

From Street Parties to Hardbass: Dance and Protest in Czech Post-socialist Urban Space

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Abstract

In this article, I trace the trajectory of protest dancing in post-socialist urban spaces, beginning with the diverse strategies of the anti-globalization movement in the late 1990s and extending to the practice's appropriation by far-right groups, who sought to update their image, in the early 2010s. More generally, I attempt to illuminate the genealogy of dance as a form of protest in this post-socialist context. I first provide historical context for the subcultural transfer of electronic dance music (EDM) and formation of protest street parties in the Czech post-socialist urban spaces, before highlighting some of the controversies surrounding this development. Finally, I focus on the far-right's appropriation of protest dance in the early 2010s through the hardbass genre.

KEYWORDS: EDM, Czech, anarchism, far-right, sound systems, social media

Introduction

Cultural historian James Nott (2020: 276) notes social dance's reliance on the existence of communal or public spaces. Among the prerequisite processes for social dance's development, he includes the abandonment of large-scale sites as a consequence of de-industrialization. These sites were taken over by ravers not only in the United Kingdom, a significant contributor to global rave culture, but also in the so-called second world where the timing of rave's expansion corresponded with the dismantling of state socialism. While I will argue that presenting rave as a form of protest dance may be overly simplistic, this interpretation is nevertheless a useful

starting point for a historical account. The politicization and de-politicization of rave culture are critical to the story of protest dance's development in post-socialist spaces. This relates particularly to the role of the anarchism and since early 2010s also of different far-right movements.

Scope, sources and methods

In what follows, my aim is to present an initial interpretation of a socially engaged set of dances that may take the same or similar forms but have different meanings. In doing so, I propose to focus particularly on a spatial analysis of dancing in public space. This may be understood as an exceptionally powerful way to reclaim space in the context of post-socialist space, which has been largely privatized since 1989. My second line of inquiry relates to activity by the far-right that appears to borrow from the protest style of their anarchist counterparts, particularly in the context of the heightened debates about globalization in the period of the multiple crises after 2008. For these purposes, I rely on a range of sources that include activist media such as anarchist magazines and related print and online media, social media posts that describe or feature protest dancing, and academic research and media and security reports. With regards to the first type of sources, I have retrieved several key titles, in some cases amounting to more than one volume, from the file-sharing website *Ulož.to*. My methodology consists of a multimethod historical analysis in order to deal with data from different periods and diverse activist circles.

This study begins by considering protest dancing in relation to different understandings of protest spatiality. I introduce several key concepts concerning subcultures, protest music and dance. I then provide a historical context for the subcultural transfer of electronic dance music (EDM) and formation of protest street parties in the Czech post-socialist urban spaces, highlighting some of the controversies surrounding this development. Finally, I focus on the far-right's appropriation of protest dance in the early 2010s through the hardbass genre.

Spaces and positions of protest dance

Social spatiality is the focus of a long theoretical tradition, some of which has particular relevance for protest dance. First, as social geographer Henri Lefebvre (1974) argues, all space is produced socially. Whether in its free market or state-controlled version, capitalism seeks to suppress immediate lived social experience in favor of abstract and planned spaces. The protest dances examined in this article may be attempts to oppose this pressure by enabling dancers to exercise their "right to the city" (Lefebvre 1996: 57). Second, social spatiality reflects intersecting social relations, with gender playing a particularly important role (Massey 1994). In a variety of EDM genres and styles, gender is undoubtedly a crucial category, with different roles and expectations reserved for female and male dancers respectively. Issues of subcultural femininity and masculinity remain the subject of important debates (Leblanc 1999, Hollingworth 2015). They are, however, beyond the immediate scope of this article. Global similarities to post-socialist protest dances could also be found in the *toy-toy* dance in Zimbabwe and South Africa, which has been coded as masculine, is often seen as militaristic, and occupies space that

is forbidden to black subjects. Moreover, it could be associated just as easily with the nationalist right as with the anti-apartheid left (Anderson and McGregor 2020).

