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CHAPTER 6

'WE ARE ONE VOICE'¹! A BRIEF HISTORY OF PORTUGUESE HARDCORE AND STRAIGHT EDGE MOVEMENT: PROTAGONISTS, CORE VALUES AND DIY ETHOS²

Ana Oliveira

Hardcore and straight edge are specific subcultures within the punk movement with special relevance in Portugal in the 90s and 2000s. In this article we propose to describe how this scene appeared in Portugal, who are its main protagonists, which are the core values of this subculture and how important is the do it yourself ethos to the development of hardcore and straight edge scene and to its members. The analysis we present here is based on semi-structured interviews with six of the most important actors of Portuguese hardcore.

'Now is the time': the first years of hardcore and straight edge.

The "hardcore" term began to be used in the Californian punk scene to distinguish the punk rock sound of bands like *Devo* or *Buzzcocks* from most brutal and rough currents (Kent, 2006). In the late 70s this musical genre was refined and exalted with bands

¹ Song of X-Acto. We can translate as "Somos uma só voz".

² This text results from research carried out under the research project KISMIF – Keep It Simple, Make It Fast! Prolegomenons and punk scenes, a road to Portuguese contemporaneity (1977 – 2012) made possible with funding by FEDER - through the COMPETE Operational Program from the FCT, Foundation for Science and Technology. KISMIF project is promoted by The Institute of Sociology of The University of Porto (IS-UP), and developed in partnership with the Griffith Centre for Cultural Research (GCCR) and Lleida University (UdL). The following institutions also participated: Faculty of Economics of University of Porto (FEP), Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto (FPCEUP), Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra (FEUC), Centre for Social Studies of University of Coimbra (CES) and the Lisbon Municipal Libraries (BLX). For more information see: www.punk.pt/en/.

like Bad Brains, Teen Idles, Untouchables, S.O.A., Minor Threat or The Faith that combined music with an ideology that escaped the mainstream. Thus the first wave of American hardcore emerged with Washington, DC scene leading the movement. The assumptions were simple: produce short and very fast songs, but of excellent quality and with political and social content. In fact, hardcore movement proposed the construction of a better world, in opposition to the Sex Pistols' nihilism that talked about having "no future". The independence from big majors and the do it yourself (DIY) ethos were also important features. Actually, independent labels and fanzines had a relevant role in the aesthetic creation and development of this movement; we can enumerate some of them: the labels Dischord Records³, SST, Touch & Go, SubPop and the fanzines Flipside, Maximumrocknroll and Forced Exposure (Azerrad, 2002).

Between 1980 and 1983, straight edge ethics became a prominent part of a fledgling and visionary underground scene. It is a subculture of hardcore punk whose adherents refrain from using alcohol, tobacco and other recreational drugs, in a reaction to the excesses of punk subculture. Its practitioners emphasize self-control and bodily purity as an alternative to these 'hedonistic bodily indulgences' or 'deviant' practices (ie. substance abuse, promiscuity) (Atkinson, 2003: 197)⁴. The 'straight edge' term was created by Ian MacKaye, singer from Minor Threat, when he wrote a lyric with the same name in 1981:

*I'm a person just like you
But I've got better things to do
Than sit around and fuck my head*

³ Dischord Records is the label founded by Ian MacKaye, the vocalist of Minor Threat. All the band albums were released by Dischord Records.

⁴ See the slogan used by this subculture: 'don't drink, don't smoke, don't fuck. At least I can fucking think'.

*Hang out with the living dead
Snort white shit up my nose
Pass out at the shows
I don't even think about speed
That's something I just don't need
I've got the straight edge
I'm a person just like you
But I've got better things to do
Than sit around and smoke dope
Cause I know that I can cope
Laugh at the thought of eating ludes
Laugh at the thought of sniffing glue
Always gonna keep in touch
Never want to use a crutch
I've got the straight edge*

