieve the same results, however a common definition cannot be agreed upon.

Finally, the relevant literature addresses the theme of popular culture. Many sources note that popular culture studies are complex and interdisciplinary in nature. Duncan and Papanikoloau wrote two reviews on common methodologies employed by scholars of popular culture, noting that popular culture studies is “espousing a multiplicity of approaches and a methodological *laissez-faire* that is often proposing itself as the only actual methodology for the subject” (Duncan and Papanikoloau, 2006, p. 160; Duncan and Papanikoloau, 2008). Mukerji and Schudson note this as well, emphasising the importance of using the methodologies of other disciplines such as history and anthropology for gaining a fuller understanding of popular culture and how it reflects society (Mukerji and Schudson, 1986). This has informed the methodology of this thesis, which has used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Ideas are formed through consumption habits and institutions such as the media and the retail industry are particularly powerful in diffusing ideas and norms (Duncan and Papanikoloau, 2006; Hirschman and Stampfl, 1980). Ott and The Economist note, for example, how Scandinavian crime fiction has been a large success in the U.S. and has acted as a medium by which pre-conceived norms about Scandinavia have been challenged, indicating the importance of popular culture in one’s understanding of the world (Anonymous, 2010; Ott, 2007). A study of popular culture can reveal how ordinary citizens view their society or the concerns that they harbour, and is therefore useful when researching how the ideology of hate is conveyed or disseminated through a society.

A number of general questions were asked by the authors, many of which appeared in numerous articles. The main question asked was ‘How can we define hate crime?’ and ‘Are there varying degrees

of hate crime, such as bias and prejudice crime?’ (Pollack, 2009). Generally, sources came to the conclusion that hate crime is a recognised type of crime but it must be defined in a way accepted by all members of the European Union in order for collective action to occur (Chakbraborti and Garland, 2012; Pollack, 2009; Tiby, 2007). Other sources questioned ‘What is Scandinavia’s global role?’ (Ingebritsen, 2006) and ‘How can we account for the rise in right- wing parties in Scandinavia?’ (Arter, 2010). Importantly for my thesis topic, a number of sources questioned ‘What is the role of popular culture in the diffusion of norms?’ (Hirschman and Stampfl, 1980; Mukerji and Schudson, 1986; Duncan and Papanikoloau, 2006; Duncan and Papanikoloau, 2008). This question is of central importance to my thesis. Authors came to the conclusion that popular culture is extremely important in the diffusion of ideas and norms. It both helps to create norms, but also reflects the culture it operates within.

### *Useful Definitions*

Numerous useful definitions were provided by scholars that have assisted in the formation of this thesis. The difficulty in defining *hate crime* has been noted, however Chakraborti and Garland’s notion that it is a method of emphasising the outsider status of some groups in society is highly useful, in that it indicates the way in which hate crime is often directed at minority groups in society (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012).

Arter defines *nativism*, an idea which is held by many right- wing political parties, as “an ideology that holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non- native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation- state” (Arter, 2010, p. 450). This concept is commonly used in white power music and this idea will be examined in Chapter Six.



*Popular culture* is a difficult term to define. Kidd notes this difficulty, arguing that it possibly describes 'the people's culture' (Kidd, 2007). This however is a complicated and broad definition, made more complex by the fact that cultural boundaries between the local and international are increasingly changing and are becoming blurred (Kidd, 2007). He suggests another broad definition of *popular culture*, suggesting that it may contain both tangible products, such as clothing styles or folk music, and also intangible products such as ideas and norms (Kidd, 2007.) This thesis employs Kidd's broader definition of popular culture, and in conducting case studies on both white power music and *The Millennium Trilogy*, both tangible and intangible products will be assessed.

### *Where This Thesis Fits into the Literature*

This thesis will discuss hate crimes committed within Sweden against women, immigrants and homosexuals. As stated previously, popular culture will be reviewed through case studies of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* and Swedish white power music. These modes of popular culture reflect the creator's support for, or concern about hate crime in Sweden. They may also be used as a way of creating norms within society. This is what I will evaluate. The time period that I will be assessing will be from 1990 to the current time. Whilst the causes of hate crime are a serious concern and deserving of research, this is beyond the scope of this thesis. This thesis is instead an analysis of the role of popular culture in illustrating the prevalence of hate crime within Sweden.

There are some significant gaps in the literature which will be filled by this thesis. Whilst a number of the articles reviewed reflected on the role of popular culture in society, there is little relating to Sweden in particular. Therefore, I will use the ideas and definitions from the popular culture literature I have read and assess how it applies to Swedish popular culture. I have found no literature which specifically relates popular culture to ideas about hate crime. I aim to fill this gap by assessing popular

culture in Sweden and looking at ways in which it addresses public concerns or feelings motivated by hate crime. I will also encourage further research in this field.

# Methodological Overview

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## *Commonly Used Research Techniques*

Scholars who research both popular culture and hate crime employ a wide range of research methodologies. Some employ only quantitative methods, such as systematic analyses of voting behaviour in elections and analyses of hate crime data sets (Arter, 2010; Bille, 2006; Bunar, 2007; Eger, 2010; Kestilä and Söderlund, 2007; Rydgren, 2004; Tiby, 2007). However most have used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct their research. Many authors use a small- n comparative analysis in their research (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012; Kestilä and Söderlund, 2007; Moore, 2010; Pollack, 2009; Rydgren, 2004). Content analysis is also used by a number of authors, in which they closely analyse the content of popular culture artefacts such as newspapers and television news over a period of time (Arter, 2010; Bille, 2006; Bufkin, 1999; Bunar, 2007; Chakraborti and Garland, 2012). Discourse analyses as well as more detailed linguistic analyses are conducted as well, mostly surrounding anti- hate crime legislation and different peoples' and organisations interpretations of words within this legislation, as well as analyses of discourse surrounding particular issues such as immigration during election periods (Green- Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008; Rydström, 2008; Schierup and Ålund, 2011; Wilets, 1997). This thesis applies both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, with the main chapters using the case study approach.

## *The Constructivist Approach*

The constructivist idea that “people do one thing and not another due to the presence of certain ‘social constructs’: ideas, beliefs, norms, identities, or some other interpretive filter through which people perceive the world” (Parsons, 2010) is central to this thesis. As a major approach to social and

political study, the constructivist approach posits that the world is socially constructed and that one's interpretive filters affect how they act. In this thesis, popular culture is examined as a medium through which the social, political and cultural world can be constructed by an artist or author to convey particular beliefs about their society. The major methodological techniques employed in this thesis are both qualitative and quantitative, however the majority of this work is qualitative in its analysis.

### *Quantitative Analysis*

“Quantitative work rests on the observation and measurement of repeated incidences of a political phenomenon” (John, 2010) in order to make inferences about certain behaviour. Whilst quantitative analysis informs only a small section of this thesis, it is significant nonetheless. This thesis argues that hate crime is a social and political issue in Sweden despite its global reputation of being open and liberal, and data has been collected to indicate this. The collection of data regarding levels of hate crime in Sweden allows for the comparison of different motivations for hate crime- whether it be homophobia or xenophobia for example, and to compare how the phenomenon of hate crime in Sweden is changing over time. The comparison of data sets over a period of time indicates that the status of hate crime as a political issue is changing. Further, evidence of more accurate and specific data collection of hate crime in Sweden indicates an increasing level of importance given to hate crime by the state in its attempt to control it, indicating the importance of this type of quantitative analysis for the outcome of this thesis.

### *The Case Study Approach*

The main body of this thesis is based on the case study approach. “Case studies enable researchers to focus on a single individual, group, community, event, policy area or institution, and study it in depth” (Burnham et al, 2008). This thesis contains an in depth analysis of two forms of

popular culture which have a clear relationship with hate crime. This approach allows for research to move beyond theory and provides empirical examples of popular culture being used as a political tool, as well as a forum for debate and for the dissemination of ideas.

A case study is conducted on Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* and examines the way in which Larsson used this series to articulate his concerns about the treatment of some groups in Swedish society, particularly women. The significance of using *The Millennium Trilogy* as a case study lies both in its explicit portrayal of hate crime within Sweden, and in the fact that Larsson was a political journalist who decided to use crime fiction to convey his message more effectively. This choice indicates Larsson's belief that through popular culture, ideas can be conveyed more widely and effectively than they can through political journals, which may not be as widely read. Whilst these novels are only fiction, they portray a damning picture of Sweden, in which misogyny and violence go unnoticed. The case study of *The Millennium Trilogy* consists of a constructivist analysis of Larsson's depiction of choice of language, violence and discrimination in Sweden to convey his concerns about how particular groups in society are treated and viewed by others.

The second case study is of Swedish white power music and how artists project an ideology of hate into society. These texts are significant for two reasons. Firstly, Sweden is governed by strict hate speech laws, which would render these songs illegal in Sweden. The lyrics convey explicit hatred towards numerous groups in society, including immigrants, homosexuals and politicians. However Sweden's white power music industry is thriving and it is a world leader in the production and dissemination of white power music and merchandise (Futrell, Simi, Gottschalk, 2006). This indicates that despite the fact that this music is considered illegal, there are many Swedes who sympathise with its ideology. Secondly, Swedish white power music endorses hate crime, whether it be through

encouraging listeners to take violent action, or through attempting to justify hatred towards particular groups in society in their lyrics. This chapter uses discourse analysis to analyse the use of symbolism, norms, values and beliefs in white power music and how this works to portray hatred towards members of society and how it binds all white power music together with a common goal- the supremacy of the white race. The majority of the lyrics are in Swedish. I speak Swedish, so translations were done by me and the lyrics written in the chapter are the English translations, with every attempt made to ensure their original meaning remains. The major difficulty with this chapter was in the initial research stages. Due to the highly offensive nature of the lyrics and the fact that most white power bands operate illegally in Sweden, a very limited number of their lyrics could be found through a Google search on the internet. It is these songs which are analysed in the music chapter.

### *Discourse Analysis*

Discourse analysis is “a qualitative methodology that focuses attention on the role that language and communications have in shaping the social world” (Burnham et al, 2008). In keeping with the constructivist paradigm which informs this thesis, discourse analysis is used to analyse how social reality is constructed by producers of popular culture through their choice of language, in order to achieve certain political outcomes. The key element of this discourse analysis is the way in which language is used and manipulated by white power artists to convey racist messages, to undermine the state, to form a connection between all white power musicians through a common language and common goals; and how derogatory language is used by Stieg Larsson’s characters to convey his personal concerns about how some members of Swedish society were being subjected to forms of hate crime.

# Hate Crime: Sweden's Underbelly

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## *Definitions*

Hate crime is a relatively new concept in society although it is not a new phenomenon. It is a concept based on ideas espoused in Articles One and Two in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article One states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (United Nations, 1948). Article Two continues to state that

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non- self- governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty (United Nations, 1948).

The statement of these rights forms the basis for understanding acceptable standards of living within any given society and place expectations upon governments to deliver these standards. The concept of hate crime has risen from an understanding that whilst all people are entitled to be considered equal within society this is not the reality and some groups are targeted specifically to be victims of crime. It is the added motive of hatred of a particular group which separates a traditional crime from a hate crime.