In this context, protest dancing is best described as a “mode of spatial disobedience” (Blanco 2013). Outside the urban spaces that are my focus, sites where dance was combined with politics were often created in the Czech countryside. These sites were either rented or provided for free by like-minded owners. Alternately, in urban settings during the Communist dictatorships, state-backed city planners established a large number of urban spaces for public use. During the “era of decay” (Kolářová 2014) of the *perestroika* years between 1986 and the changes of 1989/1990, some of these spaces were gradually taken over by the young members of subcultural scenes. Some of these spaces and places of the early Russian rave scene have been examined by cultural and linguistic anthropologist Alexei Yurchak (1999). By the half of the 1990s, they were increasingly becoming the domain of professional cultural entrepreneurs (Kontra and Kopáč 2021). Similarly, large industrial sites and abandoned infrastructures from the heyday of state socialism, the “no-man’s land” under bridges, deserted streets and neighborhoods and disused public transport vehicles, were the sites of early post-socialist rave parties (Slačálek 2011).

In its initial phase however, I propose to frame the protest dance particularly in relation to the then relatively strong anarchist movement. Sociologist Dana M. Williams (2018) situates the peak of contemporary anarchist activities in the 1990s as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall and controversies around Marxism’s credibility as an alternative to capitalism. This analysis resonates for the relatively large generation of young Czechs who grew up in the 1990s. While radically opposed anarchist models of social anarchism (Murray Bookchin) and temporary autonomous zones (TAZ) (Hakim Bey) have generated much debate, I would suggest that in the context of protest dancing, the rubric of TAZ is especially illuminating. Music is also one of the elements that binds these zones with different libertarian, environmentalist or socialist roots together (Blanco 2013).

Political scientist Catherine Eschle (2004: 65) has characterized the anti-globalization movement as extra-institutional, noting that direct action was the key mode of its struggle while the diversity of the movement was perceived as a strength. According to Eschle, its actions reflected:

[an] intersectional view that recognises the multiplicity of forms of global power and need for context-specific resistances. The intersectional view encourages a complex understanding of the relationship of the movement to globalisation: as opposed to some dimensions, bound up with others and as embodying alternative globalised relationships of solidarity and democracy. This has led many activists and commentators to criticise the ‘anti-globalisation’ label and to argue for a new name based on what the movement is for.

(Eschle 2004:76).

In the same vein, Czech sociologist Radim Marada (2003) has applied the term “alter-globalization” to suggest a movement in search of another version of globalization. He associates this movement with the credo “another world is possible”, drawing an analogy with the late 19th-century romantic movement. The

basis for this comparison lies in representations of young people's public protests and protest culture in the two periods.

Roots of protest music and dance

Studying protest culture is aligned here with the current renaissance in subcultural studies (Gildart et al. 2020), which is influenced by the seminal work of Dick Hebdidge (1979) but attentive to post-subcultural studies critiques (Bennett 2011). I focus particularly on the application of this body of subcultural theory to activism (McKay 1996). In recent times furthermore, two major volumes of popular music studies have explored the topic of protest music. The first, an essay collection compiled by ethnomusicologist Aileen Dillane and her co-editors (2018) offers a comprehensive multi-thematic view of protest music around the world. The second by historian Jeff Hayton (2020) traces protest music throughout the 20th century, focusing especially on the commodification of these songs and their incorporation into mainstream culture. The ongoing "Rebel Yell or Rebel Sell?" debate around popular music does not, however, wholly apply to protest dancing. In contrast, these EDM backed protest dances provided the means by which different collectives pursued social change.

