

**When 'Girl' Is A Four-Letter Word:
A Case Study of Pussy Riot in Western and Social Media**

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ABSTRACT

On February 21, 2012, five members of the Russian girl group Pussy Riot stormed the altar at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow to perform what they called a punk prayer in protest of President Vladimir Putin's reelection. The performance lasted less than one minute, yet became the cause for intense prosecution and harsh sentencing of three identified group members on charges of hooliganism. Since the performance, Pussy Riot has become a lightning rod of discussion regarding depictions of women and girls within Western and social media. This study reviews the history of girl groups and analyzes the messaging strategies they attempted. A mixed-methods approach was employed to review the depictions of Pussy Riot in Western and social media and to measure the degree to which the group's preferred messaging was promoted. The key findings include a low level of reporting on Pussy Riot's political positioning and the rejection of Pussy Riot's preferred narrative by Western media. Overall, the results provide insight to the complex relationship between women in the media and suggest ways that communication practitioners can improve their tactics.

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Introduction

In the summer of 2011, a bold declaration was made in the form of pop music: "Who run the world? Girls!" (Nash, et al.). At least, according to Beyonce. But how true is the hypothesis of her chart-topping single?

As a gender, we have drawn the short end of the stick, with controversy and suspicion following us since the very creation of Eve. Over the course of history, we have been proclaimed as virtuous, defamed as harlots, and cast below men in terms of rank and file. Questions of propriety have persisted throughout the ages, with basic human rights still being denied to many women in this very day and age. And yet, as a whole, we have proven resilient, as we cross, redefine, blur, and even play along the invisible, unspoken gender lines.

The early-to-mid 1990s saw the rise of the Riot Grrrl movement within Western culture, with bands like Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, and Huggy Bear reclaiming the feminist mantle in Western popular culture. Originating in Washington, D.C. and later spreading throughout the United States and the Western world, the informal network adapted punk music, style, and culture to promote their ideology and outrage. In embracing a do-it-yourself aesthetic, Riot Grrrl groups

gathered to talk and support one another amid a rock scene that was very much a boys' club. Personal testimonies and manifestos were spread through photocopied fanzines - the precursors to blogs - and distributed by hand or through the mail (Hopper, 2011, para 5).

By doing so, Riot Grrrl marked the first time that women and girls created popular media for themselves. The spirit of the movement challenged the mainstream culture that denied the value of women's ideas and their very beings, while the content created protested the status quo and promoted their views through tangible artistic media.

Though the original Riot Grrrl movement died out by the late 1990s, the Russian girl group Pussy Riot has recently taken up the cause. The all-female Russian collective stages guerilla performances promoting feminism and LGBT rights and opposing the policies of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The group

gained worldwide prominence in 2012 following the arrest and conviction of three group members on charges of hooliganism related to an unauthorized punk-prayer performance at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Since the conviction, Pussy Riot has become a lightning rod of discussion regarding matters of censorship, freedom of speech, cultural differences within Russia, and the depiction of women in the international media. With everything from the group's structure, purpose, and motives to discuss, the resulting differences between Pussy Riot's stated intentions and the mainstream media coverage are particularly curious and worthy of examination (Pelly, 2012; Platt & Sotnik, 2012; Vanden Heuvel, 2012).

The media, both old and new, have long exploited selected elements from within the diaspora of female liberation through sensationalized and sexualized coverage, often disregarding the original intent and purpose [of feminist protests](#) in favor of a preferred narrative. In terms of content, this approach – this framing of content towards the creation of a desired storyline – is fascinating in scopes both massive and minute. Our modern society is one of media convergence, where societal consumers are simultaneously courted across multiple media platforms; it is this convergence culture that makes it easier than ever before to study popular movements and the various ways in which societies and cultures interact (Jenkins, 2006). The question then becomes what (if any) impact the perpetuated messages actually have upon our understanding of these cultural phenomenon, and whether the chosen method of sharing encodes the content with a biased perspective.

Media reports and depictions are important to consider for several reasons. In the larger context, it is important to think about the ways in which cultures understand and relate to one another, while on a smaller scale, relatively little material exists juxtaposing these dynamics in action through the lens of the modern, 24/7 Western news media cycle and social media. Pussy Riot group members readily admit to being influenced by punk subculture and the Riot Grrrl movement of the early-to-mid 1990s, both of which relied heavily on peer-to-peer contact and promotion in order to sustain momentum and growth. The collective nature of such peer-to-peer information sharing, and its effect of community building, is worthy of

exploration in regards to its extension towards social media. As Kathleen Hanna, one of the original Riot Grrrls, has said of the attention placed on Pussy Riot:

This could be the start of a whole new thing, a whole new motivating source for a globally connected unapologetic punk feminist art and music scene. A catalyst, no matter what it gets called. Anything is possible, if anything, this band has reminded us of that (Hanna, 2012, para. 3).

In order to fully analyze these notions and ideas, it is necessary to look at the blurring lines of old and new media, entertainment and politics, and the public and the personal. Social cognitive theory and framing must be considered, especially for their ability to foster an understanding of the potential influence of the media on the public; these theories provide a structured train of thought which aid in the organized interpretation of the media's effects. For instance, since the news media have great power in choosing the lens through which to report on social protest, the framing technique can be utilized to minimize ideological threats against the status quo. For feminists in particular, this often means subjection to reports on physical appearance at the sake of substance. The use of chosen words and images has a great deal of influence; in this case, the word girl can be just as powerful as any of the more traditional four-letter words (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, Ashley & Olson, 1998).

To this end, the point of this paper will be to explore how Western and social media have portrayed Pussy Riot, as well as to discuss the potential implications of this coverage on public perceptions. While there are other all-female bands and/or political groups, the selection of Pussy Riot is due to the complete creative control retained by the group. Since the group was formed with the sole intention of promoting their political agenda and advocating for reform within modern Russia, the possible interference of promotion for the lone sake of profit or fame is thus eliminated. This rarity mimics the approach of Riot Grrrl activism and will be an important aspect to consider through analysis; it highlights the fact that Pussy Riot chose specific tactics based on the possibility of political gain rather than media coverage.

Objectives

Specifically, the study will attempt to:

1. Review the communication techniques used by Pussy Riot.
2. Assess [Western media](#) coverage of Pussy Riot and explore its effectiveness in reporting the stated goals of the group.
3. Analyze social media discussions regarding the group and the review their overall perceptions and sentiment.
4. Demonstrate the extent of any media bias towards the group due to gender.
5. Suggest ways in which communication practitioners can better advance female messaging through the media.

For the purpose of this study, the specific media considered as Western will be confined to English-language broadcasts from a convenience sample of networks catalogued by the Internet Archive on the website Archive.org. A *60 Minutes* interview with Pussy Riot will also be considered, as will popular print sources such as *The New York Times*, *GQ Magazine*, and *The Atlantic*. Twitter will be the sole platform reviewed for social media.

In order to achieve a comprehensive review of these ideas, this paper will be organized into two major sections: the literature review and the case study. The literature review will provide an overview of the ideas and dynamics pertaining to Social Cognitive Theory, Framing, Traditional Western News Media, New/Social Media, and Girl Culture. This section is intended to provide a comprehensive framework from which to approach the following case study and the research objectives of this paper, as stated above. The case study of Pussy Riot will then employ a mixed methods approach to explore the ways in which the group was featured in the media. Finally, the results of the study will be analyzed and discussed, before concluding with a summation of the findings and recommendations for future consideration.

Literature Review

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory proposes that society at large functions by mimicking the actions, behaviors, beliefs, and styles of a selected influential set, usually made up of persons glorified by the media. The adoption of such behaviors is furthered through repeated exposure, which, in turn, results in the carrier medium becoming a powerful source of “gender-linked knowledge and competencies” (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008, p. 132). A prime example of such behavior in action can be found in the rise of gender-specific clothing for babies; white, a neutral (and bleachable) option, had been prevalent until the start of World War I, when manufacturers began to promote blue and pink as gender-signifiers (Maglaty, 2011). This notion demonstrates that created content is the source of “measurable influence on people’s perceptions of the real world, and, regardless of the accuracy of these perceptions, they are used to help guide subsequent attitudes, judgments, and actions” (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008, p. 131). It logically follows that those in charge of creating and distributing media have great influential power.

The founder of social cognitive theory, Albert Bandura (2001) extended his theory towards emerging social technology, seeming to foresee the now prevalent social media platforms that allow for individuals to promote their own influence; he referred to this phenomenon as being the “macrosocial applications of sociocognitive principles” (p. 18). He said:

the values to which we subscribe and the social systems we devise to oversee the uses to which our powerful technologies are put will play a vital role in what we become and how we shape our destiny (Bandura, 2001, p. 23).

