

Understanding Discrimination in Hardcore Music Scenes, Then and Now

by

Jonathon Mohan

Submitted to the Board of Arts Management for the School of the Arts in fulfilling the requirements for

the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Purchase College

State University of New York

May 2019

First Reader: Dawn Gibson-Brehon

Second Reader: Laura Ricciardi

Table of Contents

Introduction.....3

History.....4

Defining Hardcore.....5

New York Hardcore.....7

Skinhead Presence in Hardcore.....8

Agnostic Front & Co. at the Forefront of Hardcore10

Hardcore’s Second Wave: Youth Crew & the Straight-Edge Movement.....16

Conclusion.....22

Introduction

Hardcore Punk, an American subgenre of music, as well as the development of Hardcore as a subculture, is widely recognized for the impact it still has well over thirty years later. The movement is grounded in values of community, shared purpose and do it yourself (DIY) ethics. These ethics included anti-establishment, anti-recording industry, mainstream counterculture, left-wing politics, social activism and many other ideologies across the various subcultures it spawned. Despite the positive social impact the movement and its offshoots attempted to foster, Hardcore Punk left ugly marks on history with a reputation for violence, which in turn led to bigotry and discrimination towards the LGBTQ community, women and people of color. Taking a step back, this is a very perplexing notion, as Hardcore Punk prided itself on strengthening communities of artists, social activists, music fans and youth, while simultaneously marginalizing those who weren't part of specific communities, based on aggressive micro-politics.

This project will primarily be exploring that contradictive sentiment and its origins, analyzing the history of Hardcore Punk and the variety of violent and often discriminatory mindsets perpetuated throughout the 1980's and 1990's, which was arguably the peak of the subculture and the roots of a complicated identity crisis. Additionally, this project will serve to use that history to frame the context for the current state of the Hardcore and heavy music scenes at large, and how the precedents set by the forefathers of Hardcore Punk shape not only today's public perception of the subculture, but also the behaviors and standards those within the culture are held to.

History

The origins of Hardcore Punk can be traced back to the two movements of Punk Rock across the 1970's, and as far back as the Proto Punk movement of the 1960's. According to *AllMusic.com*, an online database owned by the pop culture media platform *Complex*, the Proto Punk movement predates the Punk Rock movement, characterized by its stripped-down, primitive sound. The movement was retroactively labeled as such, considering the movement itself lacked coherence, and was not fully aligned with the contemporary counterculture. The movement opposed the "hippie" lifestyle as well as the conventions of popular Rock music. The music lacked in production quality but compensated with artistic ambition and willingness to explore taboo lyrical themes and musical techniques such as extensive use of feedback and white noise. One of the most influential groups to emerge from this era was The Velvet Underground for exactly those reasons ("Proto Punk Music Genre Overview"). Taking this movement into account, it does set a framework for the next few movements of Punk and eventually Hardcore, where attention is taken away from the artistic ambition, and placed more on the aspect of counterculture and social influence.

Nixon was in office for the first few years of the 1970's and the young white males of America were divided, angry and directionless. The Vietnam War was still raging on; a war many Americans were strongly opposed to on moral grounds, as they felt it was a foreign civil war we had no right to intervene in, yet millions of young men were drafted to fight in. Nixon's infamous Watergate scandal also drained the American public's trust in their government, which wouldn't begin to be restored until Gerald Ford comes into office in 1974. Considering the social and political roller coaster that America was at the time, Punk Rock in the 1970's cleaned up its

predecessor, the Proto Punk movement of the 1960's, and moved us closer to the sound and social values we associate with Punk today: fast, distorted guitars and harsh singing about rebelling against the government and the immorality it appeared to stand for.

The movement which later became known as "American Hardcore" was a direct response to the Punk movement of the late 1970's, marking a cultural shift inward towards fostering community within scenes and further embodying DIY ethics. Towards the end of the 1970's, "New Wave" Punk became gradually more popular. It was Punk that was increasingly commercialized and played on radios, synonymous with art schools and cosmopolitan locations, with more glamorous aesthetics and friendlier sounds than what you would have found in a suburban basement or backyard ten years prior. While the Hardcore scene did take some elements of Punk, it was a direct retaliation to this shift, stripping Punk back down to its aggressive roots and emphasizing exactly that. It was essentially a rebellion against a rebellion.

This wasn't taken too kindly by older punk fans, who viewed the rapidly emerging subgenre in Southern California as anti-intellectual, overly violent, and musically limited, which appealed majorly to the suburban youth of the time. It's from this point we can already see a divide forming amongst like-minded individuals. Both the fans of the original wave of Punk Rock, and the fans of Hardcore share similar values and ethos, but vary in their musical and social expression, which then becomes the dividing line between them.

