

# Places for Races: The White Supremacist Movement Imagines U.S. Geography

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## ABSTRACT

Increasingly, scholars are acknowledging that racial and other forms of animus assume a spatial dimension. Not only does intercultural hostility take different forms depending on location, but so, too, does the concomitant bias-motivated violence imply “places for races.” The very intent and motive of hate crimes are grounded in the perceived need of perpetrators to defend carefully crafted boundaries. While these boundaries are largely cultural, they may also take on a real, physical form, at least from the perpetrator’s perspective. Nowhere is this more evident than in the geographical imagination of the White Supremacist movement. This paper will trace the ways in which the movement idealizes the appropriate geographical “places for races.”

It is no accident that scholarship on hate crime and related forms of violence use such terminology as “borders,” “boundaries,” “transgressions,” or “territory,” for example. Hate crimes are situationally located; they have a spatial element that is often overlooked, although just as often implied by the semantics noted above. Hate crime can be seen as one mechanism by which the appropriate “spaces for races” can be created and reinforced. It is a weapon often invoked when victims are perceived to threaten the racialized boundaries that are meant to separate “us” from “them.” And all of this occurs within the institutional contexts of what is known to be the appropriate place of victim and victimizer. There is, as many black or Asian or Native or Hispanic people know, danger in nonconformity and in challenging borders. Racial violence becomes justifiable as a punishment for transgressions of institutionalized codes of conduct, for crossing the boundaries of race. Reactionary violence to such border crossings ensures that white people and people of color will inhabit their appropriate places in physical and cultural terms. The boundaries are preserved.

What we offer here is an exploration of the spatial imagination among

the white supremacist movement, an analysis that sees racially motivated violence and other related activities as, in part, contestations over space and the interpretation of those spaces. In short, writing specifically about the white supremacist movement, we seek to provide tentative answers to the conceptual questions posed by Razack (2002, p. 5):

What is being imagined or projected on to specific spaces and bodies, and what is being enacted there? Who do white citizens know themselves to be and how much does an identity of dominance rely upon keeping others firmly *in place*? How are people kept in their place? And, finally, how does place become race?

We approach these issues through several interrelated aspects of the geographical imagination of the white supremacist movement: their xenophobic ideology; their targeting of specific areas for the commission of hate crimes; their “concrete” mapping of the United States according to racial and ethnic “places for races”; the reification of the Pacific Northwest as the great white homeland; and the expansion of white supremacist “space” via cyberhate. Before addressing these issues directly, however, we begin with a brief discussion of how race becomes place generally, and the role that hate crime may play in that process.

### I. RACE, PLACE, AND VIOLENCE

Throughout the history of the United States, whiteness has been conceived as the norm, thus supporting racialized boundaries that assume whiteness as the standard against which all others are judged. It divides white from non-white, “unraced” from “raced.” There is an ideological presumption of innate, biological differences between races that is then extrapolated to cultural and ethical differences. One’s biological race is understood to determine one’s “essence,” to the extent that physical characteristics are linked to all other elements of one’s identity. This construction of racial difference subsequently justifies the full array of practices associated with racial exclusion and marginalization. Since difference has been understood negatively in the United States, it has come to signify deficiency or deviance. Consequently, “nonwhite” is equivalent to difference and inferiority. “Nonwhite” is the antithesis of white, and must necessarily remain subordinate to white. Moreover,

Whiteness is generally (and paradoxically) defined more precisely by who is excluded than who is included. Whites are those who are not non-white, those who are not racially marked, those who are not clustered together to form a category or racial minority. (Blee, 2004, p. 52)

As this suggests, race also implies “insides” and “outsides,” places of belonging and not-belonging, such that certain people may be seen to be in or out of “their place.” Such race-based juxtapositions are central to legitimating and rationalizing the marginalization of the Other who stands outside the boundaries of whiteness: “The ability to create and enforce these boundaries is related to societal power, as different formations of power rely on territorial rules about ‘what is in or out of place’ for their existence” (Sumartojo, 2004, p. 89). Our “place” thus becomes racialized, thereby shaping our lived experiences and related life chances. The connection between race and place is much more than a symbolic metaphor. It has dramatic material consequences as well. Consider Razack’s assessment:

When police drop Aboriginal people outside the town limits leaving them to freeze to death, or stop young Black men on the streets or in malls, when the eyes of shop clerks follow bodies of colour, presuming them to be illicit, when workplaces remain relentlessly white in the better paid jobs and fully “coloured” at the lower levels, when affluent areas of the city are all white and poorer areas are mostly of colour, we experience the spatiality of the racial order in which we live. (2002, p. 6)

This talk about inside and outside, about border crossing and other spatial metaphors, implies the centrality of geographical understandings of racial formations. In short,

Geography is relevant to the social construction of race and ethnicity because identities are created not only by the labels that are borne but through the spaces and places within which they exist . . . geography, the spaces and places that we exist in and create simultaneously shapes and records the way life unfolds, including the lived experience of ethnicity and race. (Berry & Henderson, 2002, p. 6)

As the preceding implies, central to our understanding of the geography of race is one particular element of the spatial as it relates to racial construction: boundaries, or borders. Borders are especially important as markers of the distinct boundedness of racialized groups, setting the limits as to who belongs where. They symbolically (and often physically) determine and reinforce ethnic separation and segregation. Whiteness, in particular, is a closely guarded fortress that is, by and large,

defined by its boundaries . . . In determining whiteness, borders are more significant than internal commonality. Over time whiteness has been constructed, in the words of the legal theorist Cheryl Harris, as “an exclusive club whose membership was closely and grudgingly guarded.” (Blee, 2004, p. 52)

Significantly, boundaries signify both the social and the spatial margins of race. They can take the symbolic form of cultural difference, of legislative control, or of popular imaging. Yet they are likely to assume a spatial dimension, such as walls, fences, or railroad tracks. Native American reservation boundaries, for example, represent something in between. They are invisible geopolitical borders, which nonetheless assume—in the imaginations of both Native and nonNative—a very real presence and impediment between residents and nonresidents (Sumartojo, 2004).