Bandura further warned that individualism could undermine collective efficacy by allowing movements to become muddled under the weight of numerous minute differences. He believed that such platforms could potentially “become a constraining force that, in turn, control how [people] think and behave” (Bandura, 2001, p. 17).

Framing

Framing, another constraining force, is usually implemented in attempts to guide thought. From a narrow perspective, framing can be defined as a social construct purposefully implemented in order to influence the audience. This places an emphasis on the power of the medium, rather than the power of the message itself; essentially, the idea put forth is that it is not what but how something is said that matters (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2009).

Though it can also be asserted that framing is a dynamic, co-dependent principle, characterized as much by what is included as what is excluded, to say that it is as powerful for its content as for its method of delivery gives great credit to the so-called 'message creators.' This raises questions of ethics and cultural understanding; with the current state of the media potentially being compromised by self-serving biases on the part of these creators, context is surely as considerable a factor as content (Hallahan, 1999).

Because "a frame makes reference to something resident in the surrounding culture... the presence of the frame essentially invites the audience to apply the information and meanings within which the culture has imbued the frame" (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, p. 23). This suggests a diversion from the sought-after cultural understanding. Furthermore,

quality news coverage is only likely to reach a small audience of already informed and engaged citizens.... The rest of the public either ignores the coverage or reinterprets competing claims based on partisanship or self-interest (Nisbet, 2009, p. 14).

Even such, "framing plays a pivotal role in defining social problems and the attendant moral actions in dealing with them" (Hallahan, 1999, p. 217). Without the access to or promotion of news and stories, cross-cultural understanding would not be possible.

Traditional Western News Media

Though social cognitive theory and framing provide frameworks for interpretation, to say that a comprehensive understanding of the current state of

media is easily achievable is to underestimate the realities, scope, and power of current news production. The notion that a democratic media system should provide insight into everyday social forces in order to broaden perspective is as noble as it is silly; were mass media free, in this sense to educate, it would not be able to maintain its vast outreach, or the essence of its mass influence. Current trends point to an even greater increase in the amount of messaging from fewer, yet more powerful, producers (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992).

The news media exercise a great power in choosing how to report social protest; the framing technique is especially useful in minimizing ideological threats against the status quo. As Ashley and Olson (1998) found in their study of newspaper and print magazine content, most reporting concerning the Equal Rights Amendment covered the issue of women's rights mainly in terms of the legal progress required to pass a constitutional amendment, with little regard to the specific policies and movement leaders. Their research concluded that "women involved in social protests have been treated differently depending on the issues and their tactics; the media have lost interest when women protest on behalf of their own needs" (p. 266).

For feminists in particular, this treatment often means subjection to reporting on physical appearance, which can even include speculation on underwear and personal hygiene (Ashley & Olson, 1998). This discussion shows that

the lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus on it. And the special genius of this system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992, p. 374).

Some of the strongest evidence of media bias and framing can be found through the study of techniques used in the delegitimation of feminists. Over time, these actions came to extend beyond the reporting on aspects of women's visual appearance, moving on to the use of quotation marks around such words as

'liberation,' and emphasizing dissent within the movement. Conversely, the anti-feminists were described as well-organized and attractive. The movement's goals are rarely mentioned, while surface details were commonly presented (Ashley & Olson, 1998). It should be no surprise that "the coverage of the women for the movement rarely included their goals, [but] often focused on deviant (but not violent) behavior" (Ashley & Olson, 1998, p. 271).

Furthermore, newer, technological advances within the field of journalism allow for the public to be provided with an unprecedented amount of poor journalism, while also providing access to a wider variety of reputable news sources (Fallows, 2012). In his profile of Gawker media, Fallows (2012) notes that the reporting done by the staff writers is nearly all online-based, which suggests that the content published is actually a frame within a frame – information that has been pre-processed only to be chewed up and rewritten for one of the company's websites. A study of this process of frame transformation shows that the approach only serves to shift attention to media discourse as an outcome or dependent variable (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). In other words, media creators have begun to react and respond to what it believes its public wants to hear. And with so much choice now available to the consumer, the danger here is that, "with each passing month, people can get more of what they want and less of what someone else thinks they should have" (Fallows, 2012, p. 38). There is, however, some good news to be found in this, as the unsettled nature of such media leaves room for competing challengers to provide alternatives (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992).

New/Social Media

"Social media represents a confluence of old technologies, archival functions, the desire to share and blog, identity shaping platforms, as well as the ability to individually and collectively edit web-based content" (Green, 2011, p. 12). These tools can affect our impressions of others, help to shape online communities, and provide valuable insight as to how average web users both generate and consume media.

In fact, original Riot Grrrl Kathleen Hanna credits the Internet, and resulting social mediums, with the promotion of access to elements of counter-cultures and the cultivation of a do-it-yourself spirit that harkens back to the early days of handmade zines (Eakin, 2012). As early adopters “from the beginning, punks relied on a basic, low-cost mode of production that exploited public-domain technologies,” (Ramirez, 2009, p. 6). The subculture’s historical aversion to traditional media outlets has led to a reliance upon differing methods of mass communication, and social media have become fundamental to the development of the punk communication infrastructure (Ramirez, 2009).

This methodology “is qualitatively different from the dominant media structure in that it primarily relies on people as actors rather than consumers” (Ramirez, 2009, p. 10). The notion is similar to Driscoll and Gregg’s (2011) review of the two-way participation demanded by convergence culture, and is further supported by a 2012 Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism finding that YouTube is quickly becoming a popular source of news. The findings of the study are an interesting contradiction to the purported problem of fewer news producers. The on-demand nature of the website allows for viewers to search for the news they would like to see, as well as to choose their preferred source. This idea has world-wide implications, and could prove to become a force of its own within the realm of globalization (Farhi, 2012).

Moreover, Driscoll and Gregg’s discussion of the increasing difficulty in separating online culture from every day life applies to the idea of a conscious participatory culture and underscores the use of this medium by subcultures (Driscoll & Gregg, 2011). As they assert, “subculture is a tool for talking about interaction between rhetorics of presence and community” (p. 567). The implication of this form of extended community building is that participants can – and should be – exposed to advocacy online, but should move their actions offline as well.

Since users share information on such a mass scale, maintaining an online façade would be difficult to maintain. This leads to the logical presumption that user-generated content is less likely to be purposefully, or even knowingly, framed towards a specific implication or intended outcome (Green, 2011). As users go about

exploring the faults and fables of the world, social media “have demonstrated the power to create news and become alternative, competing sources of information” (Jones & Himelboim, 2010, p. 274).

The bottom line of convergence culture is that participation has become something media industries must engage with since consumers are already using existing technologies to breakup and reformulate media texts for reasons of their own (Driscoll & Gregg, 2011, p. 574).

Another element to consider in relation to social media is that of listening. The importance of this idea is that it offers a way to analyze forms of online engagement while remaining at a subjective distance. Over the course of history, what we listen to, as well as how we listen, has shifted to accommodate our changing behaviors. This notion, however, is in direct opposition to the oft-applied metaphor of speaking up through action that is usually used to define online culture. Little research has been done to look into these lesser forms of participation, such as direct messaging and reading of comments. The act of such participation, such tuning in, is itself participatory, and it is with only a slight extension that one then could speculate that framing within these forms of created culture must be innate in nature (Crawford, 2009, Farhi, 2012). Twitter itself provides an interesting example of this notion in action. The platform limits each tweet and direct message to 140 characters, which forces the writer to condense their message into only a handful of words. Users then turn to punctuation marks and grammatical style in order to fully convey their message. This labored creation relies on tone and style to imply – or frame – meaning where words are not possible.

Girl Culture

Since the early 1990s, a growing trend within feminist culture has been the strategic invoking of girlhood imagery. As various zines and e-zines note, Riot Grrls often adapted little girl-esque and/or extremely sexualized methods of dressing, purposefully invoking such images as a means of fostering female youth fandom,

with the added bonus of causing disruption to the traditional patriarchal cultural discourse (Driscoll, 1999, Wald, 1998).

This deliberate promotion of girlish dress, and the accompanying personas, has usually been found at the intersection of feminist and music culture. For members of the Riot Grrrl subculture, this presentation of girliness has been a tactic of aesthetic, working as a political response intended to reclaim representations of female sexuality that are produced by a male-dominated society (Wald, 1998).

The invocation of such imagery plays on “the instability of the meanings that consumers construe from performers who play the girl and who attempt to signify girliness in an ironic or parodic fashion” (Wald, 1998, p. 592). In this sense,

the performance of nostalgia complicates and extends the Riot Grrrl performance of righteous outrage at patriarchal abuse, in other words, invoking a yearned-for innocence and lightheartedness that retroactively rewrite the script of childhood. Yet such idealized representations of girlhood, while undeniably pleasurable and therapeutic, are of uncertain practical or strategic value as a feminist realpolitik, particularly outside the context of popular youth/music culture (Wald, 1998, p. 598).

