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Roles and Attitudes of Males and Females in The Anarchist Punk Community

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at Virginia Commonwealth University

By

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## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	v
<u>INTRODUCTION</u> .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	1
Definition of Key Terms .....	2
Punk .....	2
Anarchist punk .....	3
Significance of the Problem for the Discipline .....	6
Significance of the Problem Outside of the Discipline .....	6
<u>LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</u> .....	8
Subcultural Research .....	8
Research on Women in the Punk Subculture .....	11
Theoretical Framework .....	16
<u>RESEARCH QUESTION</u> .....	19
<u>RESEARCH METHODS</u> .....	20
Research Design .....	20
Research Study Goals .....	21
Specific Objectives/Evaluation .....	22
Sampling .....	22
Subjects .....	25
Data Analysis .....	26
Limitations .....	28
Generalizability .....	28
Sample Bias .....	29
Measures for Protecting Human Subjects .....	29
<u>RESULTS AND ANALYSIS</u> .....	31
<u>SUBTLE SEXISM</u> .....	33
Considerate Domination .....	33
Numerical Domination .....	33
Control Over Subcultural Institutions of Punk .....	35
Good Old Boy Networks .....	39
Hyper-Valuation of Men .....	40
Idolization .....	40
Exaggerated Credit, Credibility and Legitimacy .....	41
Exaggerated Support .....	43
Subjective Objectification .....	44
Sexual Objectification .....	45
Beauty Standards - Controlling Women's Appearance .....	45
Double Standard/Mixed Expectations of Being Crusty and Sexual Behavior .....	49
Women As Accessories .....	51
Women As Tagalongs .....	52
Women As Children .....	53
Condescending Chivalry .....	54

Subcultural Exclusion .....	55
Women Excluded from Punk Bands .....	56
Exclusion from the Decision-Making Processes of Subcultural Institutions .....	57
COVERT .....	58
Containment - Gatekeeping .....	59
Tokenism.....	60
Co-optation .....	61
Manipulation.....	62
BLATANT SEXISM .....	64
Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Interpersonal Violence .....	64
SUMMARY .....	67
<u>CONCLUSIONS</u> .....	70
References .....	84
Appendices .....	89
Appendix A - In Depth Interview Guide .....	89
Appendix B - Initial Email For Online Interviews .....	92
Appendix C - Research Subject Information And Consent Form .....	93
Appendix D - Script For Face To Face Interviews:.....	96
Appendix E - Script For Online Interviews:.....	97
Appendix F - Email For Obtaining Additional Respondents.....	98
Appendix G - Online Research Subject Information And Consent Form .....	99

#### List of Tables

Table 1 Glossary of Punk Terms .....	79
Table 2 Benokraitis And Feagin's Typology Of Subtle Sexism (1995).....	80
Table 3 Socio-Demographic Data.....	82
Table 4 Major Themes of Participant Responses .....	83

Abstract

ROLES AND ATTITUDES OF MALES AND FEMALES IN THE  
ANARCHIST PUNK COMMUNITY

By Donna M. Manion

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Science at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University 2007

Director of Thesis: Dr. Diana H. Scully, Professor, Women's Studies and Sociology

Sexism is a widespread social problem that exists throughout the world today. It persists within the dominant culture, as well as in various subcultures, including the punk subculture (Daugherty 2002; Leblanc 1999; McRobbie 1991; Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998). Nijole Benokraitis and Joe Feagin's (1995) theory of sexism posits that subtle sexism is the unequal and harmful treatment of women that is typically less visible than blatant sex discrimination. This particular type of sexism may often go unnoticed, as society has internalized subtle sexist behaviors. Empirical research on subtle sexism has been conducted in various settings, such as the employment, academic, and military sectors of society (Benokraitis 1997). However, this theory has not been adequately

applied to subcultural research. This research investigates whether subtle sexism exists within a group of self-identified anarchist punks who contend their primary tenets/principles dictate that they reject all forms of inequality. Moreover, if sexism does exist within the AP subculture, eradication of this problem within this community may be a daunting task -- as sexism may persist in subtle, invisible, and obstinate ways. This exploratory and descriptive research will utilize interviews of fifty men and women to examine if sexism exists, specifically in a subtle manner, and, if so, to illuminate manifestations of sexism within the anarchist punk community. Additionally, this study engages Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) sexism theory to a non-traditional, subcultural setting.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Statement of the Problem**

Sexism is pervasive throughout the world. It is manifested in various forms, such as sexual assault, honor crimes, sex trafficking, domestic violence, dowry violence, son preference, and lower wages for women. The following statistics demonstrate the extent of sexism and its effects: women possess only 1% of land resources throughout the world; 200,000 women die every year as a result of back-street abortions, and two-thirds of the 300 million children who have no access to education are female (World March for Women Web Site 2004). Although many contend great strides have been made to eradicate sexism within Western society, it remains embedded within various segments of culture. Examples include the underrepresentation of women in the employment sector at top levels of management and in the political arena. Additionally, sexual discrimination has been evidenced in the educational sector by the advisement of young women towards traditionally saturated feminine disciplines, such as humanities and social sciences, or in mass media where women are depicted and relegated to the stereotypical, second-class status as presented in television, movies, and music videos as sex objects (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995). Sexism is manifested in individual behaviors such as sexual harassment, stalking, rape, and domestic violence.

Due to the pervasiveness of sexism, it is no surprise that it has been reproduced in subcultures/countercultures, such as the motor bike boys, hippies, skinheads, or punks. Although the general punk subculture purports to be egalitarian, it has been found to be

sexist (Leblanc 1999; Rosenberg and Garafolo 1998). The focus of this research is the anarchist punk (AP) subculture, as their objectives are to eradicate oppression throughout the world, which includes the elimination of sexism, and to achieve egalitarianism. As this particular group strives to be more egalitarian than the dominant culture and other subcultures, it is important to survey sexism -- to see if it exists and to observe the level of sexism (blatant, covert, and subtle) and its embodiments. Moreover, if sexism exists within the AP subculture, it raises the following questions: what is to be said of a radical, liberal subculture that bases itself on social change for equality while sexism still persists, even in a subtle manner? Is the anarchist punk subculture not entirely radical or are only certain beliefs, practices, and behaviors radical? Has sexism been a priority for social change within this subculture?

### **Definition of Key Terms**

#### **Punk**

“Punk” is a broad category inclusive of a variety of subgroups and subcultures. In this section, I will provide a general overview of punk. There are many subgenres within the punk community, which contain multitudinous ideologies, values, and styles, such as pop punk, d-beat, hardcore, straight-edge, emo/screamo, Riot Grrrl, and anarchist punk.

Punk is a difficult concept to define, as individuals within and external to the community define it differently. In his book, *Philosophy of Punk-More Than Noise*, which is perceived to be the definitive authority on punk within the anarchist community, Craig O’Hara defines punk as a “formidable voice of opposition” (1999: 41). He employs Profane Existence’s, a well-known anarchist punk (AP) collective, definition of

punk, which identifies punk as a social movement struggling for peace and freedom. I will use O'Hara's (1999) and Profane Existence's definition of punk in conjunction with the general sociological definition of punk as a music based subculture (Brake 1985; Hebdige 1981; Leblanc 1999). Sarah Thornton, author of the *Subcultures Reader*, offers a sociological perspective on subcultures, which defines subcultures as "groups of people that have something in common with each other (i.e., they share a problem, an interest, a practice) which distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other social groups" (1997: 1). By defining punk in this comprehensive manner, it is portrayed as a voice of opposition, a lifestyle, music, and fashion.

Similar to other rock music forms, punk is characterized as rebellious, nonconformist, and anti-authoritarian (O'Hara 1999). The most unique characteristic of the punk community is the Do It Yourself (DIY) ethic. From its origins, participants in the punk community designed their own clothes, formed their own bands, created their own record labels, ran their own distros (See Table 1: 79), and published their own zines (See Table 1: 79). Punk's DIY ethic provided individuals with a sense that anyone can play music, including women (Daugherty 2002; Leblanc 1999). During this first wave of punk, the community was inclusive of women who were inspired to play music and felt welcome to share the stage with men (Daugherty 2002).

### **The Rise of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave –Anarchist Punk**

Mainstream media declared punk dead when one of the most known commercial punk bands, the Sex Pistols, disbanded in 1979. This declaration was premature, as not only were many bands still in existence, but the punk community burgeoned at this time

(Davies 1996). Between 1980 and 1984, the second wave of punk emerged and took a more overtly political turn. It was at this juncture where many punks proclaimed themselves anarchists and activists (Davies 1996; Leblanc 1999; O'Hara 1999). During this time, many punks embraced the DIY ethic of their predecessors (O'Hara 1999). This style of punk is known as anarchist punk (AP). Anarchist punk "is a subgenre of the punk rock movement consisting of groups and bands promoting specifically anarchist ideas" (Wikipedia Web Site 2001). According to Peter Kropotkin (1970), a prominent anarchist, anarchism is

The name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government-harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreement concluded between various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being (P. 284).

Many second wave anarchist punk bands lyrically and philosophically attacked institutions such as capitalism, government, religion, and social problems such as war, sexism, racism, classism, and Third World exploitation. They embraced the anti-war, environmental, and animal rights movements (Leblanc; 1999; O'Hara 1999). Davies (1996) distinguished the two waves of punk by describing the first as subversive in which individuals perceived themselves as alienated and isolated, while second wave bands were political. The first wave of punk opened up new possibilities for second wave bands that were not explored by the first wave constituents, such as exploring political ideologies and playing for political causes, such as Rock Against Racism, Rock Against

Reagan and Anti Nazi League (Davies 1996). In addition, punks played a significant role in anti-nuclear rallies in Europe and America (Lamy and Levin 1985).

This second wave of punk significantly affected punk music of today. There are hundreds of newer anarchist punk bands that have fallen into newly labeled genres, such as crust-punk (See Table 1: 79) or hardcore, who hold the very similar political ideologies as their second wave predecessors. Furthermore, newer collectives have formed, such as Profane Existence, which is the most prominent punk anarchist, zine/distro/collective today. They explain their objective:

We believe in a system of organization based on equality, without leaders and bosses, and where decisions are made by direct democracy (this is called non-hierarchical organization). We are against centralized state power, capitalism, patriarchy, and any other oppressive system whose power structure places one individual above another. We believe that it is our responsibility to take action in self-defense against such oppressive institutions - we call this revolutionary anarchism. As punk rockers, we revel in the fact that we are a counterculture of social outcasts and we reject the white, middle class apathy and privilege that most of us were born into. Where our politics meet counterculture, this is what we call the "anarchopunk movement." We are a culture of resistance! (Profane Existence 2002: 2).

Profane Existence asserts that their goal is to rid the world of its oppression, including patriarchy. However, Lauraine Leblanc found that sexism exists in the general punk community. Her research included interviews with forty female punks in the general punk community, which culminated in a book called *Pretty in Punk* (1999). Her main thesis posits that females join subcultures to resist feminine constructions of gender, only to concede to masculinist expectations of how they should be. While Leblanc's results were derived from the general punk community, this study researched the existence and manifestations of subtle sexism within the anarchist punk community.

### **Significance of the Problem for the Discipline**

Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) subtle sexism theory has been applied to a multitude of settings; however, it has been inadequately applied to nontraditional environments. If subtle sexism does, in fact, exist within a radical subculture, sociologists need to examine the factors that lead to the inconsistency between attitudes, beliefs and behavior. Additionally, researchers may endeavor to discover and devise effective tools for social change, not only in the subcultural terrain but in mainstream society. Another significant benefit of this research is that it echoes and underscores prior research on women in subcultures, such as Angela McRobbie (1991) and Lauraine Leblanc (1999), who concluded that women are not studied within the context of subcultures.

### **Significance of the Problem Outside of the Discipline**

If sexism is evident within the AP subculture, individuals outside the discipline of sociology may question why sexism persists within a radical subculture and how the dominant culture will eradicate sexism if it is not possible for a smaller, radical group of individuals to eliminate this problem. What does this say of the persistence and power of socialization or of the power some people hold over others? By examining if sexism exists, in a subtle manner, and illuminating potential manifestations of sexism within the AP subculture, this study can be useful to academic and non-academic communities, and to individuals within the subculture itself. Since the Fall of 2003 when my research began, there has been an increased active awareness with regard to the prevalence of

sexism within the AP community. For instance, in the Summer of 2004, Dan and Maygun, editors of Profane Existence, authored and published an article on sexism called "Punk vs. Sexism Primer." If there is cumulative discourse on the prevalence of sexism within this community, there is an increasing chance that more people will become aware of the problem and more likely address the issue. For instance, if members of the AP community cannot identify women's roles or accomplishments within the subculture, they may realize that there is a problem within this subculture. If men still occupy dominant positions within this subculture, individuals may question why this is the case and what can be done to change this problem. Additionally, individuals may also question whether gender roles within this subculture mirror gender roles within mainstream culture.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Various subcultures have been researched since the early 1900s such as criminal/delinquent gangs, hippies, skinheads, and punks. Qualitative research on subcultures endeavors to explain factors that lead to subcultural formation, the functions subcultures serve, the type of individuals who participate in subcultures, and the effect subcultures have on its members. Two schools have influenced research on this topic: University of Chicago and Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS).

Subcultural research has its roots in sociology, particularly at the University of Chicago, which in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on factors that lead to the formation of criminal/delinquent subcultures. Although the punk subculture may be perceived as “delinquent” by mainstream media (O’Hara 1999), it is a music based, rather than a criminal, subculture. Therefore, a focus on criminological theories would be nonproductive for this research. Additionally, the CCCS did not solely focus on criminal/delinquent subcultures; they concentrated on various types of subcultures such as hippies, skinheads, and punks. However, scant attention was given to female subcultural participation until Angela McRobbie (1991) addressed this specific problem.