The lyric talked about him but quickly, and against his expectations and intentions, it became not only a label for drug-free hardcore punk youths, but also a movement “spreading around the world and remaining a vital part of the hardcore punk community to this day” (Kuhn, 2010: 13). Thus, in the second half of the 80s we can talk about the first wave of self-identified straight edge bands across North America, often referred to as the “youth crew movement” (Kuhn, 2010). The 90s bring the ‘new school’ straight edge bands, among others aspects characterized by the increasing significance of animal rights and by a strong political awareness, in a context characterized by the social uncertainties derived from globalization. At this stage arise inside the straight edge various ideologies and this multiplicity generates up different positions within the subculture, from the extremists, who take their ideology in an aggressive logic against non-followers of the subculture, to those who choose the incorporation of straight edge philosophy in their daily habits in a more private way. The use of tattoos as a symbolic practice of this

lifestyle seems to be transversal to the subculture that sees them as a way to promote their message of peace and self-control.

Figure 1: A Portuguese straight edge girl promoting her option for a clean living life style



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TUGAxCORExCLASSICS/280020182012198?sk=timeline>

At that time we have seen the proliferation of hardcore and straight edge scenes in various countries, like Portugal with appearance of X-Acto, in 1991, or *New Winds*, in 1995. Later, from 2000 to nowadays, we can look to a diverse movement with a kind of old school revivals, vegan straight edge reunion tours, but also with a lucrative straight edge merchandise industry (Kuhn, 2010). But let's go back to Portugal. Here the hardcore scene, close to the American line of the 80s, was undoubtedly marked by bands like X-Acto and Sannyasin and places like Ritz Club, with its matinees. In fact, these were the protagonists of the moment with greater adhesion to Portuguese punk (Rios, 2004). The movement began as a result of the contact of some people of Portuguese

punk scene with the straight edge reality of England and, at the same time, with the arrival of the first records and fanzines belonging to this subculture. As happened in USA or in England, some people of the Portuguese punk scene started thinking they must to have mental clarity so they can resist to the system and change the world. X-Acto are seen as the catalyst of the movement in Portugal, influencing the emergence of other bands, as one of its members tells us:

We started to make a very cute scene: open our rehearsals. Our rehearsals were open. Who wanted, just appear. We started to organize concerts there in that garage without my parents knowing, which was impossible because so many people showed up, like sixty people. When we started our band, in Sintra began to emerge more bands, like Alcoore and Subcaos. Josué, 38 years old, Bachelor's, Illustrator and designer, Cascais.

Figure 2: X-Acto rehearsal, 1994.



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TUGAxCORExCLASSICS/280020182012198?sk=timeline>

Picture 3: *X-Acto* and *New Winds* rehearsal, 1996.



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TUGAxCORExCLASSICS/280020182012198?sk=timeline>

The early 90s was characterized by the predominance of the 'Linha de Sintra Hardcore', to which belonged, in addition to X-Acto, bands like Alcoore and Subcaos. Between 1995 and 1998, the community begins to increase with people from the South margin of Lisbon (Croustibat, Human Choice) and Linda-a-Velha⁵ and the appearance of bands adept of the straight edge. Indeed, this philosophy of life, based on a clean living, began to have an important place in most of the time bands, as in X-Acto, but also in New Winds, Finger Pointing, Day Of The Dead, Liberation, Renewal and Gafanhoto, who adhered to these ideals, looking for a breakthrough in relation to capitalism and consumerism (Guerra, 2010; Haenfler, 2006), using the music as a vehicle to convey a message for social, personal and political change. People involved in this lifestyle were in contact with the straight edge community

⁵ Sintra and Linda-a-Velha are two municipalities of the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon.

of various other countries and they even tried to create a Straight Edge Libertarian Federation.

I remember in 94, we tried to make a first meeting of straight edge that we called SELF. SELF was initially Straight Edge Libertarian Federation, which was supposedly an international federation of straight edge in several countries. We had contacts with groups in Argentina, Brazil, and we were trying to make a SELF in Portugal. They were there people of X-Acto, people of Sacavém and Benfica and was also there a representative of the SELF in Brazil. It was the first meeting we had and it was funny because this initial core of people is that one from which I think came all the straight edge scene in Lisbon, Portugal. Lisbon has always been the strongest zone for straight edge. Fernando, 38 years old, Teacher, London, England.