That a devaluation of feminist activity exists within the popular cultural field, to the point where the contributions of feminism are ignored even within the areas in which girl culture is most prevalent, such as pop music, is not surprising. However, the current trend in contemporary feminist approaches seeks to emphasize women’s skillful use and manipulation of popular culture, an approach that they see as having value beyond that of patriarchal reinforcement and capitalism. To these media creators, consumption is viewed as a tool of engagement, invoked in order to engage individuals with the articulations of the communities.

Yet this appropriation of girlhood is an ambiguous invocation at best; some may view such tactics as nothing more than token feminism, still complicit within the marginalization and sexualization of women. An example of this is not even a far reach – in fact, one needs to look no further than the first major post-Riot Grrrl girl group, the Spice Girls.

Marketed as the “every girl,” the Spice Girls were, in their time, presented to the public as mirroring images of the idealized fashion, attitude, and outlook of the average girl in order to create a relationship with their targeted audience (Driscoll, 1999). “Invocations of Spice Girls’ fandom work[ed] directly by identification: Spice Girls’ fans [were] Spice Girls, the promotional material [said] so repeatedly; and, Spice Girls’ fans [wished] they were Spice Girls – it [said] that too” (Driscoll, 1999, p. 175).

The distinction between these differing girl groups – that of the alternative, counter-culture approach in comparison to the popular culture version – can be said to lay in the authenticity of their promotions. While the marketing initiatives behind the Spice Girls were strategically created by other professionals, Riot Grrrl culture relied “on the integral presence of the girls themselves in the process of producing girl culture” (Driscoll, 1999, p. 182). To these creators, girlhood was not a universal component of the female experience, but rather a tactical expression of a highly specific ideology regarding “female sexuality, women’s cultural-political agency, and the women’s social location” (Wald, 1998, p. 588).

When combined, all of these theories and notions create an understandable sense of concern for the ways in which females are portrayed through all types of media. Social cognitive theory and framing exemplify the influence of Western news media and demonstrate how these outlets have the power to promote not only the topics considered, but also the very manner in which they are thought of; these theories show that the manner in which something is discussed is more important than the face-value of the topic itself.

At the same time, the Western media seeks, on some level, to provide their publics with the information that they believe is desirable; the irony here is that a growing number of media consumers are seeking alternate sources of information online through social media platforms. In turn, social media users respond by becoming the content creators themselves, by uploading, sharing, and commenting on content as informed by the bits of the world around them. This phenomenon is new to the media landscape since the time of Ashley and Olson’s (1998) study of media reporting on the Equal Rights Amendment and certainly warrants study,

especially in consideration of the advancements (and possible exploitation) made by the Riot Grrrl movement and Spice Girls in the interim.

Case Study: Pussy Riot

Background

Formed in Moscow in 2011, Pussy Riot is a collective of anonymous reform-minded Russian women. The group is only nominally a band; though they write and perform original songs, the intent is always focused on advocating their political positions. Throughout 2011 and the beginning of 2012, they performed "in nightclubs, on the subway, and even in Red Square," maintaining their anonymity by wearing balaclavas in addition to their signature brightly colored outfits, and through the use of codenames (Nemtsova, 2012, para. 4). These choices to conceal their faces and names are as much a precaution to protect themselves from persecution as it is one of aesthetic. Due to this provision, not much is known about the group's founding or membership, though it is believed that there are seven to twelve active members.

In February of 2012, the group staged what they called a punk prayer at an altar in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The performance was meant to highlight and criticize the close ties between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin; it was prompted by the support given by several prominent church leaders towards the reelection of President Vladimir Putin. Security at the cathedral acted quickly to shut down the performance, ending the so-called prayer before the entire first line of the group's song, *Virgin Mary, Chase Putin Away*, could be sung. However, a video of this incident was uploaded to YouTube and soon garnered worldwide attention; to date, the video has been viewed more than 2.5 million times. The arrests of three group members, Yekaterina (Katia) Samutsevich, Nadezhda (Nadya) Tolokonnikova, and Maria (Masha) Alyokhina, followed a month later on the charge of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred.

This action generated an enormous amount of attention from Western media outlets, the volume of which eventually the target of significant backlash; this backlash was, ironically, also popularized by Western media outlets. To wit:

Coverage of Pussy Riot by the Western media has been described as “the human-rights equivalent of the blanket coverage afforded to the lone white girl who goes missing on a tropical vacation” (Chotiner, 2012, para. 4). In an article titled *Manic Pixie Dream Dissidents: How the World Misunderstands Pussy Riot*, Sarah Kendzior (2012) purposely invokes a comparison between the women of Pussy Riot and the fantasized character often featured in cinema for the sole purpose of fulfilling the fantasies of a male audience. Kendzior expresses exasperation over the Western coverage of the group, which she believes to be biased, due to the ignorance of the substance and purpose of Pussy Riot in favor of their aesthetics. While Chotiner questions the vast amount of coverage concerning Pussy Riot, and raises the issue of coverage for the sake of sensationalism (pointing to celebrities, such as Madonna, Sting, and Paul McCartney, who have voiced support of the group), Kendzior’s sociocultural analysis critiques the terms and notions invoked within the coverage itself. Despairing over the use of the word ‘girls,’ Kendzior argues that the focus on the physical appearance of the group members, along with the implementation of nostalgic notions of youthful punk individualism is both the aim of the Russian media and the mistake of the Western coverage. But while Kendzior asserts that the removal of Pussy Riot from their rightful context of political persecution in Russia raises questions about the state of gender, media, and politics within the media, Kathleen Hanna has a different opinion, saying:

There are definitely issues of looking at Russian politics through the lens of being American, and there will always be Americans acting as the moral police around the world. But at the same time, these are feminist artists, so it is our issue, and you don’t fuck with feminist artists (Eakin, 2012, para. 57).

For all of these squabbles, the group members themselves were rarely heard from through the lead up and duration of their trial. Of course, this is in part due to their imprisonment, but also can be attributed to the lack of concern or

consideration on the part of major media outlets. Michael Idov of *GQ Magazine* was able to conduct an interview with two of the imprisoned group members, Nadya and Masha, by having their lawyers smuggle written questions and responses. Notable for its direct confrontation of the media's obsession with Pussy Riot's physical appearance, the interview claims that the group is the first "feminist punk collective" to gain prominence in Russia and credits them with the revival of "riot-grrrl chic" (Idov, 2012, para. 1). Yet despite the credit due for speaking to Nadya and Masha directly, the article, as evidenced, also exhibits extremely Westernized language in its descriptions and content, referring to the group members not only as "the girls," but also proclaiming them to be "pop stars" (Idov, 2012, para. 1). This is the same kind criticized by Kendzior. As she cautions, "Pussy Riot tells us a lot about how we see non-Western political dissent in the new media age, and could suggest a habit of mischaracterizing their grave mission in terms that feel more familiar but ultimately sell the dissidents short" (Kendzior, 2012, para. 4). The use of lesser words in descriptions of the group and their actions lessens the importance and scope of the issue(s) they are trying to address.

For what it is worth, however, the group members do not seem concerned with these disputes. Of their situation, Nadya has expressed some awe, saying:

we couldn't even imagine that the authorities would be so dumb that they would actually legitimize our influence by arresting us... The church performance was a perfect opportunity for Putin's apparatchiks to claim that our motives were religious intolerance and not political protest. This way our persecution could be framed as a righteous burning of blasphemers, as opposed to just stifling free speech (Idov, 2012, para. 10).

But, of course, these are not the issues highlighted in mainstream coverage. Though "Pussy Riot identifies as feminist, you would never know it from the Western Media, who celebrate the group with the same language that the Russian regime uses to marginalize them" (Kendzior, 2012, para. 2). Yet this, in contrast to the lack of discussion regarding freedom of speech, does not seem to trouble Nadya, who explains that she

humbly hope[s] that our attractiveness performs a subversive function. First of all, because without 'us' in balaclavas, jumping all over Red Square with guitars, there is no 'us' smiling sweetly in the courtroom. You can't get the latter without the former. Second, because this attractiveness destroys the idiotic stereotype, still extant in Russia, that a feminist is an ugly-ass frustrated harridan. This stereotype is so puke-making that I will deign to be sweet for a little bit in order to destroy it (Idov, 2012, para. 15).

As a point of contradiction, these issues of gender and sexualization are rarely addressed within the Russian media, despite the similar and consistent reference to the group members as "the girls" (Idov, 2012, para. 1). The differences between these contexts are jarring; it is clear from the demonstrations where supporters of Pussy Riot chant about freedom that President Putin has had success in framing resistance to his authority as an affront to Russian national values.

An even greater amount of interest and Western media coverage followed in the aftermath of Nadya, Katia, and Masha's trial and subsequent conviction in August of 2012. Using the criticisms of the coverage listed above as a point of reference, the following case study was developed for analysis.