The United States Congress defines hate crime as a “criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, ethnic origin or sexual orientation” (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 2012). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) continues to note the importance of not conflating hate crime with general feelings of hatred- it argues that freedom of expression and speech are fundamental civil liberties which must be protected,

but that criminal offences which are driven by motives of hate are not to be tolerated (FBI, 2012). Sweden has adopted a similar definition of hate crime. Whilst hate crimes are not specific types of offences expressly regulated in the Penal Code, the Swedish government also views hate crimes as typical criminal offences with the added motive of bias or hate (Brottsförebyggande rådet (Brå), 2011). Despite the fact that there is no uniform definition of hate crime in Sweden, since 2008 police officers registering a police report are required to make note as to whether an offence could potentially be regarded as a hate crime or not (Brå, 2011).

There are methodological difficulties that researchers face when conducting a study of hate crime. Due to a lack of a common definition of *hate crime* within Europe and national variations in the ways in which hate crimes are reported and categorized, international organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) face methodological difficulties in categorizing hate crimes for the purpose of conducting international comparisons. They must rely on data available publicly, through Non- Government Organisations (NGOs) and through surveys in order to generate reports on hate crime trends within Europe. In addition, numerous European states have only a limited system through which to report hate crime which indicates their limited commitment to reducing hate crime. The 2009 Annual Report on Hate Crime from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) rights notes that only eleven European states have criminal justice data on racist crime available from a national source (OSCE, 2009). This makes a comparative study of hate crime trends in Europe difficult and limits the ability of organisations such as the European Union to address this issue.



## *The Significance of a Study of Hate Crime in Sweden*

The significance of a study of hate crime in Sweden lies in Sweden's reputation of being an exceptional place to live. Sweden is reputed to be an open, egalitarian and forward-thinking country and its reputation would suggest that hate crime is almost non-existent there. A brief look at Sweden's main tourism and information website, indicates the reputation that Swedes promote of their country. The website promotes a strong sense of egalitarianism, whether within the office at work or when applying for a job (Sweden.se- The Official Gateway to Sweden, 2012). The website describes Swedish culture in a way that many Swedes and people around the world believe to be true- that Sweden is a country well-known for its entrepreneurship; the Swedish government takes care of its citizens with generous welfare benefits; Sweden has freedom of the press; the government is democratically elected and all processes are transparent; official records are made public allowing for authorities to be held accountable; all people in Sweden are considered to be equal; and Sweden is at the forefront in fighting for human rights (Sweden.se- The Official Gateway to Sweden, 2012).

This reputation is not unfounded. Firstly, Sweden has a reputation for openness due to its relatively high acceptance of immigrants. Dahlström and Esaiasson note that "by most standards Sweden has been strongly affected by international migration. Until the 1960s, Sweden was ethnically homogenous. Today, with a population of 12 percent foreign born, it is one of the most ethnically heterogeneous countries in Europe" (Dahlström and Esaiasson, 2011). Secondly, Sweden was the third country in the world, behind Denmark and Norway, to legalise registered partnerships for homosexual couples in 1995, indicating the liberal values of Swedish society (Rydström, 2008, p. 199). Thirdly, Sweden is famous for its openness regarding freedom of the press and access to information. In 1766 Sweden became the first country in the world to permit freedom of the press (Sweden.se- The Official Gateway to Sweden, 2012). This allowed for freedom of information to the literate public and also gave these people the opportunity to freely express their political opinions. Fourthly, Sweden demonstrated

how gender equality is an important concept, being the first country in the world to acknowledge the father as a caring parent on par with the mother in 1974, as well as providing excellent parental leave programs (Oláh and Bernhardt, 2008). This is an extremely flexible system which recognises the importance of both the mother and father in a family and is an example of how Swedish society places an emphasis on gender equality. Finally, Sweden is well- known for its generous welfare state. Whilst citizens pay up to sixty per cent of their income in tax, they are well- looked after by the government, receiving free education, generous pensions and unemployment benefits, as well as cheap medical care (Murray, 2004).

Whilst it would appear that Sweden is an exceptional place to live, hate crime is a serious political and social issue in Sweden. Sweden faces the same problems that every other country does, such as racism and homophobia. Sweden's promoted reputation does not accurately reflect the reality of the problem of hate crime within Sweden, and this is why a study of hate crime in Sweden is significant.

### *The Reality of Hate Crime in Sweden*

Despite Sweden's global reputation, hate crime is a serious social and political issue. Much of Sweden's hate crime is connected to immigration concerns. Since World War II, Sweden began to open its borders to more and more immigrants, especially to displaced persons from the war. In 1975, there was a unanimous multi- party decision to transform Sweden into a multicultural nation (Kaminsky, 2012). Since then, Sweden has had a high intake of immigrants and refugees in proportion to its population compared to other Western European states. As Sander notes,

In proportion to its population, Sweden- which has a liberal immigration policy and reputation for granting political asylum- has taken in more outsiders than any other Western European Nation. In 1994, the number of immigrants arriving at Swedish ports reached 83,000, an all- time high (Sander, 1996).

Problems have arisen in Sweden as a result of high levels of immigration. Firstly, immigrants were receiving free healthcare and free schooling, but Sweden struggled to give all immigrants jobs (Sander, 1996). As a result, it appeared that some immigrants were living off the welfare state benefits but not actively contributing to the Swedish society and economy. The economic downturn of the 1980s and 1990s added fuel to this debate, with higher unemployment levels leading Swedish citizens to question whether immigrants had taken jobs that should have been available for Swedes as well as bringing the idea of the welfare state to the forefront of public debate (Kaminsky, 2012). Immigrants were also not forced to assimilate into Swedish society. It was decided by the Swedish government that assimilation was not necessary- immigrants simply needed to learn how to function in Swedish society. There was even a policy of *hemspråkslära*- a policy where immigrant children had the option to take extra classes at school in their native language, instead of becoming fluent in Swedish (Kaminsky, 2012). Whilst immigrants were not forced to assimilate into Swedish society, Swedes were also not adequately educated through community or school programs about how to live alongside an increasing number of new immigrants. This led to issues such as segregation and workplace discrimination. The anti-immigrant sentiment in Stockholm grew sharply during the 1990s and in 1993 in Trollhattan, the widely-publicised bashing of two Somalis and subsequent television interviews of local residents indicated that ordinary citizens, and not just members of far right extremist groups, were frustrated with the level of immigration in Sweden (Jederlund and Kayfetz, 1999). As a result of problems faced by large amounts of immigration, the political right- wing grew in popularity. In the 1991 elections, 6.7 per cent of the vote went to the extreme- right, anti- immigrant New Democracy Party (Kaminsky, 2012). The increased popularity of the Sweden Democrats, which were founded in 1988, indicates that immigration is still a

major political issue in Sweden. The Sweden Democrats, who have now attempted to distance themselves from their neo- Nazi background, have previously collaborated with the *Vit Ariskt Motstånd* (*White Aryan Resistance*) at protests, and have had significant membership overlaps with neo- Nazi organisations (Kaminsky, 2012). In addition, the majority of hate crime committed in Sweden has a xenophobic motive (BRÅ, 2011). The increasing popularity of right- wing political parties, as well as increased public debate about the role of immigrants within Swedish society, indicates that immigration is a contentious political issue.

Significantly, the Swedish state has taken an increasingly serious view of hate crimes over the past twenty years in an attempt to uphold their human rights values. In 1994 a clause was introduced into the Penal Code which provided an opportunity for harsher sentences for criminal acts which also involved a motive of hate (Lönnheden and Schelin, 2002, p. 48). This clause states that

If a crime is committed against a person as a result of the person's race, colour, national or ethnic origins, religious beliefs or some other similar circumstance, then this is to be regarded as an aggravating factor in relation to the setting of the sentence (Lönnheden and Schelin, 2002, p. 48).

The new clause also indicated the state's move to accept homosexuality by including a section related to crimes carried out against a person as a result of their sexual orientation (Lönnheden and Schelin, 2002). In 2008 the definition of hate crime was broadened significantly in Sweden. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebygganderådet, Brå), made a decision to expand the concept of hate crimes to include offences between minority groups and also offences committed by minority groups towards majority groups (Kawesa, 2010, p. 12). When classifying hate crimes, both police and statisticians must categorise offences according to their motive, such as homophobic, Islamophobic, anti- Semitic and so forth. In 2008 new categories were introduced in Sweden including hate crimes with an 'Afrophobic' or an 'anti- Roma' motive (Kawesa, 2010, p. 12). These groups were deemed to be

especially vulnerable to hate crimes in Swedish society and therefore needed to become individual categories. The broadening of categories included in hate crime in Sweden indicated the broadening of understanding as to what constituted a hate crime and which groups in society were being targeted more than others. It also indicated that hate crime was not confined to majorities attacking defenceless minorities, rather, that any offence committed by a person or group towards another person or group which had a motive of hatred attached constituted a hate crime. Significantly, broadening definitions of hate crime indicated an increased level of importance being attached to hate crimes in Sweden. It indicated the importance of addressing the issue of hate crime and also indicated the increasing social and political significance of this problem.

In Sweden, statistics are collected annually by *Brottsförebyggande rådet (BRÅ)* in the Swedish Crime Survey on types of offences committed. Since 2008 police have been required to note whether or not they believe an offence had a motive of bias, and if so, what type of bias (BRÅ, 2011). The following tables indicate the levels of hate crime in Sweden and which groups hate crime is most likely to be directed against.

**Figure 1- Hate Crimes Recorded by the Police in Scandinavia**

	2007	2008	2009
<b>Denmark</b>	Not Available	98	Not Available
<b>Finland</b>	698	1163	Not Available
<b>Iceland</b>	2	3	0
<b>Norway</b>	257	213	236
<b>Sweden</b>	3536	5895	5799

Source: OSCE 2009 Annual Report on Hate Crime in the OSCE Region

It must be noted that Sweden has excellent reporting and data collection systems, but the other Scandinavian countries also have good data collection. Sweden is far ahead in the number of hate crimes reported to the police, partly because of its data collection systems, but also because it is a significant issue in Sweden compared to the rest of Scandinavia.

**Figure 2- Police Reports in Sweden with a White Power Motive 2005-2010**

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
328	304	408	695	555	444

Source: Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2012.

**Figure 3- Anti- Semitic Hate Crimes in Sweden 2005- 2010**

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
111	134	118	159	250	161

Source: Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2012.

## Figure 4- Police Reports with a Xenophobic Motive in Sweden 2005-2010

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
2272	2189	2489	4224	4116	3786

Source: Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2012.

In 2010, approximately 81,000 people stated that they had been subjected to xenophobic hate crimes in that year, while approximately 19,000 people had been subjected to homophobic hate crimes in that year (BRÅ, 2011). In 2010, seventy four per cent of all reported hate crime had a xenophobic motive (BRÅ, 2011). There is a noticeable increase in crimes between 2007 and 2008. During this period, the concept of hate crime was broadened in Sweden to include more groups in society. For example hate crimes targeting an individual's sexuality could now include crimes against bisexuals, transgendered people and heterosexuals (BRÅ, 2011). This was part of the Swedish government's increased attempt to address hate crime, indicating its seriousness as a social and political issue. Despite detailed recordings of types of motivations for hate crimes (for example, xenophobic hate crimes is also broken into Afrophobic, anti- Roma, and so forth), in the annual BRÅ reports about hate crime, there is no mention of domestic violence towards women, or men, nor is there any information regarding discrimination based on gender.

These figures indicate that contrary to Sweden's promoted reputation in the world, hate crime is a serious issue and that Sweden is not the exceptional, open, egalitarian society it claims to be. Whilst not all Swedes share ideologies of hate towards particular societal groups, there is a number who do, and these people act in both violent and non- violent ways to voice their hatred. The remainder of this thesis will assess the way in which hate crime is represented, debated, and even encouraged by some in Sweden through the mediums of crime fiction and music.