### **SUBCULTURAL RESEARCH**

In recent years, subcultural research has focused on female participation; however, this has not always been the case. Researchers found that classical research failed to address female involvement in subcultures. In addition, McRobbie (1991)

contended, when women have been mentioned in research, the findings were more like footnotes. In her book, *Feminism and Youth Culture* (1991), Angela McRobbie stated that during the past 15 years, subcultural research has focused solely on male youth cultural forms,

Although ‘youth culture’ and the ‘sociology of youth’ and particularly Critical and Marxist perspectives on them – have been central stages in the development of cultural studies over the past fifteen years, the emphasis from the earliest work of the National Deviancy Conference (NDC) onwards has remained consistently on *male* youth cultural forms (P. 26).

Additionally, she concluded that past research has focused on relationships between male youth and class culture, machinery, school, community, and the workplace. Leblanc (1999) cited past research on subcultures, which focused on male participation from Frederick Thrasher’s study of gangs in 1927 to Hall and Jefferson’s focus on working class males in Britain in 1975, to Jay MacLeod’s study on the Italian Slum in 1987.

The lack of information regarding female participation within subcultures prompted McRobbie to question if young females were absent or invisible in subcultures. As she discovered, females were on the peripheries of subcultures. McRobbie endeavored to explore the reasons for the marginalization of women and critically reread two subcultural classics: Dick Hebdige’s, *Subculture-the Meaning of Style* (1981), and Paul Willis’ *Learning to Labour* (1977). McRobbie asserted attention was not given to the issues of sexuality and sexism. She contended that sexism was not criticized by Paul Willis’ study and argued his research was inundated with aggressively masculine language, which was ‘unambiguously degrading’ (1991: 31) to women. Additionally,

McRobbie argued that in Hebdige's *Subculture*, his "...usage of 'style' structurally excludes women," while style/fashion has always been more of a female than male interest (p. 34).

McRobbie (1991) concluded female roles in subcultures are not only subordinated, but they are maintained by and reproduced from the dominant culture. The retention and reproduction of subordination is exemplified by previous studies, such as Willis' *Profane Culture* (1978), who researched motor bike boy and hippy subcultures. Traditional sex roles prevailed in both subcultures. McRobbie cited evidence that females were in marginal positions in the motor bike subculture, and their access and participation were contingent upon the girlfriend role. McRobbie's review of Willis' research of the hippy culture portrayed femininity as equated to "earth goddess/earth mother." Additionally, McRobbie found that females were relegated to the role of girlfriend or "hanger-on" in the skinhead subculture.

Confounded by the fact that women were marginalized to the peripheries in the motor bike, hippy, and skinhead subcultures, McRobbie investigated an alternative route for women to organize their cultural life. She examined the teenybopper culture of the 1970s and found this phenomenon was acceptable to parents, as young women were kept in their homes only to gaze at their favorite pop stars in their rooms, and, in effect, far away from moral depravity and danger. Consequently, this also reproduced traditional gender stereotypes of women as passive fans. McRobbie cited the most important aspect of teenybopper culture offers females the opportunity to define a space of their own (1991: 24). McRobbie argued that female participation in subcultures can be best studied

by moving away from a male focused subcultural terrain. She also questioned whether women have a different leisure space than men and, consequently, offer a different form of resistance. She further maintained women are not attracted to masculine subcultural solutions. However, Leblanc (1999) disagreed, as women participate in the general punk community.

Subcultural research has been conducted mainly by men with an emphasis on male forms of resistance while female roles in subcultures have not been given sufficient attention. This lack of feminist focus has resulted in that there is little known about females who join male subcultures (Leblanc 1999; McRobbie 1991). McRobbie calls for a shift in research attention to focus on women's culture. Moreover, researchers have not confronted the issue of sexism within subcultures. Clearly, female roles are subordinated and reproduced within the dominant culture and hence subcultures. Furthermore, there has been inadequate research conducted on the punk community, particularly the second wave of punk and women in punk.

### **RESEARCH ON WOMEN IN THE PUNK SUBCULTURE**

Recent research has been conducted on women's participation in the punk subculture (Daughtery 2002; Leblanc 1999; Murphy 2001; Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998). The literature revealed the following: the first wave of punk was notable for pro-feminist attitudes, women occupied marginal positions in the punk community, and the punk community is dominated by men, not only numerically but by symbolic rituals and behavior, expectations, and interactions. Additionally, the second wave of punk has not

been sufficiently studied, primarily because the media and academia have always focused on commercially popular bands (Goshert 2000).

Many researchers concurred that the first wave of punk was profeminist in its initial stages (Daugherty 2002; Leblanc 1999; Murphy 2001; Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998). At this point, women were no longer relegated to the status of 'groupie' but were afforded the opportunity to play in bands (Bayton 1998; Daugherty 2002). Perhaps one of the reasons women participated in this community may be due to punk's DIY ethic which provided a sense of ownership and autonomy with regard to creativity. In effect, punk female musicians challenged both public perceptions and the music industry's sexist understanding of the proper female performance of the popular music artist and music fan. For example, the Slits, a popular first wave punk band, was comprised of female members (Daugherty 2002). During this time, women used punk to interrogate gender by using fashion as a form of resistance to critique oppressive ideals of beauty and to undermine the definition of women as sex objects by wearing cut-up clothing, uneven haircuts, flashy makeup -- all of which criticize natural beauty (Bayton 1998; Daugherty 2002; Davies 1996).

During this time, punk rhetoric was profeminist; however, the community still had misogynist tones (Daugherty 2002; Leblanc 1999; Murphy 2001; Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998). An example of this is when Mark P., editor of the London zine, *Sniffin Glue* (1976) and band, *Alternative TV*, made disparaging remarks referring to women as weak and that punks were not women (Daugherty 2002; Laing 1985; Leblanc 1999). While the window of opportunity for women to become involved was more open in the

punk community than other music scenes, it was still heavily male dominated (Daugherty 2002). Violence began to take over the punk scene in 1979 and increased through the early 1980s with the advent of masculinized, American hardcore punk. It was at this juncture where women became isolated from the violent, punk spaces, and women-driven bands became disillusioned with the punk community (Daugherty 2002; Leblanc 1999).

Research reveals that while women participated, they often occupied the peripheries of subcultures, particularly in the punk scene (Brake 1985; Leblanc 1999). Men are the major players in the punk community: they are in bands, run distros, publish zines, set up shows, and own venues. Moreover, historians of punk music have ignored female contributions to the punk community such as playing in bands and creating zines.

Additionally, it was evident that males dominate the community, numerically; they comprised 60-70% of the first wave of punk (Daugherty 2002). Male numerical domination in this subculture has remained unchanged since the inception of punk. As Leblanc (1999) found that at the time of her study, 1993 to 1995, the community was either comprised of two-thirds to three-fourths men. Leblanc (1999) also notes the punk community was not only dominated by men, numerically, but by masculine symbolic symbols/rituals, masculinist behavior and ideals and domination of female behavior by men's expectations of women.

Leblanc (1999) contends the masculinity of punk is apparent in the construction of subcultural symbols and rituals, such as the mosh pit (See Table 1: 79), in which there is an overrepresentation of men. The fashion of punk may reflect aspects of masculinity from the larger dominant culture: shaved heads, tattoos, and leather jackets.

Additionally, male punk behavior was found to be hypermasculine and included behavior such as tough posturing, spitting, and roughhousing. Therefore, attitudes, ideals, and behaviors of punk are constructed along masculine norms (Leblanc 1999).

Men constructed and reinforced the masculinism of the subculture through their everyday interactions with each other and female punks. Leblanc's (1999) participants described punk men as standoffish, sexist, condescending, and sometimes physically abusive. Respondents in her study found male punks condescending because they did not take female punks seriously. While some of Leblanc's participants reported punk men to be respectful or egalitarian, overall, participants reported that they were treated as sex objects. In addition, female respondents reported punk men protected them from harassment of others. However, these same men would not police the same type of behavior within their male circle. Additionally, Leblanc (1999) found that female punks fell into one of two roles: (1) the virtual boy, who takes on the masculine norms and is accepted as one of the punks, or (2) the woman that dates all the male punks, who is not respected by either male or female punks. Male punks were found to be instrumental in establishing boundaries between female punks who are, and those who are not, respected. Furthermore, the absence of diverse roles for women in the scene was problematic for female punks, as women had a choice between these two oppositional roles that isolate female punks from each other. This also demonstrates how masculine domination was maintained and perpetuated through gender norms. In order to gain respect within the punk community, female members adopted masculine characteristics of punk dress and/or behavior. In addition to gendered role designations that reflected masculine

domination, Leblanc's (1999) participants were confronted with another set of mixed expectations of sexual pressure. Additionally, to gain respect and acceptance within the punk community, female punks were forced not only to embrace masculine characteristics and behaviors of punk, they were also viewed as potential partners for males and were therefore expected to conform to mainstream standards of female heterosexuality -- to present themselves as attractive and to be sexually available.

Punks assert that their subculture is egalitarian; however, because of conflicting expectations and masculinist domination of behavior and ideals, research suggests the ideal of egalitarianism does not translate into practice. Male punks maintain the masculinity of the punk subculture by shaping and enforcing its gender norms and by presenting females with contradictory sets of expectations.

In contrast to the general punk scene, egalitarianism is one of the main foci of the anarchist punk community. If the general punk community mirrors mainstream normative expectations, it is important to examine how the anarchist punk community replicates these expectations. Men's numerical domination, in conjunction with masculinist behaviors, ideals and normative expectations that are dictated to female punks are problematic for them. This community is obviously dominated by men, and, in turn, female punks do not have the leverage to counter-define the norms of this subculture. One exception was the Riot Grrrl movement in the early 1990s, which was a feminist form of punk that arose and challenged these norms and expectations. Their aim was to demarginalize women in the punk community (Daugherty 2002; Leblanc 1999; Murphy 2001; O'Hara 1999; Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998). They discussed various

feminist topics, such as past and present women's movements, sexual abuse, sexism, body image, and women's health care issues, mental illness, and homosexuality (O'Hara 1999). Riot Grrrl became a spin-off community. Some researchers (Daugherty 2002; Leblanc 1999; Murphy 2001; Rosenberg and Garofalo 1998) contend that Riot Grrrls were excommunicated from the punk community because they challenged the boundaries of punk to such an extent that it became labeled as a new genre.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In *Modern Sexism* (1995), Benokraitis and Feagin introduced their theory of sexism, which is categorized into three tiers: blatant, covert, and subtle. They contend sexism "involves both antifemale prejudices and stereotypes and the power men have to implement them in everyday practices of discrimination" (1995: 39). Clearly, sex discrimination refers to unequal and harmful treatment of individuals based on their sex, which can take many forms such as glass ceilings, sexual assault, and pornography along with many other behaviors and manifestations. Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) contend sexism exists along a continuum of intent, visibility, and the degree of harm, documentation and remedies, which occurs on four societal levels: individual, organizational, institutional, and cultural.

The individual level of sex discrimination is the differential treatment that occurs in a face to face interactional environment, which is targeted toward specific individuals and can either be direct/indirect and impersonal/personal. Organizational discrimination is built into practices of organizations and is comprised of differential rules, practices, and policies for men and women within formal organizations, such as corporations or

hospitals. The third level is institutional discrimination, which refers to “sex discrimination occurring on a routine and repeated basis in family, political, economic, educational, military, and religious institutions” (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995: 46). This type of discrimination is pervasive and overlapping as it crosses public and private boundaries and/or institutional sectors (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995). Sexual discrimination on a cultural level is built into art, music, literature, language, customs, beliefs, and ideology. An example of discrimination found in art is women depicted as seductresses.

Subtle sex discrimination refers to the unequal and harmful treatment of women that is typically less visible than blatant sex discrimination. It can be innocent or manipulative, intentional or unintentional, and well meaning or malicious. This type of sexism is difficult to define and measure. It is often unobserved, as society has, for the most part, internalized subtle sexist behavior as “normal, natural or customary” (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995: 41). Subtle sexist behavior has been and continues to be transmitted via culture (symbols, language, values, and norms) and, in turn, transmitted to subcultures. However, it can be just as real or harmful as the other forms of sexism. Subtle sexism is more visible on the individual level. Examples are when women are not listened to due to an unconscious assumption that they do not know what they are talking about or when a woman is called “honey” in the office. There are nine forms of subtle sexism: condescending chivalry, supportive discouragement, friendly harassment, subjective objectification, radiant devaluation, liberated sexism, benevolent exploitation,

considerate domination, and collegial exclusion (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995; See Table 2: 80).

This study examined the following forms of subtle sexism: condescending chivalry, supportive discouragement, friendly harassment, subjective objectification, liberated sexism, benevolent exploitation, and considerate domination as they may occur in the anarchist punk community. The intention was to not explore collegial exclusion as this type of sexism is based in the collegial milieu, and, although exclusion may occur in the anarchist punk community, it is within the confines of this specific community rather than the college atmosphere. In addition, Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) radiant devaluation category was not investigated in this study, because, according to O'Hara (1999), this form of sexism is highly discouraged within the AP scene.