Methodology

In order to fully address this study's stated research objectives, a mixed methods approach was used, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analyses. This organization allowed for the combination of in-depth interpretive analysis using qualitative methods, along with a quantitative content analysis that permitted a more comprehensive summary of media coverage. A convenience sample was used for all method types, so as best to observe the media readily available to and used by the general public. The methods were organized as follows:

Quantitative Content Analysis of Televised Reports

News segments were reviewed and quantitatively coded in order to generate a comprehensive review of their content. A convenience sample of videos was used; they were found by accessing the website Archive.org and performing a keyword search for "Pussy Riot." The search results were not limited in any way except to restrict search results to only programs broadcast in the English language. This process resulted in 199 segments from nine networks: ABC, CBS, CNBC, CNN, CSPAN, CW, FOX, KQED Plus, LinkTV, and PBS. After these segments were filtered to remove duplicate broadcasts, 74 unique segments remained.

These segments were then watched and coded according to a previously developed codebook (for the complete codebook, see Appendix A). The specific objective for this analysis was to observe and note patterns and/or differences in reporting of general information pertaining to Pussy Riot and the trial of three of its group members, including whether or not descriptions of the group adopted the same language, discussed the group's political positioning, or otherwise accurately described the group's stated purpose.

The information coded falls into the following categories:

- General – information pertaining to the network, segment length, reporter gender, etc.
- Language – descriptive words and phrases used to describe Pussy Riot in the report.
- Content – information and facts of the events reported.
- Context – explanations as to why the events of the report are newsworthy.

Qualitative Analysis of CBS' 60 Minutes Report

An interview with Pussy Riot group members Katia and Kot as aired by the news program *60 Minutes* was watched and critiqued. The segment is 12 minutes and 35 seconds in length and was accessed via cbsnews.com. For this analysis, the objective was to note the descriptions of the group and ways in which they were presented, as well as the overall tone, sentiment, and attitude of the report. At the

time of this study, this report was the only interview of the group conducted by a major American news network.

Quantitative Content Analysis of Twitter Content

A search of Twitter's built-in search feature was conducted on April 18, 2013 using the following search operators:

girls "pussy riot" lang:en

punk "pussy riot" lang:en

women "pussy riot" lang:en

Putin "pussy riot" lang:en

female "pussy riot" lang:en

Stahl "pussy riot" lang:en

feminist "pussy riot" lang:en

Top results, determined by Twitter based on an algorithm that considers relevancy and user engagement, were then quantitatively analyzed in consideration of their content and intended meaning (for the complete codebook, see Appendix B). This search process resulted in 343 tweets being collected for analysis. The objective of this research was to discover common language and descriptions of the group used on social media, gauge support for the group, and to analyze overall sentiment in consideration of keywords used in describing the group from both individual, personal accounts and accounts belonging to major Western media outlets.

Results

Quantitative Content Analysis of Televised Reports

Results for this portion of research were obtained by analyzing the coded data in SPSS; crosstabulations and frequencies were run to generate results pertaining to the type of television networks reporting on Pussy Riot, the language used in reporting, and the context in which the group was presented.

The following is a breakdown of the 74 videos that were watched and coded, according to network:

Table 1. Networks as Percentage of Total Sample

Network	No. of Videos	Percent of Total
ABC	1	1.4%
CBS	8	10.8%
CNBC	1	1.4%
CNN	29	39.2%
CSPAN	4	5.4%
CW	1	1.4%
FOX	3	4.1%
KQED Plus	2	2.7%
LinkTV	6	8.1%
PBS	19	25.7%
<i>N</i>	74	100%

Of these videos, 6.8% were aired on Owned and Operated (O&O) stations, 10.8% were aired on affiliate stations, 33.8% were aired on Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) access stations, and 48.7% were aired on cable or satellite stations. Given the small number of videos from several of the networks, the networks were collapsed into three main groups: Network, Cable, and Other. The groups were made up as follows:

Network – ABC, CBS, CW, FOX

Cable – CNBC, CNN

Other – CSPAN, KQED Plus, LinkTV, PBS

As a result of collapsing the networks by type, 17.6% of total videos were considered to be Network, 40.5% were considered to be Cable, and 41.9% were considered to be Other. Of the total sample, 31 videos (41.9%) were anchored by a male, 36 videos (48.6%) were anchored by a female, and 7 videos (9.5%) were co-anchored by both a male and female.

Upon performing several crosstabulations based on the broadcast station types, variances in terminology were found. Table 2 and Figure 1 depict the differences in terminology across the reports.

Table 2. References to Pussy Riot by Formal Name

	Network	Cable	Other	Overall
In Introduction	15.4%	70.0%	80.6%	32.4%
Within Report	84.6%	46.7%	80.6%	67.6%

A chi-square test showed that the frequency with which Pussy Riot was referred to by name in the introduction of the report depended on the type of broadcast station, with the result being of highly significant value: $\chi^2 (2, N=74) = 17.700, p < .001$. As can be seen in Table 2, network news broadcasts were much less likely to call Pussy Riot by name than broadcasts on cable or other networks. In contrast, 84.6% of network news broadcasts referred to Pussy Riot by name in the report itself. Also of note is the fact that only 46.7% of cable broadcasts referred to the group by name within reports. When analyzed by frequency, Pussy Riot was referred to by formal group name in the introduction of total reports 32.4% of the time, compared to within the content of total reports 67.4% of the time.

Figure 1. Keywords Used to Describe Pussy Riot

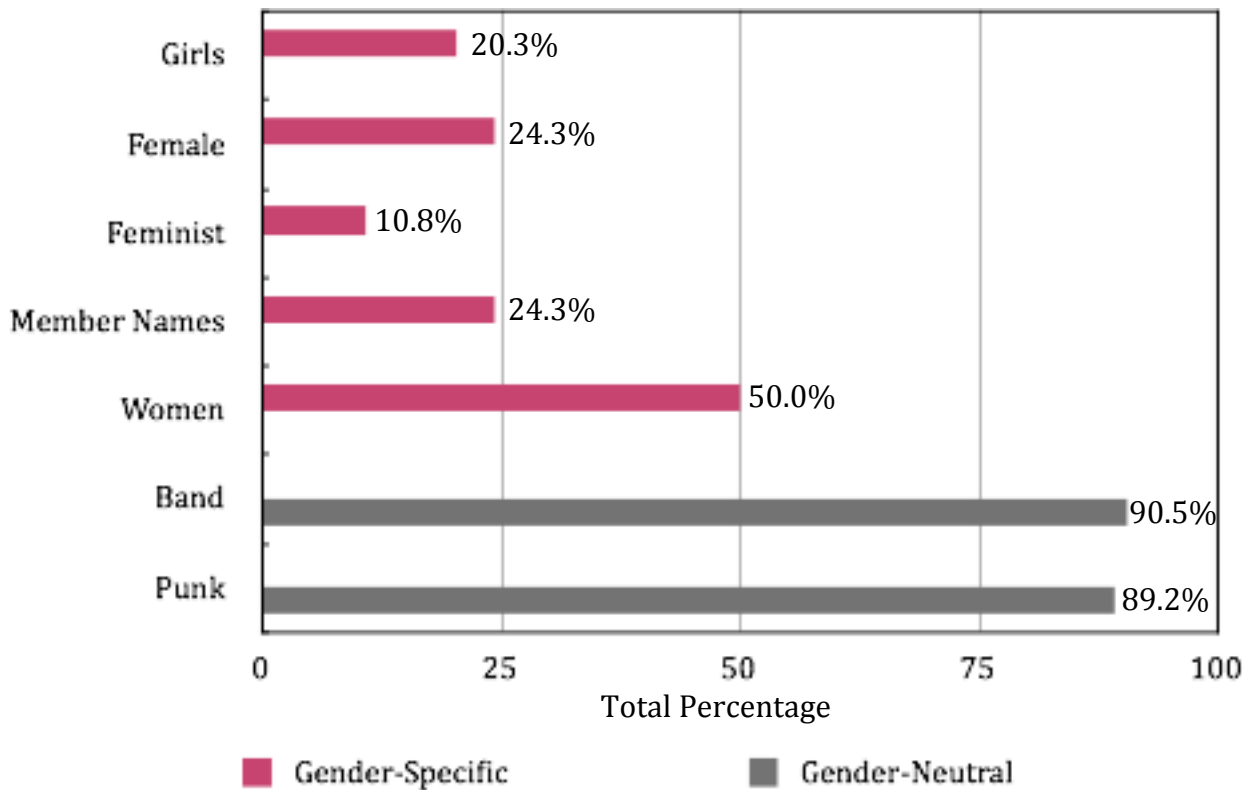


Figure 1 displays the frequency of the keywords used to describe Pussy Riot within all reports, including both gender-specific (i.e. girls, women, etc.) and gender-neutral (i.e. group members, band members, etc.) terminology. Gender-neutral terminology was overwhelmingly used in comparison to that of gender-specific, though reports could use more than one term per segment. Though the total percentage of instances in which Pussy Riot members are referred to by their individual names (either first, last, or both) is shown to be 24.3%, the breakdown by Collapsed Networks, when subjected to a chi-square test is $\chi^2(2, N=74) = 7.968, p < .05$. See Table 3 for a breakdown by type. This shows that, of all broadcasts, those in the Other category (and, to a lesser extent, those in the Cable category) were most likely to refer to the group members by their individual names.