# The Importance of Popular Culture in a Study of Hate Crime

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The study of popular culture is an area of study which aims to explain the role of popular culture in society. Popular culture is considered to be an everyday aspect of Western societies and appears in many forms, such as music, clothing, films, speech and books. If popular culture is part of the everyday, then it must play a role in the lives of citizens, whether it is by influencing the beliefs of people or by reflecting the general beliefs of a society. Hate crime is an issue which is strongly linked to the beliefs of members of a society. If popular culture either influences or reflects what members of a society believe, then it must have a relationship with hate crime, and it is this relationship which will be explored in this thesis. In order to do this, it is necessary to understand the broad nature of popular culture studies and the differences that different epistemological positions have on the way researchers view the role of popular culture in society. This chapter will conclude with an explanation as to how constructivism offers the best framework for researching the relationship between popular culture and hate crime in Sweden.

## *Definitions*

Popular culture is a very broad area of study. There is no common definition of popular culture although there is a general consensus amongst scholars as to what a study of popular culture entails. Kidd notes the difficulties of defining *popular culture*, noting that it is a term which may describe 'the people's culture' however cultural boundaries between the local and the international are increasingly changing and becoming blurred (Kidd, 2007). He suggests a more broad definition of *popular culture*, suggesting that it may be described as a 'common culture', which includes both tangible cultural



products (such as clothing styles) but also intangible cultural products such as ideas, values and norms (Kidd, 2007). Duncan and Papanikolaou sum up the broadness of the concept of *popular culture*, writing that “perhaps, for the time being, researchers need to accept in emphatically positive terms that this lack of a lingua franca and a stable object of study is what defines Cultural Studies and Studies of Popular Culture”, noting that the broadness of this concept does provide the researcher with a wide and varying range of interesting research topics and a freedom of choice of methodology (Duncan and Papanikolaou, 2008). A definition which is useful for a study of the way in which popular culture and hate crime relate to each other is that given by Peterson. Peterson defines culture in terms of symbols, writing that

Culture consists of four kinds of symbols: values: choice statements that rank behaviour or goals; norms: specifications of values relating to behaviour; beliefs: existential statements about how the world operates...; and expressive symbols: any and all aspects of material culture (Peterson, 1979, pp. 137- 138).

This definition provides a basic framework for an analysis of popular culture and its role in society. If values, norms, beliefs, and expressive symbols are found within popular culture then it is clear that popular culture does not merely consist of forms of entertainment, rather it actively promotes and affects certain values and lifestyle choices of the consumers. Further, through expressive symbols or stated values, beliefs or norms, popular culture may be the means through which a producer or creator aims to convey an opinion or shape the beliefs of others.

Despite a lack of a common definition of *popular culture*, many researchers address similar research questions in their studies of popular culture. Many researchers choose to study the role of popular culture in the dissemination of ideas throughout society or the way in which popular culture reflects societal values (Mukerji and Schudson, 1980; Street, 1997). Increasingly, researchers have narrowed their research topics to look more specifically at the role of popular culture in certain aspects of life. Researchers may ask specific questions about the relationship between popular culture and

political engagement and political communication (Street, Inthorn, Scott, 2012; Street, 2005); about popular culture and norm diffusion (Kidd, 2007); and the politics of retailing and norm diffusion (Mukerji and Schudson, 1980). These research questions focus mainly on popular culture as a medium through which societal values and choices are influenced but in their analysis they limit the ability of consumers to decide which forms of popular culture best reflect their beliefs. Recently, more work has been written about the legitimacy of popular culture studies from an International Relations perspective (Grayson, Davies, Philpott, 2009). Popular culture may be viewed as an everyday aspect of capitalist societies, however non-capitalist societies receive little attention in popular culture studies.

### *Common Epistemologies of Popular Culture Scholars*

There are three main epistemological positions from which popular culture scholars conduct their research. In the pluralist paradigm, the media act only as “instrumental intermediaries” between agents who give their preferences and the options offered by the political system they are in (Street, 2005). Popular culture has a very limited active role in influencing societal values and beliefs. Putnam (1995, 2000), Marquand (2004) and Blumer and Gurevitch (1995) are leading pluralist scholars. Putnam is concerned with the erosion of social capital and the collapse of civic engagement, blaming the mass media for much of this problem (Putnam, 2000). He continues to argue about the way in which the media induces lethargy and passivity, leading to limited political activity by citizens and that television is especially responsible for propagating messages which exacerbate this current trend (Putnam, 2000). Popular culture therefore acts purely as a medium through which ideas are disseminated for the public to choose from, but it does not play an active role in how public opinions are formulated or the way in which certain ideas are portrayed compared to others.

In the constructivist paradigm, popular culture is viewed to have a much more active role in the political system and in the wider community. The media is viewed as a place where the political system is constructed and a place where the media can construct the relationships between the agents who work within this system (Street, 2005). As Street notes,

The political world is re-constituted according to the conventions of the medium in which it comes to exist; it is constructed as 'reality' by the media that present and report it, a reality in which politics is a superficial game of appearances (Street, 2005).

Lees-Marshment (2001), Scammell (1995), Dahlgren (2001), Hart (1999) and Delli Carpini and Williams (2001) are leading scholars of the constructivist paradigm. These scholars argue that the introduction of new communication technologies has ultimately changed the way in which citizens view the world and form their values. Delli Carpini and Williams note the "political significance of popular culture in the construction and interpretation of the news" (Delli Carpini and Williams, 2001, p. 170), indicating the power that popular culture has to influence the way citizens perceive the world. Hart and Dahlgren both argue that politics as a realm of activity has significantly changed and that popular culture plays a significant role in the dissemination of ideas to the public. Hart argues that "the television has rewritten the relationship between voters and politics, shaping the way that people see, and *feel* about, politics" (Hart, 1999 in Street, 2005). Dahlgren further emphasises the role of the media in influencing politics, writing that

politics no longer exists as a reality taking place outside the media, to be "covered" by journalists. Rather, politics is increasingly organised as a media phenomenon, planned and executed for and with the cooperation of the media (Dahlgren, 2001, p. 85).

In the constructivist paradigm, there is a strong focus on the aesthetics of politics, where politics is an exercise in symbolic interaction and politics is 'performed' to an audience. In this way, popular culture plays a crucial role in the dissemination of political ideas and the way in which these ideas, values and

norms are portrayed to citizens. Popular culture plays the role of constructing social reality and identity and heavily influences the construction of culture (Street, 2005).

The third and final strand is structuralism. In this paradigm, the media is simply part of a larger project of social theory and theorists look more broadly at “issues of structure and agency, the constitution of communities, and the nature of the subject” (Street, 2005). Unlike pluralism, which deals with information and knowledge, structuralists analyse power relations (Street, 2005). According to Garnham, a leading structuralist theorist, “who can say what, in what form, to whom for what purposes, and with what effect, will in part be determined by and in part determine the structure of economic, political, and cultural power in society” (Garnham, 2000). This form of analysis focuses on “the structural power that allocates resources and constrains behaviour” (Street, 2005). Rules and regulations govern the production and content of media, clothing, music, films, novels and so forth. How individuals interpret messages given through popular culture is determined by their social position and experience of the world. Therefore, the structuralist argument is that whilst popular culture can shape our understanding of the world, popular culture is itself governed by systems of political regulation and this is where an analysis of the importance of popular culture must focus.

The constructivist strand is the paradigm which shapes this thesis. Popular culture heavily influences the way in which ideas, values and norms are constructed and portrayed to the public. In turn, the way that citizens view the world is as a result of what they see and learn through the popular culture they consume.

## *Using Popular Culture to Study Hate Crime*

If popular culture is a medium through which societal norms and values are disseminated, or act as a forum for political discussion about issues of concern in a society, then a study of popular culture may be useful in understanding reasons for and levels of hate crime in a particular country. Taras is one scholar who argues for the importance of a study of European popular culture when attempting to understand societal values and concerns. He shows that popular culture can be used as a forum for voicing concerns, but can also be used to influence the public. Taras argues that popular culture is the most useful way for people to communicate contemporary feelings of hatred towards an individual or group. He argues that “the drama of European xenophobia is most effectively captured in the works of European writers, not in the discourse of EU leaders or social scientists” (Taras, 2009). He provides examples of theatre performances in which immigrants are portrayed through language which causes them to appear to be sub-human, as well as plays which address the issues of relations between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ of European communities (Taras, 2009). English playwright David Edgar is cited as an author of one such text, in which the main character voices his concerns about the treatment of immigrants in a period of transition between communism and democracy, asking

And tell me, does it bother anyone that as the opera houses close, the synagogues are being desecrated? That Vietnamese and gypsies—and Ukrainians—are beaten up by skinheads on the streets and everyone applauds? That as the walls fall in the west, there’s new ones rising just as high the other side? (Edgar, in Taras, 2009).

Authors in Europe are shown to be using popular culture as a way of both voicing their concerns about issues in their society, or to portray the way they view their society in darkly satirical ways. Taras argues that politicians barely tell the truth as this may cost them their position, but writers invariably do. He suggests that “It is to Europe’s cultural intelligentsia that we must turn for an understanding of the enormity of contemporary European fears” (Taras, 2009), indicating the importance of popular culture in an understanding of the sentiments of groups of people which may lead to hate crime. When

particular groups in society are portrayed in certain ways in national popular culture, this may have an effect on the way in which these groups are viewed by members of the public. Nestingen believes that in Scandinavia, popular culture has been used to create numerous heterogeneous 'publics', "in opposition to the homogenising influence of the post- World War II state" (Nesting, 2008). People identify with certain elements of their national popular culture and use these elements to form collective identities. Nestingen further notes that novels and films in Scandinavia have been used as preeminent sites for "debates over individualism, collectivity, national homogeneity, gender, and transnational relations" (Nesting, 2008). He argues that popular culture is a way through which the public can become politically engaged and that popular culture has been used to create identities within Scandinavia.

Nesting's argument about the importance of popular culture in identity formation provides the basis for an analysis of popular culture in Sweden and its relationship to hate crime. The following chapters will analyse the values, norms, beliefs and expressive symbols which are found in Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* and in Swedish music, and the way in which these have influenced Swedish people in the beliefs they hold and actions they take, looking specifically at hate crime.

# Men Who Hate Women: Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy*

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## *Introduction*

Hatred and discrimination are the key themes of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy*. Women, homosexuals and individuals who do not fit Scandinavian cultural norms are abused and discriminated against throughout the trilogy, with this abuse occurring at all levels in society. This chapter will examine the way in which Larsson used crime fiction as the medium through which he could voice his concerns about Swedish society and to spark public debate on these issues which he felt strongly about. A constructivist analysis of the *Millennium Trilogy* indicates how popular culture is an effective medium through which hate crime can be discussed. Larsson created a reality through the novels. Real places and organisations were mixed with fictional characters and events in order to create a sense of reality for the readers. Relationships take place in a realistic cultural and physical setting that readers can relate to. This chapter will begin with background information on Stieg Larsson's life and information relevant to the creation of the *Millennium Trilogy*. An explanation will then be offered as to why the *Millennium Trilogy* should be studied in a study of the relationship between popular culture and hate crime in Sweden. Finally, this chapter will examine the way in which Larsson used language and depicted violence and discrimination in this series as his way to not only convey his concerns about Swedish society but to expose a darker side to the Swedish welfare state and provoke public discussion.