Defining Hardcore

"Hardcore" as a term was meant to indicate the most extreme form of Punk music; fast, loud and aggressive at the very core. The music was comprised of a conventional "singer – guitar – bass – drums" formula, but songwriting took a different direction, focusing more on rhythm

than melody or structure. The movement itself was initially comprised mainly of young, white males from the Southern California and Washington D.C. areas, who were tired of their suburban lives dominated by Republican values, believing their futures would amount to nothing more. This sense of nihilism and aggression needed an outlet that this subculture provided (Blush). This went together with skateboard culture, which at the time was also an evident expression of an aggressive youth culture with anti-establishment ideals. It was around this time that *Thrasher* came into publication, a magazine widely known for promoting extreme sports and other facets of youth culture, and still resides, if anything, as an aesthetic archetype today.

Punk was itself an initial movement of youth culture rebelling against the establishment, but once Punk began to shift towards the “mainstream”, the younger generation sought to “out-punk the punks” and fostered a movement that seemed to embody a pure hatred for mainstream culture, reclaiming the forgotten aspects of Punk that made it “Punk”. While Punk had roots in the U.K. with bands like The Ramones, Hardcore proved itself entirely American, sprouting up from cities in California and Washington with names like Bad Brains, Cro-Mags and Black Flag (Blush).

These bands helped to shape Hardcore as a movement, bringing it from a sideshow to the main attraction across the country, furthering this social divide between sounds that emerged in the 1970’s and 1980’s. Early shows sometimes ended in police riots, shows were full of stage-diving, slam dancing and other aggressive forms of moshing.

In fact, the term “mosh” was coined by Bad Brains, one of the most notable Hardcore Punk bands, comprised of a handful of Rastafarian men from Washington D.C. The term “mosh” may have come from the phrase “mash up”, popular in Jamaica for meaning “to destroy” or “to kill”. Bad Brains would have alternate sections in their typically fast-paced music where they

would slow down for what they called “mosh sections”, allowing slam-dancers to wind up and hit each other as hard as possible (Sanneh).

New York Hardcore

The New York scene was late to catch on to the first wave of Hardcore, given its cosmopolitan nature and distance from the origin cities of Hardcore, but quickly became one of the most brutal and despised scenes in Hardcore. New York Hardcore (NYHC) was known for its tough-guy ethos and often quite bigoted attitudes, with New Yorkers at shows being rougher with out-of-towners, and turning it into a “proving ground” of sorts. The tougher you were, the higher your social status in the New York scene.

Hardcore Punk historian Steven Blush notes the beginning of New York Hardcore as when Bad Brains moved in from Washington D.C. in 1981. Immediately following their arrival came the emergence of many New York bands considered crucial to the movement, including The Beastie Boys, Agnostic Front, and Murphy’s Law, as well as groups from New Jersey such as Misfits. Bands were coming from as far as Cleveland, Ohio to New York and congregating on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

Blush believes it was around this time the “chug” came about. “Chugging” refers to the onomatopoeia for a muted guitar chord, the “chug” is important to Hardcore as it set a musical framework that is still used today. Hardcore Punk’s musical identity was centered around rhythm, and the use of rhythmic guitar chugging (Sanneh). While something of a conscious in-joke today due to its simplicity, remains prevalent in the genre and is frequently incorporated into song sections that get a crowd excited.

Skinhead Presence in Hardcore

While Hardcore did seek to foster community centered around inclusivity and DIY ethics, it evolved into a movement that would naturally push away those who were “outsiders” to respective communities and scenes, while simultaneously creating subcultures within the scenes. After New York Hardcore began to burgeon in the East Village, kids found themselves squatting in abandoned buildings and adapting to the street culture, a practice common since the 1970’s. These young Punks often shaved their heads to show solidarity with “skinheads”, a youth subculture of working-class British immigrants from the U.K. who rejected conservatism, as well as the bourgeois hippie movement, in preference to alternative values, mainly the “rude boy” Jamaican subculture, and combining it with the mod aesthetics that were popular in the U.K. at the time (Brown). These youths would have shaved or bald heads and wear working class clothing such as Dr. Martens boots, rolled up jeans and suspenders, as well as listen to music like ska and reggae, which were genres rooted in Jamaica.

As the skinhead subculture developed and made its way to America for its second wave, skinheads became affiliated with far-right and far-left political ideologies, with some skinheads rejecting politics altogether, but by the early 1980’s, the aesthetic became synonymous with Neo-Nazis and racially-driven violence due to the media’s portrayal of the subculture using a few isolated examples. The presence of this culture in New York City, especially during the early years of New York Hardcore, played a part in fueling violence both at shows and on the streets, as a very specific set of skinheads particular to Hardcore Punk played into the “machismo” of the Hardcore scene, considering themselves a tougher breed and willing to test their mettle in the pit.

