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SOUTHERN ROCK MUSICIANS' CONSTRUCTION OF WHITE TRASH

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Abstract: Based on interviews, song lyrics, websites, and observation of concerts, we examine how southern rock musicians construct themselves as poor, rural, white men. While popular culture often uses negative stereotypes to degrade poor whites, we show how southern rock musicians reclaim what they view as positive attributes of "white trash." They do this by embracing symbols of southern white trash (including the confederate flag), glorifying rural poverty, and celebrating drunken violence. We bring a focus on capitalism into our analysis by uncovering how class is central to southern rockers' racialized and gendered identity work, situating them as marginalized workers in a culture industry, and drawing out implications for class reproduction.

Keywords: intersectionality; music; identity work, white trash

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Social theorists convincingly point out that race, class, and gender are intersecting, interlocking systems of oppression (Anderson & Collins, 1992; Collins, 1986; 1989; 1998; Creenshaw et al., 1995; hooks, 1981; 1984). The implications of such theorizing include that people occupy and identify with multiple positions in matrices of domination (Collins, 1990) and that individuals reproduce or challenge inequalities via social interaction (Schwalbe et al., 2000; West & Festermaker, 1995). Though Collins (1995) urges scholars to avoid privileging any one system of oppression, as the editors of this special issue and others (Bebeoglu, 1994, Kandal, 1995, Giminez, 2001) point out, class—and capitalism more generally—is often neglected or downplayed in analyses of intersectionality.

In this article, we examine how musicians in the "southern rock revival" construct and market a cultural identity that lies at an intersection of race, class, gender, and region: southern white trash manhood. The revival is a rebirth of the 1970s, cross-genre southern rock music movement, in which groups such as the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd celebrated the nostalgia of the traditional, agrarian, patriarchal south as a better time and place through a fusion of country and rock-n-roll (Butler, 2003; Cobb, 1982; Ching, 2001; Ownby, 1998; Wells, 1996). We show how like their classic rock counterparts, revivalists symbolize class, race and gender by doing "identity work," which refers to how people use language and other symbolic resources to signify selfhood (see Snow & Anderson, 1987).

Although everyone presents raced, classed and gendered selves to audiences, southern rockers' white trash selves are commodities they *sell* to audiences. While southern rockers' records are not released by major labels, nor do they sell albums in the millions, they do have fans who consistently pay a cover charge to see them in local bars and buy their independently produced recordings. These consumers of white trash manhood enable many southern rockers to make a living—though usually a meager one—playing and selling original music, which is quite difficult without corporate sponsorship.

Southern rock musicians are on the margins of a larger niche market of the American culture industry, which stereotypes poor southern whites (especially men) for profit (Costello, 2004; Hartigan, 1992; Newitz, 1997; Smith, 2004). Daytime talk shows (Grindstaff, 2002), mainstream music (Halnon, 2003), movies (Hartigan, 1992; Williamson, 1995), books (Smith, 2004), news outlets (Mason, 2005), and pornography (Penley, 1997) often depict poor, rural white men as stupid and lazy, racist drunks who are uneducated, perpetually unemployed, and violent. The most successful contemporary profiteers of white trash are probably the members of the *Blue Collar Comedy* enterprise, who market themselves as poor, white, working class southerners in their popular television show, Hollywood movies, books, stand-up tours, and comedy records (Jarosz & Lawson, 2002).

Such othering commonly takes the form of the pejorative labels 'hillbilly,' 'redneck,' and 'white trash,' which originated as both raced and classed slurs.

During the great depression, for example, condescending Midwestern and Northeastern whites labeled migrating rural, poor, southern whites as hillbillies and rednecks (Harkins, 2003; Hartigan, 2000; Jazorz & Lawson, 2002). During this same time period, West coast whites labeled migrating Midwestern whites trying to escape the dust bowl as 'okies' (Dunbar, 1997, Dunbar-Ortiz, 1994). Before the Civil War, southern elites used the phrase "poor white trash" to demarcate lower class whites as inferior yet non-black (Wray, 2006). In contemporary discourse, "poor" has been dropped, but white trash remains both raced and classed. The notion of white trash assumes that whites should not be poor and culturally inferior and implies racial minorities are "naturally" impoverished and lacking in social capital (Hartigan, 1997; Newtiz & Wray, 1997, Moss, 2003; Wilson, 2002). While these labels developed in different contexts and are sometimes used in different ways (e.g., redneck may be used to describe middle-class racists and hillbilly may be reserved for those from Appalachia), they have evolved into virtually synonymous labels demarcating a problematic whiteness polluted by poverty and rural culture (Hartigan, 2003).