Benokraitis and Feagin's 1995 theory of subtle sexism has been applied by many researchers in various settings and culminated in a book by Nijole Benokraitis, *Subtle Sexism* (1997). Women and men were interviewed to investigate the occurrences of subtle sexism in the legal, engineering and academic professions, day care settings, therapy, and various other settings. The intention of my research was to apply Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) subtle sexism typology to the AP community, namely because this radical community strives for egalitarianism. Evidence of subtle sexism and gendered attitudes and practices can be illuminated by employing a qualitative research method that queries individuals directly within the AP community.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

Sexism is pervasive and has been found to exist within the general punk subculture. The anarchist punk community strives for an egalitarian society that would eliminate classism, racism, and other forms of oppression. Sexism, in particular subtle sexism, may persist within this subculture. Although highly discouraged, a few incidences of blatant sexism have been found within this subculture. Therefore, there may be more occurrences of subtle sexist behaviors than blatant sexism. Consequently, sexism in the anarchist punk subculture would contradict the intentions of this particular group with regard to practices of sexual equality. The focus of this research is to examine if sexism exists, in a subtle manner, and to illuminate the extent and manifestations of sexism within the anarchist punk community. As this community contends that their primary tenets/principles dictate that they reject all forms of inequality, individuals may continue to engage in practices, both consciously and/or unconsciously, of sexual inequality, namely in the form of subtle sexism.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Research Design**

Initial preparation for this study began with a review of the relevant literature devoted to subcultures, female representation and participation in subcultures and, more specifically, punk, with the intent of shedding light on the existence of subtle sexism, and gendered attitudes and practices. This study examined the perceptions and experiences of individuals within the anarchist punk (AP) community. Additionally, this analysis explored manifestations of sexism identified by participants not mentioned in the literature.

For this study, a qualitative research design was utilized based on semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews and Internet email questionnaires (See Appendix A). The decision to conduct face to face in-depth interviews in Richmond, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia was mainly an effort to take a more comparative approach with regard to the findings. Similarly, the decision to include the online community and solicit through Internet sites, such as Myspace, and an AP message board, such as Profane Existence, was intended to gather a more diverse group of self-identified anarchist punks. Just as advancing technologies significantly impact the dominant culture, the AP community is influenced as well, which is reflective of their participation in virtual/online communities. Thus, the use of the email questionnaires also provided the opportunity to obtain perspectives from anarchist punks involved in the Internet community.

Several elements of the research guided my decision with regard to choosing a qualitative methodology, the first of which was the exploratory and descriptive nature of the topic area. Second, the conceptualization and operationalization of subtle sexism, and gendered attitudes and practices were based on the current and relevant subcultural literature in relation to sexism, my 20 years experience in the punk and AP community and four years in the AP Richmond scene, and collaboration with punk individuals and groups. Third, the individuals under study were also a factor. Generally speaking, the AP community is committed to the ideal of egalitarianism.

It was important to speak directly with individuals inside the AP milieu via a series of semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews along with email questionnaire responses in order to accurately describe their perceptions and experiences in relation to subtle sexism and gendered attitudes and practices. Moreover, participants were not only afforded the opportunity to share their experiences and perceptions but to also contribute to developing ways to confront and combat sexism.

### **Research Study Goals**

- Collect information based on the personal perspective/experiences of self-identified anarchist punks from three locations (Richmond, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia) and two Internet sites (Myspace and Profane Existence Message Board).
- Highlight, descriptively, the existence, role and impact of subtle sexism, and gendered attitudes and practices within the AP community.

### **Specific Objectives/Evaluation**

- Interview 30+ self-identified anarchist punks.
- Conduct qualitative comparative analysis of the data from interview sessions and Internet email responses; identify common themes, and summarize findings.  
  
Compare/contrast interviewee and questionnaire responses with relevant literature and Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) theory/typology of subtle sexism and any other possible areas not mentioned in the literature.
- Provide interviewees with a written summary of findings, and be available for questions that interviewees may have.
- Present principle findings of research in a public forum.
- Make material available to interviewees upon appropriate request (e.g., providing transcripts to respective interviewees).

### **Sampling**

The collection of data utilized face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews and email questionnaires conducted from April 24, 2005 to March 19, 2006. The sampling method was based on convenience/snowball sampling. The snowball sampling method was utilized, as the focus of the research was the AP subculture, a group of people with specific values and beliefs. After each interview, participants were asked to refer another potential volunteer. The sample population consisted of 50 individuals, both male and female, 18 years and older, currently members of the AP community in the Richmond, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia locations as well as Internet virtual communities, such as Myspace ([www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)), and an AP message board, such as

Profane Existence ([www.profaneexistence.com](http://www.profaneexistence.com)). Myspace is an Internet site where individuals from various and multiple backgrounds meet and post streaming bulletins of opinions and/or events. The Profane Existence message board is a virtual venue for anarchist punks to discuss and distribute information concerning various aspects and features of punk life. Bulletins regarding the research study and requests for interested volunteers/participants were posted on Myspace and the Profane Existence message board. Additionally, I created a group/forum and joined feminist/anarchist feminist groups on Myspace and posted a thread on the Profane Existence message board under the gender/feminist forum. This method was effective in obtaining potential participants. For example, one participant reposted my research study bulletin on his online Live Journal site, and, as a result, six respondents filled out the email questionnaire. One of the face to face interviewees snowballed to another face to face interview and four individuals who participated in the email questionnaire. Out of the 50 participants, 26 were face to face interviews and 24 were in response to the online email questionnaire. There were initially 81 individuals who expressed interest in participating in the email questionnaire; however, only 28 participants actually completed the questionnaire. Four email questionnaires were discarded -- two were incomplete, and two participants did not meet the sample characteristic criteria of being an anarchist punk per Question 4 of the email questionnaire form (See Appendix A).

At the initial face to face meeting with participants, the nature of the study and the purpose of interview were discussed (See Appendix D), and written informed consent (See Appendix C) was obtained. Participants were given a brief orientation about the

study related to the initial research question: Does subtle sexism exist within a group of individuals (self-identified as anarchist punk) who identify with and participate in a community who contend their primary tenets/principles dictate that they reject all forms of inequality? During interview sessions, each subject was asked to share personal experiences/perceptions to the same series of open ended questions based on the semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix A) in relation to subtle sexism, and gendered attitudes and practices within the AP community. Face to face interviews were conducted in Richmond, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia at convenient locations agreed upon by participant and researcher. Locations included various coffee shops, an East coast punk festival (Pointless Fest), participants' place of employment, their apartments, and my own apartment.

All interview sessions were recorded on a microcassette recorder, and each session was transcribed verbatim and then uploaded into Microsoft Word. Face to face interview sessions ranged between one to three hours. The total audio recording time for all face to face interviews ran approximately 65 hours. For the online email questionnaires, an initial email was sent which included two scripts (See Appendix B and Appendix E), introducing and describing the research study. Individuals, who responded with interest in participating in the study, were sent an information consent sheet (See Appendix G). Individuals who agreed to participate were sent an email questionnaire (See Appendix A), which requested that they return responses within a two-week time period. After a participant completed and returned the email questionnaire, a thank you script (See Appendix F) was sent requesting email participants to refer potential research

volunteers. A master table was created to track responses/non-responses to informational consent and email questionnaire forms.

## **Subjects**

The following socio-demographic data for each participant were also collected:

1) sex (male/female); 2) ethnicity (white, African American, Hispanic, Native American); 3) age of the participant (18-20; 21-30; 31-40); 4) highest level of education attained (i.e., GED/High School, Bachelors, Master); and 5) geographic location (See Table 3: 82).

Of the 26 face to face interviews conducted, 13 were male and 13 were female; and of the 24 email questionnaire respondents, there were 15 males and 9 females, for an overall breakdown of 28 males and 22 females. Face to face interviews included 22 whites and 4 Hispanics. Email questionnaires consisted of 21 whites; 1 African American; 1 Native American; and 1 Hispanic. The total ethnicity breakdown was 43 whites; 5 Hispanics; 1 African American, and 1 Native American.

Among face to face interviewees, 4 participants were between the ages of 18-20, while 20 subjects fell into the 21-30 category and 2 participants were in the 31-40 age bracket. Email respondents included 4 participants between the ages of 18-20, 14 between the ages of 21-30, and 6 between 31-40 years of age. For both face to face interviews and email questionnaires, 8 participants ranged between the 18-20 years of age, 34 participants between 21-30 years of age, and 8 participants between 31-40 years of age.

Education levels for face to face interviews included 10 participants with a high school diploma only, while 14 participants held Bachelor degrees and 2 participants

reported not having a high school diploma. For the email interviews, 16 participants held high school diplomas, 6 participants held Bachelor degrees, and 1 respondent held a Masters degree, and 1 participant reporting not having a high school diploma. Educational level for the total sample consisted of 26 participants with high school diplomas, 20 participants holding Bachelor degrees and 1 participant with a Master degree. Finally, 3 participants had less than a high school diploma.

Additionally, geographically, 9 participants from were Richmond, 7 from Washington, DC, and 7 from Philadelphia. There were also 6 participants from Baltimore, 4 from Minneapolis, 2 from Canada, while the remaining 15 participants hailed from various locations across the United States.

### **Data Analysis**

The approach used in this study to elicit individual experiences is based on the assumption that sexism may exist within this radical subculture, and the role of gendered attitudes and practices found in larger society have not only influenced the oppositional subculture of the AP community but also complicates their ability to practice their ideology of egalitarianism with regard to gender equality. Both face to face in-depth interview findings and responses from the email questionnaires shed light on the processes of subtle sexism and gendered attitudes and practices within the AP community. Participants were given a brief orientation about the study prompted by the initial research question: Does subtle sexism exist within a group of individuals (self-identified as anarchist punk) who identify with and participate in a community who

contend their primary tenets/principles dictate that they reject all forms of inequality. Responses to this initial question provided me with a general sense of what subtle sexism and gendered attitudes and practices meant to participants. It also gave me the chance to clarify terms participants were unclear about before moving on to specific questions and probes with regard to subtle sexism.

Participant responses were entered into a matrix (See Table 4: 83). The matrix was developed from the interview guide, and served as a tool for organizing and coding the data by identifying themes, patterns, and anomalies in relation to individual and collective responses to the questions on the interview guide. The data obtained were coded by using the typology of subtle sexism created by Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) (See Table 2: 80).

After initial coding of the data, categories were revised by collapsing some and expanding others. Several a priori categories from Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) typology were revealed in interview responses. I analyzed the incongruence of the data against this schema of subtle sexism. Additionally, in vivo categories that emerged from the interview and email questionnaire responses not identified (i.e., hyper-valuation of men) by Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) typology were coded using Strauss and Corbin's *Grounded Theory* (1990). Strauss and Corbin (1990) provided a useful method for creating and analyzing emerging categories and relationships across existing data categories. Grounded theory encompasses placing interpretations and conceptualization of the data, and finding relationships between these concepts. This is achieved by coding. Strauss and Corbin cite three types of coding: open, axial, and selective. Open

coding is accomplished by identifying relevant categories. Axial coding binds data together by associating a category to its subcategories, and selective coding relates a core category to all other categories. This is done by creating a story, relating the categories by means of a paradigm and authenticating the relationships between categories against the data.

### **Limitations**

With respect to limitations of this study, this type of qualitative research has its own inadequacies. Due to fiscal and time constraints, a large scale study was impractical. However, the intention was to gather at least 30 participants, which I was able to surpass by utilizing an email questionnaire. It is worth noting that some of the email questionnaires contributed much information; but, overall, most email questionnaire responses had less information than face to face interviews.

### ***Generalizability***

Generalizability presents another limitation of this study. Since a subculture is a specific group with its own set of values and beliefs, which differ from the dominant culture, it will be difficult to infer findings to the general population (Neuman 2003: 213). Likewise, because a snowball sampling method was utilized rather than a random sampling method, it is equally difficult to generalize to the overall punk community and AP community. Therefore, generalizations are limited to this sample.

### ***Sample Bias***

In utilizing a snowball sampling method as opposed to a random sample for this study, the potential risks for sampling bias exist. The prospective participants that contacted me may have been highly motivated and/or held strong opinions with regard to the issue of sexism within both the punk scene and, more specifically, the AP community. In contrast, had a random sampling method been utilized, it may have revealed fewer prospective respondents that were aware and/or interested in communicating their perspectives and experiences with regard to issues of sexism within the AP community. Additionally, while the AP community itself is rather large, the sample from this subculture was relatively small.

### **Measures For Protecting Human Subjects**

A main concern with regard to collecting data in this study was the protection of anonymity and confidentiality of participants. This study was IRB approved. To allay fears with regard to anonymity and confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms were used in place of participant's actual names. Also, all participants were advised verbally and/or in writing that their participation was strictly voluntary. Additionally, they were advised verbally and/or in writing of their right to withdraw at anytime during, or after the study and of their right to withhold any or all information they have provided.

All data collected and tracking information for both face to face interview data and online email questionnaire data, to include consent forms, email addresses, phone numbers, and audio recorded and transcribed interview sessions, master tables, coding are filed under pseudonyms and were stored in a secure location. Additionally, archived

email questionnaire responses were deleted from the computer as soon as they were uploaded into Microsoft Word. All computer files related to research are password safeguarded. For the complete human subjects consent form, see Appendix C and Appendix G.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

Anarchist punk (AP) is a social movement that is rooted in punk music. When queried as to what AP meant to respondents, most participants asserted that its objective is to make the world a better place. A facet of AP is to be socially aware and to participate in activism. Its objective is egalitarianism, such as human rights, feminism, environmentalism, and animal rights. Another ethic of AP is to participate in a DIY (Do It Yourself) culture, which is based on the tenet of anti-consumerism. The DIY ethic includes to make, repair, and build using as few resources as possible and learning how to be autonomous. AP critiques society, its rules and its norms. It is anti-capitalist, antifascist, and anti-authoritarian. To be an anarchist punk is to be politically active.