## *A Background to the Millennium Trilogy*

A study of Stieg Larsson's life until the publication of the *Millennium Trilogy* is necessary in order to understand the basis for, and the issues raised, in the book series. Larsson was a Swedish political

journalist and author born on August 15, 1954 (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 4). He was raised by his grandparents in Västerbotten, in far northern Sweden in an area on which the fictional village of Hedeby in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is clearly based. His grandfather, Severin Boström, was an anti- Nazi communist who was imprisoned in an internment camp during World War II (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 7) and his values influenced not only Larsson's upbringing, but influenced the creation of characters in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. In 1972 Larsson met his lifelong partner, Eva Gabrielsson, who he was in a relationship until his death on November 9, 2004 as a result of a heart attack.

During the 1980s there was a wave of racist violence in Sweden and this continued throughout the 1990s. In 1991, Stieg Larsson and Anna- Lena Lodenius published a book titled *Extremhögern [Right-Wing Extremism]* which detailed all political parties and groups at that end of the political spectrum, documenting their beliefs, their use of violence, their origins and their current global affiliations (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 53). In 1993, *Storm*, an extreme right- wing magazine published by *Vitt Ariskt Motstånd [White Aryan Resistance]* published photos of Larsson and Lodenius, as well as their personal and business addresses and social security numbers, with a caption stating "Never forget his words, his face, and his address. Should he be allowed to continue his work- or should he be dealt with?" (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 54). These threats continued until Larsson died in 2004. "In 1995 the white- power music scene was at its peak and Sweden was the world's largest producer of hate propaganda" (Expo, 2010). Säpo (the Swedish Security Service), an arm of the Swedish National Police, "estimates that during 1998 alone, there were more than two thousand unprovoked racist attacks, more than half of which can be directly linked to neo- Nazi militants in White Power groups" (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 55). Inspired by the British anti- fascist magazine *Searchlight*, for which Larsson was working, *Expo* was founded in 1995 to supplement *Stop Racism's* newsletter in Sweden with in- depth articles on racist and extreme- right groups (Gabrielsson, 2011, pp. 46- 47). Stieg Larsson was its editor- in- chief. From *Expo's* first publication, its staff members were subjected to harassment and death threats from neo- Nazi



groups. *Expo's* printing house was also vandalised and covered in swastika stickers saying 'Don't Print Expo' (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 47). Stieg Larsson's aim at *Expo* was to not only expose extreme- right and racist groups in Sweden, but to also sound the alarm about nationalist political parties, showing that they were not mad gunmen, but legitimate political parties and movements which needed to be combatted by political means. Larsson remained *Expo's* editor- in- chief until he died in 2004 and his research at the magazine provided a foundation for the issues he conveyed in *The Millennium Trilogy*.

Eva Gabrielsson, Stieg's life partner, played a large role in the publication of *The Millennium Trilogy*. Larsson died before his books were published, however they had already been handed to the publisher. Gabrielsson and Larsson were together for thirty- two years and was involved in many of the struggles Larsson faced against neo- Nazi groups. In her book *Stieg and Me*, she notes that she and Larsson never married so that they were never officially and legally connected to one another. Due to freedom of information laws in Sweden, all citizens have access to the personal details of other citizens, including their address. However since Larsson and Gabrielsson were not married, Larsson could not easily be traced to a specific location by violent racist groups through his partner (Gabrielsson, 2011, pp. 55- 59). This is an issue which Lisbeth Salander must work around in her attempt to stay relatively anonymous in Sweden when she is wanted on suspicion of murder in *The Girl Who Played with Fire*. Gabrielsson and Larsson were childless so despite the fact that they were in a relationship for thirty- two years, the Swedish inheritance laws did not allow Gabrielsson to inherit Larsson's belongings after his death, such as the intellectual rights to *The Millennium Trilogy*. This has sparked public debate about inheritance laws in Sweden as well as a long legal battle between Gabrielsson and Larsson's family over who has the rights to his novels.

Stieg Larsson's life experiences heavily influenced the characters, ideologies and events in *The Millennium Trilogy*. As a teenager, aged just fifteen, Larsson was a witness of a gang rape at a camp ground in Umeå (Baksi, 2010 in Bethune, 2010). Some of the perpetrators were friends of his. Whilst Larsson was not directly involved in the rape he did not intervene and later, when he tried to apologise to the victim, she refused his apology and argued that he was just as bad as the actual perpetrators for not intervening (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 75). Eva Gabrielsson argues that this event strongly contributed to Larsson's feminism and that *The Millennium Trilogy* was written as a semi- apology and as a way to expose crime against women in Sweden (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 75).

*The Millennium Trilogy* was written in Stieg Larsson's spare time when he was not working at *Expo*. All three books were written and handed to the publishers at the same time just before he died. In 2005 the first book was released. The main characters of *The Millennium Trilogy*, who appear in significant roles in all three books, are Lisbeth Salander, Mikael Blomkvist and Erika Berger. Lisbeth is a highly intelligent social misfit with a talent for computer hacking and a past darkened by years of abuse by men. She has no trust in the state or in any person in a position of authority as a result of a lifetime of abuse. "This female protagonist represents a popular- culture convention of individuality, whose gender construction clashes with standards of government authorized gender equality" (Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm, 2009, p. 158) and her character goes against female gender norms. She is the girl with the dragon tattoo, after whom the first book is named. Mikael Blomkvist is an investigative journalist and the co- owner of fictional Swedish journal *Millennium*. He appears to be a man who will do what it takes to uncover the truth, however this desire has its limits when the future of *Millennium* may be in jeopardy. He is a good- looking philanderer who is in an unconventional relationship with Erika Berger, the other co- owner of *Millennium*, as well as with Lisbeth. Erika Berger is a married woman, however her husband is aware of her relationship with Blomkvist, which they argue is purely sexual. She is the upper class, Belgian- Swedish editor- in- chief of *Millennium* who is highly motivated,

efficient and successful in her career. These three characters play significant roles in each of the three novels.

### *The Effectiveness of Crime Fiction*

*The Millennium Trilogy* has been an effective medium through which Larsson's concerns about Swedish society could be conveyed because it has been so widely read. *Expo* was a controversial magazine which uncovered extreme right-wing organisations with a tendency for violence, however the novels allowed Larsson to portray these groups in graphic detail under the guise that he was writing crime fiction. Most people and organisations in the series, however, are based on what Larsson experienced during his life. Whilst *Expo* published damning information about particular aspects about Swedish society, it was a small magazine that was not widely read, and barely covered its operating costs each year (Pettersson, 2011, pp. 133- 134). *The Millennium Trilogy*, however, has sold nearly forty million copies worldwide and has been made into films in both Swedish and English (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 211). In its first year of publication, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* sold 50,000 copies; *The Girl Who Played with Fire* sold 100,000 copies in its first year; and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* sold 400,000 in its first year (Pettersson, 2011, pp. 255- 256). This indicates the widespread and growing popularity of the trilogy throughout the world. Stieg Larsson was a political journalist, but significantly, he used crime fiction to convey his concerns about Sweden. *Expo* was disseminated to a niche market however crime fiction is a highly popular genre in Sweden and has a high potential to be more widely read. Popular culture, and specifically crime fiction, has proven to be a highly effective medium through which ideas can be disseminated and public interest in the darker side of Sweden has risen as a result of this series.

## *Popular Culture and Hate Crime*

*The Millennium Trilogy* is an important text in a study of the relationship between popular culture and hate crime. Larsson used this series to expose a lot about Swedish society. At first, many aspects of the novels appear typically Scandinavian- the sexual liberty of characters, discussion of the welfare state, freedom of expression and freedom of the press, and freedom of access to information. However Larsson opens up a dark side of Swedish society to the readers which is not often exposed to the public and uses his novels to convey his concern at the way in which some groups in society are treated. Colombani writes that “the trilogy is an allegory of the individual’s eternal fight for justice and morality” (Colombani in Gabrielsson, 2011, p. x). Vizcarrondo notes that “[Stieg’s] approach to combatting cruelties like violence towards women, sexual disorders and domestic abuse is by depicting them” (Vizcarrondo, 2011, p. 55). Larsson used his novels to illustrate his concerns about crime and discrimination in Sweden. Eva Gabrielsson believes that the novels have been successful in exposing some of Sweden’s dark side. She writes that many journalists ask her the same questions about the trilogy, such as whether or not the issues of corruption, abuses of power, discrimination, and violence against women really do exist in Sweden and that the journalists are shocked to discover that this does occur (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 210). She continues to write

It’s strange that Sweden always seems like a model to many other nations, when here we have the same problems found everywhere else. These interviews show me that the trilogy has taken some of the luster off Sweden’s image as a progressive and egalitarian model for human rights (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 210).

Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm also argue that Larsson effectively used his *Millennium Trilogy* to expose a darker side of Sweden. They write that

Although contemporary Sweden appears to have successfully combined and maintained a welfare state, significant economic development, and equality in gender relations, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* reflects- implicitly and explicitly- gaps between rhetoric and practice in Swedish policy and public discourse about complex relations between welfare state retrenchment, neoliberal corporate and

economic practices, and politicized gender construction. The novel, in fact, endorses a pragmatic acceptance of a neoliberal world order that is delocalised, dehumanised, and misogynistic (Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm, 2009, p. 157- 158).

This is a side of Sweden not often shown to the world, and Larsson used *The Millennium Trilogy* to show that Sweden faces serious problems with hate crime and discrimination.

### *Constructivism*

A constructivist analysis of *The Millennium Trilogy* highlights the effectiveness of using popular culture in the dissemination of ideas to a wide audience. Through the use of both real and fictional places and organisations, Larsson creates social and political relationships which are believable for readers. It is the nature of crime fiction that much time is spent in creating and describing the setting of the novel and this is done effectively by Larsson, making the setting of the trilogy something which many readers, especially Scandinavian readers, can relate to. Through the fictional characters, Larsson depicts Peterson's four kinds of cultural symbols: values, norms, beliefs and expressive symbols (Peterson, 1979, pp. 137- 138). His beliefs and values are projected through particular characters, such as feminism in Lisbeth Salander and Erika Berger, while Scandinavian cultural norms are dissected through characters who either do or do not embody these norms. These issues will be discussed below.

### *Key Themes in the Millennium Trilogy*

Through the depiction of hate speech, violence and discrimination, Stieg Larsson conveys his concerns about Swedish society. Throughout the series, hate crimes are committed, ranging from harassment to murder, as a result of hatred of a particular group in society. The groups which are most

commonly subjected to hate crime in *The Millennium Trilogy* are women, homosexuals, and outsiders who do not fit the Scandinavian cultural norm. This is the overarching concern of Larsson's novels.

## Language in *The Millennium Trilogy*

### *Hate Speech*

The central concern of *The Millennium Trilogy* is hatred. This series was written following a period in which Sweden experienced a high level of hate crimes, often perpetrated by members of extreme-right groups. Whilst many of these crimes involved physical assaults, many crimes came in the form of threats or verbal abuse, such as the threats that Larsson faced as a result of working at *Expo*. This has sparked debates about freedom of speech and hate speech laws. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) contains two Articles which relate to freedom of speech. Article Nineteen states that

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice (ICCPR, 1966).