A historical analysis of protest dance should take several trends into account. Nott (2020: 276) identifies a key shift from couple-centered to solo and communal dancing. At the same time, individuals were said to either "find themselves" or "lose themselves" in dance. The second strategy can be found in an earlier study on ecstatic dance practices from extreme metal and hardcore punk to EDM (Daniel 2019b). The study revealed Dionysiac rituals that were transgressive, although mainly confined to those who had already been initiated. This kind of solo and communal dancing has also been supported by the rise of club culture and a new breed of synthetic drugs (Malbon 1999). Applying sociologist Michel Maffesoli's (1988) concept of "neo-tribes" to rave scenes, George McKay (1998: 9) describes acid house as a predecessor of rave since these are both "avoidance lifestyles". While the strategy of "conscious evasion of majority culture/the system/Babylon" (McKay 1998: 9) may appear apolitical and escapist (Wall 2002: 37), I would argue that it must be contextualized among the countercultural strategies of disengagement and refusal that have defined various scenes globally since at least the 1960s. Sergei Prozorov (2009), for example, offers a careful appraisal of disengagement in late Soviet counterculture. Autonomists in Italy (Wright 2002) and Germany (Geronimo 1990) also adopted "strategies of refusal" (Tronti 1966: 234-252) around participation in factory work and the nuclear family. Moreover, the rejection of mainstream culture is integral to the self-valorization of punk (Keir 2006).

Punk scenes in Poland, rich and vital since the half of the 1980s, became to a certain extent a mediator between global punk and punk in Czechoslovakia. Raymond Patton (2018) has written about the global connections of punk in Poland linking it with the revolt against 1980s' mainstream politics in both the West and East. The Czechoslovak socialist regime, which local punks protested against, was also built on conservatism and the privatization of public life and spaces, to a large extent similar to capitalist regimes in the West. The cultural occupation of public

space in Czechoslovakia in the 1980s, however, was far from limited to punk opposition to the state socialist regime and strategies of avoidance. On the one hand, the socialist state still organized mass athletic events, such as the *Spartakiáda*, which was last held in 1985 (Roubal 2016). Besides, country music festivals such as *Porta* were also important ways to reclaim public spaces in cultural terms (Houda 2019). The mass demonstrations of the autumn and winter of 1989 also brought new stimuli for the use of public space, with a particular attention to its aspects of carnival and performance (Kenney 2002, Krapfl 2013). In the 1990s, however, there was a strong trend towards the further privatization of public space in the urban development of many post-socialist cities (Ther 2014), with Prague situated at the front of the peloton. Squats and other non-conformist social and cultural centers emerged in the early 1990s and disappeared the decade after under the triple pressure of immediate economic interests, local politics and police repression. Urban public space was reduced to squares and parks. Although many post-socialist cultural practices in public space may seem turned unilaterally to a lifestyle both apolitical and escapist, the dances presented in this article carry clear messages of political protest.

Parties on fields and in the streets

In the post-socialist context, protest dance actions relate to a do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos that grew out of post-1960s social movements and turned their attention to lifestyle and counterculture. Art historian Julia Ramírez Blanco (2013) traces the origins of this dancing to a tradition of free festivals that began with large-scale countercultural celebrations in England in the 1970s. A similar genealogy may be discerned in the Czech DIY “underground” festivals of the 1970s that became increasingly politicized following their suppression by Communist authorities (Skořepová 2019). British “new age nomads” were met with a similarly violent state reprisal and the brutal experience of the mid-1980s (Tash 2005). Repression of British raves followed in the early 1990s, as the territorial expansion of the “Second Summer of Love” of 1988-1989 from dilapidated urban spaces to countryside open air raves, was suppressed (McKay 1998).

Acid and rave did not appear in the Czech lands until the first half of the 1990s when the first British sound systems visited the post-socialist country that was known for its burgeoning cultural scene, its extraordinarily liberal atmosphere and, for several years after 1989/1990, its rather lenient police (Slačálek 2011). Rave did not take off among “alternative” young Czechs, however, until an almost week-long *teknival*, a large free party in Hostomice, central Bohemia in the summer of 1994 (Daniel 2016). While the ensuing British anti-roads movement including activist groups like Earth First! and Reclaim the Streets (RTS) did not reach the Czech space immediately, communication between subcultures across national borders was swift given the relatively strong and internationally well-connected Czech anarchist movement, which significantly influenced some aspects of Czech youth culture. In addition, Czech anarchists had links with the emerging local rave scene and operated within the broader international protest movement arena (Slačálek 2011).