Actually for some of the interviewees, the importance of straight edge movement in Portugal was so big, that they believe if there were not those straight edge factions, there was nothing: there were no concerts, no one organized them, there were no fanzines, there were no collectives, there was no hardcore scene. In fact, Portugal seems to be one of Europe's strongest recent political straight edge scenes and *New Winds*⁶ the main straight edge export (Khun, 2010).

At that time and after Ritz Club closed, the concerts at Kasa Enkantada, a squat in the center of Lisbon, in cultural and social associations, in parish councils or in centers of Portuguese Youth Institute were very important to the growth of the movement to which the music has always been the reason for the meeting, the reason to release frustration of depressing and uneventful (sub)urban lives.

With the end of X-Acto and the end of Ritz Club in 2000, the hardcore movement suffered some confusion and fragmentation. Several subgroups emerged within hardcore, it has been merged with the metal and emo, from where screamo and metalcore were

⁶The band made several international tours with a strong involvement of the public.

born. At the same time, some of the main protagonists of the Portuguese hardcore scene are now members of bands like If Lucy Fell, Linda Martini, PAUS, Riding Pânico and The Vicious Five. Although anchored in a rock sound, these bands eventually develop specific sounds that are therefore the result of a socialization in hardcore in the 90s. But this doesn't mean the end of hardcore in Portugal. Actually, nowadays there are many bands that have this kind of sound and philosophy. They have a lot of control of what they do and how they want to communicate it. We can talk about My Rules (Lisbon), No Good Reason (Almada), Mr. Miyagi (Viana do Castelo), that play a fast hardcore or thrashcore, and, in some way, *Adorno*, with some influences of original emo.

'In it for life': why to belong to this scene? After this brief journey through the history of hardcore and straight edge subculture in the USA and Portugal, now it's interesting to explore the motives that make someone decide to belong to these movements. We do that here focusing on the speeches of some of our interviewees. Thus, our analysis allows us to identify five main reasons for our respondents enter in the hardcore scene and take an active role.

First, the strong ideological content associated with hardcore and straight edge movement. This subculture is seen as an alternative to more commercial or mainstream music, contents, and lifestyles. Through the messages transmitted and the lifestyle promoted, hardcore and straight edge are like a weapon against the system. Alcohol and drugs are seen as social lubricants, both in punk and in hardcore, that blur and decentralize people from the true political and cultural power of this subculture – the power to really make a difference, to create an independent and alternative network, not only musical, but also culturally and

socially. Thus straight edge was seen as an essential basis for achieving sobriety, clarity and power needed to build a better world. Besides, people believe hardcore and straight edge must to be something really alternative to what is mainstream, what is the system. They have to challenge society and the status quo. Otherwise they are not really different from what already exists⁷. So we can say that for some of our interviewees, the involvement in the hardcore subculture happened for the content and not for the music, at least in a first moment.

I saw straight edge more like a weapon than as a lifestyle. I could perfectly see the pattern that mattered to the status quo, to the power, that the population was fully immersed in drugs and alcohol and did not think in a critical way, did not have a critical perspective of things and the straight edge I think it was a gun, a tool that allowed somehow to have this clarity, this distance.
Fernando, 38 years old, Teacher, London, England.

Related to this, and in the case of some of our interviewees, perhaps makes more sense to talk about the discovery of a movement or subculture to which they already identified with than speak about adhesion. In fact, two of our interviewees discovered hardcore because they already belong to the metal scene where they usually were ridicularized for don't smoke, don't drink or don't consume drugs. When they started to attend to hardcore gigs, they began to have contact with many people who made music that was still extreme music and who also had the same option in relation to the consumption of substances.

The hardcore interested me because of its content. When I had ten years, I thought I would have a metal band, but then I thought that what doesn't interest me in the metal are the lyrics, they don't interest me at all. Talk about Satan... I thought that when I had a band on the CD, it would have the addresses of Greenpeace and that stuff, for people to be informed. Anyway, to

⁷In this context, for example, all messages and actions for the defense of animal rights, for more just and equal economic relations, for peace or for environmental protection assume special relevance.

make a better world. When I discovered the hardcore, I realized there was a genre of music that interested me enough and which content totally meets my interests. (...) When I discovered X-Acto in 1995, I realized there were a lot of people playing music as I liked and talking about things that interested me. Bartolomeu, 36 years old, Incomplete Bachelor's, Photographer, Almada.