However this article continues to note that with these freedoms come the responsibility to respect the rights and reputations of others and to protect national security and morals (ICCPR, 1966). Article Twenty states that "Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law" (ICCPR, 1966). This means that whilst all individuals have the freedom to express and believe whatever they choose, and also have the right to seek, receive and impart their beliefs, they are also strictly limited by the fact that they cannot have promote beliefs which incite hatred, even if this is what they truly believe in. This has been a cause for

much debate as to what extent the law can regulate an individual's speech and expression. In 2008, the European Union (EU) "adopted a frameworks decision on "Combatting Racism and Xenophobia" that obliged all member states to criminalize certain forms of hate speech" (Mchangama, 2011, p. 45). Sweden now has strict laws prohibiting hate speech. Whist one of the four fundamental laws of the Swedish Constitution relates to the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression, since 2003 a clause condemning hate speech has been included in the Constitution (Regeringskansliet, 2012). This has sparked a high level of public debate about how this affects freedom of expression and concern about the state's involvement in an individual's life. Hate speech is used throughout *The Millennium Trilogy* by various characters. Through these verbal displays of hatred, Larsson indicates the need to protect people from this form of hate crime.

### *The Use of Derogatory Language*

Derogatory language is used by numerous characters in *The Millennium Trilogy*. This language is most often directed towards women and homosexuals and is included throughout the trilogy as a way of illustrating how some groups of people are viewed by others. It is also used as a form of subordination by some male characters, who use derogatory language in an attempt to verbalise their supposed authority over their female co-workers. Throughout the trilogy, women are referred to as 'whores' and 'bitches' by men they work with or are acquainted with- men such as Nils Bjurman, Martin Vanger, Policeman Faste and Zalachenko. Serial rapist and murderer Martin Vanger refers to Lisbeth as an "anorexic spook" (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, p. 404) and to women in general as 'whores'. Nils Bjurman, Lisbeth's state- appointed guardian, refers to Lisbeth in *The Girl who Played with Fire* as a 'whore' and as his 'plaything', indicating the way in which he views women as subordinate and who exist for his entertainment (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 31). Policeman Faste also regularly refers to women as 'bitches' and 'whores' (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 316). This language towards women occurs not only in private conversations, but in the workplace and in the

media. Shockingly, misogynistic language is often tolerated by co-workers. They may disapprove, however they rarely voice their disapproval and derogatory language continues to be used. Zalachenko is the ultimate example of a man who hates women. When speaking to his own daughter, Lisbeth, he abuses her, saying “You look like shit. Like a fucking prostitute” (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 542). He then continues to tell her that her mother was a ‘whore’ (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 542). When he asks if Bjurman raped Lisbeth, his only comment is “Did Bjurman rape you?... Damn, what appalling taste he must have had. I read in the paper you’re some sort of dyke. That’s no surprise. There can’t be a man who’d want you” (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 543). Zalachenko also refers to homosexuals as ‘dykes’ and ‘fairies’. Whilst Larsson does not portray all men in the trilogy as misogynists or as homophobic, the result is that the reader is left with the impression that it is not uncommon for homosexuals and women in particular to be subjected to discrimination and be victims of verbal abuse. This is not the image that Sweden portrays to the rest of the world, but it is a side of Sweden which Larsson felt needed to be exposed.

## **The Depiction of Violence in *The Millennium Trilogy***

### *Men Who Hate Women*

The second way in which Larsson conveys his concerns about hate crime in Sweden is through depicting graphic physical and sexual violence. The first way he did this was through the title of the trilogy. The original title in Swedish is ‘Män Som Hatar Kvinnor’ [Men Who Hate Women]- a shocking but accurate title which captures the essence of the trilogy. This title was changed to ‘The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo’ in English as a way of ‘watering- down’ the political incorrectness of the message of the original title. The original title does not sit well with readers, who do not like to identify with such negative messages. Whilst they quickly discover that the content of the trilogy deals extensively with hatred of women, a title which goes so blatantly against Western democratic ideals, such as equality and law and order, is not comfortable for readers. Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm note



the ethically most jarring egregious crimes of the story: the cover up and depreciation of violence against, and murder of, women. These gendered crimes are generally overlooked by reviewers and readers' discussions despite the fact that the novel's original title in Swedish... makes clear that gender relations are central to the plot (Westerståhl Stenport, Ovesdotter Alm, 2009, p. 158).

Statistics relating to hate crime are noted at the beginning of each section of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* which indicate the reality of hate crime against women in Sweden. These include statistics such as "18% of the women in Sweden have at one time been threatened by a man" (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, p. 7). Real statistics are juxtaposed with a fictional story. This blurs the line between reality and fiction and gives the reader the understanding that the violence depicted in the novel is based on reality.

### *Physical Violence*

The second way in which Stieg Larsson confronts the issue of violence in Sweden is through the depiction of physical violence. This includes bashings, rough handling and murder. The Vanger family in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is a family with a history of Nazism. Through this family, Larsson directly voices his concerns about Swedish neo- Nazism and violence towards women. Numerous members of the Vanger family, including Richard and Martin have Nazi sympathies, and Richard was a member of one of the first Nazi groups in Sweden, the Swedish National Socialist Freedom League. He was also "a brutal domestic. He beat his wife and abused his son" (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, p. 80). This violence was then inherited by his son Gottfried, who was a violent alcoholic who raped and abused his children, and this violence was once again inherited by Gottfried's son Martin. Martin and Gottfried both raped and abused Harriet (Martin's sister and Gottfried's daughter), but also raped and murdered other women. The victims included Lena Andersson from Uppsala in 1966, Lea Persson from Uddevalla, and Sara Witt in Ronneby in 1964 (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, p. 402). When Blomkvist finds Harriet in Australia, she describes in graphic detail the abuse that she suffered at the hands of men

in her family. Whilst the description of the abuse is graphic and shocking, Larsson depicts the reality of an abusive situation to the reader. When Blomkvist questions Martin about why he abuses and kills women, Martin answers “Because it’s so easy... Women disappear all the time. Nobody misses them. Immigrants. Whores from Russia. Thousands of people pass through Sweden every year” (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, p. 401). Martin preys on vulnerable women and this represents Larsson’s concern that so many women ‘slip through the cracks’ of the system in Sweden. Gottfried and Martin are by far the two most violent and perverted men in the trilogy and whilst their crimes are extreme, their violence represents an ideology that Larsson believed some men in Sweden held towards women; that is, that women are subordinate to men and are of limited use to society.

Violence towards women continues throughout the trilogy. In *The Girl who Played with Fire*, Lisbeth overhears the beatings and verbal abuse that occur nightly in her neighbouring hotel room, however the wife of the abusive man refuses to leave him. Violence towards Lisbeth occurs regularly and as a result, she “does not trust in the welfare state or its judicial policies in rectifying crimes committed by men against women” (Westerståhl Stenport, Ovesdotter Alm, 2009, p. 173). This further indicates Larsson’s concern that not only does violence towards women occur, but it is often not reported and not resolved by the authorities.

### *Sexual Violence*

The most shocking way in which Larsson voices his concern about the status of women in Sweden is through his depictions of sexual violence. A traditional feminist argument would suggest that a man may rape a woman “to simultaneously demonstrate both his physical dominance and the female victim’s forced subordination” (Seawell, 2005, p. 180). Larsson addressed this subordination of women through graphic depictions of sexual violence, emphasising his disgust towards men who commit these

crimes. A key theme of *The Girl who Played with Fire* is the trafficking of women from developing European countries to the west. Dag Svensson and his partner Mia Johansson are the two characters who are developing research on this crime until they are murdered. When explaining his research, Svensson notes that

We [Sweden] have a government which introduced a tough sex- trade law, we have police who are supposed to see to it that the law is obeyed, and courts that are supposed to convict sex criminals- we call the men, the punters, sex criminals since it has become a crime to buy sexual services- and we have the media which writes indignant articles about the subject, et cetera. At the same time, Sweden is one of the countries that imports the most prostitutes per capita from Russia and the Baltics (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 77).

He reveals his documentation of powerful men who have used trafficked prostitutes, including a civil servant of the Ministry of Justice who was responsible for drafting anti- sex- trafficking laws (one aged only fifteen), three policemen, five lawyers, one prosecutor and a judge. What is most worrisome is that the 'sex mafia' is comprised of average men with limited sophistication, however they have managed to evade the police who supposedly have a large amount of funding behind them. Svensson explains

The girls involved are so far down society's ladder that they're of no interest to the legal system. They don't vote... Of all crimes involving the sex trade, 99.99% are not reported to the police, and those that are hardly ever lead to a charge... Attacks on teenage girls from Tallinn and Riga are not a priority. A whore is a whore. It's part of the system (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 79).

Through the discussion of Johansson's and Svensson's projects, Larsson discusses his disgust at the way in which some women are not protected by the legal system despite obvious violations of their human rights. He argues that sex trafficking is a crime which should be easily stopped, but since many of the victims of this crime are illegally in Sweden and are not able to actively contribute to society and vote, they appear to not be worth the effort. Due to the nature of sex trafficking, it is a crime which almost only victimises women. Johansson explains "there is no other form of criminality in which the sex roles

themselves are a precondition for the crime. No is there any other form of criminality in which social acceptance is so great, or which society does so little to prevent" (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 87). Larsson uses Johansson's and Svensson's dialogues to convey the way he feels that sex trafficking is viewed in society. It is an activity which is criminalised by law, and society believes that this is enough. However Larsson believes that anti- sex trafficking laws are purely symbolic and there to satisfy the public and that this crime continues to happen due to the way that authorities view women., and in particular, foreign women who are of little interest to the legal system.

The ultimate assault against a woman occurs the two times that Lisbeth is raped by Nils Bjurman, her legally- appointed guardian. His assaults begin with questions about her sex life- questions which are inappropriate and irrelevant (Lisbeth is simply asking him for access to her money). Bjurman's position is such that he has a high level of control over Lisbeth's life and her freedom depends highly on what he allows her to do. The first rape occurs in Bjurman's office when Lisbeth requests some of her money. This was the first time Bjurman had abused someone but the reader knows that he enjoyed it. He says to himself "this is better than a whore. She gets paid with her own money" (Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, p. 200). Bjurman is filled with the desire to dominate women, including his ex-wife who refused to let him play out his fantasies on her. The second rape occurs at Bjurman's home when Lisbeth comes to ask for more money. This time Lisbeth is subjected to a violent rape where she is tied up for most of the night and nearly suffocated. Larsson writes Bjurman's thoughts as he is later remembering the assaults, thinking to himself that "she was the ideal plaything- grown up, promiscuous, socially incompetent, and at his mercy" (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 31). He also believed that Lisbeth "had been the perfect solution. She was defenceless. She had no family, no friends: a true victim, ripe for plundering" (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 31). Lisbeth also has a very small body and looks many years younger than what she is, further adding to Bjurman's desire to dominate her. He sees her as the perfect victim to have power over. A study was conducted in 1977 by Groth,

Burgess and Holmstrom regarding the psychology of rape. This study found that in all cases rapes were committed by men to assert their power or anger over the woman (Groth, Burgess and Holmstrom, 1977). This is the main concern Larsson raises- that some men view women as subordinate to them and rape women in order both assert their dominance but also to reassure themselves of their dominant position. Whilst the second rape scene in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is very brief in both the novel and in the film version, it is powerful and shocking. The horror of rape is vividly portrayed and confronts the audience. Whilst these rapes are fictional, the inclusion of statistics relating to violence against women at the beginning of each section of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is a stark reminder that these crimes are committed in Sweden and that society must act to prevent it from happening to more women.