“Pogoing became slam-dancing, now known as moshing, and some of ’em didn’t seem like they were there to enjoy the music, as much as they were there to beat up on people—sometimes in a really chickenshit way,” This was recollected by Jello Biafra of Dead Kennedys, a band that remain an icon in the realm of Punk for their 1981 song, “Nazi Punks Fuck Off”, a testament to American Hardcore Punk’s disdain for the skinhead movement and the hostility they brought to shows. This quote was included in a GQ article written by Steve Knopper, published in January of 2018, that serves as an oral history of the conflict between Punks and Neo-Nazi skinheads, told through a collection of quotes from prominent musicians and influencers of the time.

Henry Rollins, the vocalist of the California-based band Black Flag, recounts how the skinheads would show up in groups, and the violence ranged from small scuffles to *Clockwork Orange*-esque actions. A more specific example: Rollins describes the events surrounding a Black Flag show in Florida in 1986, where skinheads assaulted their sound technician and cut the lines to the PA, then returned with law enforcement who demanded that the band leave the county within an hour (Knopp).

Knopp’s article in *GQ* goes on to mention that skinhead violence rarely led to extreme injuries or death, which brings up the idea that many incidents of the time were solely confrontational, and media portrayal of these events could have been skewed a certain way to cause reactions by the public. However, Knopp mentions an incident in San Bernardino, California in 2006 where Neo-Nazis cause a riot of over 1,500 which resulted in many injured and one stabbed. This seems to contradict many first-hand accounts for what Hardcore, specifically New York Hardcore, was like in the 1980’s. Many of the descriptions in interviews

depict it as danger lurking around every corner, and bands acting like gangs fighting to survive the mean streets.

The history of skinhead culture is a deep and messy one, but in a way parallels the evolution of Hardcore Punk across the 1980's and 1990's – being rooted in a central set of ideals and values, and then being warped over time and finding itself having slight variations from place to place. At this point, Hardcore-Punk found itself leading a paradoxical identity. This scene with a goal of solidifying a community became focused on micro-politics, with musicians often choosing band members not by talent, but by how involved they were in supporting their scene or how tough they proved themselves at a show by fending off skinheads or other Hardcore fans.

Kalefa Sanneh, an English-American journalist, music critic and a Harvard graduate, spent eight years writing for *The New York Times*, covering Rock, Hip-Hop and Pop music. Since leaving the position in 2008, Sanneh has been regularly contributing to *The New Yorker*. In a 2015 piece regarding how the New York Hardcore movement's paradoxical social structure was shaped, Sanneh writes, “This focus on micro-politics, on scene citizenship, was central to hardcore, and to its double-negative identity. If the punks were antisocial, the hardcore kids would be, somehow, anti-antisocial, promoting a kind of scowling solidarity—equal parts “unity” and “get the fuck away from me.” This attitude was spearheaded by Agnostic Front, one of the bands most credited for the development of New York Hardcore.

Agnostic Front & Co. at the Forefront of Hardcore Punk

Formed in early 1980 by guitarist Vinnie Stigma, Agnostic Front was a driving force behind New York Hardcore's heart in the Bowery, vocalizing many of the ideologies New

York's Hardcore scene was infamous for. In a 2009 interview with Jason Buhrmester of *The Village Voice*, Agnostic Front singer Roger Miret, an immigrant of Cuban descent, reflects on youth in Manhattan in the early 1980's for the 25th anniversary of their album "Victim in Pain", the album that confirmed the band's place at the forefront of New York Hardcore. Miret describes the streets of Lower Manhattan as a battlefield, where every group of punks saw every other group of punks as a gang.

Miret confirms the micro-political aspect of New York Hardcore, being recruited as the frontman after clearing the pit at an Angry Samoans show. "The rule for Agnostic Front was that you had to be in the pit," Miret recalls with a laugh. "You had to be a pit person. Nobody cared if you could actually *sing*, but if you were a terror in the pit, you qualified." After moving to Manhattan from Union City, New Jersey, Miret spent much of his time in Manhattan at A7, an after-hours club in the East Village where local Hardcore and Punk bands played from 1 a.m. to sunrise, with a threatening banner over the stage reading, "Out-of-town bands: Remember where you are." (Buhrmester) This serves as a looming example of the identity politics of New York Hardcore – if you were from another city or scene, you had to watch your back.