I did not adhere to the movement, I just discovered a movement to which I identified me with and began attending concerts of this movement and was in this sense that I was part of the movement but I don't know if say 'belong to' the political or ideological movement makes sense because it was something that was already in me... Gaspar, 32 years old, Incomplete Bachelor's, Musician and Producer, Lisbon.

A third reason as to do with the fact this lifestyle allow people to be rebel without being in conflict with others. To be involved in hardcore scene and to have a straight edge way of living allow people to combine the very youth rebellious with their studies or their working life, it allows people to reconcile their subcultural identification with other spheres of their lives. It's like to have the better of two worlds: music, ideological content and aesthetic and peer recognition without having problems with the parents, in the school or in the work.

I understand the straight edge, even more than the punk, as something that allowed me to combine all my faces. It allowed me to be punk without having to be punk. It allowed me to dress more pretty clean, to have a clean look, easier to harmonize with my parents, with school, with family, so it allowed me to escape problems - not that I had thought of it consciously. (...) That allowed me to find that I continued to be very rebellious and crazy but without actually having to go into great family conflicts. Fernando, 38 years old, Teacher, London, England.

Getting involved into hardcore and straight edge may also occur because of the identification with the DIY ethos associated to this subculture. It has to do with a kind of strong magnetism exerted by a community of people really dedicated to do things independently and with a great spirit of sharing experiences, material, music, everything. It's about the energy with which

people in this movement live and do things, it's about empowerment and the capacity to make things happen, it's about being an alternative and the fascination all of this can generate in people who want to challenge the status quo and the dominant ways of living.

As a result of the combination of all these factors, belong to hardcore and straight edge can act as an opportunity of personal growth and development through the values, ethical principles, ideological content and experiences in which these agents find themselves involved.

We have created a parallel scene with revolution messages and slogans and we tried to change our lives and many of us eventually manage to get a gigantic human development because we have been awarded with very sharp ethical and moral values. Xavier, 37 years old, Upper Secondary Education, Bank employee, Lisbon.

'I need your strength to live': experience hardcore and straight edge through its core values

Hardcore punk isn't just music, it's much more than music, it's a culture, it's a lifestyle, it's positive, it's political and it's powerful. Xavier, 37 years old, Upper Secondary Education, Bank employee, Lisbon.

Considering them much more than just music, Xavier's worlds seem to resume those that are the core values of hardcore and straight edge scene. As we mentioned before, 'Straight Edge' is first of all the name of a song of a hardcore American band – Minor Threat – that named a 'behavioral movement' within the punk scene (Blush, 2001; Khun, 2010). As 'Xavier', the most fervent followers understand straight edge as something that goes beyond than just a name of an urban tribe. It is seen as a way of living that some follow with a sharp orthodoxy⁸. Actually, as

⁸This kind of position usually makes other punks look to straight edgers as the more "puritan" and "moralist" faction from the punks. But for those that belong to straight

Haenfler suggests, despite the individuals who belong to straight edge subcultural are free to follow the philosophy in different ways, often adding their own interpretations and meanings, there are fundamental values common to the entire movement. Regarding the Portuguese case and the experience of our interviewees, we propose an analysis of the meanings and ways of being involved in hardcore and straight edge scene in the 90s, based on the core set of straight edge values and ideals identified by Haenfler (2004).