Such stereotypes of poor white southerners deflect critical analyses of contemporary social problems that are rooted in class inequality. These representations, for example, encourage people to view poor whites' poverty as deriving from their moral inferiority and personal irresponsibility, rather than as a consequence of deindustrialization and global outsourcing (Jarosz & Lawson, 2002). Representing poor southern whites as racist enables middle-class and elite whites (who benefit most from racism) to feel good about their own "colorblindness" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Similarly, portraying poor southern white men as philandering wife-beaters enable middle-class and upper-class men to more easily avoid taking responsibility for patriarchy (Halnon, 2003) and the patriarchal dividend they receive (Connell, 1987). Mainstream news also draws on such stereotypes to frame and rationalize horrific acts of whites' violence, such as the Rodney King beating (Dunbar-Ortiz ,1994), the bombings of the Oklahoma Federal Building and the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, and even torture at Abu Ghraib prison (Mason, 2005). Similar to the "controlling images" of Black women (Collins, 1986), cultural notions of white trash limits not only poor whites' ability to define themselves, but it also symbolically legitimates inequalities and social problems.

Southern rock musicians are critical of mainstream culture's turning of poor, white southerners into spectacles to be mocked and exploited for profit. Echoing the words of other interviewees, for example, one southern rocker proclaimed, "The southern white man is the only person that you can lampoon in the mainstream media and still be politically correct in doing so." As our study shows, contemporary southern rockers proudly embrace southern white trash manhood. At the same time, however, they unintentionally reproduce many of the stereotypes of poor whites when selling their white trash identity to cultural consumers. Overall, we bring a focus on capitalism into our analysis by uncovering how class is central to southern rockers' identity work, situating them as marginalized workers in a culture industry, and showing how they unintentionally legitimate capitalism (as well as gender and racial inequality).

METHODS

Our data derive from interviews with southern rock musicians, transcribed lyrics, downloaded internet sites, and fieldwork at concerts. We started by identifying a few central artists in this music scene, including Hank III, the grandson of legendary country singer Hank Williams, Sr. We then uncovered the network of southern rock bands by examining what bands have toured together and shared members. In total, we identified 25 key bands as part of the southern rock revival.

After identifying revival bands, we monitored their websites for new postings and tour dates. When a tour brought the band within close proximity, we requested an interview via phone and/or email. Upon confirmation of an interview, we downloaded the musicians' Internet sites, collected their music and transcribed their lyrics, and conducted preliminary analyses of this data. Doing this before interviews, when possible, helped us develop questions to ask these artists. Overall, we conducted a content analysis on the lyrics to 683 southern rock songs and all 25 bands' websites and MySpace pages.

In addition, we conducted 30 tape-recorded interviews with southern rock musicians. We developed an adaptable sequence of discussion topics to guide interviewees to talk about their lives as musicians, their music and its message, and a variety of stereotypes about southern white men. We said that while we would indicate what bands were part of this research, we would not attribute specific quotes to any individuals, allowing them to be more frank. Since we conducted interviews either before or immediately following their performances, we also used concerts as opportunities for participant observation—documenting 20 of these events in 9 different U.S. cities with audio and video recordings.

We analyzed our data inductively. Initially we noticed that many interviewees talked and sang about being southern, so we asked, "What does being southern mean to southern rockers?" It then became apparent that the musicians often used the term "southernness" as a proxy for being a poor, rural, white man who may, or may not in fact be from the South. We then changed our focus accordingly, and examined how southern rockers constructed themselves as poor, rural white men. We found three key methods of such identity work: (1) embracing symbols of poor southern whites, (2) glorifying rural poverty (3) and celebrating drinking and violence. Only later did we situate our study in the literature on white trash and intersectionality and explore our analyses' implications for understanding the reproduction of class inequality.