Miret also goes on to confirm the origins of the term "Hardcore" in this interview, saying, "we wanted to separate ourselves from the druggy or artsy punk scene that was happening in New York at the time," says Miret. "That was old Andy Warhol stuff. Just artsy. We were rougher kids living in the streets. It had a rougher edge." Agnostic Front notably perpetuated the "us vs them" mentality, and rallied their fans in fights against capitalism, cops, and whoever "them" could possibly be. Many saw the band and the movement they sparked as nothing but macho thugs, which arguably is true. A subculture of mostly men, making music as ugly as their cuts and bruises, with a social ladder you climbed by being more aggressive. Maybe the old

punks of the 1970's were right – maybe anti-intellectual, overly violent, and musically limited was the proper way to describe the first wave of Hardcore.

As Miret describes, the groups of Punks in the Hardcore scene were essentially gangs. You would have Punks at shows from all over New York City, but they all hated each other. Punks from Queens hated the Punks from Manhattan, and they both hated the Punks from Long Island; this paints a vivid picture like gangs fighting over territory. The animosity was also apparent between the NYHC scene and other East Coast scenes in Boston and Washington D.C., although Boston and D.C.'s scenes were supposedly doing much better, as Todd Youth, the guitarist from Murphy's Law, describes the kids from New York as, "crazy fucking street rats" (Sanneh).

One factor that contributed to the violence was political affiliation within the Hardcore scene, as well as a lack thereof. As mentioned, many young punks residing in Lower Manhattan became affiliated with skinheads, whose movement centered around working-class solidarity had essentially been supplanted by Neo-Nazis. During these years, Agnostic Front came under fire for their use of Nazi imagery and allowing it to become synonymous with the "New York Hardcore attitude", effectively giving Neo-Nazis a home within the New York scene (Sanneh). Agnostic Front's first album cover featured a photo titled, "The Last Jew of Vinnitsa", depicting a Jewish man being executed by an SS soldier in 1941 Ukraine. The album follows with a few anti-fascist epithets but remains largely undeclared in its political stance. Many fans began to pick and choose their own meanings and focused on more overarching themes that could represent their pride in New York Hardcore, but overall this just stirred up more tension.



"The Last Jew in Vinnitsa" (2016). *Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection*. 2012.1.397.

<https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1085>

The political ambiguity perpetuated by Agnostic Front, gang mentality within the New York Hardcore Scene, as well as the presence of fascist and White supremacist groups culminated in what Miret described: a battlefield.

While the band's stance on the situation remained ambiguous but reassuring that they were not advocates of prejudiced violence, they still provided an opening for White supremacy, as well as anti-gay violence, in Hardcore. Given that Hardcore was a scene of predominantly White males, and in New York City was based out of neighborhoods populated by mostly minorities, it comes as no surprise that this subculture came to be in the same vein as White supremacy. Agnostic Front and Cro-Mags, another band at the forefront of the New York

Hardcore movement, often rallied their fans into somewhat tribal groups, and naturally they came to be centered around racial identity.

The Cro-Mags, in similar fashion to Agnostic Front, were one of the earlier movers and shakers in New York Hardcore. Cro-Mags made it a point for their music to reflect the hostile environment they grew up in, “Depicting the violence, poverty and urban decay of the streets of the lower east side in the 80’s” (History). The band’s website takes liberty in depicting the band’s history as an underdog story, with the band members being no more than adolescents, drinking, doing drugs, getting into street fights and planning robberies before coming together and starting Cro-Mags.

Despite recent legal issues between band members regarding legal ownership of the name “Cro-Mags” (Grow), the band found themselves at the cusp of New York Hardcore during the 1980’s, accomplishing a blend of Hardcore Punk’s aggression with the speed and precision of Thrash Metal, opening the floodgates for future creative endeavors which would later earn the moniker of “Crossover” given the intent of crossing over Hardcore and Thrash Metal.

According to data taken from the Census Bureau in Washington D.C., the population of Manhattan in 1980 was almost 1.5 million people, with most of that population comprised of White people at almost 850,000 people. The census data accounts for almost 310,000 Black people and roughly 336,000 people of Hispanic origin. The East Village has a long history as an enclave for ethnic residents; Alphabet City specifically is famous for its Eastern European and Latino communities, and evidently was regarded as one of the most dangerous places in New York City towards the end of the 20th century.