When queried about the motivation of being anarchist punk, many cited that they were exposed to it from the general punk community. Respondents explained they were attracted to AP because it was a movement they could identify with politically and provided the opportunity to participate in activism (anti-war, socialism, anarchism, human rights, etc...). Since they rejected the status quo, their intention was to seek an alternative style of living, and when queried as to reasons others join this community, respondents cited the same motivations for others as themselves.

When respondents were questioned about whether men and women join the community for similar or different reasons, many claimed that they joined for similar reasons. The next popular response was the perception that women entered the scene by dating a punk or to find a punk boyfriend. In addition, they stated women joined for

gender/queer issues and to find a community that was free of sexist attitudes, as well as providing a safe environment within a community of similar others. Others cited different reasons for men joining, such as the AP community was a place where punk men can thrive, have a sense of belonging and to reap the benefit of a fraternal bond.

Despite this, my data showed evidence of subtle, covert and blatant forms of sexism in this community. The most frequent occurrence was subtle sexism which was manifested in the following forms: considerate domination, subjective objectification and subcultural exclusion. Considerate domination is comprised of subcategories of numerical domination, control over subcultural institutions of punk, good old boy networks, and hyper-valuation of men. Subjective objectification consisted of sexual objectification, beauty standards, double standards and mixed expectations, women as accessories, women as tagalongs, and women as children. Subcultural exclusion was comprised of women being excluded from playing in punk bands and from the decision-making processes of subcultural institutions of bands, labels/distros and organizing protests. The last category of subtle sexism was condescending chivalry. Covert forms of discrimination were found in manifestations of containment (gatekeeping), tokenism, co-optation and manipulation. Finally, blatant sexism was evidenced in the form of sexual violence, sexual harassment and interpersonal violence.

## **SUBTLE SEXISM**

### **Considerate Domination**

According to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995), considerate domination occurs when men “often occupy preeminent positions and control important decision-making functions” (1995: 109). Men’s positions of power are accepted because domination is institutionalized and internalized. Institutionalized domination occurs as it is built into a culture’s language and customs. Therefore, women in positions of power are deviations from the norm. For example, when women are in positions of high status, people tend to apply a hyphen when referring to their occupation, i.e., female-doctor. In addition, when distinguishing a female or female-fronted band on fliers or records reviews, similar hyphenization was found in the data. Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) assert that internalized domination is manifested by interruptions in speech. An example of this is when a woman is speaking; men interrupt, turn away from her, or have side conversations. This was found throughout the data and will be discussed in a future section. In addition, various categories of considerate domination emerged such as numerical domination, control over subcultural institutions of punk, good old boy networks, and hyper-valuation of men.

### ***Numerical Domination***

Previous research has noted that punk is numerically dominated by men. The first wave of punk was comprised of 60-70% men (Daugherty 2002). Additionally, Leblanc (1999) found in her study of the general punk community, men dominate the general

punk scene by a ratio of 2/3 to 3/4. A similar gender ratio was evident in this study, as most respondents believed that 7-8 out of 10 punks were male. Interestingly, a mere 6% of the respondents believed the gender breakdown in the AP community to be 50/50. When queried about why there are not more women in the punk scene, the most popular response was that punk is a white male dominated subculture. Polly, a 21 year old self-identified activist, stated,

Punk, as with most things, is very white-male-friendly. Perhaps, some women feel threatened by the boys club. Almost all of the men I consider my comrades are aggressive. That can be intimidating at times. About why there aren't as many women in the punk scene as men, and you can put this on the record, is because we get fed up and leave. The end.

Respondents also stated that gender socialization steers women away from this subculture, characterizing it as aggressive, violent and testosterone laden. Others regarded punk as boy's club in which the fraternal bond leads to women feeling left out.

Due to numerical domination, women are thought to have more difficulty gaining credit and place in this community. According to Houston, a 28 year old punk female and active in the community for 11 years, "...women have to struggle a lot harder to get credit and to get their place... whereas men, I have seen men walk into the room at the end of a demo [demonstration]... 'ya, great job,' and it's like where the fuck have you been the last 3 weeks..." Houston is describing a scenario whereby women often have put in significant amounts of work such as planning for protests/demonstrations, while men, who have done significantly less work on the same project, appear on the day of the protest and receive the bulk of credit and recognition. The women who have actually done the work are rendered virtually invisible by those giving out the recognition.

As a result of numerical domination, women's accomplishments are viewed as an anomaly. According to A.C., a self-identified Latino/Hispanic male, who has been in the punk scene for 15 years and is a musician, stated, "...well there's more men, so there's obviously going to be more men in bands, more men writing zines... but it doesn't mean that women are not doing it. You kind of notice it more when women do, because it's not another guy doing it..."

The perceptions of these participants illustrate that numerical domination may often result in reaffirming and perpetuating a good old boy network. In this context, men occupy dominant positions and often have control over subcultural institutions within the AP scene. Consequently, women often endure harder and longer struggles with regard to credit and recognition in this community.

### ***Control Over Subcultural Institutions of Punk***

The subcultural institutions of punk include bands, distros/labels, organizing shows and protests, and publishing zines. When respondents were questioned about the roles of men and women in the community, many stated the roles were similar where both men and women set up shows, create zines, participate in activism and are equally respected. There may be, among participant responses, gaps of idealistic egalitarian versions of the AP scene as opposed to what is actually unfolding within this community. For instance, CJ, who is male, stated,

The roles of males and females in the scene are the same and on equal ground. They are both there to help bring about a positive change any way that they can. That is why they chose to be a part of this scene. Anyone who is in the anarchist community could not think that there needs to be different roles for men and women, and, if they do, they need to turn in their membership card.

However, when respondents were asked their perceptions of men and women in this community, they perceived women as passive participants. Most noted the ratio of men in punk bands was 8-9 out of 10. Naomi, who sings for a well known band that has toured internationally, stated, “Even though there are a lot more bands with women, but it’s still not rare to go to a show with 4 or 5 bands and all the bands are all men...” This may not only be due to numerical domination but to exclusionary practices, i.e., not allowing women to play in bands. Furthermore, according to Jim, who organized several anarchist collectives and sang for an outspoken anarchist punk band,

Men’s roles tend to be defined as more active. They are the band members, the ones who put out records, the ones who do zines, the ones who run websites. Even when they are not doing these things, they are more likely to be active participants by doing all the talking, doing all the dancing, setting the standards for their scene. Women are left with little space to contribute...

Another mechanism of control over AP subcultural institutions is by dictating the standards of punk music. One respondent, Molly, who has been in the AP scene for 13 years, postulated that the “...punk ‘voice’ is very male, and women have to mutate their experiences into male ones to be heard...” Punk is inclined to demonstrate a preference for masculine attributes. Gracie, a 23 year old women’s advocate who received her Bachelor’s degree in Women’s Studies and is a zine writer/activist, stated, “I have heard of bands who didn’t want to be a ‘girl band’ or do music about ‘women’s issues or thought that women couldn’t play or sing as well as men...”

Additionally, the vast majority of distros and labels are owned by men. Few respondents believed that distros/labels were run by women. However, Biff, a 21 year old male musician and band member, did not believe there was any sexism in the AP

community, stated, "There is no sexism in my scene, but if there was, I doubt it would be in the anarcho (anarchist) scene because the principals of anarchist punks are: anarchy, peace, equality." When queried as to who ran distros/labels, he thought both men and women ran them, "I think both." Biff later added that more men run distros/labels as a result of numerical domination. In other words, there are more men in the scene. While Tim, a distro/label owner, stated, "From my experience, the most successful distros and record labels, etc... have both men and women at the helm. However, the vast majority is exclusively run by men, with women taking only secondary roles or doing the labor behind the scenes, while the men make all the important decisions and take all the credit." It was noted that men take on dominant positions while women take on accessory or supporting roles, such as doing grunt work, filling the orders for the distros/labels, or sitting at the merchandise tables at shows, etc... As Sage, a 33 year old zine publisher, stated,

I was a woman who ran a distro in which the guy got all the credit. It was his distro... I ended up running the distro and did all the work... People will always come up to the dude behind the table and assume it's the dude doing all the work, and it's never the girl. The reason why I say it's the girls that do it because I think that girls are more capable than guys in actually doing the shit, and, therefore, I think that there is actually a lot more of "those invisible women behind the scenes," and the really successful distros and really successful labels, there is a woman pulling the fucking strings and making it happen.

Because men have assumed leadership roles and decision-making responsibilities, they gain respect and status within the AP community. This enables men to network with each other where distros, record labels, bands and clubs are concerned. This leads

to a domination of the commodities produced, i.e., what bands are heard and ultimately succeed.

Respondents noted that it is harder for women to book shows and for their bands to have their shows booked. Tim stated, “I have also heard of gigs being canceled when some sexist promoter found out there was a woman or women in bands. Face it, we live in a sexist world and having a female member in the band is a handicap in many ways. Of course, I think that’s fucked up and will gladly be in bands with both men and women...”

In the process of organizing protests, it was noted that men were given prominent roles. According to Tim, “... I still see ‘important’ jobs go to more ‘respected’ people (generally the men) all the time. Even within a multi-gender organization, it’s still easy for old gender roles to pop up without even noticing, and everyone has to be prepared to recognize and stomp out this behavior.” In comparison, women, instead, are interrupted in meetings, their opinions are ignored or discounted, and they are bullied in conversations. Margaret, an activist who resides in Baltimore, reflected on an event, which she and a friend helped organize, “We kept on talking, and they kept on interrupting us and only listening to our male comrades to the point that all of us on our side were so pissed off that we nearly left in tears.”

The responses in this segment highlight the control that men hold over the subcultural institutions within the AP scene and reiterates the processes by which men receive the majority of rewards, recognition, credit, and status.

### *Good Old Boy Networks*

Along with institutional power, men have taken on leadership roles resulting in them gaining contacts with other “important people” in the community, and, consequently, forming a good old boy network. According to Gracie, “I’ve organized conferences, shows, and protests with mixed-sex groups and usually (with the exception of childcare) men and women did basically the same things. The men usually had more contacts with ‘important’ people and did more outreach, and the women sometimes ended up doing the shit work...”

Respondents indicated that men associate with other men, and thus create strong affiliations with each other, which in turn facilitate retention of their high status. According to Janet, a resident of Washington, DC who organizes punk shows, “I think it’s a lot easier for men to make connections where distros and record labels are concerned. It’s harder for girls to email somebody and expect to have their request for stuff to distro taken seriously.” When asked why this happens, Katie, a 39 year old, who has been a member of the punk community for 15 years, stated,

Their connections are with other men. It’s easier for men to talk to other men about like “Hey can I get a few of your records, and I will put them in my distro, and I will trade you...” So their distros are burgeoning and growing and then they are going all over the country, and they are hanging out with their male friends, and it becomes like a big pool. It becomes really nepotistic in a way.

The perceptions and experiences of these participants speak to the dominant status and positions, or rather hyper-valuation, of men in the AP subculture. Additionally, respondents’ perceptions in relation to aspects of social networking between men in dominant positions contribute to men obtaining and maintaining higher status.

### *Hyper-Valuation of Men*

Hyper-valuation is an emergent category that arose from the data which Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) did not identify. Many respondents regarded men as more welcomed and respected giving them greater standing in the AP community. Thus, men receive more support because they are perceived as more credible and having more legitimacy. Three forms of hyper-valuation of punk men emerged from the data: idolization; exaggerated credit/credibility and legitimacy; and exaggerated support.

### **Idolization**

Many respondents noted that punk men have celebrity status. According to Susan, age 23, self-identified tattooed, tough girl, "... men are viewed as more of an icon or idol like 'wow...this person is so great and so amazing,' and women are viewed as more of an accessory." Respondent Jim concluded, "So, ultimately men get to be stars and active while women get to be sex objects regardless of the differences in achievement."

Men in bands are put on pedestals, when their words and ideas are revered without question or examination. Margaret added,

It's a hero worship of people, and it's the heroes and heroines, usually heroes. That is the thing with Fred. Fred is really outspoken about gender issues and if you have a couple of dozen young kids who are like [said notable band] 'oh my god', they are going to go and attach on to the political language because it is their hero's language...and if Fred was saying a different message, it might very well have been that [editor's note: meaning they would agree with whatever Fred said].

Hero worship affects both men and women. Dimitri, a career roadie who has toured with a number of big named punk bands, stated, "... certain females in the scene, if someone is in a band, they give them reverence. One of the bands I am on tour with, the singer of the band gets all these girls coming up to him and just gawk at him and talk senselessly at him..."

A consequence of hero worship and idolization is competition between women for the attention of men. Skip, a well-known punk musician, explained how women treat his significant other, "Mae has gotten the evil eye from younger girls. There is always this hero worship thing."

This segment highlights how male punk status in the AP scene is, in part, constituted by the practices and actions of female punks. These female punk practices and actions are often manifested through female to female competition whereby females often undermine one another for male attention.

### **Exaggerated Credit, Credibility, and Legitimacy**

When men enter into the scene, they are given automatic credibility and legitimacy. The primary manner in which they are scrutinized is for their level of authenticity, such as patches, music collections, and bands. Houston noted, "I think that people would automatically garnish this person with respect, and, no matter how much people, like me, or any of our other friends helped, I am sure that they would get all the credit." According to Polly, "Yes, men in the scene are generally treated with more respect than women. Men are heard more and sometimes even, as I stated, talk over and interrupt their female comrades. Men are also given more credibility..."