FINDINGS

Embracing the Symbols

Rather than deflect or defend themselves from the stigma and stereotypes directed at poor, rural whites, southern rockers celebrate being white trash, rednecks, and hillbillies. Musicians in the southern rock revival sometimes use or allude to such labels in their band names, such as the White Trash Messiahs, The Wayward Drifters, Junkrod Joe, and Those Poor Bastards. Others explicitly

incorporate southernness into their band names, though in ways that distance them from "respectful" mainstream southern bands: Alabama Thunderpussy, Nashville Pussy, and Dixie Witch. Using such labels primes audiences to interpret their performances and recordings as indicative of white trash.

Southern rock musicians frequently embrace white trash stereotypes in their lyrics and song titles. Examples include Assjack's "White Trash," Willie Heath Neal's "Backwoods, Country White Trash," Nashville Pussy's "Lazy White Boy." and ANTiSEEN's "Talk Show Trash." Many of these southern rockers define white trash as a proud culture and lifestyle that outsiders could not and should not try to understand. For example, Assjack's lyrics to the song "White Trash Part II" include: ". . . it's a hillbilly redneck kinda thing." In "Not Everybody Likes Us," Hank III sings about how outsiders dislike southerners for their "certain way of living," and their "certain kind of style." Many Southern rockers also lyrically claim they do not want to leave their roots and become mainstream or middle class. For example, The Laney Strickland band sings about needing "re-hillbilly-tation" and "redneck therapy" after spending too much time in "the big city." In these songs and others, Southern rockers defy their cultural derogation and proudly define themselves as white trash, hillbillies, and rednecks.

Southern rockers also reference white trashiness when presenting themselves on their internet webpages or in interviews. On their MySpace webpage, for example, The Laney Strickland Band begins almost every post with the greeting: "O.K. Rednecks." Unknown Hinson describes himself on his webpage as "a sociopathic, gun-totin', ex-con redneck." On their MySpace page, Artimus Pyledriver declares that they "don't just write music about the South, they live it." To "live it" implies that they are *authentically* southern white trash as opposed to the 'imposters' of the mainstream culture industry. Fans' posts on band websites further reinforce the stereotype of white trash. For example, one fan posted an image adapted from the cartoon series The Smurfs called "blue trash," which depicts Papa Smurf with beer in hand, next to a pregnant Smurfette holding a child in front of a trailer with a mushroom for a roof.

During interviews, southern rockers often defined themselves as the cultural ambassadors of poor, rural, whites. They proudly painted themselves, their music, and their fans as authentically trashy. When asked about the inspiration for his lyrics, one interviewee said, "I think my best lyrics come from white trash living: hot-rod cars, drinking, debauchery." Many similarly invoked labels to describe their backgrounds. One interviewee said he "grew up pretty poor," another said he was from "a rednecky, white trash suburb." Another man, who said he "grew up on a farm" and could "tell you all there is to know about growing tobacco," described his band's singer as "raised up . . . real white trash, grew up in a trailer park."

In addition to using the terms hillbilly, redneck, and white trash to demark southern whiteness, southern rock musicians also do so by displaying the confederate or rebel flag. The rebel flag is ubiquitous in this musical subculture. Stickers of the flag are on many band members' instruments, cases, amplifiers, and vehicles. Some musicians, including some of the most respected in the scene like Hank III and Jeff Clayton of ANTiSEEN, have prominent flag tattoos. Some

bands incorporate the confederate flag into their band logos, websites, and album art. Rebel flags can be found hanging as a backdrop during many live performances, as well as in backstage arenas such as dressing rooms and touring vehicles.

What kind of whiteness does displaying the flag signify? As mentioned earlier, there is a cultural trend of stereotyping rural, poor southern whites in the mainstream media. A common prop in such stereotyping is the confederate flag. "Larry the Cable Guy," one of the most popular of the Blue Collar comedians, for example, often wears a baseball cap displaying a rebel flag and much of his "Git-R-Done" catchphrase merchandise includes the flag (See LarrysFleaMarket.com). However, whereas popular culture often uses representations of poor southerners with the confederate flag (including Larry the Cable Guy) to poke fun at and demean them, southern rockers seem to have something else in mind. These musicians understand that for many middle-class and elite whites, the confederate flag symbolizes the backwardness, racism, and the lack of education of white trash (see Reed, 2002), and they use this symbol to embrace white trashiness. In other words, the flag enables southern rockers' to mark a boundary between them and white, upper-class outsiders. Musicians' display of the flag and can be seen, at least in part, as a kind of class resistance, as well as revaluing stereotypes of southerners (see also Cooper & Knotts, 2006).