Despite their importance in separating “us” from “them,” boundaries are not fixed. In both symbolic and material terms, they are permeable and subject to ongoing tendencies to transgression (Webster, 2003). Native Americans leave the reservation for job opportunities; black Americans move into predominantly white neighborhoods to gain access to better schools and other infrastructural supports; immigrants come to the United States to pursue the “American Dream”; people of color generally demand the right to inclusion and participation in the machineries of economics and politics. As such, they represent threats; they have violated the carefully crafted barriers intended to keep them in their respective boxes. It is in these contexts—at the “symbolic boundaries”—that racialized violence is likely to occur (Webster, 2003, p. 99). It thus becomes a territorial defense of cultural, often national “space.” It is a means to reassert the marginality of the other who dares to transgress:

Hate crimes are exclusionary acts motivated in part by offenders’ desires to assert power over a given space, whether it be a neighborhood or public street. The effect of such acts is to send a “message” to members of the targeted group that they are unwelcome. In addition, hate crimes and responses to them contribute to the meaning of a place, representing a struggle between the meanings informing offenders and those informing other groups. (Sumartojo, 2004, p. 105)

Barnor Hesse and his colleagues were among the first to address explicitly the spatiality of hate (Hesse, 1993; Hesse, Rai, Bennett, & McGilchrist, 1992). In a chapter featuring an “experiential analysis” of racial violence, Hesse et al. (1992) devote a section explicitly to the “geography of victimization.” What is especially intriguing here is their discussion of white territorialism as a precursor to racial violence specifically. In their analysis, white racial violence perpetrated against a threatening Other is conditioned by a “sense of proprietorial relation to social space,” such that perpetrators come to see themselves as “*defending their space against change and transformation*” (Hesse et al., 1992, p. 173) [emphasis in original].

More recently, Colin Flint (2004) has made an even more explicit

foray into the field with the publication of an innovative collection of essays specifically devoted to the geography of hatred and intolerance. Here contributors offer varied explorations of the ways in which organized and informal groups assert their territorial claims in efforts to purge their neighborhoods, cities, regions, or nation of the encroaching threats represented by people of color and gay men and lesbians in particular. In a way that resonates with the work we present here, the authors share the recognition that “imperatives of the territorial defense of places and spaces result in the adoption of exclusionary visions and practices” (Flint, 2004a, p. 9).

Our paper is intended to continue the dialogue begun by these scholars. As noted, we specifically seek to explore the ways in which the white supremacist movement imagines “races for places,” as well as the spatialized rhetoric and strategies in which this dynamic is manifest. Our work is inspired by the conversations within Flint’s anthology, engaging with it by providing insights into ways in which white supremacists imagine discrete locales for themselves, and for all of the threatening Others in our midst. We bridge the ideology-action binary that characterizes many of the pieces in that volume. What we offer is an assessment of how the ideologies of whiteness give rise to concrete racial projects and strategies for implementing those ideals: the closing of borders, regional segregation, and the Northwest Imperative. We close with a glimpse into the white supremacist occupation and exploitation of cyberspace.

## II. XENOPHOBIA: RACES OUT OF PLACE

The starting point for much white supremacist thought and action is the perception that racial groups are discrete and unbreachable entities, and that they thus occupy discrete and unbreachable locations, both culturally and spatially. Thus,

perpetrators of hate crime draw from their own normative understanding or beliefs about what type of person is “out of place” in a given setting. If these rules are breached, their understanding of a place is challenged. Studies of hate crime have suggested that perpetrators of hate crime may identify with a place such that their sense of place makes them feel licensed to defend it from intrusion. (Sumartojo, 2004, p. 89)

Sumartojo (2004) inadvertently characterizes a substantial element of the motivation for hate group mobilization. In this case, however, it is not simply a local site that is in question, but rather the whole nation state that is the United States. This is most evident in the fervor of the country’s anti-immigrant rhetoric, which seeks to construct immigrants as dangerous “others” within. In fact, rhetors are fond of using the explicitly exclusion-

ary term “alien” rather than “immigrant,” presumably to highlight the legally and culturally marginal status of these people.

A recurring theme in the white supremacist counterculture is that the United States of America is a “white nation.” The image of the United States as a product of the revolutionary colonists with European backgrounds negates the role African slaves and native peoples played in the formation of the nation. Regardless, the thinking goes that the “founding fathers” of the nation were white males, and if the United States was created by and for whites in 1776, it should continue to be a white-controlled nation centuries later. From unaffiliated racists telling African-Americans to “go back to Africa,” to Christian Identity adherents who believe that the continental United States is the biblically prophesied “promised land,” the claim has been laid as to who has rights to the country.