			Group Members Referred to by Name		Total
			No	Yes	
Station Types	Network	Count	13	0	13
		% within Station Types	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Cable	Count	24	6	30
		% within Station Types	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	Other	Count	19	12	31
		% within Station Types	61.3%	38.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	56	18	74	
	% within Station Types	75.7%	24.3%	100.0%	

Table 4. Visual Means by which Pussy Riot is Described

	Network	Cable	Other	Overall
Appearance	0.0%	3.3%	19.4%	9.5%
Clothing	23.1%	3.3%	12.9%	10.8%
Balaclavas*	53.8%	26.7%	12.9%	25.7%

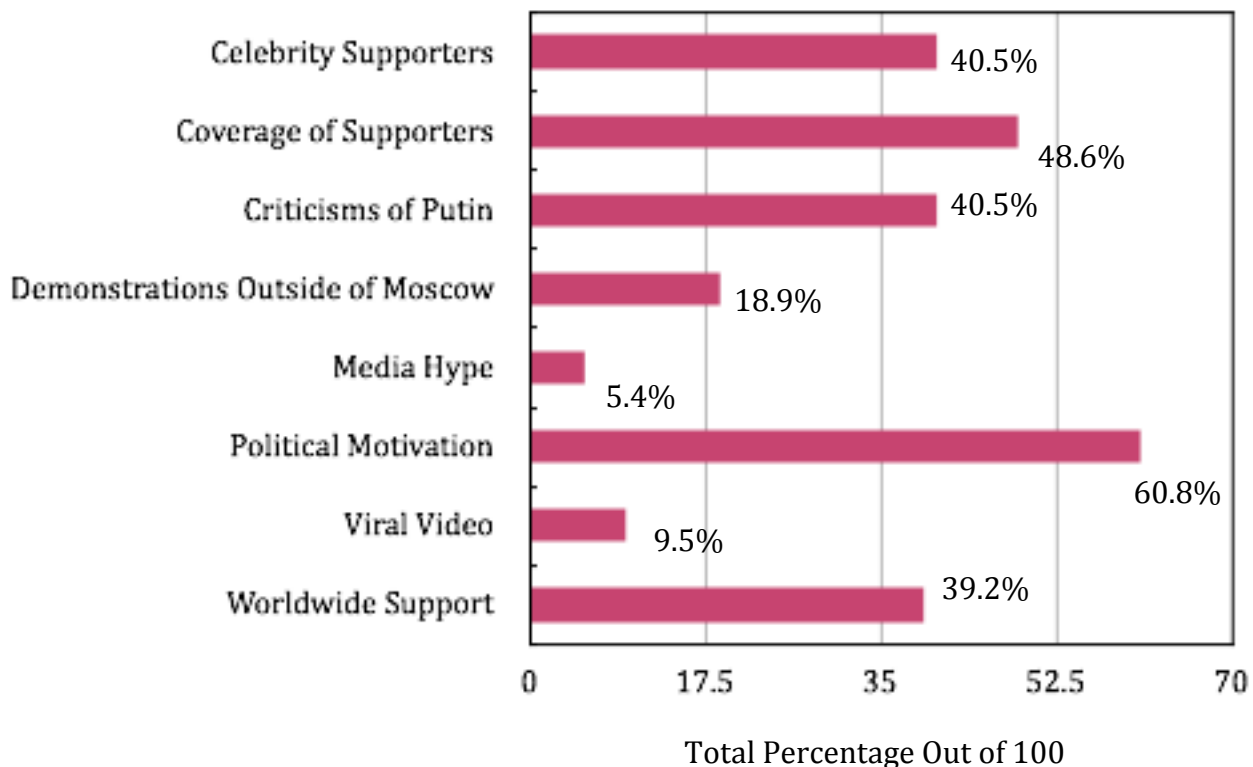
* $p < .05$

In addition to keyword terminology, the crosstabulations of station types also revealed differences in the context and content of reports. Table 4 shows the total percentage of times that Pussy Riot was described by physical or visual appearance.

In a majority – 53.8% - of network reports, balaclavas were referenced as being worn by Pussy Riot members. By comparison, this percentage was nearly halved – 26.7% - in coverage by cable networks. Coverage by other stations was even less likely to mention the facemasks, including references in only 12.9% of reports.

Newsworthy reasoning for reporting on Pussy Riot also presented a variance, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Newsworthy Reasoning for Reporting on Pussy Riot



While the group is described in 60.8% of overall reports as being politically motivated, only 40.5% of all reports directly describe the group's grievances against President Putin. This contrasts with the fact that 82.4% of all reports at least refer to

Putin by name. While nearly half – 48.6% - of reports discuss supporters of the group, only 39.2% report that the support is worldwide and not contained to Russia. Discussion of celebrity supporters is present in 40.5% of reports, the same amount which discuss the group's specific political positions. Only 9.5% of all reports mention the performance video uploaded to YouTube that began the worldwide support, and an even lesser amount – 5.4% - of reports discuss the saturation of the story within the media.

			Performance Footage Shown in Report		Total
			No	Yes	
Station Types	Network	Count	3	10	13
		% within Station Types	23.1%	76.9%	100.0%
	Cable	Count	10	20	30
		% within Station Types	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	Other	Count	16	15	31
		% within Station Types	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	29	45	74
		% within Station Types	39.2%	60.8%	100.0%

As table 5 shows, actual footage from Pussy Riot's performance at Christ the Savior Cathedral was present in reports more often than not, appearing in 76.9% of Network reports and 66.7% of Cable reports. Only reports on Other networks were less likely to feature performance footage, though the difference was minimal – 51.6% of reports did not feature the footage, while 48.4% of reports did.

Qualitative Analysis of CBS' 60 Minutes Report

On March 24th, 2013, CBS' pioneering investigative journalism program, *60 Minutes*, featured a 13 minute and 32 second segment on Pussy Riot. Anchored by veteran reporter Leslie Stahl, the report featured an interview with Katia, who had just been released from prison on appeal, as well as with Pyotr Verzilov, husband of

the imprisoned Nadya, and Gary Kasparov, a prominent Pussy Riot supporter. Also interviewed was Kot, a current Pussy Riot member, though she would only agree to appear on camera in a balaclava, and with her voice disguised.

Stahl's reporting began with a brief overview of the Putin regime and its crackdown on protestors advocating for civil liberties; Pussy Riot was introduced nearly a minute into the segment with commentary as to their "obscene, but attention grabbing, name." Though Stahl referred to the group as being formed by "young feminists," she places an observably negative emphasis on the phrase, before proceeding to call them the "poster girls for Russian dissent," who make "lewd gestures in cartoonish getups." In describing the group as a popular "punk band on YouTube" (with an obvious head shake to emphasize and almost delegitimize YouTube), Stahl seemingly expresses surprise that a group whose action she refers to as "deliberately offensive" would cause such commotion. Her narrative also reinforces the reverence many Russians feel towards the Orthodox Church.

Returning from commercial break, the next segment opens with footage from the performance at Christ the Savior Cathedral. Stahl describes the "five girls in the church in their trademark masks, called balaclavas," though she noticeably struggles to pronounce balaclava. She then critiques the performance, saying, "it looked silly, like a prank which made the harsh punishment seem out of proportion" and notes the use of "vile obscenities." Stahl also incorrectly states that only three members of Pussy Riot were present, when, in fact, there were five – only three members were later arrested.

The piece then moves on to introduce Katia, showing footage of her in her home. Stahl's voiceover describes Katia's previous "anti-authority stunts" as video shows Katia forcibly kissing a Russian policewoman. Fellow Pussy Riot member Nadya, a "seasoned provocateur" is then described as Katia's "partner in crime," as the video proceeds to show her involvement in the same so-called stunt.

Next, Stahl and Katia sit down together to discuss the group's actions and overall purpose. In this interview, Katia denounces Putin's election as illegitimate. When Stahl directly asks if Katia, and Pussy Riot, are advocating for the overthrow of the government, Katia says yes.

The piece then cuts to footage of Pussy Riot performing in Red Square, with Stahl's voiceover noting that "band members are idealistic and brave and well-educated." Stahl then goes on to say that Pussy Riot is a "band made up of 12 or so feminists who call themselves girls or devochki [Russian word for girls]" and claim that they have staged "public disturbances," performing "crude, almost juvenile acts."