In the second half of the 1990s, a new trend of “street parties”, DIY events that combined resistance and rebellion with carnival began first in the United

Kingdom and then elsewhere. Curran (2007) argues that these events were inspired by Situationist theory and practices, an influence made clear from their focus on spectacle and happenings and their youth-centered orientation. Through a playful *détournement* of public spaces reserved for cars, the streets were turned into a dancefloor. In his introduction to a piece by John Jordan, editor George McKay provides a clear definition of street parties, which, he notes, occur:

when an urban road (or even a motorway) is suddenly blocked off and thousands of revellers turn up in full party mode to make their pleasure-filled political point. Social criticism is combined with cultural creativity in what's both a utopian gesture and a practical display of resistance.

(McKay 1998: 27)

According to the article published in the Czech criminology and security studies journal *Defence & Security (Ochrana & Bezpečnost)*, the first event of this kind in Prague was in May 1997 (Nový 2017). A protest against the freeing of a police officer who had been responsible for a violent and still not convincingly explained police raid on local punk club *Propast* a year earlier (Daniel 2016) was accompanied by music from sound systems and the dancing of some 200 people in front of the Ministry of Interior. However, the scale of the action increased exponentially when the Global Street Party (GSP) was held in Prague one year later. Organized by a group called People's Global Action, this event on 16 May 1998 was synchronized in sixty countries around the world. Using the slogan "Our Resistance is as Transnational as Capital", its aim was to draw attention to the G7+1 summit in Birmingham and the related second conference of ministers of the newly created World Trade Organization in Geneva (Blanco 2013). Prague's GSP brought together members of different anti-authoritarian and radical environmentalist groups as well as the Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation.

This unauthorized march through the city and associated acts of vandalism drew a violent response from police. Similar though considerably less violent street parties followed in Prague and also in Brno where the still relatively tiny Czech rave scene gathered in May 1999 to protest the planned construction of the R43 freeway (Plzáková 2010: 22). The most significant event, however, from a protest dance perspective came in September 2000 when Prague was the site of both the International Monetary Fund summit and large opposing protests (Mareček 2001). Protest dancing was a vital part of this anti-globalization action; a bloc of dancers and musicians in pink and yellow stood beside the "black bloc" of protesters who violently confronted the police (Kolářová 2009). Protest dance parties of this kind continued until the summer of 2002 as a new generation of activists replaced the older one. One event that applied these tactics was *Do-it-yourself karneval*, which has been held annually in Prague since 2003. In 2007, its organizers announced their decision to end the carnival because of concerns it had lost its radical ethos. It was resurrected, however, and since 2008 has been part of *Freedom Not Fear*, a movement that critiques digital surveillance and monitoring (Červeňáková 2008). In Brno, representatives of a broad network of local music and dance scenes including not just EDM but also hip-hop, ska and other music genres have been organizing *Protest Fest*, a large-scale counterculture festival with a street parade

since 2003. The event was a pointed response to the local military trade fair (Veselá 2010). Although positioned rather marginally in Czech mainstream politics, these activities received significant yet predominantly negative media coverage and became important references for many young Czechs regardless of their political sympathies. The connection between protest dance and different anarchist and/or alt/anti-globalist strands was not uncritically welcomed by all these different groups.

Anarchists: between the support and refusal of the protest dance

Czech anarchists praised the GSP for having brought far more people to the streets than their usual demonstrations. One observer wrote that the street party had brought

a new wind into the still waters of anarchist and similar demonstrations. It enriched them with forms of entertainment: music, dance, performance, refreshments.