Obviously, the history of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants strengthened by its racial and ethnic diversity is reflected in the national motto, *E pluribus unum* (“Out of many, one”). Yet this claim on the land is a central issue for white supremacists. According to the 2000 census, non-Hispanic whites are still an overwhelming majority of American citizens (75.1%), but regional differences and demographic changes can place the majority group in settings where majorities are not so clear. In Phoenix, Arizona, whites constituted 71.1% of the 2000 population; but in Detroit, Michigan, whites made up only 12.3% of the population (2000 Census). Nationally, the highest percentages of whites are in New England and the Great Plains states in the Midwest. Vermont was the whitest state in 2000 (96.8%), and Mississippi was the least white in the continental United States (61.4%—Hawaii was only 24.3% white). Coincidentally, the nation as a whole is becoming “less white.” Whites made up 80.3% of the 1990 census and 77.1% of the 2000 census.

Thus, immigration represents a challenge to the white race. Unlike the cases of the previous three waves of immigration, the current arrivals are not predominantly European, are not even predominantly white. On the contrary, they are much more likely to be fleeing the violence and poverty of the Third World. Thus, they are overwhelmingly Asians, and Hispanics from South and Central America. On the basis of race alone, these immigrants are not as readily assimilable as their predecessors. And this makes people such as racist leader and 1988 U.S. presidential candidate David Duke nervous:

The darkening of our nation mimics histories of many other nations. The nations of the Caribbean, Central, and South America, are predictive examples of the fate that awaits us. The Third World awaits our children. It is in our streets, in our taxpayer subsidized housing projects, in our

jails, and in our mayor's chairs . . . . Our children grow up in an alien society that our forefathers would not recognize. (Duke, 1996, p. 2)

The hegemonic bloc in the United States—white European males—are in a crisis of identity brought on by the increasing diversity engendered by the immigration patterns of the late twentieth century. Culturally, non-whites, the non-European immigrants who have breached the national shores, are constructed as major contributors to the breakdown of the United States' unity and stability. Tarver (1994) provides an insightful analysis into the ways in which English-only initiatives present an Us vs. Them dichotomy, wherein immigrants carry with them customs, folkways, and language (a.k.a. “gibberish”) that make native-born English-speaking Americans “strangers in their own land” (Tarver, 1994, p. 214). In his National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP) newsletter, David Duke warned that immigration

will make white people a minority totally vulnerable to the political, social, and economic will of blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Orientals. A social upheaval is now beginning to occur that will be the funeral dirge for the American we love. I shudder to contemplate the future under non-white occupation: rapes, murders, robberies multiplied a hundred-fold, illiteracy such as in Haiti, medicine such as in Mexico, and tyranny such as in Togoland. (cited in Langer, 1990, p. 94)

In an address to the online weekly radio show *American Dissident Voices* presented in 1995, William Pierce, the recently deceased leader of the National Alliance, likewise observed:

During the 50 years since the Second World War, American has been darkening, has been getting less and less White. Immigration from Europe was cut off after the war—except for Jews of course—and the floodgates from the non-White world were opened. Asians and mestizos have been pouring into the country, both legally and illegally. (para. 5)

The outcome of this “browning” or “darkening” of the country, according to Pierce and others like him, is “more and more non-Whites, more and more crime and filth and disorder” (Pierce, 1995, para. 20). Immigrants—with their dark skin, their odd ways, and their foreign cultures and languages—will hasten the demise of the true, white Christian identity. They will overrun the white race and overturn the existing relations of power.

In addition to the cultural threats posed by immigrants, hate activists argue, they also bring with them economic problems. From their perspective, immigrants—especially Third World immigrants—come to this coun-

try for two reasons: to sack the welfare system, and to take the jobs of Americans. Presumably, immigrants are getting rich off the United States' welfare system, and it is catapulting them into the middle class over the heads of long-suffering, native-born Americans. In reality, statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor show very few welfare recipients moving into the middle income bracket.

Immigrants are in a double bind. On the one hand, they are berated for their presumed exploitation and plundering of the United States' social safety net. On the other hand, should they turn instead to legitimate employment—as the vast majority do—they are then reviled for stealing “American” jobs. In an environment already strained by corporate downsizing, such rhetoric plays on the fears of an economically insecure public. Whether framed in economic, cultural, or criminal terms, the underlying message is that war must be declared on the invading force of immigrants, for they are the “enemies” of the American way of life. Presumably, they present a threat that can only be contained by extreme means. Consequently,

immigrant bashing is a popular activity in assigning blame for the nation's economic problems. When stagnation is evident in the national economy and unemployment exceeds seven percent, a pervasive fear that one's job is on the line often emerges. Anxiety triggers frustration and blame; resentment towards immigrants, documented and undocumented, becomes an ugly side of racism, nativism and xenophobia. (Ochoa, 1995, p. 227)

As hate groups would have it, the tide of immigration must be turned to minimize and reverse the flood of “mud-people” onto the United States' shores. The boundaries between the defiled and deviled races and the pure white race must be reinforced. Hence, the necessity for racial segregation arises. Separate spaces become territorial markers and buffers against the “pollution” represented by the Other. They reflect “idealized racial typifications tied to notions of slumliness, physical and ideological pollution of the body politic, sanitation and health syndromes, lawlessness, addiction, and prostitution” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 198). If these threats can be contained, constrained, hidden behind real or imaginary walls, then the white race is safe from infection.