The Bowery in the East Village was also home to CBGB, the famous nightclub where Punk thrived in the 1970’s and one of the spots where Hardcore took New York by storm in the

1980's ("Hardcore on the Bowery"). The club was receptive to Hardcore in the 80's considering it was a good way for them to make more money by running all-ages shows. Considering both the Latino and European presence in the East Village during the first wave of Hardcore, it makes sense that racial tension would rise since Agnostic Front's lack of stance on topics like fascism and Nazism allowed White supremacy to take root. This goes hand in hand with the testosterone-fueled micro-politics of the New York Hardcore scene, where your social status was determined by how many shows you went to, and whether you could take a beating once you got there. It's easy to see how the "us vs them" mentality leads to "them" being defined by race.

It is once again that Bad Brains, an all-Black Hardcore band, proves the exception here. They made no effort towards dividing their fans by race, gender, sexual orientation, or other identities; they were already part of a minority and were determined to spread positive energy.

Drowned in Sound is an online music zine started by Sean Adams in 1998 and financed by the Artist Management company Silentway Ltd. Contributor Rene Symonds from London was given the opportunity to interview the members of Bad Brains in 2007 and had this to say,

Let's start back at the beginning. It's 1979 and in the poor neighbourhoods of Washington DC, four friends – gifted musicians – discover the music of the Ramones, The Stooges, The Pistols, The Dead Boys and others. Bad Brains was formed, but where other punkers had been limited by skill, the Brains were technically proficient musos with a history of progressive jazz. In other words, they could fucking shred, dude. Within weeks they were the kings of the scene and people flocked to their shows, partly out of novelty. "*Have you heard this band Bad Brains,*" kids would say. "*Apparently they're all black dudes!*" - something completely unprecedented in punk.

“I never really noticed that I was the only black guy in a club,” says bassist Daryl Jennifer retrospectively when I call him at his East Coast home. *“I just knew I was a youth inspired to be a punk like my brethren Ian MacKaye [of Minor Threat / Fugazi]. We was colour blind.”*

The band members further expressed that once they got in touch with their spirituality through Rastafarianism, their music evolved. From the spiritual transcendence of Rastafari to Positive Mental Attitude (PMA), Bad Brains were dedicated to promoting positivity through their music – something they very much admired about Bob Marley, leading them to integrate elements of Reggae into Hardcore for a much more diverse sound.

Bad Brains felt like a diamond in the rough, if you will. A shining example of a band from the first wave of Hardcore that focused solely on positive energy and fostering the sense of togetherness that scenes like New York Hardcore seemingly couldn’t manage.

Despite the momentum behind the first wave of Hardcore, the early 1980’s scene didn’t last very long – mostly due to the little longevity that New York Hardcore and similar inner-city movements held. By the late 1980’s, Hardcore moved back out to the suburbs where it found the kind of structure that NYHC came up short on.

Hardcore’s Second Wave: Youth Crew & the Straight-Edge Movement

In 1987, Ray Cappo of Danbury, Connecticut started a small record label with a classmate and was riding on the success of his band, Youth of Today, one of the biggest names in New York Hardcore. Cappo’s label, Revelation Records, released a compilation in 1987 titled, “New York Hardcore 1987: Together”, and introduced the world to what are now well-respected acts like Gorilla Biscuits (REV). Cappo’s aim with Youth of Today was to bring the same heavy-

hitting sound that the first wave of Hardcore had but bring a moral structure to the movement in cities like New York through the straight-edge movement known as “The Youth Crew”.

Straight-edge was a philosophy born out of the early 1980’s D.C. scene dedicated to an anti-drug and anti-alcohol lifestyle. In some cases, it includes a strict vegetarian diet or even the abstinence of “temporary gratifications” such as sex. Many were drawn to the punk scene in D.C. for the art, some for the social activism and sense of community, and some for the anti-authoritarian ideology, but remained hesitant because they felt that drugs served as nothing more than a hinderance. This philosophy came about as a timely response to the hedonistic behaviors in the scene towards the end of the 1970’s. Around this time many notable musicians met an early grave, such as Sid Vicious from The Sex Pistols, who died of a heroin overdose in New York City’s Greenwich Village in 1979 (Kifner).

Nowadays, Straight-Edge is a movement recognized around the world, and not always associated with Hardcore. Many who adhere to the lifestyle also advocate for animal rights, anti-fascism, feminism and ecological movements.

The second wave of Hardcore, proudly representing the Straight-Edge lifestyle, made it clear that they were going back to Hardcore’s roots in the suburbs. Wearing Nike sneakers, Champion sweatshirts, varsity jackets, drawing X’s on the backs of their hands and sporting low-cut hair, this movement sparked arguably as many problems as it sought to resolve. Most evidently, the youth crew movement retained, and likely emphasized the macho, testosterone-fueled attitudes of the first wave of Hardcore, incorporating an air of misogyny and keeping the violence contained within the venue.