## **Discrimination in *The Millennium Trilogy***

The third and final way in which Stieg Larsson addresses his concerns about hate crime in *The Millennium Trilogy* is by depicting discrimination. Whilst this is not as overtly violent as some of the other actions taken by characters, discrimination against people due to their gender, sexuality and appearance occurs throughout the series and indicates that this type of hatred can be just as damaging as physical assaults.

### *Women in the Workforce*

Women in the workforce are consistently discriminated against throughout *The Millennium Trilogy*. Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm note that “although Sweden consistently ranks as one of the most gender equal counties in the world according to the “Gender Equity Index” and achieved top position in 2008, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* repeatedly addresses discrepancies between practice and official policy” (Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm, 2009, p. 162). In the police force, two

men in particular feel uneasy about working alongside a woman- Sonja Modig. These men, Faste and Hedström, use derogatory language when referring to their female colleague and show great discomfort at being considered as equals to her. When Faste and Modig interview Miriam Wu in relation to Lisbeth's whereabouts, Faste is decidedly uncomfortable with the situation. "It was obvious that Faste felt threatened by a beautiful, intelligent and outspoken lesbian woman" (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 320). He turns to sexual harassment, asking Miriam Wu irrelevant questions about her sex life and then continues to ask Modig if she would prefer to interview Miriam Wu alone because she is probably turned on by her (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 321). Faste gains a reputation as being a policeman who has difficulty working with women, especially when they are confident and successful. He sees women as a threat. Hedström from Milton Security also has difficulty working with intelligent women. Instead of acknowledging Modig's achievements and success, he questions "whether the famous Officer Bubble had something going on with that bitch" (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 327). He does not believe that Modig could be in her position based on credibility and instead she must be in a relationship with the head of the investigation. When Hedström leaks information to journalist Tony Scala regarding the investigation, he instructs Scala to refer to the informant only as 'she'. Modig is the only female on the investigative team and it is clear that she is being framed by someone who is uncomfortable with her being there.

Erika Berger also faces discrimination at her new job. After being hired as editor-in-chief of *Svenska Morgon-Posten* in the hope that she can bring new life to the newspaper, she quickly discovers that she must deal with discrimination by other senior members of staff. The fact that a woman has been hired as the new editor-in-chief was viewed by the newspaper's board as a controversial but necessary move to increase the paper's readership. She finds particular staff, such as Holm, ignoring her decisions and printing articles she had previously rejected. Further, Erika often discovers that editorial meetings have been moved forward by half an hour without her being notified and by the time she

arrives the majority of editorial decisions have already been made. She is given looks by senior male staff which she believes mean “you shouldn’t worry your pretty head over complex matters, little girl” (Larsson, *The Girl who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest*, p. 304). This constant undermining of her authority in the workplace is a form of discrimination which Larsson depicts as being reasonably common and accepted in Swedish workplaces. On top of Erika’s decisions being constantly undermined, she is faced with verbal abuse, being called a ‘whore’ and being sent sexually abusive messages in anonymous emails from someone within the office. Whilst in theory this behaviour is illegal, throughout the trilogy Larsson suggests that it is not uncommon in the workplace in Sweden.

### *Discrimination Based on Appearance*

Discrimination also takes place throughout the trilogy based on characters’ appearance or sexuality. Lisbeth has an unusual appearance- she looks very young and is very skinny, so people do not take her seriously. While Lisbeth is searching for an apartment she is talked down to by real estate agents. She is spoken to like she is a child with no level of independence and with little intelligence (Larsson, *The Girl who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest*, pp. 66- 67). The readers are aware that this impression of Lisbeth is the polar opposite of her true self, however Larsson shows that many people base their opinions of people on how they appear. This is also true for an all- female band named ‘Evil Fingers’ who are labelled ‘Satanists’ by Swedish newspapers as a result of how they choose to dress.

### *Discrimination Based on Sexuality or Gender*

Larsson was concerned with the way in which women and men were viewed differently for similar behaviour. His character Mikael Blomkvist “was known for being a ladies’ man” (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, p. 69). He sleeps with many women but his sexual activity is never called into question; even his unconventional relationship with Erika Berger, who is married and whose partner

consents to her extra- marital relationship, is never called into serious question. Lisbeth also sleeps with many people but is labelled a 'prostitute' and a 'whore'. Lisbeth does not identify with any particular sexuality- she believes purely in the sexual pleasure of the moment regardless of who it is with- and this is a concept which other characters find difficult to grasp. They prefer to categorise her according to social norms which they understand, such as 'bisexual' or 'lesbian' however these labels do not fit her accurately. Miriam Wu, Lisbeth Salander and the members of Evil Fingers are constantly portrayed as "lesbian Satanists"- a term which carries derogatory connotations and places a certain amount of judgement on the characters of these people based purely on their sexuality and physical appearance.

### *The Role of the Media*

Larsson portrays the final type of discrimination through the media's coverage of crimes. Hatred and bias are key themes of *The Millennium Trilogy* and the media plays an important role in the way certain values and beliefs are portrayed to the public. In a newspaper article about Miriam Wu, the headline screams "Police Tracking Lesbian Satanist Cult", followed by a picture of Miriam Wu at a performance, topless, accompanied by text that writes "Salander's girlfriend wrote about Lesbian S&M sex. The 31- year- old is well known in Stockholm's trendy nightspots. She makes no secret that she picks up women and likes to dominate her partner" (Larsson, *The Girl who Played with Fire*, pp. 334- 335). This is a deliberately provocative article and picture which only act to fuel stereotypes of people who do not fit the cultural norm. Crimes involving money trump those involving women. The profitable and systematic trafficking of girls from Baltic and Eastern European states to the west goes almost unreported in the newspapers however the corporate scandal of the Wennerström Affair is front- page news for days. Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm note that "all bestial crimes actually committed against women in the novel are suppressed and never brought to public awareness or trial, whereas corporate crimes get exposed and corporate inefficiencies rectified" (Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm, 2009, p. 160). In *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Blomkvist, Salander, The Vanger



Corporation and Millennium choose to cover up the murders committed by Gottfried and Martin. They choose to not allow these murders to come to trial as this could be detrimental to the Vanger Corporation. This would, in turn, have negative repercussions for Millennium, where a member of the Vanger family sits on the board. "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo thus in fact presents a scathing... indictment not only of corporate media but also of smaller journalistic enterprises promoted as anti-establishment, anti-corruption, impartial, and investigative" (Westerståhl Stenport and Ovesdotter Alm, 2009, p. 169). Larsson was himself a journalist yet he gives a very negative depiction of the media. The media have a great responsibility in providing information to the public, however this role gives them a lot of power. Whilst Malik argues that the media should play a larger role in changing stereotypes and steering public opinion towards acceptance of many different types of people (Malik, 2011), the content of the media is highly subjective and can be heavily influenced by individual journalists or the ideology of the editing staff. Larsson indicates this concern through the way in which the media in *The Millennium Trilogy* depict different groups of people and the importance they place on different crimes. In this way, the media is in a powerful position to heavily influence public perceptions of issues and influence how different groups of people are viewed by the public.

## *Conclusion*

Stieg Larsson used his *Millennium Trilogy* to voice his concerns about Swedish society. In his field of work, he was exposed to hate crime and discrimination every day and in his job as a journalist he saw a dark side of Sweden. *The Millennium Trilogy* was his opportunity to convey his concerns in what was a fictional series based on his life experiences. A constructivist analysis indicates how throughout the trilogy Larsson creates scenes of physical and sexual violence, hate speech and discrimination which are sometimes shocking but at other times appear to be a normal aspect of the workforce or media in Sweden. The construction of a blurred fictional and factual reality in Sweden, through the use of real statistics but fictional events and characters, both creates an environment that readers can relate to and

emphasises the reality of hate crime in Sweden. The fact that Larsson was a political journalist but used the trilogy to more effectively and graphically convey his concerns shows the significance of popular culture in the dissemination of ideas to the world. *The Millennium Trilogy* has been read and viewed as films around much of the world and as Larsson's partner Eva Gabrielsson notes, it has sparked much discussion about the reality of the image that Sweden portrays to the world of being egalitarian, open, and a global leader in the protection of human rights (Gabrielsson, 2011, p. 210).

# Blood and Honour: White Power Music in Sweden

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## *Introduction*

Music is an important element of the skinhead and nationalist movements around the world. It is a medium through which concerns can be voiced, ideology can be disseminated and instruction for courses of action can be given. In the skinhead and nationalist movements in Sweden, music is used as something which binds all members together and encourages them to unite with a common goal. This chapter will examine the relationship between white power music and hate crime in Sweden. Specifically, this chapter will analyse the use of Peterson's four elements of popular culture- beliefs, norms, values, and expressive symbols-throughout Swedish skinhead music and how these convey particular meanings to unite all listeners who share similar beliefs. This chapter will begin with an analysis of the function of music in society and how it is an important political tool. A background of skinhead and white power music in Sweden will follow, emphasising the importance of music within these cultures. Finally, this chapter will conduct case studies on Swedish artists and bands to indicate the way in which musicians use their music to convey their beliefs to society.

## *The Role of Music*

Music has been used for different purposes since ancient times. Most commonly, people use music as a form of entertainment, at concerts, listening to the radio, when out in nightclubs or bars, and when watching a musical show. Music is also used in therapy or for relaxation. It may be used in a yoga class to create a calming atmosphere or in a gym to motivate people. De Sousa notes that "it has been used to treat the sick in ancient times and frequently is used to cure depression" (De Sousa, 2005, p. 52),

whilst Kinney and Kinney believe that music is created as a result of peoples' feelings and emotions (Kinney and Kinney, 2008, p. 88), further emphasising its therapeutic role. Music also has a deeper role in society. It is something that people identify with, whether it be because of the genre of music, the lyrics of the songs, or because of the general sub- culture that particular music is immersed in. Dorsey notes that "using music to create identification is crucial to the formation of political publics" (Dorsey, 2004, p. 61). Folk music, for example, brings people together who share a common history, culture, language or nationality and enables them to celebrate a common identity.

Music is a medium through which politics can be conducted. It may be used for propaganda by the state, the state may censor types of music or artists, it can arouse a community into action and it can be used as a forum for political debate. Mattern argues that music creates three different types of community action-

the confrontational, the deliberative and the pragmatic. The first conforms to the idea of protest music, where one side pits itself against another; the music frames the opposition. Deliberative use of music involves debates within a community about its members... Finally, pragmatic use of music occurs when a common identity and interest already exist, and music is deployed to advance these pre- established aims (Mattern, 1998 p. 19)

This classification of different types of music is useful in that it indicates the political nature of music, however it is limited in that it discounts the agency of the individual listener to make their own choices. It also does not indicate the way in which music can shape people's aspirations or goals. This classification, however, is still useful in an analysis of white- power music in Sweden and how it plays a highly political role in exposing a subculture which encourages hate crime through both confrontational and pragmatic community action.