### III. SPATIAL IMAGININGS: PLACES FOR RACES

The overlapping belief systems documented herein lead many hate groups to the sort of conclusion noted above: Through organized action, the white race must reverse the trends represented by the myriad forms of white

racial “suicide” and “genocide.” Moreover, the goal of this action is fairly consistent from group to group. It is best summarized by the “14 Words” principle shared by many Christian Identity groups: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children.” The means by which groups intend to achieve this goal, however, differ somewhat. For some, the first step is relatively simple: Close the borders in order to halt the darkening of the United States. William Pierce (1995) suggested one mechanism by which to stop illegal immigration from Mexico: Shoot anyone attempting to cross illegally. He assured us that after “two or three shootings in the first night . . . the word would be out: Don’t cross the border unless you want to die.” He justified this approach by resorting to the rhetoric of vilification, in which the “alien” is constructed as criminal, explaining, “Fewer immigrants would have to be shot trying to come across the border that first night than law-abiding Americans are now being murdered each year by illegal-alien criminals in California and Texas.” Hence, the most extreme violence can be justified by recreating the “Us” vs. “Them” opposition, which portrays “Them” as being even more violent and therefore deserving of exclusion and, where necessary, execution. For, as Razack asserts, “a specific geographical imagination is clearly traceable in the story of origins told in anti-immigration rhetoric, operating as metaphor but also enabling material practices such as the increased policing of the border and of bodies of colour” (2002, p. 4).

Another common theme—shared by hate groups and the militia movement—is the idea of racial segregation, generally in geographical terms. According to this position, the white race can survive only if it is isolated from the biological and cultural influences of the non-Aryan races. Writing of what he sees as the racist culture of the west generally, Goldberg (1993, p. 187) asserts that “threatening to transgress or pollute established social orders necessitates their reinvention, first by conceptualizing order anew and then by reproducing spatial confinement and separation in the renewed terms.” No more apt description could be offered of the white supremacist vision of the United States in particular. Angry and apparently in fear of the changing demographics of the U.S., white supremacists call for a renewal of the great white homeland, preferably through a thorough purging of the “dirt and filth,” or, as a compromise, through a rigid separation of “us” from “them.” The most effective way to keep the bloodline pure is to establish—or re-establish, as they see it—autonomous racial nations. Keith and Pile (1993, p. 2) make the intriguing observation that the trouble with so much talk about “place” is that it is “rarely clear whether the space invoked is ‘real,’ ‘imaginary,’ symbolic,’ a ‘metaphor-concept’ or some relationship between them or something else entirely.” At least white supremacists are explicit in their use of the term. They quite literally mean “place” as some-

thing “real,” as something that is—or at least should be—filled with particular people:

Racist groups support not only racial separation but also absolute racial hierarchies of domination and subordination, superiority and inferiority. They seek a division of racial space that is vertical as well as horizontal, thereby ranking as well as distinguishing among racial groups. Moreover, the construction of spatial separation is designed to maintain the perceived vertical divisions, and the strength of the social hierarchy will facilitate the success of the geographic project. (Blee, 2004, p. 53)

At the broadest level, the crucial space for American supremacists, as white “separatists,” is the United States of America, which is best filled with solid white Christians. For some within the hate movement, this would mean deporting non-Europeans to their country or continent of origin: Africans to Africa, Asians to Asia, Hispanics to Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, or wherever. The National Socialist Vanguard (online) claims that the “Black folks in the large or small cities will have no way to survive except repatriation.” Strom (online) agrees:

Since Farrakhan and other Black Nationalists want a nation of their own, let them have one. That means that we can have a nation of our own. Since Black Nationalists want to go to Africa, let them go. That means that we can have our America back.

For others, racial separation can be established within the existing borders of the United States. A white racist newsletter, *The National Observer* (online) suggests “strict geographical separation, devoid of racial conflict or oppression,” in which each ethnic group would establish its own political territory. Groups like the NAAWP, some cells of the KKK, and Aryan Nations have long called for a white racial homeland in the North-western United States, leaving the rest of the nation to diverse minority groups. The NAAWP—under the initial leadership of David Duke—has designed an elaborate “relocation” strategy, consisting of nine ethnically based regions. What such mapping allows—in the best tradition of de Champlain, or Lewis and Clark—is for supremacists to once again become masters of the territory that they survey.

The “White Bastion” would cover the extreme northwest (more on this below). “Navahona” would contain all Native Americans in the area currently known as New Mexico. “Alta California,” the twenty-mile-wide band along the United States-Mexico border, would be home to Mexican Americans; illegal immigrants would be shot on sight. Hawaii would become “East Mongolia,” the nation of all Asians and Pacific Islanders.

African Americans would be “regrouped” in the deep South, in what is now Florida, southern Alabama, and part of southern Mississippi, and would be called “New Africa.” However, Miami, Miami Beach, and Dade County—“New Cuba”—would be reserved for Cubans. “West Israel”—the United States homeland of the Jews—would take up Manhattan and Long Island, while the remainder of the New York metropolitan area, or “Minoria,” would be set aside for “unassimilable minorities,” including Puerto Rican and Mediterranean immigrants. Finally, French Canadian immigrants would remain in “Francia,” the extreme northern portions of the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York.