Legitimacy grows with subcultural participation. Men gain increased respect and credibility as they participate more in the subculture. Rob, another musician, who has been in the scene for 17 years, stated, “It seems to me, even in the AP scene, men get taken more seriously when it comes to starting a band, especially when they have been in a few successful bands already.” Privilege goes hand in hand with respect and credibility. When men have respect and credibility, they are less accountable for their behaviors. This implies that punk men do not need to work on their sexist behaviors, and, consequently, their lack of effort to change their behaviors becomes excused. Dimitri stated, “Males in the scene talk to themselves so much and believe so much in themselves that they are not like the rest of the scene... They don’t carry those things [issues] with them. Rather than dealing with them, they just think that they are cured. They think that they are not sexist because they say they are not sexist.”

Many respondents noted that when men have exaggerated credibility, a problem arises where even though they are working on educating themselves, they are not critical or aware of their privilege. Jim stated, “I think some of it has to do with the fact that a lot of men don’t work on their sexism (or racism, or classism, or other “isms”) when they become involved in the scene. They don’t think about their actions or behaviors.”

Some respondents have asserted a need for self-criticism. Since men and women have a positive perspective of their community but without self-criticism the problem of sexism will not be eliminated. Joe, an activist and train-rider, currently living in Richmond added,

I think it all goes back to we are all born within this male dominated society, and it again leaks into our subculture... and a lot of times, I feel sexism gets excused

and rather than getting addressed, people don't want to deal with it; but if people do address it, other people don't want to hear it because they are fooling themselves into believing that we have created this perfect little subculture, but it's not.

Respondents reveal that as men are placed in leadership positions, they receive exaggerated credit, credibility and legitimacy. With exaggerated credit, credibility and legitimacy, men are often above reproach, particularly in the areas of self-criticism and sexist behaviors. In short, their sexist behaviors become excused, and sexism is harder to address.

### **Exaggerated Support**

When respondents were asked if they would support a male friend in endeavors such as starting up a distro, label or band, and how others would promote this support, most noted that men would receive considerable encouragement. Beth stated,

My male friend was starting a project. I almost started to cry because you feel so hopeless when you see how easy it is for other people, but you want to support them because they are your friends... It's not like they need your encouragement; they have it from everyone in the world, but I support them... It's really painful to hear about the ease that other people have.

My data indicate that men are encouraged to be in bands more so than women. Emma, a current resident of Richmond and former resident of Washington, DC and Minneapolis, stated, "Guys are encouraged and rewarded to be in bands. Guys are rewarded for being in bands. Guys don't have to worry that their band is going to be labeled a 'chick band.'" The data confirmed that men are encouraged and rewarded for various endeavors. Janet stated, "...but I think it's a lot harder for women to garner support for things whether it's

a distro or rally or a social issue that needs addressing. I think it's harder for women to get their voices heard."

A lack of encouragement affects women's motivation to play music. As Naomi stated, "I think that it all comes down to, again, women aren't as encouraged so when you aren't encouraged you don't feel as motivated and as confident about doing whatever it is like playing music or anything like that." This can lead to intimidation. Susan stated, "...that is why I haven't played music in years because I look at all these people, and I just feel like I am not good enough."

Issues of exaggerated support reflect the overwhelming endorsement men receive for their individual and collective endeavors, which contribute to the notion that punk men in the scene can accomplish virtually anything. In contrast, for women, the lack of support and the invisibility of women's efforts and/or endeavors has contributed to many punk women in the scene becoming frustrated and/or leaving the community altogether.

### **Subjective Objectification**

Subjective objectification described by Benokraitis (1997) is a form of sexism that "treats women as children, possessions, or sex objects" (p. 17). Subjective objectification was manifested in the following forms: sexual objectification, beauty standards, double standards, women as accessories, women as tagalongs, and women as children. Due to subjective objectification, women's behavior is controlled and may contribute to their status in the scene also being controlled.

### ***Sexual Objectification***

A function of women in this community is to provide sexual gratification for men. Howie, age 21, who is a bassist in a punk band, stated, “I treat everyone on an equal basis, but I think a lot of punks treat girls as a sexual object.” Naomi stated,

I feel like some of the men I am friends with... I wonder if they are really friends with me because they are trying to maybe hook up with me or if it's just because they actually respect and like me as a person, and it really sucks. I feel like it's happened before ... maybe [a band member] will try to hook up, and then if I reject them, it's kind of a cold shoulder the next time I see them...

Another function of women in this community is to be part of the dating pool, with the expectation that they are to date within the scene. This is due to the fact that there aren't many punk women in the community. According to Mae, who runs a distro/label with her significant other,

I was talking about dating somebody... he was not really involved in the punk scene, and I remember my friend, a guy in the punk scene, telling me, “Well you can't date outside of the scene, there's not enough girls in the scene...” Guess I never thought of it as like looking at people in that way, as dating.

A consequence of sexual objectification is that women are not listened to. Rosie, currently living in Richmond, stated, “I think they are viewed as an object... They don't listen to what she has to say.” Katie concluded,

They kind of see women as a peripheral bonus -- One, we can say that there are women in our movement, or there's women in our scene, and, two, they can pick from that little pool of women and use it as a dating circle ...

### ***Beauty Standards - Controlling Women's Appearance***

AP is a place where women should be able to break free of beauty standards. Jane, a vocalist from a well known upstate New York band, stated, “Beauty standards is a

huge part of the real world and what draws people into the scene is that those standards of beauty are broken down...” Most respondents confirmed that beauty standards exist in this community. The belief is that it affects men; however, harsher standards apply to women. There is a significant pressure for women to maintain a level of conventional beauty. An email respondent, Zach, 18 and a lead singer of a California punk band, stated, “Women are expected to fall into specific beauty standards: punk rock Barbie (someone who otherwise would be considered ‘beautiful’ in mainstream society...but wears punk clothing), crust girl, etc...”

Beauty standards are different for men and women in the AP community. Respondents noted the more one meets the punk aesthetic, the more attractive she/he is. However, this standard was applied more to men. While men’s level of attractiveness is defined by their legitimacy (patches, bands, etc...), women’s appeal and legitimacy is determined by their beauty. Polly stated “There’s a whole male thing about ‘out-punking’ each other. Who can have the biggest mohawk, longest dreads, tightest pants, most worn-out boots, etc...” However, participants believed men’s outer beauty was inconsequential as long as they had the right credentials, and, in Janet’s opinion, “...he will still get laid.”

In recent years, pornography sites have gained popularity by co-opting the punk aesthetic and perpetuating beauty standards. Jim stated,

When it comes to women, there’s a serious focus on the ‘punk rock Barbie doll’ look... I think it’s become worse since the ‘punk’ porn sites have started going up. They reinforce mainstream beauty standards while marketing a ‘punk’ image, and lots of punk men are buying into it.

According to Gracie, “I think that beauty standards still apply in a lot of ways--the Suicide Girls phenomenon, for example -- and that it isn’t questioned very often...”

Sizeism is another beauty standard for women. Women who do not fit into a size standard are negatively affected by their nonconformity. Katie stated,

Even though guys say they are not fat phobic... when you see them interested in women, it generally fits into that larger beauty standard... The clothes are different, and the attitudes are different but the body and the expectation of women are the same. If you got a little or a lot of weight on you, you are kind of like, you are the one left standing alone at the dance...

Negative sanctions for nonconformity are manifested in ways such as being excluded from interactions with other punks or not being asked to participate in the music realm. Howie stated, “I think if a lot of people perceive a girl as not being attractive, they won’t hang out with them...I think there are a lot of punks that do this.” A.C. noted that there is a beauty standard for women who play in bands, “I mean I haven’t heard this talk, but if you see pictures of a lot of girls in bands, they are hot.”

Unattractive women, by punk standards, are placed in the “mother hen” role. Katie noted,

That is you are not picked to date, you are picked as this cool girl to hang out with and, you know, then you find yourself in the position of “Oh, I got my shit together,” because I am a strong woman, you feel almost like relied upon to be like “mother hen” or like the driver or the person that takes the shit or the person that kind of keeps the shit together in the scene.

In the AP community, while women are encouraged to break away from traditional standards of beauty such as makeup and shaving, some respondents have noted there is a pressure to be naturally beautiful, i.e., to not wear make-up. According to Emma,

Make-up and shaving ...really are looked down upon...it is still the same beauty standard, and, you know, I like makeup... I was at a phase where I felt really uncomfortable wearing makeup because this was when I was 19 or 20, and it was just so frowned upon by everybody I knew... But then all the guys wanted to date the girls who were just naturally beautiful! I don't even get to use makeup to help me out anymore.

Therefore, a mixed expectation is given to women. Women should be naturally beautiful and not seek the help of make-up, as that is not defined as punk.

Men control women's appearances. Feminists are not exempt from the pressure of beauty standards. According to Susan, "I think the aesthetics of typical female beauty and beauty standards, and, even in the punk scene, like the punkest girls that are into feminism for years, they have body image issues that are so fucking ridiculous."

According to Sarah, a graduate student working on her Master's degree in Education,

There was a girl who is extremely feminist, very 2nd wave oriented... She befriended a group of three guys in the scene who are pretty well known and who consider themselves feminists. They told her that it wasn't feminist of her to wear makeup and shave...so shortly thereafter she ceased to do both ... So, she wasn't adhering to a "mainstream" beauty standard anymore, but it was at the coercion of men.

Nonconformity to beauty standards leads to exclusion and alienation of women.

The contradiction between the assumption that the AP community was a place where women can be free from traditional beauty standards and their stifling, controlling presence was noted by Alicia, a 19 year old show goer/promoter, who stated that,

It is what bugs me the most about the scene. Everyone claims to be against the media and against the politics of the outside world, yet when someone who isn't classically beautiful, most everyone I know will talk about them. If someone is really tall, or really short, or in a wheel chair, a lot of kids will see this as a joke...

Men exert considerable control in relation to dictating the standards of beauty.

They control who enters the scene by beauty standards and women's movement within

the scene. When women do not conform to these standards, it often negatively affects their participation within the scene by way of reduced interaction with others, isolation, and exclusion from activities in the community.

### ***Double Standard/Mixed Expectations of Being Crusty and Sexual Behavior***

An aesthetic and lifestyle characteristic common in AP is being “crusty.” Crustiness can include alternative standards for hygiene and grooming. A double standard existed for men and women, although mixed expectations were given to women regarding the degree of crustiness and sexual behavior. Male punks were allowed to be dirty and unhygienic, while this was not the case for women. Dimitri notes this double standard and explains how non-crusty girls are considered more attractive as they fit into the more traditional beauty mold, “I think men are allowed to be more dirty and gross -- kind of like crust... Whereas the girl is crusty, she is cool, but she is not as cool like the girls that are wearing really short skirts and fishnets and trying to be cute in a different sort of way and wearing makeup and trying to be attractive.” A paradox arises when women are told they should not wear makeup yet, it is more important for them to be attractive rather than punk. This supports the notion that women are considered sex objects or accessories. Not only does this paradox frustrate and confound women, female respondents were further confused when they were confronted with men’s reactions of disgust when they reached a level of crustiness. Rosie explains her experience, “...I was hanging out with some boy punk who found out I didn’t shave and said it was disgusting... I was really frustrated by that.” Gerald, a 22 year old traveler and activist, noted a double standard as well,

Unfortunately, there are double standards as far as hygiene or appearances are concerned. I have met plenty of people who feel that women have to shave or stuff like that which I think is ludicrous, but, unfortunately, not all anarchist male punks adapt, like some of them still have the beliefs of normal society as far as how women are supposed to look...

A double standard of sexual behavior was also evidenced. LeBlanc found that in the general punk scene, women were given mixed messages about their sexual behavior, namely that they should be sexual but not overly sexual (1999: 130). Sarah stated, "I've also seen situations where new girls will show up to a party or show and make out with a few different guys. They are called 'sluts' by guys and gals alike even by the guys who made out with them, but no one questions the behavior of the males involved--again, just like the mainstream culture that we attack." Joe added, "It is sort of how I feel generally in society, if a female is promiscuous, she is labeled a slut, but, if a male is promiscuous, he is labeled a player. The male is given a positive status, and the female is given a negative status, and they are both doing the same thing and just because of gender, they are given different labels."

Conclusively, men define the beauty standards and control women's sexual behavior. In Katie's experience, she found that men asserted they were not fat phobic but observed them going after traditionally beautiful and thin women. This heightens women's frustration since they are led to believe that the AP is nondiscriminatory, regardless of their appearance.

### *Women As Accessories*

The data indicate while men take on dominant roles, women took on accessory roles and repetitive work such as xeroxing, flyer-ing, cooking, cleaning, and filling orders at distros. Julia, an organizer from Washington, DC, stated,

My friend and I talked about this once because she lived at a house with a bunch of folks that were in a band and when other bands come into town...she would cook for them and stuff. I think that's an area where who cleans up after a show like if two people work on a show together and one is male and one is female, who gets credit for the work, who does the bulk of the work, who does the work that is like related to outward appearances like talking and negotiating the bands and who is doing the grunt work of cleaning up the space after it is over. Females do more of the grunt work and males do more of the PR.

Molly added,

I find that women still tend to do more of the day to day care-taking and grunt work. I think that we still cook most of the meals, do the cleaning, go to the meetings, and put up the posters for shows and demos. I find that men do a lot of the talking work. I find that men tend to get the centre stage a lot more, where as I find that women are holding up the whole stage.