Cutting back to the interview between Stahl and Katia, the later confirms Stahl's implication of crudeness, saying, "this is the language we've chosen, of punk." Katia says that Pussy Riot's performances were purposefully dumbed down, noting that, "we've chosen this specific kind of language to attract attention."

Continuing on, Stahl, via voice over, explains that the Kremlin only began paying attention to Pussy Riot after the video of their performance at Christ the Savior had gone viral. She then refers to the plight of Pussy Riot as a "cause celeb" while concert footage of Madonna and an outtake from *South Park* are played.

Stahl is next shown interviewing Kasparov, a prominent Russian protester and Pussy Riot supporter. Over the course of their conversation, Stahl asserts that "to be obscene in a church, on an alter, is to be blasphemel [sic]" and "the words were offensive, they cussed." Her inflection on the word cussed is clearly negative, as she nearly spits out the word.

The segment then moves on to show a brief interview between Stahl and Sergei Markov. When asked directly by Stahl, the spokesperson confirms that the Russian government intervened in Pussy Riot's trial to push for a harsh sentence, claiming "it's the duty of authorities to stop the violence."

Turning to address the trial and verdict directly, Stahl describes the seemingly defiant members on trial, saying that they appeared to be willing to take advantage of the stage Putin had provided. She asks Katia if the three members on trial considered "begging for forgiveness," an option which Katia flatly [rejected](#). "It's strange," she says, "when you're innocent."

Stahl's next interview is with Verzilov, who claims that the verdict was a "jolt." The footage onscreen shows the group members placed within a cage inside of a Russian courtroom, while Stahl's voiceover describes Maria and Nadya as the

mothers of young toddlers, now being sentenced to years in penal colonies. The voiceover also incorrectly states that Katia was freed at this time, when she was, in fact, convicted; she was later released after an appeal. The footage then shows a clash of protesters and police outside of the courtroom, with Kasparov being visibly forced into a police van. Another excerpt from his interview with Stahl is then shown, where she poses the following question: "Is this case of this punk rock group, is it really significant, is it really important?" Kasparov responds affirmatively, calling the situation a case of "Goliath versus girls." A cut is then made back to Stahl's interview with Markov, where she says that the verdict "looked like a very heavy handed action against these weak, little girls." Markov responds by agreeing the image is bad, but that the Kremlin had to take steps to protect against future violence and potential damage to the Russian economy. Stahl responds, "All because of this trial? Of those girls?"

The report then joins Verzilov on a seven-hour drive to visit Nadya. Stahl expresses concern over the fate of their daughter Gera, who was only able to see Nadya once since her arrest. Footage is also shown of Maria's 5 year-old son, with Stahl's voiceover describing the harsh conditions of the penal colonies.

The final interview of the segment is with an unidentified Pussy Riot member, codenamed Kot. Agreeing to appear on camera in her balaclava and with her voice disguised, Kot meets with Stahl in what is described as a "rat-infested music studio." Currently in hiding in Moscow, Kot says that she wants to show that Pussy Riot still exists.

To conclude, Stahl notes that several protest organizers are also on trial within Russia, while the images on screen show Putin surrounded by supporters. Furthermore, Stahl notes that Pussy Riot has not staged a performance or released a song since the arrests of Nadya, Katia, and Maria and that their music videos have been banned. She ends the report by saying that, "the battle of Goliath and the girls goes on. But it's complicated, like a Russian novel."

Overall, Stahl's tone, line of questioning, and choice of phrasing, reveal an obvious lack of regard for Pussy Riot. These factors have an obvious effect on the

segment, with the result being a lack of a full, comprehensive understanding of Pussy Riot's purpose and actions.

Quantitative Content Analysis of Twitter Content

As with the previous content analysis, results for this portion of research were acquired by analyzing the coded data in SPSS; crosstabulations and frequencies were generated to find information regarding the language used to describe the group and any prevailing sentiments of tweets, as well as to find the presence of opinion within the tweets.

Below, Figure 3 shows a breakdown of the 343 tweets that were collected and coded, according to type of account. Of the total amount of tweets analyzed, 106 tweets, or 30.9% of the total, were from accounts belonging to private individuals. Online-only media sources, including aggregated blogs such as *The Huffington Post*, comprised 14.3% of the total, or 49 tweets. Official accounts belonging to network and cable news outlets provided 6.1% of results from 21 tweets, while official accounts of print news sources, including *The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*, contributed 70 tweets, or 7.9% of the total. When combined, these media sources provided a total of 140 tweets, or 40.8% of the total sample. Furthermore, including the total results from the personal accounts of journalists (27 tweets, or 7.9%) brings this total to 167 tweets, accounting for 48.7% of the total sample.

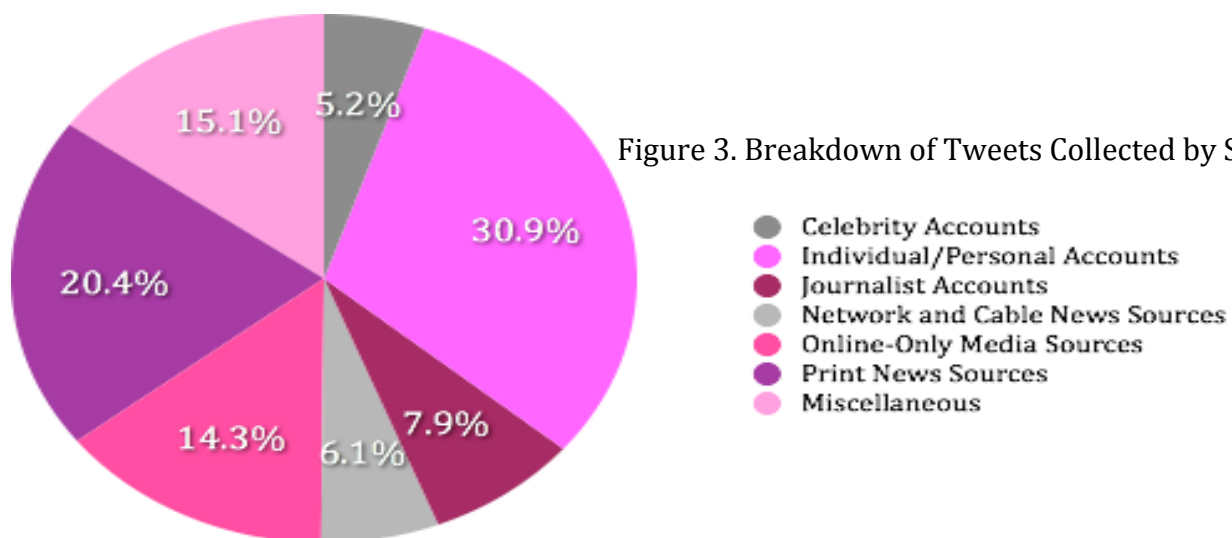


Figure 3. Breakdown of Tweets Collected by Source

Of the total number of tweets collected, the largest sample – 94 tweets, or 27.3% of the total - resulted from the search for tweets in which both Pussy Riot and Putin were named. The second largest sample was collected from tweets using the word punk in reference to Pussy Riot, which made up 25.0% of the total, from a collection of 86 tweets. Of the gender-specific search terms (girls, women, female, and feminist), the search for the word women in reference to Pussy Riot generated the highest number of results, with 45 tweets, or 13.1% of the total. When combined, the gender-specific search terms resulted in a total of 143 tweets, or 41.6% of the total. These results are seen in Figure 4 below.