Of course, groups advocating such measures recognize that such strategies would involve “difficulty and temporary unpleasantness.” They might even require the use of force. Nonetheless, it is deemed the best solution to promote the long-term interests of all groups in question. It is especially important to them, however, that whites regain “a nation”:

We must have White schools, White residential neighborhoods and recreation areas, White workplaces, White farms and countryside. We must have no non-Whites in our living space, and we must have open space around us for expansion. (National Alliance, online)

Only in this way can white society purge itself of the “alien” and “dangerous” hordes that threaten to destroy Aryan culture in the United States.

Perhaps David Duke’s NAAWP is indebted to South African policies of Apartheid. Specifically, the group seems to have borrowed from the Group Areas Act of 1950, which provided for the following:

1. A residential race zone or area for each racial group;
2. Strong physical boundaries or imagined barriers to serve as buffers between residential zones. These barriers may be natural, like a river or valley, or human constructions, like a park, a railway line, or highway;
3. Each racial group should have direct access to work areas (industrial sites or central business districts), where racial interaction is necessary, or to common amenities (like government bureaucracies, airports, sport stadiums) without having to enter the residential zone of another racial group. Where economies in furnishing such common access necessitate traversing the racial space of others, it should be by “neutral” and buffered means like railways or highways;
4. Industry should be dispersed in ribbon formation around the city’s periphery, rather than amassed in great blocks, to give maximal direct access at minimal transportation costs; and

5. The central business district is to remain under white control. With similar goals in mind, it is noted that “in every case the construct of separate (racial) group areas, in design or effect, has served to constrain, restrict, monitor, and regulate . . . space and its experience” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 196).

The white supremacist mapping of the United States brings to mind Oikawa’s (2002) discussion of the “cartography of violence” that suggests that the processes of nation building are “based upon systematic racial exclusions and other social divisions” (p. 74). None attend to this in more crude and explicit terms than those within the white supremacist movement. For them, social space is not nearly as central to constructing a white nation as is the very real geographical reconstruction of physical space. Members are very literal in their interpretation of racial space, laying claim to much of North America, and certainly all of the United States, as “white man’s land.” Never mind that the original inhabitants were overtaken by the violence and disease of colonization. If the pre-existence—and especially the devastation—of Aboriginal peoples is largely minimized in white settler rhetoric, it is completely erased from the even more extreme white supremacist discourse. It is as if they never were. And subsequent immigration (often forced), from the same perspective, should never have been.

#### IV. THE NORTHWEST IMPERATIVE

At the heart of this cartography of violence lies the notion of a great white homeland, located in the Pacific Northwest. Even if “Navahona” or “New Africa” remain distant visions, the imagined “White Bastion” can and should be made a reality. This preserve also occupies a distinct cultural and spatial locus, especially as envisioned by Richard Butler, one of the racist leaders who spearheaded this movement. Butler owned property in Hayden Lake, Idaho, outside of Coeur d’Alene, where he created an armed compound in 1978. The Aryan Nations had connections to The Order, a racist gang that committed murder and armed robberies in the Northwest to fund a “white revolution” in the early 1980s. Butler began hosting Aryan World Congress meetings in the 1980s to draw leaders from the white supremacist counterculture to the Pacific Northwest.

The rhetoric of the Christian Identity movement noted above included the idea that European whites were the lost tribes of Israel and had been called to North America as the prophesied “promised land.” While Butler was a leader of the racist right, he saw himself as a prophet of the “race of Adam.” Two events added to the fuel that the Northwest corner of the United States might be the biblically mandated homeland to racial separatists. The first event was the death of Bob Mathews, leader of The Order, at

the hands of the FBI (or his own) in 1984. Mathews escaped a gun battle with law enforcement in Portland, Oregon and fled to his cabin on Whidbey Island in Washington State. As he was cornered by the FBI, Mathews' cabin went up in flames. Mathews' death made him a martyr for the violent Aryan movement and the anniversary of his death, December 8th, is celebrated as a day of remembrance. Fellow member of The Order David Lane (in prison for The Order's crimes) wrote a phrase that has taken on sacred significance: "We must secure an existence for our people and a future for white children." This phrase, called the "14 words," is an identifier of loyalty to the acts of The Order and the mission of the Aryan Nations (14/88 = 14 Words and Heil Hitler, a common racist greeting).

The second event of "biblical proportions" in the Northwest was the standoff in Ruby Ridge, Idaho in 1992. Randy Weaver was a white separatist connected to the Aryan Nations who attended their World Congress meeting in 1986. Weaver, his wife, and their children lived in a hilltop cabin when Weaver failed to appear in court on a weapons charge. Knowing that Weaver was a well-armed antigovernment separatist, U.S. Marshals organized a blockade of his home and a tactical assault to force him out. The resulting 10-day standoff left Weaver's 14-year-old son, Sam, and wife, Vicki, dead from marshals' gunfire. The siege was finally resolved by racist survivalist Bo Gritz acting as a mediator between federal authorities and the surviving Weavers. The standoff was witnessed by scores of antigovernment sympathizers and racist activists, including skinheads from the Aryan Nations compound. Eventually, the government admitted violating its own rules of engagement and awarded the victims of the siege a multimillion-dollar settlement.