These two philosophies are similar but are not synonymous. While both movements shared the intent of bringing moral reform to the barbaric first wave of Hardcore, Straight-Edge

was more concerned with the lifestyle of being free from drugs, alcohol and other vices, as well as participating in social activism. Youth Crew was an offshoot of the Straight-Edge movement centered around the suburbia aesthetic, and dressing like jocks. Someone who is Straight-Edge doesn't necessarily have to be involved in a Hardcore scene, but someone who was involved in the Youth Crew movement in the 1990's was most likely Straight-Edge.

Women were heavily ostracized from the Youth Crew scenes, which is likely the origin of the contemporary notion that Hardcore is a "boys' club" and being mainly associated with cis-white males. Additionally, slam-dancing, considered the original form of moshing, was a form of dancing at Hardcore and Punk shows where people would go around and quite literally slam their bodies into other show-goers (Blush). With the presence of youth crew during the second wave of Hardcore, this evolved into a much more aggressive form of dancing which was oddly more athletic in nature. Spin kicks, swinging arms and flips off the stage were the main aspects of this, as well as the divide between the band and the crowd vanishing as the audience rushed the stage to grab the microphone, all of which is still ever-present today (Sherman).

Crowdkilling, a common occurrence at shows featuring Hardcore and similar subgenres, is a form of moshing that is often the subject of debate. Audience members go around the mosh pit throwing punches and kicks at people standing near the edge of the area, or further into the crowd.

Jake Tiernan, a blog writer for *Heavy Blog is Heavy* published a piece in January 2016, where he goes on to recall the behaviors of Youth Crew, and how it compares to modern forms of bullying at shows. He asserts that while Youth Crew aimed to have young music fans surrounding themselves with others who sought a positive and healthy lifestyle, it led to

dangerous herd mentalities, resulting in Crews policing shows and ganging up on people who didn't seem to fit their mold.

The act of crowdkilling has seen many extremes, often being pushed well past simply fists and feet; audience members kicking holes through walls, being tackled through merch tables, and beaten over the head with shoes – resulting in damages to patrons and the venue alike. This act seems to stem from a mentality that everyone at the show should be participating, forcing anyone who attends to be part of the mosh pit. The irony of this is that Punk music is built on expression and freedom of choice under a similar set of values, and forcing people do to something they don't want to is exactly the opposite of that (Tiernan). The result is that the experience of being at a show becomes a contest of brute strength, audacity and showmanship, more akin to professional wrestling matches than what one considers a concert.

Nowadays this ideology can be seen through the phrase, “If you don't want to get hit, stay home,” a slogan that's become synonymous with the concepts of toxic masculinity and exclusivity in Hardcore, harkening back to the attitudes of Hardcore's first wave, and is what pushes venues to adopt safer space policies today.

We live in a time where political correctness and safe space policies are becoming a staple for DIY spaces. This is mainly due to excessive violence more than often being the reason why shows and entire venues get shut down, and discrimination still rearing its ugly head in venues, making showgoers feel unwelcome or threatened, and resulting in lowered turnout at shows. People are very quick to defend these actions, specifically overly aggressive moshing, which do present a level of physical danger to many people who don't want to be involved in it and simply enjoy the show from a distance.

While attempting to spread a “positive message” and create a sense of togetherness for youth with no outlet, it begs the question of, “has starting a counterculture to a counterculture to a counterculture really done more harm than good?”

Regardless, both movements share the same core ideology of community, and despite superficial and aesthetic differences, Hardcore lives on in a myriad of contemporary subgenres. In Kalefa Sanneh’s piece for *The New Yorker*, he notes,

Hardcore endured, too, as an ideal, and a cultural strategy. Most of all, being hardcore means turning inward, ignoring broader society in order to create a narrower one. In that narrower society, one’s ideological convictions can matter less than conviction itself—a sense, however vague, of shared purpose. In the New York hardcore scene, a wide range of characters—from Rastafarians to Republicans, street rats to suburbanites—came to see themselves as part of the same movement. That flexible spirit lives on in the genre’s famous suffix, which is now used to tag an array of movements, not all of them musical: rapcore, metalcore, grindcore, nerdcore, mumblecore, normcore.

While the sentiment of “shared purpose” sounds poetic, and almost heroic, it’s important not to disregard the negative effects brought about by that mindset only a few decades ago. Ignoring broader society causes communities to turn inward and shun anyone deemed an “outsider”, inherently marginalizing other groups if not done with a sense of welcoming and inclusivity for anyone who wishes to be a part of that community. It’s largely like the idea of, “if everyone wants to be different, doesn’t that just make you all the same?”