Positive, clean living and reserving sex for caring relationships are two of straight edge core values⁹. Indeed, the straight edge philosophy promotes a drug-free, tobacco-free, and sexually responsible lifestyle (not engaging in casual and promiscuous sexual relations). It is, as Irwin (1999) suggest, a way to subvert the stereotype of the excessive consumption associated to the punk movement members and, at the same time, to create ‘an alternative, drug-free environment’. Meanwhile, being clean and sober is also the ultimate expression of resistance (Haenfler, 2006) – resistance to the mainstream, to the consumerist society in which we live nowadays. Some straight edgers are committed vegetarians or vegans as well. This clean living is “the key precursor to a positive life” (Haenfler, 2004). Here, positive life must be understood as having a broad meaning, including an exercise of question and resistance to the society’s norms, a positive attitude through life, respect the others, having an active role to make the world a better place. Therefore, as Haenfler suggests, ‘clean living and positivity were inseparable; they

edge subculture this way of living is important to prove that to be a punk doesn’t mean to be immoral, violent or vandal.

⁹ We present them together because as Haenfler refers, reserving sex for caring relationships is an extension of the positive and clean lifestyle and our interviewees always speak about them in association.

reinforced one another and constituted the foundation for all other straight edge values' (Haenfler, 2004: 416).

With different levels of commitment to this life philosophy, in a general way, our interviewees seem to guide their lives having this principles and ideals in mind. Xavier, member of *New Winds*, identifies very well the basic pillars of being straight edge: say no to alcohol, to tobacco, to drugs, to dependency, to a system of exploitation which sees people as a commodity and who acts as an oppressor. For him, positive and clean living can make easier to develop a (r)evolutionary consciousness and to have a deep and true impact on society. In the same way, Gaspar, member of If Lucy Fell, Linda Martini and PAUS, also identifies this clean living as a straight edge premise:

At the time, the straight edge scene that was connected with the hardcore punk had three premises, then there was extreme people, the hardliners, but the three premises were: a youth free of drug, alcohol (...) some carried this to the extreme and were not in favor of promiscuous sex, for example, then there were others who became vegans or vegetarians, so they ended up attaching several of these ideologies, but the base was to be free of drugs, straight edge was initially that. Gaspar, 32 years old, Incomplete Bachelor's, Musician and Producer, Lisbon.

As Haenfler (2004) suggests when talk about resistance within the straight edge subculture, Josué, member of X-Acto, one of the most relevant Portuguese hardcore and straight edge bands, understands and experiences the positive and clean living as a way to be different and to demonstrate his opposition to the dominant society:

To be different; it was this. I don't belong to this shit society, I don't want to belong and I will do everything to don't belong to it as long as possible: if everybody drinks, I will not drink; if everybody uses drugs, I will not use drugs; if everybody picks up girls, I will not pick up girls. Josué, 38 years old, Bachelor's, Illustrator and designer, Cascais.

Like Xavier and Josué, Guilherme, member of PAUS and Vicious Five, also sees this kind of lifestyle as a way to become more conscious and thus to have more power and capacity to resist to what the dominant society imposes.

I remember the coexistence on the straight edge community those who consciously dedicated to an abstemic lifestyle and then there was the idea of reducing the levels of cruelty in their lives, choosing not to eat meat, not eat fish, which are political, ethical and philosophical assumptions that comes from getting aware: 'I don't need to be intoxicated to enjoy whatever it is' and then is like spring cleaning, you don't need these pants, you don't need these books and you begin to clean the surplus and what generates ethical and political conflicts and what is an obstacle in your way to independence from a society that deploys you a lot of decisions without you have any other choice. Guilherme, 33 years old, Incomplete Bachelor's, Illustrator/ Musician, Lisbon.

Self-realization is another core value of straight edge. Like happens in other subcultures, straight edgers seek to create and experience an 'authentic' identity. They intend to find a meaningful path in their life toward self-realization. Thus, in a context they felt encourage conformity and mediocrity, similar to other punks, they try to be "true to themselves". At the same time, and like hippies, they believe we have a great potential which is destroyed by the dominant society and toxins such as drugs and alcohol. This kind of substances is seen like a threat to a clear and focused mind and so as an obstacle to achieve their goals. On the contrary, to be straight edge enables them to be conscious and aware, to be active, to explore different philosophies, spiritualities and ideologies. All the experiences and share in which straight edgers are involved are conceptualized as real opportunities for learning and growth. This demand is reflected, for example, on how evolved the lyrics of some bands. This applies to X-Acto who went from more politicized lyrics to increasingly spiritual ones until they had formed another band – Sannyasin – whose name reveal an option for a more philosophical and spiritual content.