The deaths of Robert Mathews and Vicki and Sam Weaver have become sacred events for white separatists, demonstrating that the land of the Northwest has been consecrated with the blood of racist heroes. The proximity of the Aryan Nations compound and the ability of Richard Butler to capitalize on the events through his sermons, publications, and the Internet have helped the Northwest to become the geographic focus of the racist movement. Butler and others, like Klansman Bob Miles and the American Front, began using Old Testament-style claims on land to make the case that there was a "Northwest Imperative" for the creation of a five-state homeland for racially conscious whites. Recognizing that David Duke's plan of ethnically cleansing the United States of racial enemies (including whites who were homosexual, involved in relationships with nonwhites, or liberal) might be overly ambitious, separatists set their sights on the disproportionately white states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana (alternative plans would have the white homeland

larger, including British Columbia, or smaller, made up of only southern Oregon and Northern California).

In addition to the manufactured biblical value of land in the North-western states came a mathematical one. These states had small percentages of minorities and large amounts of open land, suitable for homesteading. Crime-ridden cities to the south and east could be seen as examples of failed attempts of multiculturalism and big government. Separatists adopted the philosophy of *posse comitatus* (from The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878): the belief that the only constitutionally recognized authority is the local sheriff. The call for an internal migration of racists to the Northwest received a positive response from many racists. In 1994, Harold Covington of the National Socialist White People's Party wrote a press release:

The NSWPP has relocated its national headquarters from Raleigh, North Carolina. The NSWPP is extremely pleased so far by our reception in Seattle. Our printing facility plans to make available sufficient amounts of National Socialist literature for the youth of Seattle to promote the "Northwest Imperative – 5 white states."

However, the the Northwest Imperative was not uniformly accepted by varied groups of the racist counterculture. Many groups connected to their Confederate states' identities in the South, or just entrenched in defending their home turf, did not take to the idea of abandoning their homes to their enemies in order to move to the Northwest. Their fears of what might happen ironically looked something like the images of Palestinians destroying the settlements of retreating Israeli homesteaders in Gaza in 2005. However, some recognized the strategy of colonizing the Pacific Northwest. The following interchange with Thom Robb, National Director, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, took place at an Aryan rally filmed for the 1991 documentary *Blood in the Face*.

Robb: Well, you have all different concepts on that, you know, Pastor Miles speaks about moving to the Northwest. I personally like Arkansas, and I don't particularly see any reason why I should want to move. However, I think most of us are willing, would be willing to move if that's what it takes.

Interviewer: Excuse me, what Bob Miles says is that, uh, get five states for the Whites in the Northwest, maybe give the Southwest to the Latinos and maybe give the South, including Arkansas if I may say so, to the Blacks. Now, this might be the point where you disagree with, uh. . .

Robb: Well, I possibly disagree from the standpoint that, that I want to

preserve Arkansas, but like I started to say, I think most of us are mature enough to realize that the preservation of our society and our people is of paramount importance, and I, yes I would move out of Arkansas tomorrow if that's what it would take to . . . to preserve our people.

Despite the reluctance of some, the idea of a multi-state area that could be colonized by white supremacists began to gain popularity in the 1990s as the Aryan Nations compound became a focal point of activity. The Portland-based skinhead group Volksfront declared its desire to create an "autonomous Aryan homeland" in the region and posted pictures of property to be homesteaded on its website (allegedly owned by the Aryan Nations). Volksfront's ten-point mission begins with the desire to "support the creation of an autonomous White European State in North America," along with a desire to end nonwhite immigration to other white areas, such as South Africa ([www.volksfrontinternational.com](http://www.volksfrontinternational.com)).

Right-wing militia icon Bo Gritz went so far as to start a white colony near Kamiah, Idaho called Almost Heaven. Residents purchasing property in the development were approved by Gritz and had to sign a "covenant" pledging to defend the constitutional rights of Almost Heaven residents. Gritz's third wife was awarded the development in 1998 in a divorce settlement after Gritz attempted suicide on the property (Thomas, 1999).

The dream of an Aryan Homeland in the United States was dealt a crushing blow in 2000 when Richard Butler lost his Aryan Nations compound at Hayden Lake. A Cherokee woman and her son had stopped along the road outside the armed camp to look for a lost wallet. The camp's guards, complete with neo-Nazi armbands, believed the two were Jews attacking the camp and fired on them, after which they chased and beat them. The Southern Poverty Law Center won a \$6.3 million lawsuit against the Aryan Nations on behalf of the victims that led to the confiscation of Butler's Idaho property, which was then turned into a peace park (Sugg, 2006). The decision effectively destroyed the Aryan Nations' dreams of becoming the center of any new nation, and Butler died in 2004 with little organization left.

With the geographic base gone, the vision of an Aryan homeland has naturally moved to the internet, where numerous discussions about the future home of white separatists continues, complete with competing flags and national names. Websites such as [northwesthomeland.org](http://northwesthomeland.org) discuss actual strategies for achieving this goal. The site promotes the internal migration of racially conscious whites to the Pacific Northwest, using supporters in the region as a simple recruiting network. The site uses fears of immigration by nonwhites to urge movement to the Northwest to help create a new nation called the Northwest American Republic (NAR).