Conclusion

The moral philosophy of Hardcore in the 1980s was admirable, but it was not properly executed. While trying to bring people together under progressive ideals, the severe identity crisis of the Hardcore Punk movement indirectly ostracized the LGBTQ community, women and people of color, contributing to these groups being marginalized from a community that strived for inclusion. The movement was sidetracked from its goal by unnecessary violence and animosity towards people who shared the same goals and ideals and set itself back by allowing Neo-Nazism into its community. This is likely because the movement started, and was pushed forward, by almost exclusively cis-white men using a barbaric social structure, something along the lines of an animalistic pack mentality. And it is because the men who sparked these movements attempted to shut themselves off from a broader society, they turned Hardcore into the bigoted, violent, testosterone-rampant “boys’ club” it’s been perceived as since.

And again, now that we are in a time where inclusivity and safe spaces are what keep DIY spaces and venues alive, and bands are vocal about calls for inclusivity based on identity in their respective scenes, if you do not adhere to that you may effectively be ostracized yourself for displays of bigotry, ignorance and excessive violence. The heavy music scenes have become drastically more aware of overt expressions of discrimination and is willing to call out those who do not reflect a reasonable and tolerant set of morals.

Works Cited

Berkers^[MOU1], P. (2012), Rock Against Gender Roles: Performing Femininities and Doing

Feminism

Among Women Punk Performers in the Netherlands, 1976–1982. Journal of Popular Music Studies, 24: 155-175. doi:10.1111/j.1533-1598.2012.01323.x

Blush, Steven. "WHAT IS HARDCORE?" *GRR Green Room Radio*, 2 Mar. 2016, 3:00, greenroom-radio.com/2016/03/02/what-is-hardcore/.

Blush, Steven. "American Hardcore (Second Edition): A Tribal History." AbeBooks, Feral House, 1 Jan. 1970, www.abebooks.com/9781932595895/American-Hardcore-Second-Edition-Tribal-1932595899/plp.

Brown, Timothy S. "Timothy S. Brown: 'Subcultures, Pop Music, and Politics: Skinheads and 'Nazi Rock' in England and Germany.'" *Timothy S. Brown: "Subcultures, Pop Music, and Politics: Skinheads and "Nazi Rock" in England and Germany"*, 1 Jan. 1970, brandingandmassculture.blogspot.com/2014/01/timothy-s-brown-subcultures-pop-music.html.

Buhrmester, Jason. "Agnostic Front's Victim in Pain at 25." *Village Voice*, 1 Dec. 2009, www.villagevoice.com/2009/12/01/agnostic-fronts-victim-in-pain-at-25/.

Cogan, Brian (2012) Typical Girls?: Fuck Off, You Wanker! Re-Evaluating the Slits and Gender Relations in Early British Punk and Post-Punk, *Women's Studies*, 41:2, 121-135, DOI: 10.1080/00497878.2012.636331

Gibson, Campbell, and Kay Jung. "Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States ." U.S. Census Bureau, Feb. 2005.

Griffin, N. (2012). Gendered performance and performing gender in the DIY punk and hardcore music scene. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(2), 66-81. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.purchase.edu:2048/login?url=https://ezproxy.purchase.edu:4131/docview/1019284979?accountid=14171>

Grow, Kory. "Cro-Mags Lawsuit: Harley Flanagan Wins Band Name." *Rolling Stone*, 23 Apr. 2019, www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/cro-mags-harley-flanagan-wins-band-name-825896/

"Hardcore on the Bowery: An Exclusive Excerpt From NYHC: New York Hardcore 1980-1990." *Village Voice*, 2 Dec. 2014, www.villagevoice.com/2014/12/02/hardcore-on-the-bowery-an-exclusive-excerpt-from-nyhc-new-york-hardcore-1980-1990/.

"History." *The Official Cro-Mags Website*, www.cro-mags.com/history.htm.

Kifner, John. "Sid Vicious, Punk-Rock Musician, Dies, Apparently of Drug Overdose." *The New York Times*, *The New York Times*, 3 Feb. 1979, www.nytimes.com/1979/02/03/archives/sid-vicious-punkrock-musician-dies-apparently-of-drug-overdose-bail.html.

Knopper, Steve. "How Black Flag, Bad Brains, and More Reclaimed Punk from White Supremacists." *GQ*, *GQ*, 16 Jan. 2018, www.gq.com/story/punks-and-nazis-oral-history.

"Proto-Punk Music Genre Overview." *AllMusic*, www.allmusic.com/style/proto-punk-ma0000005021.

Sanneh, Kelefa. "United Blood: How Hardcore Conquered New York." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 9 Mar. 2015, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/03/09/united-blood.