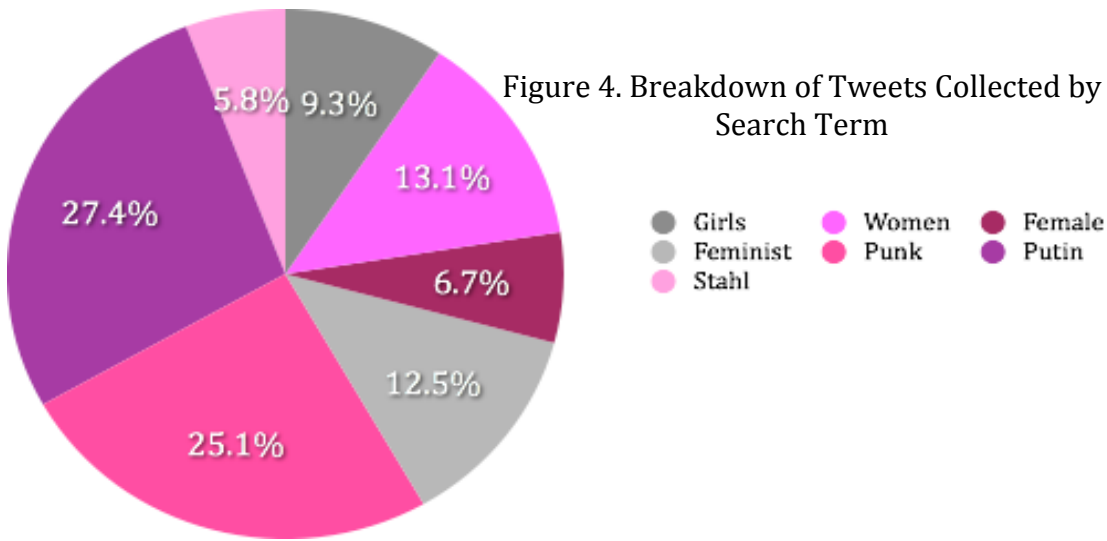


Figure 4. Breakdown of Tweets Collected by Search Term

Table 6. Percentage of Search Terms by Source

	Online-Only Media Sources	Network/Cable News Sources	Print News Sources	Journalist Accounts	Individual Accounts	Celebrity Accounts	Misc.
Girls	6.3%	3.1%	6.3%	9.4%	46.9%	12.5%	15.7%
Women	6.7%	17.8%	6.7%	8.9%	26.7%	11.1%	22.2%
Female	13.0%	13.0%	8.7%	13.0%	30.4%	8.7%	13.0%
Feminist	18.6%	2.3%	34.9%	11.6%	20.9%	4.7%	7.0%
Punk	19.8%	5.8%	20.9%	8.1%	20.9%	4.7%	19.7%
Putin	16.0%	2.1%	31.9%	5.3%	30.9%	1.1%	12.8%
Stahl	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	10.0%

The crosstabulation of search terms and account sources shown in Table 6 reveal that tweets sent from individual accounts were most likely to account for the majority of sampled results that mention Pussy Riot along with the terms girls (46.9% of sample total), women (26.7% of sample total), female (30.4% of sample total), and Stahl (80.0% of sample total), though this may be in correlation with the fact that individual accounts also account for the greatest percentage of overall tweets collected. Print sources accounted for the largest percentage of sample results using the word feminist (34.9%) and Putin (31.9%). Individual accounts and print sources each accounted for 20.9% of sample results using the word punk.

Statements of opinion were present in 29.2% of the total sample of tweets analyzed. Of this percentage, 26.2% of tweets were favorable, 9.3% were negative, and the remaining 64.4% were neutral in opinion. A chi-square test shows reveals that a crosstabulation of these results is statistically significant, with $\chi^2(2, N=343) = 83.738, p < .001$. Tables 7 and 8 depict the presence of opinion and type of sentiment expressed by source type.

Table 7. Presence of Opinion by Source Type

	No Opinion	Opinion Present
Online-Only Media Sources	85.7%	14.3%
Network & Cable News Sources	100%	0.0%
Print News Sources	97.1%	2.9%
Journalist Accounts	51.9%	48.1%
Individuals/Personal Accounts	45.3%	54.7%
Celebrity Account	38.9%	61.1%
Misc.	82.7%	17.3%

As depicted in Table 7, expressions of opinion are present in a small majority, 54.7%, of the total sample of tweets from individual accounts. Opinion is also present in 13 tweets, or 48.1% from the accounts of journalists. Expressions of opinion are shown to be unlikely from the tweets collected from media sources, though online-sources had the highest percentage of opinion present from the sampled media sources, with 14.3%, or 7 tweets from the collected sample stating

opinion(s). As a whole, this crosstabulation was shown to be statistically significant, with $\chi^2 (14, N=343) = 44.873, p < .001$.

		Sentiment			
		Negative	Positive	Neutral	
Source of Tweet	Online-Only Media Sources	Count	5	14	30
		% within Source of Tweet	10.2%	28.6%	61.2%
	Network/Cable News Sources	Count	1	1	19
		% within Source of Tweet	4.8%	4.8%	90.5%
	Print News Sources	Count	2	8	60
		% within Source of Tweet	2.9%	11.4%	85.7%
	Journalist Accounts	Count	1	9	17
		% within Source of Tweet	3.7%	33.3%	63.0%
	Individual/Personal Accounts	Count	18	33	55
		% within Source of Tweet	17.0%	31.1%	51.9%
	Celebrity Accounts	Count	2	10	6
		% within Source of Tweet	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%
	Miscellaneous	Count	3	15	34
		% within Source of Tweet	5.8%	28.8%	65.4%
Total	Count	32	90	221	
	% within Source of Tweet	9.3%	26.2%	64.4%	

In corroboration with Table 7, Table 8 shows a crosstabulation of tweet sources and sentiment. This crosstabulation showed that a majority of all tweets sampled from both media and individual sources were likely to be neutral in opinion, while tweets from celebrities were most likely to be positive. Though the sample of tweets collected from individuals showed 51.9% (55 tweets) to be neutral, 33 tweets, or 31.1% of the sample, expressed positive sentiments. By

comparison, 63.0% (17 tweets) of the sample collected from journalists was neutral, though 33.3% (9 tweets) expressed positive sentiments.

		Opinion		Total
		No	Yes	
No	Count	17	33	50
	% within Link	34.0%	66.0%	100.0%
Yes	Count	226	67	293
	% within Link	77.1%	22.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	243	100	343
	% within Link	70.8%	29.2%	100.0%

Finally, Table 9 above shows that links to other sources were present in 77.1% of tweets that lacked the presence of an opinion. By comparison, only 22.9% of tweets that reflected the opinion of the account holder were contained links. This crosstabulation is statistically significant, with $\chi^2(4, N=343) = 382.584, p < .001$.

Discussion

The overall aim of this study was to analyze coverage of Pussy Riot, demonstrate the extent of any bias due to gender, and to explore the extent of their communication technique successes. While it was certainly limited in some ways, such as by the lack of representative samples of Western news segments and the lack of readily available, in-depth Twitter analytics, the mixed methodology approach to research resulted in several interesting findings.

Pussy Riot members readily admit to having consciously chosen the language and aesthetic of punk culture as their signature method of communication. While the name of the group was chosen to shock, its borderline inappropriateness limits Western television exposure. Indeed, the analysis of news segments from Archive.org revealed that Pussy Riot was mentioned by name in less than one-third

of all report introductions. Instead, descriptions of the group were used, with the results showing that 'punk' and 'band' were the most common words of reference. In contrast to the gender neutrality of these terms, gender-specific word usage was far less common; the word 'women' was used in half of all reports, while 'girls' was used in less than one-quarter of reports, despite the latter being the preferred description used by Pussy Riot group members. However, the analysis of Twitter proved to be more promising, with nearly half of all individual account owners using the word 'girls' to refer to the group members. This contradiction might be explained in two ways; the first is that the television networks consciously chose to describe the group in gender-neutral terms in order to avoid accusations of bias. The second is the possible success of Pussy Riot in adapting the strategic invocation of girliness previously used by Riot Grrrls and Spice Girls alike. This possibility could be further reinforced by crediting the girliness with Lesley Stahl's disbelief that the group warranted serious merit and consideration. Though a quantitative analysis of Stahl's segment likely would have yielded similar results to all of the other news segments coded, the *60 Minutes* piece demonstrates a sense of disbelief and a tone of deep disapproval that would not have been evident from the statistics alone.

Within the reviewed news segments, Nadya, Katia, and Masha – the three Pussy Riot group members on trial – were rarely mentioned by name. This omission, and by extension, this anonymity, has actually been sought after by Pussy Riot members, who perform in balaclavas to hide their faces and use codenames to reference one another in interviews. However, though more than a quarter of reports mention the balaclavas in association with the group, none report on the reasoning behind the facemasks, nor does Stahl – her curt dismissal of the balaclavas underscores that the group's serious need for anonymity is overlooked due to what the Western media perceives to be an eccentric, punk-ish choice of aesthetic.

Though a majority of the television news segments referenced Pussy Riot's political motivation, less than half of the segments repeated the group's criticisms of President Putin. This finding is once again at odds with the results generated from the analysis of Twitter, where Putin was most referenced by print news sources.

Though these tweets are mainly neutral in sentiment, they at least show a willingness to discuss the ideology of Pussy Riot and the reasoning for their actions.

However, for all of the positive results garnered from the analysis, the tweets sampled did show a surprising lack of originality. Tweets with links to external sources often lacked any expression of opinion or sentiment, offering a demonstration of sorts in social cognitive theory; these tweets were most likely generated by the user through the automated 'share tweet' featured embedded in online news articles. In this case, the account owner is actually mimicking the tweet written by a media source. An interesting contrast to this passivity is found in the tweets analyzed from individual accounts in relation to mentions of Stahl. For these tweets, an overwhelming number showed the presence of an opinion, with users commenting on Stahl's handling of the interview; it seems to be that Twitter, in this specific case, is rejecting Stahl's connotation that 'punk' is a cognitive shortcut for 'obscene' and 'disrespectful.'