Either we as White people will face our racial crisis and act, or we will become extinct within the next century. Two choices, that's it. For now we must focus on getting our people to the Pacific Northwest to secure White living space. No other concrete plan for our survival exists. ([www.northwesthomeland.org/principles.html](http://www.northwesthomeland.org/principles.html), para. 3)

We see a four-phase plan to achieve this homeland that forgoes the massive violence promoted in *The Turner Diaries*, the book penned by the late National Alliance leader William Pierce. *The Turner Diaries*, a 1978 novel about a race war to reclaim America from Jewish control, has long been seen as a "how-to" guide by members of the racist right, including Timothy McVeigh, the "Oklahoma City bomber." The less aggressive plan from [northwesthomeland.org](http://northwesthomeland.org) follows the following phases:

- 1) Relocating racially conscious whites to the Northwest;
- 2) Racially propagandizing whites in the region to engage in the cause of separatism;
- 3) Creating a legal political movement for Northwest independence; and
- 4) Creating an economic, social, and organizational infrastructure that will take power in case of a failure of the federal government ([www.northwesthomeland.org/four\\_phases.html](http://www.northwesthomeland.org/four_phases.html), "Four Phases to Victory," para. 2).

The site sees the NAR as a product of a national collapse, much as the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 paved the way for new nations, such as the Ukraine, based on ethnic identities. The site goes on to talk about the pleasant ("European") climate in the region, the lack of liberals in rural areas, and the fact that "White martyrs Robert Mathews and Vicky [*sic*] and Sam Weaver died in the Northwest" (FAQ page, para. 4).

The blog at [nwhomeland.blogspot.com](http://nwhomeland.blogspot.com) makes a similar case for the foundation of the NAR, referring to the deaths of Mathews and the Weavers, and to the Census Bureau prediction that the number of non-Hispanic whites will be eclipsed by that of minorities by the year 2050. The forum takes a more militant position, targeting Zionists and making more overt calls to violent acts. On October 21, 2006, the website's author (who goes by "The Old Man" from Olympia, Washington) published a draft of a constitution for the NAR. David Lane's "14 Words" were included in the preamble: "In the name of the Divine Creator of all things we, the Aryan peoples of the earth, do hereby set forth this Constitution of the Northwest American Republic, in order that we may secure the existence of our people and a future for White children" (<http://northwestfront.org/about/nar-constitution/>, para. 1).

Residence and citizenship in the imaginary nation are restricted "to

those persons of unmixed Caucasian racial descent from any one of the historic family of European nations” (nwhomeland.blogspot.com). Jews are defined as non-whites and are not allowed to enter the NAR under any circumstance. The sixty articles include sections defining citizenship (“white”), the government (a one-party democracy), the judiciary (due process), the bill of rights (the right to keep and bear arms is first; others include universal health care and the rights of the unborn), and a “bill of responsibilities” (including mandatory military service and prohibitions against homosexuality and sexual relations with non-whites). Earlier that month, “The Old Man” posted an answer to the question of when the Aryan revolution would occur: “The revolution will come when White people love their children more than they love their possessions.” It is notable that none of the blog entries on this site have any comments from readers.

A more active forum is [www.hateandflame.com](http://www.hateandflame.com). The site (which also features speeches by Adolf Hitler) is home to hundreds of topics related to the “northwest migration.” These topics include discussions of good places to move to, such as Boise, Idaho (“the best place to retire to”) and names for the nation (“Cascadia”). The site links white residents in the Pacific Northwest with those who are considering fleeing other parts of the country in hopes of creating a critical mass of racist whites and pushing unwanted groups out.

The ongoing desire of white supremacists to create a racial separatist movement and carve out a homeland is an example of Swyngedouw’s concept of “glocalization,” the location of global processes in local space (Swyngedouw, 1997). The previous notion, that of the United States as a “white nation,” has been scaled down, infused with religious context, and given a timetable (2050). The imaginary country has been given names, flags, and constitutions, and calls for migration in a backwards *Field of Dreams* form of nation building (“If they come, we will build it”). The soil, consecrated by “martyrs,” holds the sacredness of the region, despite the fact that racists have died in many places in the United States.

The racist dream of a northwest homeland ignores obvious barriers. The succession of the region could not take place without violence. The American federal government is not going to surrender five (or one) states to religious extremists. And while Aryan separatists are still living in the NAR, but within the United States, they still must pay taxes and follow local, state, and national laws. Racist activists might rethink taking cities such as Seattle, in which nearly a quarter of residents are not white. Additionally, it would be wrong to assume that resident whites would like the idea of turning in their diverse culture for citizenship in a fascist state. The greatest obstacle would be the determination of actual citizenship. Could a white person who had a Hispanic grandmother be allowed to live in Cas-

cadia? If a white couple had a gay son, would the whole family have to move? Do those with Italian, Irish, or Iranian roots count as “white”? And how would an Aryan nation enforce bans on abortion and interracial relationships? Could you listen to Marvin Gaye in the NAR? Of course, the global community would isolate such a nation, much as South Africa was sanctioned in the 1980s, making it hard to even get Marvin Gaye albums in. Finally, there is little unity among the interested groups, with many competing to be the rulers of the Aryan homeland.

Obviously, the fantasy of a homeland will remain just that. However, racists draw upon the historical examples of Israel, Palestine, apartheid-era South Africa, Bosnia, and, of course, Nazi Germany as contemporary geographic spaces that have been (violently) claimed in the name of racial and ethnic separatism. The need for a “land of one’s own” is a powerful part of the eminent domain philosophy that led white settlers to the Pacific Northwest in the 1800s. In a diverse nation of 300 million, the open spaces of the Northwest still appeal to those who would like a little more space and a little less diversity.

There are still those within the racist subculture who have not given up on the old mantra, “The South will rise again.” In September 2006, the remnant of Richard Butler’s Aryan Nations held its 25th World Congress in Laurens, South Carolina. Those who attended discussed alternatives to the Northwest Imperative, including colonizing Alaska. The resolution was to focus on land a little closer to home, with one leader announcing that the best option was to “look at the secession of South Carolina. Start with this state” (Sugg, 2006, p. 8).