Because women are in accessory roles, they rarely receive recognition while men receive it for projects that they have worked on with women. According to Mae, "The disadvantage of that in doing it with somebody else who happens to be male and sometimes just because the way people are, the male gets all the recognition." Along with the lack of recognition, it also takes a long time for women to gain respect. Houston stated, "I think that some women do get treated with respect, but it also lends to how long they have been in the scene, if they are in a band or not and if their boyfriend is in a band or not... It's just like any other subculture in that respect. There are definitely things that lead to more respect and more privilege."

### *Women As Tagalongs*

Due to the belief that women enter the scene as a girlfriend or someone's friend, they are viewed as tagalongs. They are scrutinized and treated with suspicion, and their dedication is questioned. Aaron, a 23 year old graduate student, indicated, "I think there is a general perception that (for the most part) women involved in the scene might be there for the punk guys... I don't think this is an equitable perception, and it is definitely negative for females." Due to the scrutinization of their motivations for participating in the scene, women are identified with the tagalong role. Maria, a 22 year old from Philadelphia, stated, "Again, it took a long time before I was just Maria in the Philly punk scene. I felt trapped and belittled as 'Tom's girlfriend,' and I think a lot of women have gone through similar things."

The effects of being identified as a tagalong were found when Naomi broke up with her boyfriend, who had very high status in the community. She was worried that she would be ostracized, isolated, and excluded due to the fact that she was in the role of a girlfriend. She stated, "I went out with Mark who booked the festival...we were going out for like six years, and we just broke up a couple of months ago ... I would also get insecure like 'Ya, all right, I am Mark's girlfriend.' Probably no one thinks of me as anything differently, and I had this big complex about it and I get all upset."

These responses show when women are viewed as tagalongs, their motivations and credibility are scrutinized. Moreover, they are often excluded from participation in AP activities. This frustrates women's efforts to assert themselves beyond their status as a tagalong.

### ***Women As Children***

According to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995), compared to men, “Women, like children, are seen as less serious, competent, and able to report accurately on what has occurred...” (p. 99). In the AP scene, women are not given the same support as men and are perceived to need help in fulfilling tasks given to them. With regard to women playing in bands, Houston stated,

I also think that people just think that women are incapable. It would just be like why would you be in a band with a girl if once a month, she is going to be bitching all week long and can't have shows or go on tour if she is going to have her period? I think sometimes people think women are sometimes fragile, little beasts.

As Katie was told once, “‘Punk is no place for women.’ To quote a man I knew once. I don't think that so much it is that a woman can't play, but they think that women can't play as well. That has to do with the larger society doesn't think that a woman can survive like in a rough scene and the anarcho punk scene can be very rough and really male centric.”

Houston and Katie's responses highlight that when punk women are viewed as children, there is a tendency to perceive them as less serious and competent by both men and women in the AP scene. In this context, important tasks are generally not given to women, which contributes to a lack of support for women and/or nonparticipation and exclusion of women in the AP community.

## Condescending Chivalry

Both men and women are more protective of women for safety reasons, whether it in the mosh pit or walking home. A few participants noted that there was a perception that women could not take care of themselves. Tom, a 30 year old who has been in the scene for 17 years, stated, "I have met guys that think that women can't take care of themselves, and feel the need to possess all things in their sight and are all macho about protecting women on the dance floor. But there is a line, one is always willing to watch out for a friend, no?" However, Gracie believes old habits die hard, "In my community, I think the men know that the women can take care of themselves and respect that but still have that training to be protective of us. I don't feel like most of the men I know think of women as objects or possessions." However, it was noted that protection is constrictive. Houston stated,

A lot of times when people go to rescue a girl, it's just for show, and it's probably even unnecessary...the whole knight in shining armor bullshit. A lot of girls have their own voices but if every time something happens, another guy steps up, you eventually lose your voice because you never get to use it.

Sometimes, it makes women feel like possessions, such as Beth, an activist,

When I lived in that punk house I was attacked. Afterwards, everyone was saying "we are going to beat him up for you." Because people protect what they think is theirs, meaning I was their possession. So, they are protective like that, and I really want to mention that there are punk male friends that I have that don't think I am their possession, and they are protective of me because they love me.

Because there is a sisterhood among women, they are more protective of each other. Alicia stated, "In fact, all of the girls I know in larger scenes have started ganging up on guys who have raped girls. I think it's heroic as fuck that there are enough

numbers to do this now, and I'm glad that the message is getting out that you don't fuck with girls in the scene anymore." Sal, who is in at least three bands, stated,

I have noticed in the anarcho punk community, people have a very close knit sisterhood whenever I have ever seen a female punk in trouble or in an uncomfortable situation, I have seen at least half a dozen of her friends immediately stand up and back her up and help get her out of that situation. Last year at Pointless Fest in Philly, there was this incident where three women were raped, and a woman's group basically formed on the spot from women in Philly, who were just so absolutely pissed off that this could happen right under their noses.

According to Paula, who owns a punk house in Baltimore, "In the neighborhood where I live, I will insist on someone going with a female if she is alone. I don't necessarily do the same if it is a male. Maybe that's sexist, I don't know."

A number of respondents noted how protective they were of their friends. Moreover, the data revealed both men and women were more protective of punk women in the scene. The general perception appeared to be that women could not take care of themselves. In this sense, protectiveness might be construed as counterproductive, namely because of its potential to stifle women's independence and confidence.

### **Subcultural Exclusion**

Subcultural exclusion, which directly relates to Benokraitis and Feagin's category of collegial exclusion, emerged in these data. According to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995), collegial exclusion "takes many forms -- being ignored, isolated, excluded from decision-making processes, overlooked in textbooks and reading materials, or squeezed into small spaces" (p. 111). They assert social exclusion occurs when women are excluded "both socially and professionally" (p. 114). In McRobbie's research (1991) on

women in subcultures, she found that women were on peripheries of the subcultures, which led her to question whether women actually participate in subcultures. My data provide evidence that women are ignored, isolated, and excluded from decision-making processes that give people high status and power in the AP subculture, such as bands, labels/distros and organizing. Subcultural exclusion is an effect of considerate domination and its various categories and scenarios as explained above. An overall effect of an integration of these factors is that women are excluded from punk bands and the decision-making processes of the various subcultural institutions.

### ***Women Excluded from Punk Bands***

There is overwhelming evidence that women are excluded from playing in bands. Katie stated, "...we are at the Philly Fest, and I can only think of two bands that played out of the 10-15 bands that I have seen that had women in them." However, there were a few participants who believed that women were not excluded from AP bands. Howie expressed, "I don't think if a girl wanted to join a band in the anarchist punk scene, she would be excluded." Many reasons were given why women are excluded from bands, such as the belief that punk is a boy's club, and women are not encouraged to play. Also, there is an assumption that women are unable to play instruments and are not as talented as male musicians. John stated that women are excluded from punk bands as they are untalented at making music but believed if a woman has musical aptitude, "... I doubt she would be excluded due to her gender in most situations in the punk scene." In addition, women were required to be exceptional musicians to play in a band. According to Houston, "They make it hard for girls to get in bands, like a lot of the girls I know who

are in bands because they started all girl bands. Or some of them are just really exceptional musicians that the men have no reason to not let them in their bands.”

When asked about the number of women in punk bands, respondent Emma, laughed so hard that the tape needed to be paused and stated,

Oh my god, there is like 100 to 1 (male to female). I can name on one hand, less than one hand the number of bands that are all female members. I can think of like 2 or 3. There are lots of bands that have one girl. It's always the singer. They never play an instrument.

When women are in bands, they are relegated to the basic roles of token female vocalists or bassists. Maria stated, “Women are usually singers...” Squeaky, who is a male, adds, “It's also usually things like bass, which are more simple, less technical. Like singing and bass, I don't know why that is.”

The perception that women cannot play instruments or cannot play them as well as men contributes to women's exclusion from one of the main institutions within the AP community. Playing in bands provides a means to gaining status, credit and credibility.

### ***Exclusion from the Decision-Making Processes of Subcultural Institutions***

An overwhelming majority of respondents believed that women were excluded from the decision-making processes for activities such as running distros, setting up shows, and organizing protests. There was a perception that women are unable to fulfill the roles expected of them. Derek, who is 27 and an organizer, agrees, “A lot of women who run distros etc... aren't taken seriously or are treated in a less respectful manner than men are.” In addition to responsibilities being withheld, women are also excluded or not

invited to meetings. This stems from a belief that work given to women will not be done or done correctly. Tim has seen this happen often,

Sometimes women aren't invited to participate from the get-go, not told about meetings, etc... I've seen this happen both by design and by purely falling back on old sexist habits. I've also seen it at meetings where women are talked over by their male counterparts, their opinions aren't even seriously considered, or are otherwise bullied by their more self-assured and "respected" male counterparts.

Women have the tendency to be passive in meetings, and this may be due to the fact that they are not listened to or interrupted consistently. According to Harold, a 21 year old punk,

Because women are socialized not to step up and make their mark on activities and organizations. Men are socialized to do so and not socialized to remember to make space for everyone to be heard. It seems like all airtime by default belongs to men. A lot of us have not unlearned those macho traits like being controlling and a know it all.

Subcultural exclusion is a cause and effect for the lack of women's participation.

Women are excluded from bands, and they are not encouraged to play music. In turn, the belief that these women are not musically talented leads to an exclusion from bands, less participation and relegation to less challenging positions in bands. This results in the invisibility of women and their lower status and lack of connections.

## **COVERT**

Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) describe covert sexism as "hidden, clandestine and maliciously motivated" (p. 122). The objective of this type of sexism is to give the appearance of egalitarianism. Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) explain covert sexism is difficult to prove because "...records are not kept or are inaccessible, the victim may not even be aware of being a target, and witnesses are too afraid or self-serving to come

forward” (p. 122). The forms of covert sexism that emerged in this data were containment (gate keeping), tokenism, co-optation and manipulation.

### **Containment – Gatekeeping**

According to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995), containment is a “practice of restricting women’s entry into designated jobs and positions as to not threaten or displace composition of dominant group members” (p. 126). Containment limits participation and mobility in a community. Gatekeeping, a form of containment, emerged in my data. Gatekeeping, or rather screening processes, according to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995), “...creates and maintains containment. Gatekeepers are people (usually male) who privately examine an applicant’s credentials and routinely decide who is qualified for employment consideration” (p. 131). It was evident in the data that men control who enters and exits this community. Often when a relationship ends, respondents noted that women leave the scene. According to Beth, “Women have dropped out because after a relationship ended with somebody in the scene -- they were shit-talked by that person. The men get to stay and the women don’t, and women drop out ... it needs to be addressed because we are losing our friends.”

Due to numerical domination, the few women who are allowed entrance into the community and become active are revered. According to Jim, “Women who do take on active roles are put on pedestals by the men. They are seen as better than average women in the scene (even down to being viewed as more attractive by virtue of their active involvement).” This is problematic as it leads to co-optation and gatekeeping of other women and the containment of women.

## Tokenism

Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) assert “Tokenism is usually a conscious, calculated effort to avoid charges of discrimination and possible investigations that might uncover widespread exclusionary policies and practices” (p. 123). Similarly, instances of symbolic tokenism were found in the data, which refer to “...a commitment to equal opportunity” (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995: 125).

Symbolic tokenism gives the appearance that the tokens, women, are treated as everyone else. In the AP community, to give the appearance of egalitarianism, people will note the female gender on flyers or record reviews. Will, an organizer from Washington, DC, notes that, “When you see a punk band that is all guys, you wouldn’t say, it’s a male punk band whereas it’s a female band, it’s a woman singer, a woman fronted band. That is a clear linguistic clue that it is a deviation from the norm...” Respondents believed people want women in their bands to show they are treating women equally. Sal shared, “Everyone wants to be in a band with a female singer. Everyone wants to say I am in this band with an awesome female vocalist.” Tokenism limits women’s participation and movement within the punk scene. According to Jim, “I once saw a band with a female/male vocalist pair doing a show, and the man’s mic went out. The man took her mic and didn’t return it to her for her parts. He just did them. On a song about sexism in the scene! He literally took away her voice.”

Issues of tokenism complicate the dynamics relating to women’s status in bands. For example, flyers promoting shows that often highlight women playing in bands or female fronted bands in general give the appearance that punk women are on equal

footing with punk men in the AP scene. However, as the responses in this segment reveal the status of punk women is often a tokenized status. In this context, women's status in male bands is more about looking P.C., or egalitarian, rather than actually being either of these.

### **Co-optation**

According to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995), co-optation is the “process of bringing selected women into the system and then using them to control the entry and promotion of other women” (p. 139). Additionally, Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) state, “...the co-opted typically attribute their progress to their own intelligence, success, and hard work. They identify themselves with the ‘deserving elite...’” (p. 139). A consequence of co-optation is that it gives the appearance of egalitarianism. It also implies that most women are not special enough or do not have the qualifications except for the chosen few. The result is the co-opted become gatekeepers, which creates competitiveness among women.

According to Derek, “I think there's overall too much competitiveness in the scene. There's not enough solidarity, and there's competitiveness for partners and status....” Naomi also saw that as a problem. “I have definitely experienced a lot of competition, and the talking about each other, and that really upsets me because there are so few of us, please don't hate each other and compete with each other over nothing.”

When females are co-opted, they are more protective of men than women. According to Katie, “Because they want to belong and men control who belongs and who doesn't.” Due to co-optation, women become isolated from each other. Beth stated,

Women treat women the same way as men treat women because they have totally internalized it. There is backlash from that. Women who aren't that way assume that other women are, and it creates more isolation.