Does the flying of the flag, however, reflect an underlying racism in the southern rock subculture? One way to address this is to look for other evidence of racism among southern rockers. Our examination of the 683 song lyrics reveals only four instances in which non-whites are mentioned. In one song, Hank III sings in passing of getting drugs from a "Latino." The only other band to sing of nonwhites is the ANTiSEEN. In one song, the band mentions getting their "rebel yell van" fixed by a black mechanic. In another song they sing of daytime talk show hosts exploitation of poor whites, black women, gang members, and prostitutes for ratings. And in their version of the song 'Don't Worry,' originally written by the Black R&B artist Curtis Mayfield, the ANTiSEEN spew ethnic and racial slurs of both white and nonwhite groups in order to make the larger point about how "we" are all going to the "same hell" for our inability to get along. Although southern rockers' prolific use of the confederate flag may lead outsiders to assume they often sing of white power and racial hatred, this is not the case.

In interviews, the musicians did not express a belief that whites were superior or more deserving than other ethnic and racial groups. They claimed their use of the confederate flag reflects pride in their southern heritage, not white supremacy, A handful of interviewees even suggested that it was white folk from the North, not the South, who are the real bigots. For example, one musician said, "They're the ones who live in their precious New England gated communities talking about the Negro problem as if it were the southerners' fault, but they're the last ones that rub elbows with them." He then explained that although it "causes problems sometimes," he and his band "proudly" display a confederate flag license plate on their van." Like other southern rockers, he did not see the contradiction in blaming northerners for perpetuating a kind of racial apartheid while flaunting American apartheid's most recognizable symbol.

Southern rockers are well aware that the confederate flag symbolizes

racial bigotry, and yet choose to the display it nonetheless. The heritage it allegedly celebrates is the confederate south—a culture that was not only white controlled, but also included whites' forceful domination and subjugation of African Americans (Forman, 1991). The Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups often proudly display the same flag at their meetings, demonstrations, and in their propaganda. Southern rockers do not exist in a cultural vacuum; they understand that African Americans and others often view the confederate flag as a racist symbol and are upset when it is publicly displayed. They apparently assume, however, that their own interpretations of the flag and their own feelings of pride as southern white men are more important than the views and feelings of African Americans. Thus southern rockers' use of the flag not only signifies white trash, it also, at minimum, displays their white privilege (McIntosh, 1989). In other words, although they distanced themselves from racism in interviews, their inability to seriously address African Americans' views and feelings reflects their dominant position in a social system characterized by white supremacy.

Southern rockers embrace the symbols of white trash. They use the labels redneck, hillbilly, white trash, to market themselves as cultural products. They similarly display the confederate flag on their stages, in their dressing rooms, on their merchandise, and their bodies. While southern rockers are not the only entrepreneurs in the culture industry to use these symbols of southern white trash, unlike most others they celebrate rather than mock it.

Glorifying Rural Poverty

When presenting themselves as southern white trash men, revival artists emphasize positive aspects of living in rural poverty rather than the mainstream media's emphasis on "backwardness." One such identity work strategy involves rejecting middle-class, materialistic values. For example, in the song "Smoke and Wine," Hank III sings, "I ain't got no money, but I am doing fine." Bob Wayne reevaluates the popular expression about neighborly competition in "Moving Out," claiming "there's more to life than money, and keeping up with the Jones' . . . the money is gonna come and go, them Jones', they gonna leave." In "I Cleaned Out a Room in My Trailer for You," Unknown Hinson emphasizes positive aspects of living in poverty in a rural setting, including having a "creek out back for bathing and cleaning" and being so secluded that "we can run around naked without a fear." These excerpts are typical of revival artists' devaluing of money and material goods.