#### V. EXPANDING THE SPACES: CYBERHATE AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF A MOVEMENT

Over the course of this paper, we have collapsed a diverse array of hate groups under the broad rubric of a hate or white supremacist “movement.” Clearly, this has been a heuristic device. While there are obvious points of convergence across the various Klan groups, or Identity Churches, or Skinhead organizations, the hate movement historically has been varied and, in fact, fractured. Significantly, however, Internet communication facilitates the creation of the collective identity that is so important to movement cohesiveness (McAdam, 1982). As a Klanwatch (1998, p. 25) report observed, increasing reliance on email, Web pages, and electronic chat rooms “give[s] racists an empowering sense of community. Even lone racists, with no co-religionists nearby, feel they are part of a movement.”

Internet communication helps to close the social and spatial distance that might otherwise thwart efforts to maintain a collective identity. Given

the geographical dispersal of hate groups across the country—indeed, across the globe—the medium of cyberspace allows members in Maine, Mississippi, and Idaho to engage in real-time conversations, to share the ritual and imagery that bind the individuals to the collective without having to travel great distances or incur great costs. Virtual conversations and ready access to Web pages aggressively asserting the shortcomings of the Other strengthen the resolve of individual members by creating the framework for a shared sense of both peril and purpose.

Moreover, Internet communication knows no national boundaries. Consequently, it allows the hate movement to extend its collective identity internationally, thereby facilitating a potential “global racist subculture” (Back, Keith, & Solomos, 1998). There is no reason to expect that processes of globalization affecting commerce, politics, and demographics will not also affect the realm of identity politics played out by the hate movement (Weinberg, 1998). Weinberg argues that the Internet will in fact provide the vehicle for the construction of a “common racial identity reaching across the Atlantic” (p. 79). Regardless of national affiliation, Internet communication allows white people across the globe to share in the celebration of a common race. Thus, for example, cyberhate sites are increasingly multilingual. They tend to exploit (white) multicultural symbols drawn from Nordic, Celtic, or Nazi mythology. Furthermore, such sites facilitate the importation of outlawed documents and rhetoric so that all can share in the discourses of hate. For example, while Germany and many other European nations have criminalized the publication and dissemination of racist propaganda, these nations have yet to establish an effective means of regulating the virtual border crossing of cyberhate. In short, the potential of the Internet for creating an enhanced sense of unity among the computer-mediated community of haters is vast, and in fact, global. Ironically, at the same time that white supremacists seek to shore up the borders that separate “us” from “them,” the Internet allows them simultaneously to erode the borders that have separated “us” from “us.”

#### VI. CARVING OUT SPACES: FUTURE RESEARCH IN THE GEOGRAPHY OF HATE

Colin Flint’s 2004 volume, *Spaces of Hate*, has opened the discussion on geographic approaches to hate studies. This paper and future research can add areas of additional study. As racists continually try to define territory and the boundaries between their “us” and our “them,” how do these groups police their own borders? Remembering that Irish immigrants were not considered white one hundred years ago, how is racial purity determined? Racist groups have purged members upon discovery of non-white

ancestors in the past. How are these genetic boundaries established and enforced?

Similarly, the battle to determine who is “white” also concerns lands of origin. There is a debate within the white supremacist subculture over which Europeans are the true Aryan people. While there is a consensus that most northern and western Europeans (excluding Laplanders) qualify, other parts of Europe remain controversial. Slavs, Greeks, Italians, and Spaniards have been declared by some racists to be “mongrels” or not “truly white.” Even the French are disqualified because of the high percentage of Arab lineage among the residents of France. How are these borders determined and adjusted?

Maybe one of the more compelling geographic issues suggested by this paper is the concept of a racially homogenous homeland. As mentioned, many white supremacists look to the historical models of Nazi Germany, Apartheid-era South Africa, and even Israel and Palestine as examples of the possibility of racially-driven nations. In recent years, the model has become Serbia. The bloody Yugoslavian civil war in the 1990s used a form of genocide called ethnic cleansing to remove or murder Muslims and Croats. Those who did not fit the ethnic profile of the Orthodox Christian Serbs were driven out to refugee camps or into mass graves. In 2002, the heterogeneous nation of Yugoslavia ceased to exist and in its place emerged a variety of homogenous nations, include Serbia, Bosnia, and Macedonia.

White supremacists see Serbia as a modern European example of a created racial homeland. Hate rockers, popular with racist skinheads, have networked with nationalist bands in Serbia. Hate rock bands have traveled to Serbia for concerts, sponsored by Blood & Honour, a national skinhead organization. The Serbian record label White Eagle Records has released music by Serbian skinhead groups, such as Battle Flag, and National Socialist Death Metal groups, such as Terrormachine. This music, and Serbian nationalism in general, has become very popular with racist skinheads in Europe and North America.

White supremacist claims on land and the reactionary violence to define symbolic space has a long history. From Klan nightriders in the 1870s forcing freed slaves off of their land to racist blogs in the 2000s encouraging whites to move to the Pacific Northwest, the claim to land has always been imperative. The fear of losing America to immigrants and others encourages a defensive posturing and a need to erect walls, symbolic and otherwise. To understand hate crimes, an understanding of how people define their space as “theirs” is key.

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