This segment highlights and reiterates issues surrounding, often times, divisive female to female competition but also issues surrounding complicity and co-optation of female punks in the scene. In this context, co-optation, as these responses indicate, contributes to disharmony between females, perhaps because there are only a few punk women chosen to be in high profile roles in male bands. In this sense, the limited positions that punk women are able to occupy in these punk male bands potentially contribute to feelings of inadequacy for punk women and the feeling of isolation within the AP community.

### **Manipulation**

Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) define manipulation as “questioning or casting aspersions on a woman’s qualifications or ability behind the scenes will threaten, weaken, or subvert a women’s power or credibility” (p. 133). This is accomplished by labeling a woman as a troublemaker, which causes people to “insinuate that the misbehaving woman is basically incompetent which may lead other women to fear being associated with her cause” (p. 133).

Participants also noted the role of women within the AP community was to address feminist issues, such as forming women’s collectives, educating women and men on women’s health issues and gender roles. Most respondents stated feminism is more important to women. According to Squeeky, “... because it is women are the ones who

are being oppressed.” It was also women’s responsibility to address issues of sexual assault and interpersonal violence. Will stated,

Unfortunately, women sometimes have to be the ones, even in a politically aware community, to talk about sexual assault and sexism on stage, even though I have seen plenty of male bands do it too, and they do it sincerely, and they just don’t do it for like for punk points, but you can be perceived as whiney or “P.C.,” if you care to point that stuff out.

Beth added, “We are the ones that have to be strong, and we are also the survivors... It’s our job to be really fucking strong and really fucking nurturing and get little, if any, of that back from our male companions.”

Despite this, there is a backlash against individuals who address feminism and sexism. Respondents noted they have heard men and also women refer to feminists as “man-hating dykes” or “feminazis,” and felt that men are dismissive of feminists. Zach stated, “I have also heard people (both men and women) who listen to anarchist punk bands speak negatively of feminism, usually saying something like ‘I’m sick of that P.C. crap’ or something to that effect.” Houston added,

Normally, it’s just like “what are those fucking bitches talking about” like that kind of shit. It’s negative because when men talk about sexism and feminism, it is normally in this nagging way like “why do they always have to bring this up.” It’s never like “what can I do to change my beliefs about or to change my role in this patriarchal system.” It’s always just “why do they always have to keep telling me I am sexist or how the hell is this sexist.”

Another type of backlash was found in which certain respondents felt that when there are ladies nights or all girl bands, they equate that to extreme feminism and sexism in a reverse form. For instance, Jeff, who described himself as a traveler, believed, “Feminism, as Riot Grrrl or female superiority that is just the same as male superiority...

it should be a level of equality, and so I think feminism as equality is very strong quality to have...”

However, Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) state sometimes women need to exclude men to avoid male domination. Respondents noted the majority of instances where men were excluded from subcultural institutions of punk were from women’s support groups and Riot Grrrl activities that required deliberate male exclusion. According to Rob, who described how men were excluded from bands, “Sure, from bands that decide to be all-female bands. I personally don’t think this is sexist or offensive, but some men and women do (mostly men).”

Covert manipulation by punk men in the community is often seen in the dominant positions they hold, and the power they have and exercise to define and label others and situations. A number of responses indicate punk feminists within the scene have often been labeled as troublemakers. Arguably, this labeling by punk men is counterproductive to the AP community’s mission of egalitarianism, particularly with regard to sexism.

## **BLATANT SEXISM**

### **Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Interpersonal Violence**

Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) characterize blatant sexism as “discriminatory actions directed against women” (p. 59). This can be visible, illegal or legal and are well institutionalized in the United States.

Sexual violence, sexual harassment, and interpersonal violence were evident in my data as blatant forms of sexism. The most notable example of this was when three

women were raped on August 13-14, 2004 at the Pointless Fest, a major East coast punk fest in Philadelphia (Defenstrator Web Site 2004). The news of the rapes circulated throughout the whole AP community quickly and led to the formation of Philly's Pissed and Philly Stands Up, which are groups that address the issues of sexual assault.

According to Naomi,

Last year at this fest... three women were raped and a whole bunch of women now known as Philly's Pissed started a group for women who were sexually assaulted, and there was one particular incident about eight women or so beat the living shit out of this one guy who raped two women last year at the Fest. ... It was really amazing that these women... are here today and informing at every show... they are informing the crowd between bands playing and saying if anyone here ever feels uncomfortable or if anyone has any problems socially with like what is going on, come to us.

Some respondents contend this event has changed the Philadelphia AP scene forever. Skip noted, "Philly is a bit different after last year's events... they started the female group [Philly's Pissed] and the male group [Philly Stands Up] to deal with the issues. Not just those issues but issues growing out from there... Maybe this is like a new era." Respondent Maria, who is also from Philadelphia, described the effect of this new awareness of sexism, "It took a long time before I started noticing more women at shows. For a while, I'd be one of the only women and one of the only women who would actually stand close to the stage..."

There have been other instances of rape across the United States in the AP community, and participants claimed that now there is dialogue about sexual assault and interpersonal violence. Although the Pointless Fest rapes have sparked confrontation and generated dialogue regarding sexual assault, many respondents still cite little has been done to remedy these issues. According to Polly, "I've known 'feminists' who have

assaulted and coerced girls, who have beat up their girlfriends. Nothing ever gets done about it.”

Respondents noted that people who have confronted individuals on sexual harassment are ignored or treated differently. Joe described his experience when he made everyone aware of a sexist individual within their community who had high status,

He has been in a lot of well known bands that have achieved somewhat of a legendary status and are well known throughout the nation in the anarcho punk scene... this guy is mid to late 30s, and I have seen him treat women like objects... not even really women but young girls... I spoke out against it, and I have noticed a lot of other kids, generally males... sort of were taken aback by my vocalization of addressing the problem, and it seemed to me that due to his status within the scene they excused it and when I addressed it, it made everybody uncomfortable and that became a problem...

According to Katie,

I think that oftentimes women are more apt to call men out on their shit and that is why you see things in place at punk fests like the Philly's Pissed or the Philly Stands Up group, where people are actually starting to realize that people are being sexually assaulted at shows. We need to do something about it. There is both reactions where women are perpetuating the bad behavior of men and accepting it and just blowing it off, and there's also the women that are conscious and want to change things but those are the women that get discounted more often than not and it's a really, really sad thing because these things are really, really necessary.

Susan, the self-identified tattooed, tough girl, recounts how she was a victim of interpersonal violence. She shared how after her boyfriend physically abused her that she did not want, but felt obligated, to recount her story to other AP punks in the scene when they asked her about it. In this quote, Susan further described her frustration at the reaction from some of the individuals in the AP community,

I had people calling me, making me tell my story saying that "they were going to kick this person out of the band..." which in actuality all it did was just make me pour my heart out and feel like a complete asshole because nothing happened.

Nobody really cared. They were like, "Well, he is a bad alcoholic; well, he was on a whole bunch of coke ..."

Interpersonal violence in the punk community is rarely addressed. Generally speaking, when violence is addressed, it tends to take the form of reactive and/or sexist protective behaviors, whereby punk men take action against the abuser. However, this type of intervention against violence often ignores the victim's needs. Moreover, and perhaps more damaging, some AP members offer excuses for the abuser's behavior.

## **SUMMARY**

Participant responses revealed several themes of gendered attitudes and practices with regard to sexism in the AP community. These themes coincide with several categories listed in Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) typology of sexism: considerate domination, subjective objectification, condescending chivalry and collegial/*subcultural* exclusion. It bears noting Benokraitis and Feagin use the term collegial exclusion in relation to the academic setting. Therefore, subcultural exclusion is used to reflect the research setting and focus on AP subculture. However, the attributes of collegial inclusion such social and physical exclusion from decision-making processes mirror the subcultural exclusion participants reported. Benokraitis and Feagin's category of women as smurfettes was renamed to women as tagalongs to provide a more descriptive representation of the category.

It is important to note the specific categories in the data that were not adequately addressed or explained in Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) typology of sexism. These include numerical domination, control over subcultural institutions (bands, distros/labels,

shows) of punk, and hyper-valuation of men. These categories are linked to considerable domination. Control over subcultural institutions was not adequately addressed in Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) typology of sexism. Numerical domination and hyper-valuation of men were emergent categories. Additional emergent categories were linked to subjective objectification. These categories included: women as accessories, beauty standards and double standards/mixed expectations for crustiness, and sexual behavior. Although Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) touch upon the fact women take on accessory roles, these data indicate that accessory roles for women in the AP community is pervasive. Beauty standards were found to be a determinant for women entering the AP scene, playing in bands, and the effects of these standards on interactions that women have with others. The emergent category of double standards/mixed expectations for crustiness and sexual behavior proved to be confounding to women in the AP scene. This confusion stems from the mixed messages they receive regarding sexual behavior and acceptable levels of crustiness. In this context, punk women were expected to be sexual but not too sexual. The negative reactions and sanctions for being too sexual or crusty were often shock and/or disgust from others in the scene, particularly punk men.

Additionally, participants in both face to face interviews and email questionnaires reported four forms of covert sexism which were coded as: containment (gatekeeping), tokenism, co-optation, and manipulation. Moreover, instances of blatant sexism were reported, such as of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and interpersonal violence. Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) typologies of covert and blatant sexism were utilized to code these unexpected responses.

Similarly, Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) categories of supportive discouragement, friendly harassment, liberated sexism and radiant devaluation were not reflected in the data collected. Supportive discouragement was problematic as there was evidence that women were encouraged but excluded; however, the data illuminate exclusion more than supportive discouragement. However, when women begin to participate more in this subculture, these categories may become apparent. The fact that women were excluded from decision-making processes also reduces the incidences of liberated sexism and benevolent exploitation. Liberated sexism increases women's burdens while freeing up men's time. Additionally, benevolent exploitation is when women are taken advantage by being told they are respected and their work is critical. These categories may become emergent in the future.

Friendly harassment, which consists of sexually oriented behaviors such as flattery and hostile humor, was not found in the data. This manifestation of sexism did not emerge as these behaviors are discouraged because AP is a politically correct community.

## CONCLUSIONS

This investigation assessed the perceptions and experiences of fifty individuals in the AP community with regard to gendered attitudes and practices. The initial research question aimed to gather information regarding sexism within a group of self-identified anarchist punks who identify with and participate in a community that contends their primary tenets/principles dictate the rejection of all forms of inequality. When respondents were asked if they believed that feminism had a place in the AP scene, most vehemently asserted that it was an important objective of this community. Despite this, an overwhelming majority of participants affirmed that sexism was a problem within the scene that should be addressed and challenged. As AP is a radical subculture, which allegedly espouses feminism, how can sexism be a social issue in this milieu?

This study highlights, descriptively, the pervasiveness of subtle sexism, and gendered attitudes and practices in the AP community. Analysis of face to face interviews and email questionnaires revealed evidence of subtle, covert and blatant sexism, respectively. The categories of subtle sexism were as follows: considerate domination (numerical domination, control over subcultural institutions of punk, good old boy networks, and hyper-valuation of men), subjective objectification (sexual objectification, beauty standards, double standards and mixed expectations, women as accessories, women as tagalongs, and women as children), condescending chivalry, and subcultural exclusion (women are excluded from punk bands, exclusion from the decision-making processes for subcultural institutions). Covert discrimination was

manifested as containment (gatekeeping), tokenism, co-optation, and manipulation. Lastly, blatant sexism was evidenced in sexual violence, sexual harassment, and interpersonal violence.

The aforementioned categories in this study are interrelated. In the AP community, men dominate all subcultural institutions, considerate domination being the most predominant force leading to sexism. Some respondents hypothesized the overwhelming number of men, numerical domination, results in men occupying positions of power and control over subcultural institutions. A good old boy network is a direct result of this relationship. Conversely, some respondents noted the good old boy network ensures numerical and subcultural institutional domination. Consequently, in accordance with either viewpoint, there is no prominent place for women to obtain status or credit, further perpetuating the numerical domination and maintaining the good old boy network. Due to the relationship between these variables, men have control over the values of punk and thus are allowed to define it. This authority leads to hyper-valuation of men, maintaining their high status and ultimately constraining women's contributions and limits them from being taken seriously. While men take on predominant roles, they are perceived to be the doers/achievers forcing women into the periphery, seen merely as accessories. The good old boy network is retained by men's legitimacy in these prevailing roles, only enhancing the likelihood of new male entrants to be placed in positions of dominance over the subcultural institutions of punk. The subcategories of considerate domination are intricately related and undoubtedly cyclical.

Additionally, due to the domination of subcultural institutions, men are idolized enhancing credit, credibility and legitimacy. Because of this, men receive exaggerated support for their endeavors allowing for their male privilege and sexist behaviors to remain unquestioned. The acceptance and encouragement of men not only conveys but condones the fact that men are not obligated to work on these behaviors. It affects the overall community, and men retain their privilege while women remain marginalized.

The effects of subcultural institutional control are further demonstrated in that men have the power to define the values and standards of punk. By owning and running distros and labels, they set the standard of what punk sounds like, musically speaking, through dictating which commodities are presented to and supported by the community. Overall, they are not producing female-bands or bands that focus on women's issues, and, in effect, reinforcing the masculinization of punk.

Considerate domination allows men the power of gatekeeping. They demonstrate considerable control over women entering and exiting the community as well as their roles within it. Primarily, men define what is attractive, and women who do not conform to beauty standards are usually not allowed entrance into the scene. But if they are allowed, they are considered "one of the guys" or placed in the "mother hen" role. Women's interactions with others are negatively impacted as a result of their nonconformity to these beauty standards. One of the many consequences is that they are often excluded from AP subcultural institutions such as bands and distros. Additionally, women are faced with further contradictions in believing that they joined a radical community that is free of mainstream standards of beauty, cleanliness, and sexuality only

to be confronted with a set of mixed expectations as well as double standards regarding the degree of crustiness and appropriate sexual behavior. Women learn they must conform to these standards, or they will be isolated and excluded.