Sherman, Maria. "Air Jordans, Hockey and Hardcore: How Punk Embraced Sports." *Rolling Stone*, Rolling Stone, 11 Oct. 2016, www.rollingstone.com/sports/youth-crew-hardcore-and-the-jock-punk-look-w444247.

Symonds, Rene. "Soul Brothers: DiS Meets Bad Brains." *DrownedInSound*, 16 Aug. 2007, dis11.herokuapp.com/in_depth/2307017-soul-brothers--dis-meets-bad-brains.

~~Sherman, Maria. "Air Jordans, Hockey and Hardcore: How Punk Embraced Sports." *Rolling Stone*, Rolling Stone, 11 Oct. 2016, www.rollingstone.com/sports/youth-crew-hardcore-and-the-jock-punk-look-w444247.~~

~~Buhrmester, Jason. "Agnostic Front's Victim in Pain at 25." *Village Voice*, 1 Dec. 2009, www.villagevoice.com/2009/12/01/agnostic-fronts-victim-in-pain-at-25/.~~

~~Gibson, Campbell, and Kay Jung. "Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States ." U.S. Census Bureau, Feb. 2005.~~

~~Berkers, P. (2012). Rock Against Gender Roles: Performing Femininities and Doing Feminism Among Women Punk Performers in the Netherlands, 1976–1982. *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 24: 155–175. doi:10.1111/j.1533-1598.2012.01323.x~~

~~Griffin, N. (2012). Gendered performance and performing gender in the DIY punk and hardcore music scene. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(2), 66–81. Retrieved from~~

<http://ezproxy.purchase.edu:2048/login?url=https://ezproxy.purchase.edu:4131/doi/10.1080/00497878.2012.636331>

BRIAN COGAN (2012) Typical Girls?: Fuck Off, You Wanker! Re-Evaluating the Slits and Gender Relations in Early British Punk and Post-Punk, *Women's Studies*, 41:2, 121-135, DOI: [10.1080/00497878.2012.636331](https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2012.636331)

"Proto-Punk Music Genre Overview." *AllMusic*, www.allmusic.com/style/proto-punk-ma0000005021.

~~Blush, Steven. "American Hardcore (Second Edition): A Tribal History." *AbcBooks*, Feral House, 1 Jan. 1970, www.abcbooks.com/9781932595895/American-Hardcore-Second-Edition-Tribal-1932595899/plp.~~

Brown, Timothy S. "Timothy S. Brown: 'Subcultures, Pop Music, and Politics: Skinheads and 'Nazi Rock' in England and Germany.'" *Timothy S. Brown: "Subcultures, Pop Music, and Politics: Skinheads and "Nazi Rock" in England and Germany"*, 1 Jan. 1970, brandingandmassculture.blogspot.com/2014/01/timothy-s-brown-subcultures-pop-music.html.

Knopper, Steve. "How Black Flag, Bad Brains, and More Reclaimed Punk from White Supremacists." *GQ*, GQ, 16 Jan. 2018, www.gq.com/story/punks-and-nazis-oral-history.

"The Last Jew in Vinnitsa" (2016). Bulmash Family Holocaust Collection. 2012.1.397.

<https://digital.kenyon.edu/bulmash/1085>

~~"Hardcore on the Bowery: An Exclusive Excerpt From NYHC: New York Hardcore 1980-1990." *Village Voice*, 2 Dec. 2014, www.villagevoice.com/2014/12/02/hardcore-on-the-bowery-an-exclusive-excerpt-from-nyhc-new-york-hardcore-1980-1990/.~~

Tiernan, Jake. "No More Mr. Tough Guy: The Issue With Machismo In Hardcore." *Heavy Blog Is Heavy*, 22 Jan. 2016, www.heavyblogisheavy.com/2016/01/22/no-more-mr-tough-guy-the-issue-with-machismo-in-hardcore/.

~~"History." *The Official Cro Mags Website*, .~~

~~Grow, Kory. "Cro Mags Lawsuit: Harley Flanagan Wins Band Name." *Rolling Stone*, 23 Apr. 2019, www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/cro-mags-harley-flanagan-wins-band-name-825896/.~~

"REV 002 | V/A - New York City Hardcore 1987 - Together." *Revelation Records : V/A - New York City Hardcore 1987 - Together*, revelationrecords.com/release/223.

~~Kifner, John. "Sid Vicious, Punk Rock Musician, Dies, Apparently of Drug Overdose." *The New York Times*, *The New York Times*, 3 Feb. 1979, www.nytimes.com/1979/02/03/archives/sid-vicious-punkrock-musician-dies-apparently-of-drug-overdose-bail.html.~~