Southern rockers also downplay, reject, or ridicule a key means of upward economic mobility: education. All the interviewees who mentioned their educational history said that they stopped school as soon as possible—even, in one case, after the eighth grade—or they wished they had stopped sooner. For example, one described his degree in religious studies as "worthless" and another claimed his bachelor's degree in art only qualifies him to "paint houses." In an interview archived at Talkshoe.com, Unknown Hinson equated college education with class snobbery and a rejection of southern roots. He berated the interviewer: "Why in the hell are you talking like a Yankee if you [are] from West Virginia? . . . You went to some Yankee college and they taught you how to talk Yankee,

right? Give up your southern ways . . . They made you ashamed of being from the south?" Bob Wayne sings, "You won't catch me in no college classroom, rather live off of the land." At the beginning of one concert, Wayne Hancock announced his bass player was leaving the group for college and teased him throughout the show for "bettering himself." This identity work strategy is similar to that done by capable, yet underachieving Black students interviewed by Fordham and Ogbu (1986; 2004). In order to be accepted by their oppositional, cultural group, many Black students rejected education because their peers ridiculed school success as "acting white." In portraying schooling as an unnecessary and harmful betrayal of one's southern, working-class roots, southern rockers implicitly derided education as "middle-class."

Perhaps the key way that southern rockers glorified rural poverty involved emphasizing skills symbolic of frontier manhood: hunting, fishing, and farming (see Campbell & Bell, 2000). For example, Scott H. Biram sings about "turning up some ground" with a "mule driven plow" Joe Buck is pictured in a corn field on his MySpace page. The Legendary Shack Shakers frequently use hunting imagery in their lyrics, including "blood on the bluegrass," "hallowed hunting ground," and "buck-shot kerosene." Hank III's sings about his "loaded shot gun," while Junkrod Joe refers to firearms as "Wal*Mart Specials," accentuating his trashiness. Hank III also sings of "sitting in the bayou country, just me and my fishing line," while Artimus Pyledriver sings of "night fishing under the southern sky."

Revival artists do not portray themselves as "backwards," but, rather, reclaim southern white trash as overcoming the challenges and surviving rural poverty with limited resources. For instance, when asked about being southern, one interviewee replies:

> I've got southern roots. I've got ridiculous southern roots and I know southern culture. I know how to survive. I know how to start a fire with two twigs, and I know how to pull crops, and I know how to hunt and gut animals and all that shit. Let's take a poll. How many of these pop country fuckers can skin a rabbit and pull tobacco and cotton without cutting their fingers up? I definitely have a sense of southern pride, but it's more so a spiritual thing and a cultural thing. To me, it's about living off the land and keeping that kinship with nature and not losing your place in the world.

Similar to how others lyrically emphasize "living off the land"—including Bob Wayne, Hank III, and the Laney Strickland Band—this interviewee emphasizes rural masculine skills to revalue poor southern manhood. He also critiques mainstream artists who claim a façade of being from the south or rural environments, positioning himself as more authentic.

Overall, southern rockers glorify rural poverty by emphasizing survival skills that are culturally defined as masculine, implying they are more manly than college-educated city dwellers, and more authentic than pop country singers who may also appropriate symbols of rural manhood (Peterson, 1999). Whereas popular culture often mocks poor, rural, whites as backwards yahoos, the artists of the southern rock revival frame hunting, fishing, and growing one's own food

as essential skills and joyful endeavors that men—real men—should enjoy.

Celebrating Drunken Violence

The mainstream media often stereotypes poor, rural, southern men as being violent drunks. Southern rockers reinforce this perception by doing identity work that glorifies drinking and aggression as quintessential elements of white trash manhood. Southern rock concerts are drinking events for musicians and audiences alike, and these men honor beverages that authenticate their underclass, masculine and rural statuses. Beer is a masculine beverage (Lemle & Mishkind, 1989), and southern rockers further connect this beverage to class by drinking only cheap brands, particularly Pabst Blue Ribbon or PBR. The brand's logo often adorns tee-shirts worn by musicians and audience members, and bars often offer specials on PBR during southern rock concerts. Evoking cheers during a live show, Hank III dedicated a song to PBR drinkers by stating, "PBR drinkers in the house, this one goes out to you, god damn it!" Willie Heath Neal sings about PBR in 'Hillbilly Heaven,' which is "someplace in Tennessee where they like tattoos, drink Pabst Blue Ribbon and wear cowboy boots."