Conclusion

The mixed-methods approach showed that Pussy Riot was semi-successful in communicating their message; though television news segments tended to ignore the group's usage of certain language, the word 'girl' was prominently featured in the sample of tweets collected. The same is true for the group's criticisms of President Putin, though in this case, there is some evidence that print news sources also reported on this topic.

Media-bias due to gender is also present in some results, most notably in the *60 Minutes segment*. While similar bias was also present in the earlier interview conducted with *Rolling Stone*, the magazine at least addressed the issue head-on. This comparison suggests that the generational gap between Stahl and Pussy Riot could be responsible for the biased reporting.

Interestingly, the results of this study closely mirrored those found by Ashley and Olson regarding the Equal Rights Amendment, with little discussion of the Pussy Riot's criticisms of President Putin being observed. Rather, all three of the sources

analyzed favored observations of the spectacle surrounding Pussy Riot; little information was presented to argue in favor of the group's ideological or political views. The presence of the punk aesthetic, while perhaps useful when invoked by Pussy Riot directly in performances, only served to complicate the study – it provided the media with a prepackaged (and pre-framed) scapegoat. This is the line of thought followed by Stahl in her report; Pussy Riot is objectionable not because they're women or girls, but because they're punk and punk is supposed to be offensive.

More than anything, this study has demonstrated that the problem of bias towards women by the media is still a complex, and evolving, issue, with roots dating back to the negative portrayal of Eve in the Bible. Though societal advances have caused a shift towards political correctness, women and girls still face an upward climb towards proper recognition and consideration. Further research regarding perceptions of Pussy Riot, media bias, punk subculture(s), and social media would benefit from a methodology that would interact directly with the population sampled. For instance, focus groups or surveys would be a good way to gather extensive qualitative data. Such information could then be analyzed for demographical patterns and relationships pertaining to the findings, which could be used to advance female-centric messaging.

Already, the results of this study suggest that practitioners looking to address issues relating to gender, feminist advocacy, or the promotion of other subcultural values should reduce their messages so that they are clean, direct, and focused towards a targeted audience. Though the treatment of women in Western media has not changed since 1966, analysis of the Twitter results suggest that individual social media practitioners and consumers are more open minded, perhaps providing a new audience that practitioners should look to directly engage in dialog.

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Appendix A**Codebook for Archive.org Videos****General**

1. What network aired the segment?

- 0 = ABC (1)
- 1 = CBS (8)
- 2 = CNBC (1)
- 3 = CNN (30)
- 4 = CSPAN (4)
- 5 = CW (1)
- 6 = FOX (4)
- 7 = KQED Plus (2)
- 8 = LinkTV (6)
- 9 = PBS (20)

2. Was the station an affiliate, owned and operated by a network (O&O), a public, educational, or governmental access channel (PEG), or available only by cable or satellite services?

- 0 = affiliate
- 1 = O&O
- 2 = PEG
- 3 = cable
- 4 = satellite

3. What was airdate of the video? Enter month/date/year (e.g., 8/12/11).

4. What time of day did the report air?

- 0 = Morning (5 a.m.-10:59 a.m.)
- 1 = Afternoon (11 a.m.-4:59 p.m.)
- 2 = Night (5 p.m.-midnight)
- 3 = Early Morning (12:01 a.m. – 4:59 a.m.)

5. What was the length* of the segment?

**For the purposes of this question, length will refer only to the length of the report itself and will not include any teasers, introductions, or transitions.*

- 0 = 0-30 seconds
- 1 = 31 seconds- 1:59 minutes
- 2 = 2:00-4:59 minutes
- 3 = 5-10 minutes
- 4 = 10-15 minutes
- 5 = 15+ minutes

6. Was the segment reporter* a man or woman?

**For the purposes of this question, reporter will be the person(s) covering the whole of the story, and will not include any teasers, introductions, or transitions.*

0 = Man

1 = Woman

2 = Co-anchored by man and woman

Language

7. Is the group referred to by name (Pussy Riot) in the introduction to the segment?

0 = No

1 = Yes

8. Is the group ever referred to by name (Pussy Riot) in the report itself?

0 = No

1 = Yes

9. Is the word 'punk' used to describe Pussy Riot?

0 = No

1 = Yes

10. Is Pussy Riot referred to as a band?

0 = No

1 = Yes

11. Is the word 'girls' used to refer to the group members?

0 = No

1 = Yes

12. Is the word 'women' used to refer to the group members?

0 = No

1 = Yes

13. Is the word 'female' used to refer to the group members?

0 = No

1 = Yes

14. Is the word 'feminist' used to refer to the group members?

0 = No

1 = Yes

15. Are the group members referred to by name?

0 = No

1 = Yes

16. Are the group members described as being mothers?

0 = No

1 = Yes

17. Is the Riot Grrrl movement mentioned?

0 = No

1 = Yes

18. Is Vladimir Putin mentioned by name?

0 = No

1 = Yes

19. Does the anchor and/or reporter editorialize* over the name Pussy Riot?

**For the purposes of this question, editorialize will mean an obvious break from the scripted report, wherein which the anchor or reporter offers their own commentary.*

0 = No

1 = Yes

Content

20. Are Pussy Riot's stated reasons for protesting* discussed?

**For the purposes of this question, the report must note that the performance at Christ the Savior was in protest of Putin, his regime, and/or his policies (i.e. the performance must be described as more than a performance for performance's sake).*

0 = No

1 = Yes

21. Are the actions of the group described as being politically motivated*?

**For the purposes of this question, the group must be described as more than a band.*

0 = No

1 = Yes

22. Does the segment feature video of Pussy Riot performing?

0 = No

1 = Yes

23. Are the charges* against the group detailed?

**For the purposes of this question, the charges must be stated as either hooliganism or hooliganism motivated by religious hatred.*

0 = No

1 = Yes

24. Are the jail terms faced by the group members mentioned?

0 = No

1 = Yes

25. Are criticisms of Vladimir Putin mentioned?

**For the purposes of this question criticisms of Putin are considered to be negative commentary, but are not described as being the exclusive opinion of Pussy Riot.*

0 = No

1 = Yes

Context

26. Is the physical appearance of the group members mentioned?

0 = No

1 = Yes

27. Is the clothing worn by the group members mentioned?

0 = No

1 = Yes

28. Are the balaclavas worn by the group members mentioned?

0 = No

1 = Yes

29. Is the media hype* around the group discussed?

**For the purposes of this question, media hype will include discussion of the amount of news coverage pertaining to the group.*

0 = No

1 = Yes

30. Is the viral video of the group's performance mentioned?

0 = No

1 = Yes

31. Is the worldwide support of the group discussed?

0 = No

1 = Yes

32. Are demonstrations of support in cities other than Moscow discussed?

0 = No

1 = Yes

33. Does the report feature coverage of supporters?

0 = No

1 = Yes

34. Is Free Pussy Riot mentioned by name?

0 = No

1 = Yes

35. Are any celebrity supporters mentioned?

0 = No

1 = Yes

36. Does the segment feature an interview* with supporters?

**For the purposes of this question, the interview must be conducted by the station's personal, and not b-roll footage of a supporter's interview.*

0 = No

1 = Yes

Appendix B**Codebook for Twitter Search****General**

1. What search was the tweet pulled from?
 - 0 = girls "pussy riot" lang:en
 - 1 = women "pussy riot" lang:en
 - 2 = female "pussy riot" lang:en
 - 3 = feminist "pussy riot" lang:en
 - 4 = punk "pussy riot" lang:en
 - 5 = Putin "pussy riot" lang:en
 - 6 = Stahl "pussy riot" lang:en

2. What is the source of the tweet?
 - 0 = online-only news source (blog, aggregator, etc.)
 - 1 = network/cable news network or program
 - 2 = print newspaper or magazine
 - 3 = journalist
 - 4 = individual, personal account
 - 5 = celebrity (name recognition)
 - 6 = miscellaneous

3. What was date of the tweet? Enter month/date/year (e.g., 8/12/11).

Language

4. Is the code word in the tweet directly used to describe Pussy Riot?
 - 0 = No
 - 1 = Yes
 - 2 = Not Applicable

5. How is the code word used in relation to Pussy Riot?
 - 0 = Negatively
 - 1 = Positively
 - 2 = Neutrally
 - 3 = Not Applicable

Content

6. Is Pussy Riot the primary topic of the tweet?
 - 0 = No
 - 1 = Yes

7. Does the tweet contain a link to a news source?

0 = No

1 = Yes

8. Does the tweet contain the headline* of a story?

**For the purposes of this question, headline will refer to any text and description given to linked media that had been automatically prompted from an embedded share feature.*

0 = No

1 = Yes

Context

9. Is the account owner's opinion present in the tweet?

0 = No

1 = Yes

10. What is the overall sentiment of the tweet?

0 = Negative

1 = Positive

2 = Neutral