Straight edge, and the reason why I liked so much that straight edge scene feeling is that it allowed us an incredible exploitation of philosophies, spiritualities, policies. I think we lived a really special moment, because there was a huge group of kids who were looking for directions. Fernando, 38 years old, Master's, Teacher, London (England).

Spreading the message is another core value in straight edge subculture. Very often straight edgers actively encourage others to adopt their lifestyle. For some of them it's like to have a mission – to convince other people that an alcohol and drug free life would help them to actively construct a better world. They are frequently named by other straight edgers 'hardliners' or 'militants', because they try to impose a rigid lifestyle and usually confront who doesn't have such an orthodox way of living. That's why sometimes there is an ongoing tension within the movement and divisions between its members like happened in Portugal. But, as Haenfler suggests, 'by focusing their message at their families, subcultural peers, mainstream youth, and the larger society, straight edge created a multilayered resistance that individuals could customize to their own interests' (Haenfler, 2004: 425).

Regarding the Portuguese case and the experiences of our interviewees that is precisely what seems to be their main goal – to share their message with so many people as possible allowing them to interpret and transpose it into their day-to-day life in a personal way. And they do that through the concerts, the promotion of debates and workshops, the production of fanzines and also writing on blogs. During all the 90s, concerts were a very powerful vehicle to share a message. At the time of hardcore boom in Portugal, some bands had on average 300 to 500 people attending their concerts. Casa Enkantada, a squat in the center of Lisbon, and Ritz Club were key spots. As Fernando, member of

New Winds, told us, Casa Enkantada played a pivotal role in the development of the punk and straight edge scene, not only because of the concerts, but also because it was a place where different people can meet each other and this had promoted constructive confrontation and an interesting exchange of ideas. Guilherme speaks about the creation of a 'disciplined production culture' which had an important contribute to the growth and development of straight edge culture.

This created, in some way, a culture within the straight edge of disciplined production and the evidence is that between 1994 and 1998 the amount of people who were producing things, the amount of concerts that happened, with line-ups not much repeated, with foreign and new Portuguese bands not only making music but also recording it and sharing it, doing fanzines... There was an almost exponentially increase of critical mass to the point where every month we had one or two matinees at the Ritz Club, with an average of 400 people on a Sunday afternoon to gather around this straight edge culture. Guilherme, 33 years old, Incomplete Bachelor's, Illustrator/ Musician, Lisbon.

Figure 4: Casa Enkantada



Source:

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Figure 5: Concert at Casa Enkantada



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Many of these were benefit concerts. New Winds, for example, whenever they had the chance and the means to do so, they organized shows providing different cultural and political information, some of them with videos and spoken word moments. There was always something on stage to share and the possibility of using music to share thoughts and experiences and to make people aware of things they weren't aware of before was always a reason to keep going. Xavier, member of New Winds, believes that's why the band was so important to Portuguese hardcore and also to the international hardcore scene.

I think New Winds contributed in a very positive way to the hardcore scene. We contributed with several benefit concerts, with various messages and spoken words, with several videos, with several interviews, with several rescues of animals; the money New Winds earned was to help someone. I think New Winds contributed much (...) so many people are inspired to look for another kind of thoughts (...) We contributed in a very positive way to the hardcore scene and to the lives of people who have had contact with New Winds. Xavier, 37 years old, Upper Secondary Education, Bank employee, Lisbon.

Figure 6: Benefit concert poster in favor of prisoners



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TUGAxCORExCLASSICS/280020182012198?sk=timeline>

Figure 7: *New Winds* concert at Prague, 2006



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TUGAxCORExCLASSICS/280020182012198?sk=timeline>

In addition to the concerts, moments of encounter and exchange of ideas were also very important. It was common bands and its members attend libertarian centers, such as Centro de

Cultura Libertária de Cacilhas [Cacilhas Center of Libertarian Culture]¹⁰ and organize debates or information sessions under themes related to human and animal rights, vegetarianism or environmental protection. Fanzines were also an important tool to spread the message. In most cases, their preparation was based on independent and artisanal production forms. Its contents were diverse, covering personal texts, interviews with bands and activists, texts on vegetarianism, spirituality, among other topics¹¹. In more recent years and taking advantage of the possibilities brought by new technologies, blogs seem to play a similar role, allowing the message to reach more people faster.