(Rubeš 2008)

These anarchists also benefited from seeing that protest could be staged in alternative ways and that it was possible and even necessary to combine protest with entertainment attracting further supporters and moving away from rather rigid protest modes deployed in the past. For many, participation in a global social justice movement was also reassuring and comforting, common protest practice was already spread across the planet and Czech protesters have seen themselves as a part of a truly planetary movement. The GSP was, thus, seen as a solution to the decline of Czech anarchism that had followed its rapid rise in the early 1990s (Plzáková 2010: 22). However, and as briefly mentioned above, this support was not shared among all participants in the anarchist movement. The Federation of Social Anarchists reiterated a position taken by Murray Bookchin in his *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism* (1995). At its core was a critique of the anchoring of the anarchist movement in leisure activities and youth culture. In contrast, *Konfrontace*, a Czech anarchist review published by the Anarchist Federation strongly endorsed the GSP:

We were strengthened by shared joy in place of alienation, by personal involvement instead of the resigned consumption of homogenized entertainment. It was amazing to see how our protest was not stopped by repressive forces, and hundreds of people put aside their fears and came together to actively cooperate.

(AF 1998)

Nor were members of the rave scene united in support of their scene's politicization. Political scientist Ondřej Slačálek (2011) has analyzed the waves of politicization and de-politicization of the Czech "freetekno". While sound systems such as Cirkus Alien, Ladronka, Mayapur, Vosa and Redrum were openly political (Plzáková 2010: 22), there were many collectives that only reluctantly agreed to collaborate with anarchists or opposed such political profiling of the scene. One

important driver of the scene's politicization however was a violent police suppression of the annual CzechTek festival in 2005 but some doubts remained and the debate continued around *Freedom Not Fear* into the late 2000s. Left-wing journalist Pavla Červeňáková has summed up the debate:

The carnival might, thus, seem to reinforce the notion that the freetekno subculture is not the heir to protest subcultures, that instead of expressing the problems burdening society, its followers simply want to have fun, and thus, represent a peculiar self-help strain in the dominant consumer culture. Of course, as in any subculture, there are people in this movement whose approach is consumerist. And of course, the subculture's key concern is not protest but autonomy, or at least momentarily disconnecting from the system rather than confronting it. Of course, its politics do not come out of general slogans but out of concrete experiences. But that doesn't mean ignoring social problems. (Červeňáková 2008)

According to the already quoted security report, many environmentalist NGOs also distanced themselves from the GSP (Nový 2017). Their reasons clearly related to the readiness of the GSP's organizers to occupy public spaces by direct action and the presence of a level of violence and vandalism which they were not accustomed to nor willing to take part in. The same source also reports on a sociological study by Eliška Rendlová and Vladimír Jelínek in July 1998 (Nový 2017: 32-33). Some three months after these key events, the survey found that participants' age and political beliefs were linked to their positions on the police crackdown on the GSP. It found that young supporters of the Green Party and the far-right were both critical of police tactics. In contrast, middle-aged voters and those with more centrist liberal politics sided with police. Right-wing voters, men, business people and university graduates tended to see the police response as too lenient. Women and older supporters of the Social Democratic Party, which had taken power in the summer of 1998, were less likely to have followed the controversy.

An undergraduate security studies thesis that explores the attitudes of selected Czech political parties and organizations to the freetekno subculture (Pivec 2012) reveals other important cleavages in the support for the rave subculture. These differences were especially influenced by the police suppression of CzechTek in 2005 (CzechTek 2005). Activists linked to radical left groups such as the Marxist-Leninist Communist Youth Organization (*Komunistický svaz mládeže*), which was later banned, oscillated between non-committal support for action against police violence and cagey disapproval of ravers' anti-social behaviour (Pivec 2012: 33-34). Interestingly, Trotskyist organizations such as REVO and SocSol took their lead from key parts of the anarchist scene and generally supported the ravers. Far-right activists endorsed the police response; however, this position was soon to change.

Dancing far-right

The change did not come in the form of efforts by far-right activists to defend the anarchists, whom they counted among their main opponents in the post-socialist context. Rather, certain practices that had been used by key sections of the Czech

anarchist movement to draw young members attracted the interest of some far-right actors, who began to apply them with the same aim. This embrace of symbols, practices and cultural artifacts was, of course, not unanimous on the far-right. Among these different groups, it revived historical controversies, particularly concerning the status of cultural materials understood to be “non-white” such as hip-hop, graffiti and the wearing of the Palestine *keffiyeh*, an appropriation long limited to anti-imperialist activists on the far-left.