Revival artists also construct southern white trashiness by paying tribute to moonshine or "white lightning." Moonshine is considered masculine because of its unpleasant taste and potency (Lemle & Mishkind, 1989). In addition, moonshine has a historic connection to Appalachia and the rural south. It is an illegal whiskey made from corn in homemade stills, usually located in the deep woods as to avoid discovery from authorities (Durand, 1956). In their song 'Up the Creek,' for example, Artimus Pyledriver proclaims white lightning as the "drink of the southern man," while their website reads "Lynyrd Skynyrd, moonshine and hot rods. Welcome to the South." Hank III differentiates types of moonshine according to the southern and Appalachian regions from which they originate. On his album 'Lovesick, Broke & Driftin' he sings of taking shots of "Georgia moonshine straight from the jug," and before playing this song at a concert in upstate New York, he asked the crowd about their own local "shine." In the song 'Crazed Country Rebel' Williams attributes his being "fucked up on the floor" to "Boone County moonshine" referring to the County in West Virginia named after America's frontier hero. In addition to reflecting the self-sufficiency and resourcefulness of poor whites, there is also a class element symbolized by moonshine, given that it is homemade and thus relatively inexpensive.

Contemporary southern rock songs also frequently associate drinking with violence, which is another activity culturally defined as manly (Connell, 1987). In 'Smoke and Wine' Hank III describes himself as "a little bit crazy, on the rowdy side cause I like to drink my whiskey and I like to get high" and, in 'Thrown out of the Bar', he sings, "I've been beat up bad, been kicked around, been thrown out of every damn bar in this here town." Before playing this tune in concert he made a dedication: "This goes out to some of our rowdy, mother fucking friends out there that sometimes get thrown out of the goddamn club before the night is over with." Scott H. Biram posted a MySpace bulletin reading "Every SHB show from now on will apparently involve a brawl of some kind. I think it's great!! Just don't break my shit or throw beer on me." J.B. Beverly and the Wayward Drifters sing "I'm drinking whiskey, and I'm gonna tear up this town." In 'Gonna Be Some Trouble Tonight,' Wayne 'The Train' Hancock sings:

> Well I'm gonna get loaded out on the town
> Lookout lord I'm still hellbound
> I ain't looking for love, I'm looking for a fight
> I'm feeling mighty groggy, and there's gonna be some trouble tonight

Junkrod Joe connects drinking and fighting in his song 'Suicyco Baby,' proclaiming himself "sometimes I'm drunk and I gotta fight, just the kinda guy I am." One song, Assjack's 'White Trash Part I,' connects both drinking and violence to being a white, poor, rural man by singing of "beer and blood in my baby bottle," relatives who "lost eyes in fights," and his father's attempts to make him a man:

> My daddy, he started beating me around the tender age of five
> He said "You gotta be tough, if you're ever gonna get out of this world alive"
> Stand up, be a good man
> Do as I say boy, put this beer in your hand

In this song, drinking and violence are central themes in the singer's transition from childhood to manhood in the context of rural, white poverty.

While southern rockers' lyrics often associate drinking and violence, the violence described is generally directed against other men, not women. In all of the lyrics analyzed, there were only four mentions of violence against women. In a specially released Christmas song that seems more in line with mainstream media's mocking of poor, white men, Unknown Hinson physically threatens his wife for refusing to bring him a beer. The other three lyrical examples about domestic violence come from the ANTiSEEN, a group who is on the extreme end of vulgarity in their lyrics and stage antics (their lead singer often wounds his forehead with a barbwire covered bat so that blood streams down his face while performing). In 'I Should Have Killed You when I Had the Chance,' the lead singer describes grabbing a woman "by the throat" and wanting to "peel off all your skin." In 'Wife Beater', he "chopped her up and mailed the pieces." Though in 'White Trash Bitch,' the woman heroine murders her batterer. Overall, while stereotypes of white trash manhood include those of wife beater, southern rockers generally ignore the issue. And the group who addresses domestic violence most often, the ANTiSEEN, sometimes supports men's violence against women and sometimes honors women who kill violent men.

While southern rockers rarely sing about violence against women, they regularly portray women in stereotypical ways, which arguably supports a patriarchal culture that gives birth to such aggression. Many southern rockers perceive wives and girlfriends as threats to their independence and often write songs about having or trying to have sexual encounters with women they are likely to never see or hear from again. According to these songs, the most desirable sexual partners for "one night stands" are women who meet cultural beauty standards, and those who 'belong' to other men. For example, Hank Williams III sings of a "one night stand" with the "sheriff's wife" and the Unknown Hinson sings of attempting to seduce a married woman in the song, "I Ain't Afraid or your Husband." The message in such songs is clear: women are valued so long as they "put out" in bed and stay out of men's everyday lives.