Involvement in social change is another core value to straight edge movement. Often its members get involved in a variety of social causes. As Haenfler refers, for many, this involvement is viewed as a 'logical progression from clean living", which led them to "clear thinking, which in turn created a desire to resist and self-realize. This entire process opened them up to the world's problems, and their concerns grew' (Haenfler, 2004: 425-426). In this sense, one of our interviewees speaks about a holistic perspective of social fights promoted by straight edge. For him straight edge demonstrates that there is only a main fight – the fight against any kind of oppression.

Straight edge had a very holistic view of everything. So the big fallacy that the straight edge evidenced on many ideological

¹⁰ This is an important place for anarchists and more interventionist factions of the punk movement. Its main objective is the dissemination of libertarian ideas, regularly promoting cultural activities. The space has a library with a particular focus on social and libertarian themes, and a small library where we can find books, magazines, fanzines and music. As announced in its Facebook page, it opens its doors to all "who share the idea of an alternative society based on freedom and autonomy of individuals, without oppressors or exploiters or to who simply wants to know the libertarian ideals". You can find more information about it here: <http://culturalibertaria.blogspot.pt/>, <https://pt-br.facebook.com/CentroDeCulturalibertaria>.

¹¹ We can talk about 'Dedication' or 'Trust', for example, two fanzines of a New Winds' member that circulated between 1998 and 2000.

struggles was the issue of being single-issue approaches, issues focused on a single aspect, like feminism or anti-homophobic groups, or SOS Racism. There were groups fighting against very specific things and the straight edge ended up having a perspective that all fights were one fight, there wasn't partial struggles but that freedom of each of us depended on the freedom of others and that oppression was not only in relation to women in feminism or only in relation to homosexuals, or in relation to the factories staff, but the oppression was one and only one and we had to fight it that way. Fernando, 38 years old, Master's, Teacher, London (England).

This comprises the involvement in fights for animal rights and environmental causes with bands calling for an end to cruelty against animals and a general awareness of eco-destruction. In the Portuguese case, some members of hardcore and straight edge bands had organized benefit concerts to help kennels and catteries, others promoted speeches and debates under vegetarianism, encouraging people to adopt completely cruelty-free lifestyles. Prisoners, homeless people, women's rights, police brutality and other causes related to social justice were also reasons of concern. To prove it, we can consider Xavier's case:

I've always been involved with my bands, Força Interior and New Winds in dozens of benefits to political prisoners, kennels, catteries, non-governmental institutions, supporting the homeless and disabled children. We have made many benefit concerts and I ended up being one of the people that with more political prisoners corresponded in the hardcore punk scene. I corresponded with dozens of political prisoners and have dozens of letters from them. And did lectures on support to political prisoners and the importance of this support. I ended up volunteering for with the homeless for two years as a result of all this. Xavier, 37 years old, Upper Secondary Education, Bank employee, Lisbon.

Figure 8: Protection of the environment and defense of animals rights in hardcore fanzines



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Actually, *New Winds* was one of the bands that more actively was involved in social change. Even the name – a song from *7 Sconds*, an American hardcore punk – reveals this concern with promoting a better world. As the chorus says, they believe they could bring “new winds” to punk and hardcore; they could start bringing more people to concerts and make people to be more politically engaged; they could encourage the creation of associations and the involvement of people in social struggles. Basically, as Haenfler (2006) suggested, for *New Winds* and other straight edgers, following straight edge philosophy was a way to get involved into a broader and challenger mission – to improve the world in which they live.