The *antifa.cz* website (2010) traces different instances of such far-right “borrowings”, identifying both the “original” and its appropriation. In the late 2000s, this trend was certainly not unknown to liberal left-wing journalists, some of whom also highlighted the far-right’s long history of drawing inspiration from the practices of its opponents (Sedmířadská 2009). There is ample evidence of the far-right’s appropriation of Communist practices in the strategies of both fascist and National Socialist actors. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning the activities of the French “ethno pluralist” group *Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne* (GRECE), which was established in late 1968. GRECE was instrumental in creating the counterculture of the “new right” (Taguieff 2003). By twisting the Gramscian concepts of hegemony and “war of position”, it aimed to create cultural and intellectual dominance that mimicked practices of the left-wing student movements. Worley and Copsey (2016) provide an in-depth analysis of the situation in Britain between 1977 and 1987, a period when the National Front and British Movement tried to claim traditionally punk cultural spaces for their own racist and/or ultra-nationalist agenda. In the late 2000s, the far-right across Europe also changed its social reform policies. It increasingly opposed privatization, defended welfare entitlements and called for the reining in of the financial sector with the aim of attracting local working-class votes (Afonso and Rennwald 2018).

The appropriation of protest dancing in city spaces must also be understood as part of the image and clean-up tactics of Autonomous Nationalists, a political group that emerged from Germany in the 2000s and aimed to rid the far-right of its associations with violent skinheads in the early 1990s (Vejvodová 2008). These strategists wished to overwrite a rather unsuccessful campaign to promote a far-right “preppy look” in the late 1990s. In November 2008, various far-right activists joined together with hooligans to embrace the practice of rioting in the urban space of Janov, a suburb of Litvínov in northern Bohemia, a place with a large Roma presence (ERRC, undated). These anti-Roma riots were verbally supported by some neighbors of non-Roma descent. In the following years, anti-Roma marches became a common practice for the Czech far-right and attracted a relatively large number of supporters far beyond activist circles (Marcol 2022).

In the late spring of 2011, a new and fairly short-lived trend of dancing in public city spaces was taken up by groups of Czech soccer and ice hockey hooligans. Predominantly and openly far-right in their politics, these groups also signaled their alliance with Autonomous nationalists. These flash mob dance actions in public space labelled as “hardbass” (Daniel 2019a) can be understood as a form of protest. Hardbass was a “predominantly Eastern European EDM style that emerged at the turn of the first decade of the twenty-first century in Russia and spread to different countries in the region and beyond.” (Daniel 2021: 158). The videos of the protests, shot on cell phones, usually showed masked male participants in sportswear performing relatively simple jump-up group dances. Their sites were highway

overpasses, sidewalks, shopping centers, soccer stadium stands and in one case an Asian fast-food restaurant (Hardbass Prostějov 2011). Through these symbolic but also very physical “attacks”, participants often dressed in dark sportswear and dancing in a rather menacing manner asserted their rights to certain “territory” against “invaders”, who were variously migrant workers, police, anti-fascists or simply other hooligan “firms”. The accompanying music was a type of hard techno (gabber) with Russian-language lyrics in which even a non-Russian Czech speaker might easily decipher the numbers 14 and 88. These numbers were cryptic references to white supremacy and National Socialism, respectively. The first alluded to the notorious “fourteen words” of David Lane (“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children”) while the second was a coded Nazi salute (Miller-Idriss 2018: 54-59).