When long term partners are the topic their songs, southern rockers adhere closely to the traditional patriarchal attitudes of southern culture which perceives women primarily as property whose purpose is to provide domestic labor (Martin et al., 1991). In "One for the Ladies," Bob Wayne sings: "I'll be damned if I'll come to hear your bitching, after I've been out here working all day long. Now just shut your mouth and get back in the kitchen." Artimus Pyledriver, who claim on their website to sing odes to fast cars and women, sing in "Dirt Road White Girl" that it is acceptable for a man to love a woman, as long as she is subservient, or "down with her man." By defining "good" women as subservient, southern rockers support a set of masculinist attitudes that prime men to batter women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Southern rockers construct, white trash manhood both through the beverages they drink and the singing of fighting other men. While other cultural representations of poor southern white men trash depict them as drunken and violent, southern rockers' celebrate it in song. And while most do not overtly celebrate violence against women, they often lyrically reproduce stereotypes that promote and justify patriarchal violence.

DISCUSSION

While popular culture often represents poor rural southern white men in derogatory ways, musicians in the southern rock revival proudly promoted themselves as southern white trash men. Such identity work was infused with class symbolism, while also intertwined with meanings of race, gender, and region. By adopting white trash and synonymous labels and brandishing the confederate flag, southern rockers proudly affiliated themselves with symbols often used throughout the mainstream media to mock and degrade poor southern whites. In addition, they drew on hegemonic masculinity to revalue being poor and rural as well as to honor being aggressive drunks.

While our analysis suggests southern rock musicians proudly adopt and revalue a version of white trash that is in some ways inconsistent with mainstream representations, audiences can nonetheless interpret their identity work as affirming stereotypes of poor southern white men as unambitious, racist, violent drunks. As a result, their identity work may aid the perpetuation of class, gender, and racial inequalities. For example, just as the controlling image of the "welfare queen" (Collins, 2000) has been used by politicians to undermine the war on poverty (Hancock, 2003; Quadagno, 1996), stereotypes of poor, rural whites can be used to gut social programs designed to help the rural poor and promote international trade agreements that harm small farmers and working class people.

Southern rock musicians' construction and dissemination of white trash manhood also supports a larger culture that helps those who benefit most from our economic system to feel good about their privilege. As others have pointed out, middle class folks as well as elites use white trash and related stereotypes to frame poor whites as morally inferior and therefore personally responsible for their own poverty (Jarosz & Lawson, 2002). This discourse can prevent those who benefit most from capitalism from seeing their economic success as contingent on others' suffering. And in doing so, white trash, as a cultural construction, helps inoculate middle and upper-class people from the guilt and shame that may arise if they

acknowledged the pain their privilege is based on.

Southern rockers' construction of white trash also contributes to a culture of division that fundamentally undermines solidarity among those most exploited by capitalism. Regardless of their intentions, by using a flag that other groups fly to symbolize white supremacy and many others define as racist, southern rockers contribute to the racial divisions that hinder cross-racial solidarity among the poor and working class. Similarly, by reproducing sexist stereotypes, they also contribute to gender divisions that hinder class solidarity and progressive social change, while simultaneously reinforcing the foundation upon which gender stratification and male privilege are built (Connell, 1987). In other words, while signifying and celebrating southern white trash manhood might feel empowering to those who do it, it nonetheless helps reproduce interlocking systems of oppression.

The southern rock revival presents a model of appropriate rebellion that exacerbates personal problems and economic subordination. More specifically, instead of raising class consciousness about the social policies and processes that reproduce poor white people's subordination or advocating collective action or unionization, southern rock musicians largely promote a culture of self-destruction through substance abuse and violence. Just as mainstream rap music often presents young African Americans with ideals that, if followed, may contribute to their subordination (Collins, 2006), southern rock's construction of poor whites may guide some to choose a path that reinforces marginalization.

In this paper we have analyzed, contextualized, and drawn out some sociological implications of the southern rock revival's construction of white trash. We have shown that symbolizing class was key to their construction of a racialized and gendered identity. As Patricia Hill Collins (1998:931) points out, "it is a mistake to collapse all white men into one homogeneous category conveniently labeled 'oppressors'." As our analysis also suggests, how poor white men represent themselves and are defined in our culture may also help reproduce class inequality while bolstering their white and male privilege.

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