‘My Choice my life’: hardcore, DIY ethos and everyday life. We didn't refer DIY ethos like a core value of hardcore and straight edge subculture but, in fact, we could have done it. Actually, like

suggested by several authors (Dale, 2008; McKay, 1998; Moore & Robert, 2009; Moran, 2011), DIY is one of the most important features fueling the punk subculture. Independent record labels, DIY press, and even DIY venues allowed and continue to allow punk to be alive. They create a network which enables punk music and ideologies to be distributed. People who belong to the subculture are able to produce and disseminate their music, ideas and ideologies without the interference of major corporations. DIY ethos is based on an empowerment logic, on taking possession of the means of production, as an alternative to mainstream production circuits. It's about mobilizing DIY skills (strength, achievement, freedom, collective action). In the same way, Moore and Robert (2009) understand DIY as a social movement and also as a mobilization of resources that support punk subculture. Belong to punk movement is to be active and take on specific roles within the punk community. As Mike Watt, bassist and founder of *Minutemen*, said: "Punk was about more than just starting a band, (...) it was about starting a label, it was about touring, it was about taking control. It was like songwriting; you just do it. You want a record, you pay the pressing plant. That's what it was all about." (Mike Watt In Azerrad, 2002: 6). And if we go back to Haenfler (2004) perspective, this lifestyle and way of working can be seen as a way to express resistance and, at the same time, it can create a sense of satisfaction for those involved in the punk movement, leading them to self-realization.

In Portuguese hardcore and straight edge movement we also find this ethos. Such as the journalist Pedro Rios (2005) suggested, the DIY methodology is present in all hardcore spheres: in the musical inexperience, in the records released by small independent labels, in the dedication and cooperation spirit, in the commercial disinterest and in the informal contacts network. Thus, in Portugal,

the unifying characteristic of hardcore lovers reveals an active posture linked to the DIY featuring all musical way of production from creation to distribution.

Our interviewees confirm precisely this. Fernando tells us this DIY ethos, this independent way of doing things was probably the most important and practical aspects he experienced when he was involved in hardcore and straight edge movement. He speaks about people's empowerment and initiative. For example, they learned to play instruments without ever having taken classes; the gigs and the tours were organized by members of the bands; the records were released by independent labels. They just didn't wait things to happen; they made things happen. In his perspective, his contact with hardcore and DIY ethos had a concrete impact on his lifestyle, generating an alternative vision of how things can be done and leading to a big change in his professional life. For Xavier, punk, hardcore and DIY were synonyms. He organized the concerts and the tours, he made two fanzines, he had a distributor of books, fanzines and some merchandise without any commercial purpose, all the money he earned was to re-invest in the distributor.

The point is that I never got to separate that, because to me it was DIY, it was punk, it was hardcore, it was to make our own records, organize our own tours, make our concerts and our merchandise as if our life depended on it, like there is no tomorrow, as if today was the last day of my life and I will enjoy it. Xavier, 37 years old, Upper Secondary Education, Bank employee, Lisbon.

Bartolomeu, member of *Renewal* and *New Winds*, believes DIY ethos is an aspect of his personality, but he admits it was developed by his involvement in hardcore and straight edge subculture. And nowadays he transports this way of doing things to his professional and personal life. Actually, he thinks this is the most important 'legacy' he has from that times.

So I think sometimes it may already be the nature of people, but at the same time I have no doubts that was the involvement in hardcore, the underground culture and the DIY that pulled me around and, finally, that leads me to live this way even today. (...) I think it was developed there. We made the tapes, we did the covers and all that stuff (...) DIY, in a very refined way, is perhaps the greatest legacy that I have from punk and hardcore.
Bartolomeu, 36 years old, Incomplete Bachelor's, Photographer, Almada.

Close up. With this brief history of Portuguese hardcore and straight edge scene, we sought to account for the influences emanating from other realities, such as the American one, but also highlight those that are the specificities of the movement in Portugal. From the experience of our interviewees, we realize to what extent the involvement in a particular subculture may be important whether in a more individual perspective, related to the creative expression of those who belong to the subculture, with their personal development and with what they transport to their daily life, either in a collective perspective, related to the development of an active citizenship. In this sense, belong or have belonged to the hardcore subculture seems to have been for our interviewees both an individual and collective form of resistance and to be alternative with an impact in different spheres of their lives.

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