Videos of the protests went viral on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and VKontakte, and were imitated by hooligan groups across the country. They were particularly popular in the hometowns of major soccer or ice hockey teams with their fan bases. Interestingly, this meme did not come from the West. Rather its sources were in Slovakia and Poland where fans had been inspired by models from Ukraine and Russia and this is the actual reason of the predominance of Russian lyrics in hardbass. In fact, those models traced back to a critical practice of Russian neo-Nazis, who had previously shot violent anti-immigrant videos in urban spaces in order to intimidate both their victims and their political opponents. Once the meme surfaced in the Czech Republic, the hooligans of Sigma Olomouc, a soccer team in the east of the country, were the first to take it up (Hard bass attack Olomouc 2011). They posted their version in April 2011. There was then a pause before the hooligans of Sparta Prague (HardBass Praha 2011) and Baník Ostrava (HardBass Ostrava 2011), Olomouc’s two major rivals recorded their own videos in June 2011. Finally, Slovan Liberec responded with a clip in August 2011 (HardBass Liberec 2011). Despite this intensity over a few months in 2011, this protest dance trend eventually petered out on Czech social media. By the end of 2011, hooligans resumed their usual practices and Hardbass, as a musical and dance form, then turned to the carnival-like deployment of the caricatures of Eastern European street cultures (Daniel 2021).

The trend of hardbass videos in 2011 coincides not only with the heightening of the far-right’s activities in these crisis years, but also with the new wave of reclaiming public space in the Arab spring and the Mediterranean. The use of masks in hardbass flash mobs occurred at the same time that the hacker group Anonymous was deploying Guy Fawkes masks in its protests, a tactic publicized in the graphic novel *V for Vendetta* and its film adaptation (2005). Anonymous was present also in different protest activities in the capitalist core, such as Occupy Wall Street later in 2011 and it has its roots in late 2000s libertarian hacktivism. Besides, it also had a prime role in developing the conspiracy theories which the far-right has both readily received and highly successfully disseminated.

The appropriation of the opposing side’s cultural norms and artifacts did not end with the Autonomous Nationalists or the far-right’s infiltration of Anonymous. Rather, since the first half of the 2010s, there has been a new impetus to promote “hipster Nazism” in the realm of group called Generation identity (Šima 2021). At the same time, transnational collaboration between far-right activists and the

exchange of tactical information (Pasięka 2017) have been crucial in propelling hardbass on its unique East-to-West trajectory. Clearly the accessibility of important audiovisual recording tools in the form of relatively cheap smartphones and the pervasiveness of social media, unthinkable in previous decades, has hastened the spread of hardbass's highly politicized far-right variant.

As I have shown elsewhere (Daniel 2019a), journalists' reactions to politicized hardbass were relatively strong and sometimes even created an atmosphere of moral panic, which also elicited some reactions from the "anti-extremist" security apparatus of the Czech state. Given its relatively short lifetime in the politicized variety and dissuasion into the commodified spectacle colonized by the predominantly socially upscale public (Daniel 2021), hardbass thus followed its predecessors, such as *Do-it-yourself Karneval*, as it rapidly lost its radical ethos and consequently also the interest of the far-right football hooligan "firms" as well as its antifascist counterparts. Despite its relatively short life in its politicized version, hardbass has an important place in the trajectory of music and dance protest practices in post-socialist urban space.

Conclusion

The examples highlighted in this study show that protest music and dance activity in Czech post-socialist city spaces are anything but empty practices void of precise political meanings. Whatever their superficial similarities, the dances seen at RTS-inspired street parties and those in hardbass urban attacks carry very different messages. The first form of protest targeted the monopolizing of city space by the car industry along with communal alienation and capitulation to commodity culture and digital surveillance that reinforces police powers. In contrast, hardbass grew out of politicized football hooliganism. It shared in RTS's resistance to police oversight, multinational corporations and economic globalization. However, given its far-right roots, hardbass also protested cultural globalization, a phenomenon that anarchist-supported Czech political street parties either welcomed or carefully avoided addressing. Moreover, hardbass may be understood as a protest dance action that was since its origins directed against immigrants in general and migrant workers in particular. Despite the fact that hardbass was eventually abandoned by the far-right in favor of young and fun-seeking participants of (self)orientalizing "Gopnik parties", far-right activists clearly follow the model in their inclusiveness and openness to different modes of cultural participation in their contemporary protest events.

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