Music has been used by both the state and individuals to influence political thinking and action. Hutnyk and Sharma argue that music cannot be separated from the economic and political circumstances of its time (Hutnyk and Sharma, 2000, p. 58). Music can either be manipulated by the state to serve a political purpose or used by individual artists to create a forum for public debate about contemporary issues concerning society. Censorship is a way of the state attempting to control the political views of the public. Music can evoke emotions, including sentiments which are unwelcome in the eyes of the government. For example Austrian- born musician Hanns Eisler composed music which evoked communist ideals and believed that the music should “transform the consciousness of an active community of people” (Goehr, 1994, p. 100). For this, he was deported home from America to Austria. Music may also be utilised by the state as a form of propaganda. Street notes the way in which music has been used for propaganda purposes around the world, including in Scandinavia, where Anglo-American music was once limited to “promote indigenous national music and its associated identity” (Street, 2003, pp. 114- 115); in Zaire when former President Mobuto used particular bands to sing praises of government leaders in the 1960s and 1970s; and in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, when certain types of music were given government funding with the aim of boosting military morale and support for the government, such as the introduction of the compulsory Horste- Wessel Song in school in Nazi Germany (Street, 2003, pp. 114- 115). The manipulation of music by the state for political purposes shows the importance of music within a society and the way in which it can affect political outcomes.

The final way in which music may be used to influence politics is the way in which music may be used as a forum for public debate about political, economic, social or cultural issues. “[T]he study of music can contribute to our understanding of political thought and action” (Street, 2003, p. 113). Pride notes the diversity of issues which may arise in music, including “environmental protection, racism, economic and sexual exploitation, religious fundamentalism, and suppression of dissent” (Pride, 1998, p.

119). Artists may use their songs to share their opinions or concerns with society and to muster support for a political cause. Street notes the importance of music in creating political change. He writes “rather than simply being entertainment or escapism, popular music provided a space in which acts of resistance could be articulated” (Street, 2003, p. 118). It is for this reason that governments may choose to censor certain forms of music or certain songs, especially if they threaten the legitimacy or future of the government.

### *A Background to White Power Music*

The skinhead movement is a global movement which advocates white supremacy, anti-immigration policies and homophobic policies. The skinhead movement began in England in the 1970s and quickly spread to Western Europe. Originally, skinheads were organised around music and fashion, however many skinheads began to sympathise with right-wing politics and became strongly linked to the neo-Nazi subculture (Brown, 2004, pp. 157- 178). Whilst not all skinheads sympathise with neo-Nazi ideology, the majority do, so for the purpose of this chapter, ‘skinhead’ will be used to describe members of a subculture which sympathises with neo-Nazi ideology. This connection is largely attributed to Ian Stuart, the leader of UK band *Skrewdriver*. This band was a pioneer of white power rock and roll, and Stuart created the global skinhead organisation *Blood and Honour*, which helps to further the development of white power rock and roll, and to encourage unity amongst skinheads and Europe’s far right (Wade, 2007, p. 493). Cotter argues that white power rock and roll is the main propaganda tool for neo-Nazis (Cotter, 2007, p. 135). He writes that “It is almost universally accepted that music is the common thread that links neo-Nazi skinheads, serving as a source of entertainment, a propaganda tool and a weapon to incite violence” (Cotter, 2007, p. 113). Unlike many of Europe’s radical right-wing parties, which have chosen to work within the democratic framework to achieve their goals, the skinhead movement rejects the political system as corrupt and skinhead music encourages listeners to act using violence instead (Cotter, 2007, p. 122).

### *Defining Factors in White Power Music*

There are four defining factors of white power music. These include “hatred toward outgroups, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, chauvinistic nationalism and a disregard for conventional political behaviour” (Cotter, 2007, p. 122). Hatred toward outgroups is hatred directed to immigrants and refugees, who skinheads believe have entered their country and stolen jobs from the hard-working native white population. In addition, refugees and immigrants are viewed as illegitimately benefiting from welfare benefits the government offers, which should be given to the native population (Cotter, 2007, p. 124). Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are another key element of white power music. Musicians in the white power music scene argue that there is a conspiracy, led by Jews, to eliminate the white race, and that this conspiracy reaches to the highest levels of Western governments (Fangen, 1998, p. 37). They also argue that the conspirators are dangerously close to reaching their objective of both global Jewish domination and the destruction of the white race, and therefore extreme measures are needed to combat this (Cotter, 2007, p. 127). Thirdly, white power musicians view their role in society as being chauvinistic protectors of their race. This idea began as a form of nationalism, where right-wing extremists viewed themselves as being protectors of their language, culture, history and territorial homeland, through positive celebration of their national identity, and also through the exclusion of outside cultures. This has since developed into the ideology of ‘racialism’, where all white people are considered to be members of an extended racial family (Cotter, 2007, p. 128; Fangen, 2007, p. 47). John Burnley, from British white power band No Remorse, sums this up.

We try to emphasise the solidarity between white people around the world, regardless of where they come from. Nations are really nothing more than a line in the dirt... we have met comrades all over the world, many of which speak different tongues, yet we share a bond, which is a blood bond that cannot be denied (Burnley, 1995, in Cotter, 2007, p. 128).

Finally, skinheads disregard conventional political behaviour. Due to their belief that the Jewish conspiracy reaches to the highest level of governments, it would not make sense to use conventional political means to achieve their goals. Instead, right-wing extremist groups advocate and justify the use of violence. There are three ways that they justify and encourage this violence. Firstly, they argue that the destruction of the white race is very close and that extreme measures must be used for extreme circumstances (Fangen, 2007, p. 37; Cotter, 2007, p. 130). A perceived extreme threat appears to legitimate violence. Secondly, due to their racist beliefs and ideology, it is very unlikely that outcomes favourable to skinheads will come through the use of conventional electoral strategies (Cotter, 2007, p. 130). Finally, violent acts can raise the prestige and status of a member of a right-wing extremist group, as they are viewed by their fellow members as a martyr or warrior for their cause (Cotter, 2007, p. 131).

White power rock and roll music urges listeners to be active in their fight for the white race, instead of being complacent. It is not simply people who fight for the apparent destruction of the white race who are held in contempt, but also those who take no action (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006, p. 284). The lyrics of white power music encourage and justify action. The lyrics of white power music predict a final battle in which the white race emerges as victorious and will punish both traitors of the white race, and other races. Skinheads view themselves as the latest group of warriors to fight for the white race, comparing themselves to past warriors such as the Vikings and Nazi storm troopers (Cotter, 2007, p. 132). The process of sharing music with white power ideologies has aided the construction of a shared political identity amongst skinheads and helps to legitimise their actions. This indicates the importance of an analysis of white power music in a study of hate crime.



## *The Reality of the White Power Music Scene in Sweden*

The white power music scene in Sweden is very active. Eyerman notes that whilst skinheads are only a minor part of the youth subculture, it is growing- to the extent that at an illegal white power concert in 2002 there were over 5,000 participants (Eyerman, 2002, p. 451). “Racially motivated hate crimes are a relatively new phenomenon in Sweden when compared to other countries with longer histories of non- European integration” (Larsson, 2002, p. 4), however the white power movement in Sweden is growing. In 2002, Eyerman and Larsson wrote that the production and sale of white power music was a growing market, with a study conducted by the Swedish Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ, 1999, in Eyerman, 2002, p. 451) noting that “in May 1999 there were 322 Swedish- produced CDs on sale over the internet. There are 27 Swedish bands who have released CDs” (BRÅ, 1999, in Eyerman, 2002, p. 451; Larsson, 2002, p. 31). Only four years later, in 2006, a study conducted by Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk found that “[the white power music industry] has become a multimillion dollar industry in Sweden, which is a world leader in the distribution of white power compact discs, sold primarily through the Net” (Futrell, Simi, Gottschalk, 2006, p. 283), indicating that the white power music scene is thriving in Sweden. This music provides a collective culture and experience, giving listeners a sense of purpose and belonging (Eyerman, 2002, p. 452). In a study conducted by *Expo*, headed by Stieg Larsson in his capacity as a political journalist in 2002, it was noted that the ‘nationalist movement’, consisting of both xenophobic groups with parliamentary ambitions as well as white power groups, were growing in size and were active in society (Larsson, 2002, pp. 31- 33). Noting that much of the music members listen to incites violence against both immigrants and homosexuals, Larsson found that members of white power organisations were responsible for 9.1 per cent of homophobic crimes, 15.5 per cent of xenophobic crimes, and 22.8 per cent of anti- Semitic crimes in 2001 (Larsson, 2002, p. 5). He also noted that these statistics may not represent the complete level of involvement of white supremacists in these crimes, as members tend to be very secretive and may deny involvement in a white power organisation for risk of exposing other members (Larsson, 2002, p. 5).

An analysis of white power music in Sweden exposes a different side to Swedish society than that which is promoted to the world. Sweden's reputation of being open, welcoming and liberal does not take into account its thriving white power music scene which rejects multiculturalism, homosexuality and conventional democratic procedures. White power music is used as a medium through which artists can voice their concerns about Swedish society, as well as bringing together individuals sharing similar ideologies and giving listeners advice on how to 'fix' society. Both Peterson's definition of culture- that it contains four kinds of symbols including values, norms, beliefs and expressive symbols (Peterson, 1979, pp. 137- 138) and Mattern's classification of music into confrontational, deliberative and pragmatic functions (Mattern, 1998, p. 19), are useful in an analysis of the role of white power music in Sweden. The remainder of this chapter will analyse the way in which white power music uses symbolism, reflects values and beliefs, and creates norms to achieve its purposes, and the way in which music is also used by musicians to counter the white supremacist movement, showing that music is a political tool that reflects many different opinions in society.

### *The Importance of White Power Music in a Study of Hate Crime*

The existence of white power music in Sweden is evidence that Sweden is not entirely the open, liberal and welcoming country that it promotes itself to be. Whilst not all Swedes are racists who hold a white supremacist ideology, it is clear that there is a significant subculture within Sweden that does. The symbols, values, beliefs and norms conveyed through white power music are all strongly connected and many artists and bands use the same symbols and expressions to express their common beliefs and values. Certain symbols, such as blood, are representations of certain values and beliefs, such as the purity and bond of members of the white race. Artists state their values and the norms that are

portrayed in the music are both about how they view Swedish society now, and how they believe it should be.

The white power music scene is mostly an illegal, underground subculture. This is due to the extreme nature of its ideology, its incitement to hatred and its advocacy of violence. As noted in the previous chapter, Sweden has very strict hate speech laws and hate speech is outlawed in the Swedish Constitution (Regeringskansliet, 2012). White power music by nature can be classified as hate speech, forcing artists and bands to go underground for risk of arrest and prosecution. Whilst it is relatively easy to locate the names of Swedish white power bands and the names of their songs through a simple Google search, finding the actual lyrics to many songs is very difficult. This suggests that only a limited number of people would have access to Swedish white power music and that whilst the lyrics are extreme in their anti-immigrant, homophobic ideology and incitement to violence, it may not have a significant impact on hate crime in society. However a search of white power music on YouTube reveals a very different story. The following table indicates the number of YouTube views of songs analysed in this chapter.

**Figure 1- Swedish White Power Music on the Internet**

<b><u>Band/ Artist</u></b>	<b><u>Song</u></b>	<b><u>YouTube Views</u></b>
<b>Storm</b>	<i>Sverige Står i Brand</i>	51, 767
	<i>Upprop Sverige</i>	3, 434
	<i>Stolt, Vit och Revolutionär</i>	6, 245
	<i>Sverige Vakna</i>	16, 492
<b>Hets Mot Folkgrupp</b>	<i>Rövknällande Svin</i>	9, 814
<b>Saga</b>	<i>Ode to a Dying People</i>	282, 501
	<i>One Nation Arise</i>	547, 561
	<i>Evig Trohet</i>	30, 011
<b>Vit Aggression</b>	<i>Död åt ZOG</i>	32, 137
	<i>Sniper</i>	Not Found on YouTube
	<i>Ett Enat Folk</i>	37, 597
	<i>Moder Svea</i>	Not Found on YouTube

Source- Youtube.com, 2012

Over the last decade Sweden has been estimated to have between only 1,000 and 2,000 active skinheads (Larsson, 2002, p. 5; Cotter, 2007, p. 114). If these are accurate figures then the number of

views that these openly racist and homophobic songs have received suggest that many more people sympathise with skinhead ideology than are prepared to openly admit it. Whilst these bands and artists do not have social media pages, their music is easily accessible on the internet. Thanks to the internet, white power music is easily disseminated and is available for people all around the world to listen to for free. It has enabled the sharing of white power ideology on a global scale. This would suggest that whilst the white power music scene in Sweden does not openly and legally operate, it may not be as far underground as it appears to be at first glance.

### *Symbolism in White Power Music*

White power music heavily relies on symbolism to convey meaning to listeners. In Swedish white power music, the most common symbols are of blood, Mother Svea, the Fatherland, and of warriors. These symbols are used by white supremacist artists to both unite all white power music through the use of common symbols, but also as symbols which listeners identify with. The first symbol, blood, represents the common connection that the white race has. It represents the purity of the white race, which must be defended by all white people. *Storm* sings “My honour is fidelity, to my race I am loyal” (*Storm, Stolt, Vit och Revolutionär*), while *Saga* urges “Folk and Nation first- and blood not personal greed” (*Saga, One Nation Arise*). *Vit Aggression [White Aggression]* argue for white purity in a more extreme way, releasing a song named ‘Sniper’, which advocates for the assassination of people who mix with other races. They sing “Race- mixing is against God and nature, I feel it’s my duty as a servant of God to protect the white womanhood from any injury and degradation” (*Vit Aggression, Sniper*). These lyrics stress the importance of maintaining the purity of the white race for fear that their race will soon die out.

Mother Svea is another common symbol used by white power musicians in Sweden. Mother Svea is a lady with a crown who is considered to be the national symbol of Sweden and is used as a patriotic symbol (Joesten, 1943, p. 14). *Storm* refers to “the soul of Mother Svea’s children” and argues that “elections took Mother Svea to this national murder” (*Storm, Upprop Sverige and Sverige Vakna*), both playing on the patriotism of listeners, and emphasising the need for unconventional political processes to achieve their goals. *Vit Aggression* also regularly refers to Mother Svea, referring to her as the guardian of the purity of Sweden and as a warrior leading her followers to battle in order to maintain this white, Nordic purity (*Vit Aggression, Död åt ZOG; Ett Enat Folk; Moder Svea*).

Thirdly, white power music in Sweden regularly uses the symbol of the ‘fatherland’. Closely linked to the symbolism of blood and Mother Svea, the symbol of the fatherland conveys a sense of belonging and an eternal kinship with everyone who comes from Sweden. *Storm* argues for defence of the homeland against a mass invasion of unwanted people (*Storm, Sverige Vakna; Stolt, Vit Revolutionär*). This includes the words of the Swedish national anthem, *Du Gamla Du Fria* to create a feeling of patriotism amongst listeners, singing “You old, you free, Sweden fatherland” (*Storm, Sverige Står i Brand*). *Vit Aggression* sings about the will to free the homeland from a Jewish invasion and the defence of the homeland against a mass influx of immigrants (*Vit Aggression, Död åt ZOG; Moder Svea*). References to the homeland aim to unite Swedish listeners as members of a large Swedish family with a common history.

Finally, white power music refers to listeners as ‘warriors’ - warriors for the white race who will fight a battle for white supremacy. Most Swedish white power music urges listeners to join this fight. The artists themselves consider themselves to be warriors, fighting for the honour and purity of the white race. *Storm*, for example, urge Swedes to clean out the parasites from their country, and refer to

immigrants as 'occupiers' of Sweden. Swedes are referred to as 'soldiers' who proudly carry their victory banner as they defend their homeland to their last breath (Storm, *Sverige Vakna; Stolt, Vit, Revolutionär*). Battle language is used to encourage the fight for the purity of Sweden, emphasising that this will not come easily and that Swedes must be prepared to fight for it. *Saga* sings for a future when she will remember members of the resistance who liberated her people and her country, and will pay her respects to those who fought and died for the cause (Saga, *Evig Trohet*). *Vit Aggression* further encourages a warrior mentality, arguing that they will use any methods necessary to free Sweden from Jewish power; it does not matter what the methods are, as long as they are effective (Vit Aggression, *Död åt ZOG*).

### *Values and Beliefs in White Power Music*

One of the key aims of music is for artists to convey their values and beliefs to the world. White power musicians share common values and beliefs, and use this to create common themes between their music. White power music in Sweden typically values law and order, musicians are against immigration into Sweden due to their threat to the purity of white race and they fight against homosexuality. Much of Swedish white power music is both confrontational and pragmatic. Whilst being confrontational when protesting against immigration, corruption and the acceptance of homosexuality in society, the music is also pragmatic in that it attempts to advance the goals of skinheads and advise followers on what action to take. Through protest and advice on what action must be taken, the artist is able to convey their beliefs and what they value in society.

*Storm* is a band which highly values law and order. Like many other white power artists, such as *Vit Aggression* and *Hets Mot Folkgrupp*, they argue that corruption is rife in the government and that democracy is not an effective way of running a government. They argue that there is a lack of law and

order in Sweden, where they argue that politicians cheat with money, parliament is empty, people buy and sell drugs, possession of child porn is protected by a law, and murderers simply need to blame each other for their crime and they will all go free (Storm, *Upprop Sverige; Sverige Står i Brand*). They argue that law and order only comes through authoritarian rule (Storm, *Sverige Vakna*). This music is confrontational in that it is a form of protest against the current political system and against the corruption of those in positions of authority in Sweden.

The anti-immigrant sentiments held by white power musicians comes through strongly in their music. This music is both confrontational, in the protest against immigration into Sweden, but also pragmatic, in that artists order their listeners to actively engage in warfare against immigrants and those who support immigration in order to fulfil their common goal of ensuring the continuation and purity of the white race. *Storm* addresses the issue of immigration in their song *Sverige Vakna [Sweden, Wake Up]*. They sing

The mass invasion of undesired characters

Spreads itself more and more on our home earth so loved;

We can no longer take on the whole world in our nation,

I refuse to let Sweden be the world's wasteland (Storm, *Sverige Vakna*)

They argue that Sweden must stop accepting everything like a meaningless sheep, referring to immigrants as 'parasiternar' [parasites], which must be cleaned out (Storm, *Sverige Vakna*). *Saga* shares this belief about immigrants but argues that most people who complain about immigration are hypocrites, singing "It was your vote that opened up the border you filthy hypocrite" (*Saga, Hypocrite*). She reflects on the issue of freedom of speech when debating about immigration, noting the "thoughts once natural now classed as hate crimes" (*Saga, One Nation Arise*), in an attack on Sweden's tough hate speech laws.



Skinhead artists commonly attack homosexuals, arguing that homosexuality is an illness and a form of perversion that must be eradicated. *Hets Mot Folkgrupp* sum up this sentiment in a highly offensive song, *Rövknallande Svin [Arse- Fucking Swine]*. Not only does this band argue that homosexuality is an illness, but they are extreme in their homophobia and violent language. They argue that homosexuals are the equivalent of child murderers, have no morals and have no function in society. This is based on the idea that homosexuals will not reproduce and are not of any use to the world, and of especially no use to the white race which is under threat of destruction (*Hets Mot Folkgrupp, Rövknallande Svin*). This song advocates extreme violence, such as “64 knife wounds in your body”, “kill them with an axe”, and then “pissing on your corpse” (*Hets Mot Folkgrupp*). Their excuse for this violence is that “to murder a beast is not a crime” (*Hets Mot Folkgrupp, Rövknallande Svin*). Whilst this song is extreme in its graphic violence and hatred towards homosexuals, it is evidence that these opinions are held by some citizens in Sweden and that they believe that hatred towards some groups in society is justifiable.

## *Conclusion*

Music is a powerful tool through which people can express themselves. It is a medium through which people can express their concerns with society, their desires and aspirations, and through which people can form an identity. The white power music scene in Sweden is a growing underground movement through which artists can express their concerns over immigration, corruption, homosexuality and the apparent end of the white race. It is also a movement which encourages action by its followers to achieve the goal of white supremacy. Through an active process of ‘othering’, whereby immigrants and homosexuals are portrayed as unwanted outsiders, skinheads and sympathisers are able to form their own identity and unite over a common goal. This goal involves the

use of violence, as it is deemed to be the only appropriate form of action. White power music both portrays and encourages violent action, but it also represents a portion of the Swedish population which feels strongly that immigration is detrimental to society, as is the acceptance of homosexuality. Due to strict hate speech laws in Sweden, people cannot openly express these sentiments and are forced to operate underground. However it is important to note that whilst the white power music scene does operate underground, many songs produced by skinhead bands and artists have had a significant number of views on YouTube, suggesting that a much larger portion of the Swedish population sympathises with white power ideology than has previously been thought.

# Conclusion

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This thesis has argued that the image Sweden promotes of itself does not reflect reality. It argues that whilst Sweden's reputation is based in its history of forward-thinking, liberal policies aimed at making society transparent and egalitarian, hate crime remains a social and political concern in Sweden. The issue of hate crime in Sweden was examined through the lens of popular culture.

This thesis began with a review of existing literature concerning hate crime and popular culture. It found that whilst much useful research has been conducted on hate crime and popular culture as two separate issues, there is a large gap concerning the relationship between popular culture and hate crime as interrelated issues which may influence and reflect one another. This thesis aimed to fill that gap by asking the research question 'What is the relationship between popular culture and hate crime in Sweden?'

Two case studies were conducted in order to illustrate the way in which popular culture has a strong relationship with hate crime. The first case study was conducted on Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* Trilogy, while the second case study examined Swedish white power music. These case studies indicated that popular culture is more than entertainment, rather, it has a highly political function. Popular culture plays a role in the dissemination of ideas, can be used as a form of protest against political norms, and can be used as a medium through which an author or artist can reflect the way they view society. Larsson used his novels to convey his concerns about hate crime in Sweden, particularly against women. This case study found that discrimination and hatred appear to be part of everyday life in Sweden and whilst not all Swedes feel strong feelings of hate towards groups in society, this hatred does exist. The

case study of white power music in Sweden found that music is used as a medium through which a collective identity can be formed, in particular an identity between those with white supremacist ideologies, and that music is a way to voice concerns about political issues, protest against government policies, and encourage people to take action.

During the research process it was interesting to note that the Swedish Statistics Bureau contained few statistics on violence directed towards women, however this is the central concern of Larsson's novels. Larsson's novels depict violent crime, however they also provide a damning commentary on discrimination that women face within the workforce and in everyday life- something which sometimes may not appear to be serious enough to warrant a police report but which still indicates large biases in society nonetheless. Also of interest was the relative popularity of Swedish white power music on YouTube. The production of white power and hate music in Sweden is illegal, however Sweden has a thriving white power music industry.

This thesis finds that popular culture is a valuable medium through which the ideology of hatred can be studied and that popular culture must never be discounted as simply forms of entertainment or fashion styles. It finds that Swedish artists and authors use popular culture to convey their concerns about society but that it is also used as a tool through which hate ideology can be disseminated throughout society too. Further research on this relationship is encouraged and could provide further evidence for the importance of popular culture within Sweden, such as how certain forms of popular culture have differing impacts on political and social culture, and how these may have affected social and political change throughout Sweden's history.

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