Once women are in these accessory roles, such as sex objects, girlfriends, friends, or children, they are perceived as incompetent, comparatively speaking, to their male counterparts and are inevitably taken less seriously making it harder to prove themselves. The marginalization of women into these roles leads to invisibility, and, therefore, no credit/rewards are given to women. A lack of encouragement and containment has been found to be the result of considerate domination.

Many respondents noted that while men are encouraged and rewarded for playing music, women are not. In the realm of organizing protests, although women may be included in organizational meetings, their input is often interrupted or ignored, and they are given menial tasks. They have been excluded from decision-making processes of these activities. Due to this, women are perceived as passive or not willing to participate. This leads to subcultural exclusion.

The process of exclusion contains women on the peripheries and negatively impacts their involvement in the scene. Additionally, this feeds back into the perception that women are non-participatory and acts as a further justification to withhold responsibilities and exclude them from activities.

Considerate domination leads to tokenism, co-optation, and manipulation. Tokenism exists to give the appearance of egalitarianism in which few females are co-opted to participate in the community's activities. Co-optation engenders competition

among women, which in turns isolates them from each other and excludes women from AP institutions.

Interestingly, women have been placed in the role of addressing feminism and women's issues. This is problematic when participants stated they believed that feminism has an important place in the community. Furthermore, backlash was manifested in the form of labeling feminists as sexist when they held women's meetings that deliberately excluded men, and, when individuals confronted sexist behaviors, they were labeled as "trouble maker," were dismissed, and felt isolated. This is contradictory and counteractive to the work of feminism. Due to the good old boy networks and considerate domination, men have the power to control the backlash, and, thus, the values, the labeling of others, and events in this subculture.

As this subculture strives for egalitarianism and is known to be a politically correct subgenre of punk, there were less incidences of blatant sexism. Most respondents were knowledgeable of blatant manifestations of sexism, as it is the most visible form. Fewer were familiar with its subtle forms, and even less were aware of covert sexism. While many participants were aware of sexism in the community, a small number believed that it did not exist, that it was unintentional, or that individuals were working to remedy their sexism. Covert forms of sexism are the most difficult to discern and harder to articulate. For instance, a woman could be kept out of the community due to nonconformity to beauty standards or perhaps her project may have been sabotaged without her knowledge.

On the other hand, participants noted in recent years the community has become more inclusive of women. Examples given were that more women play in bands, set up shows and organize events. Groups have been formed and workshops have been given to address feminist issues. Music fests have been held to address the various issues of sexism. Many had supportive attitudes towards women taking part in punk. Respondents noted that they would be supportive of female-led endeavors such as starting up distros, labels and playing in bands. Although respondents were positive about their community and would like to see women included, most stated more work needs to be accomplished to confront the problem of sexism.

It appeared that certain cities have more women involved in punk. I could not obtain sufficient data to conduct a comparative analysis of Richmond, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia. However, it was found that in Washington, DC, there were many women in bands, and they are an integral part of organizing. Respondents stated this could be due to the Riot Grrrl movement in the 1990s. Washington, DC was one of the birthplaces of this movement affecting many punks, both male and female, and their attitudes toward gender equality. Additionally, AP individuals in Philadelphia have been cited to confront sexism since the Pointless Fest rapes. Minneapolis also has been known to have many women in its community. This may be due to the fact that it has the most well known AP collective, label and distro throughout the world and brings many egalitarian minded anarchist punks to this scene. Richmond has been described by participants as non-inclusive of women in their community. Moreover, participants in the

AP scene noted that, generally speaking, the Richmond AP community has never been known to be politically active.

When respondents were asked how to combat sexism, various answers were given. The predominant answer was to challenge and confront it. Education, discussion and communication were mentioned as methods to make people aware of women's issues, sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and gender roles. Participants offered ways to make knowledge more accessible, such as speaking at shows, tabling shows with pamphlets and zines, and forming collectives that promote equality. Participants stressed the AP community should set an example of a discrimination free environment; however, it was noted that this community has failed to remedy this problem.

The question remains as to why sexism still exists when many have taken various actions to eliminate it. This yields a complex and interesting answer. Since the AP community is a politically correct environment on the surface, incidences of blatant sexism (i.e., sexist jokes) are reduced. This could be due to conformity to AP values without examination of these beliefs. Because punk stems from the dominant culture, it replicates its attitudes, values, and privileges where men are in dominant roles. Men's positions of power within the AP community enable them to establish the values, standards and commodities of punk. In addition, their power enables them to apply negative labels to punk feminists. As these gender roles and attitudes mirror mainstream culture, men's power and control is also duplicated. Because there is a lack of criticism with regard to male domination within the AP community, and men react negatively when confronted, elimination of sexism is prevented. These factors work together to

maintain a predominant male force, keeping punk masculine and women on the periphery of punk.

Arguably, the AP community may quite possibly be less egalitarian than the dominant culture namely because it is a music based subculture. Within the AP music community, there are fewer subcultural institutions and, in turn, fewer roles and positions for individuals, particularly women, to take on, in contrast to the larger, dominant culture. For instance, within the dominant culture, in addition to the music industry, one can take on roles and positions within the academic, medical, legal, financial, private and nonprofit businesses, government, and religious sectors of society. Although women still hold fewer dominant roles in mainstream culture, relatively speaking, there are still more roles and positions than in the AP subculture. Due to the fact that this is a subculture, there are no formal documented policies or watch dog agencies, i.e., Equal Opportunity Agency, to monitor or mediate discriminatory behavior and/or acts with regard sexism and other inequalities. As men inhabit the dominant roles within the AP subculture, the social, gendered hierarchy works in their favor, and, thus, there is little reason to upset the power dynamics in place. While it is often perceived as a “radical” community, there is also an expectation that sexism doesn’t exist. This is just wishful thinking. However, very few people have the courage or energy to address these issues. It takes a violent act to occur in the community to force attention to this problem. Thus, it is entirely possible that in the AP community sexism, whether blatant or subtle, may indeed be more lethal than the dominant culture. The disrespect for women’s concerns may also lead to

physical and mental acts of abuse, such as rape. For instance, it is unfortunate that it took the three rapes at the Pointless Fest to raise awareness.

The question of why sexism remains and is just as prevalent, if not worse, than the dominant culture suggests the need for future research. The contributions of this study to subcultural and gender research are several. It echoes and underscores prior scant analysis of women in subcultures, such as Angela McRobbie's (1991) and Lauraine Leblanc's (1999) research, who concluded that women are not studied within the contexts of subcultures.

Researchers may focus on discovering and devising effective tools for social change, not only in the subcultural terrain but also in mainstream society. Interestingly, there is a perception within this community there has been positive growth in gender roles evidenced by more women participating in bands, running distros and organizing political activities. Outside the discipline, the discourse regarding the problem of sexism within this AP community will be augmented by these findings. The increased level of discourse will stimulate communication, raise awareness and illuminate the manifestations and effects of gender inequality. This may lead to direct action towards diminishing, if not eliminating, the pervasiveness of sexism within this community. It would be helpful to conduct longitudinal studies of the AP community to track changes in the various manifestations of sexism and its practices of egalitarianism.

**TABLE 1: GLOSSARY OF PUNK TERMS**

Crust punk	Crust punk is a newer genre of anarchist (anarcho) punk mixed with elements of extreme metal. Crust punk is characterized by guttural or shrill vocals (often in the form of dual vocals) and an unpolished gritty, bass-heavy sound. From <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crust_Punk">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crust_Punk</a>
D-beat punk	A style of hardcore punk that existed since the early 1980's, pioneered by the punk band, Discharge, based on a particular drum pattern. D-beat bands focus on anti-war and anarchist messages.
Demo	Demonstration, protest
Distro	A distro is when an individual purchases records from record labels and resells them at punk shows or via online.
Emo-scremo	A subgenre of hardcore punk which focuses on emotional issues.
Fest	Festivals are bigger shows of a duration of at least a day or more that have many bands playing and sometimes workshops.
Hardcore punk	A subgenre of punk that originated in the United States in 1970s. It burgeoned during the early 1980s. The sound is generally thicker, heavier, and faster than 1970s-style punk rock, and it is characterized by short, loud, and passionate songs about serious topics such as government, capitalism and the punk subculture.
Patches	Pieces of cloth that have band logos, or political statements and symbols printed on them.
Moshpit	A mosh pit is an area in front of a stage at a concert (show) in which participants slam dance.
Pop punk	This form of punk has been around since the 1970s. Some pop punk bands attack serious issues with humor, i.e., Ramones. Some pop punk bands have achieved worldwide commercial success, i.e., Green Day. This brand of punk is sometimes labeled as pseudo-punk or sellout punk.
Riot Grrrl	A feminist form of punk whose focus was on issues such as sexual abuse, sexism, body image, women's health care issues, mental illness, and homosexuality.
Scene	Community
Shows	Punk concerts, usually at smaller venues or even houses.
Straightedge punk	A brand of hardcore in which followers abstain from drugs, tobacco and alcohol.
Zines	A zine (short for fanzine) is a hand made magazine that contains interviews with punk bands, show updates, politics and at times, even fashion.

**TABLE 2: BENOKRAITIS AND FEAGIN'S TYPOLOGY  
OF SUBTLE SEXISM (1995)**

1.	Condescending chivalry	Courteous behaviors that are protective and paternalistic, which treat women as subordinates. This type of sexism is problematic as it is built into everyday routines and reinforces sex inequality. This inhibits women's personal and career growth.	An example is a male manager who gives a male subordinate more challenging assignments with an underlying assumption that women are not capable of completing challenging assignments. This hinders women's career advancements.
2.	Supportive discouragement	Behavior in which women receive mixed messages about their skills and accomplishments. There are four forms of supportive discouragement: when a women is encouraged but stereotyped, encouraged but not rewarded, encouraged but excluded and encouraged but then manipulated to be exploited.	An example of encouraged but stereotyped is to encourage women to major in feminine disciplines, such as English or Social Work.
3.	Friendly harassment	Sexually oriented behavior that appears to be harmless. Subtle discrimination is any type of behavior that directed at women creates discomfort or embarrassment. Most common forms of friendly harassment are flattery, hostile humor and psychological intimidation.	An example of flattery is illustrated by a woman working alongside two men whose productivity was lower than her own. They complimented her on her work to manipulate her into completing their share of the work.
4.	Subjective objectification	Refers to the behavior in which women are treated as possessions, children or sex objects. This renders a perception of women as incapable and unintelligent. When women are treated as sex objects, they are viewed as decorations or a product of sexual acquisition.	An example of this may be when a woman is called back for a second interview because she is attractive.
5.	Radiant devaluation	Refers to when women receive positive yet demeaning stereotypical evaluations.	An example is when a professor is characterized as having a motherly attitude towards her students.
6.	Liberated sexism	Behavior which appears "at face value" to be egalitarian. This behavior increases women's burdens while freeing up men's time.	Overloading, an example of liberated sexism, occurs when women's participation leads to the double day.

7.	Benevolent exploitation	When women are taken advantage of by being told something is good for them, or because they are respected and that their work is critical. This exploitation is unnoticed as it is accomplished by people who care about them. Forms of benevolent exploitation are dumping, sponsorship abuses, showcasing and technological and advertising abuses.	Dumping, a form of benevolent exploitation, is when women are given other's work and do not gain rewards or credit for it.
8.	Considerate domination	Men occupy dominant positions and control the decision-making processes because it has been internalized or institutionalized. Considerate domination that is institutionalized demonstrates the way in which male domination is built into our language, laws and culture.	An example of internalized domination is when females are interrupted while speaking or side conversations that occur while women speak.
9.	Collegial exclusion	Exclusion that occurs in the higher education environment in physical, social and professional ways. Physical exclusion is manifested in behaviors that ignore women or isolate them from the decision-making process. Social/professional exclusion occurs when women share the same physical space as men but are excluded from the old boys' network. In both cases, women are dismissed and ignored.	An example of this is when a female professor is excluded from meetings based on her sex.

**TABLE 3: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

	Face to Face = 26	Email = 24	Total =50
<b><u>Sex</u></b>			
Female	13	9	22
Male	13	15	28
<b><u>Ethnicity</u></b>			
White	22	21	43
Hispanic	4	1	5
African American	0	1	1
Native American	0	1	1
<b><u>Age</u></b>			
18-20	4	4	8
21-30	20	14	34
31-40	2	6	8
<b><u>Education</u></b>			
Does not have high school	2	1	3
High school	10	16	26
Bachelors	14	6	20
Masters	0	1	1
<b><u>Geographic Location</u></b>			
Richmond	9	0	9
Baltimore	2	4	6
Washington, DC	7	0	7
Philadelphia	5	2	7
Minneapolis	1	3	4
Canada	0	2	2
Other	2	13	15

**TABLE 4: MAJOR THEMES OF PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER ROLES AND ATTITUDES WITHIN THE AP COMMUNITY**

More men in the AP community.
Men hold the dominant positions of AP subcultural institutions.
Men are active and are the “doers.”
Men are hyper-valued, have exaggerated support and credibility/legitimacy.
Men network with other men who have high status in the AP community.
Men receive the majority of rewards and recognition.
Men viewed as gatekeepers in the AP community.
Women hold supportive/accessory roles.
Women in the AP scene tend to do the administrative legwork/grunt work.
Women join the AP community as girlfriends and friends.
Women perceived as less competent and serious.
Women’s legitimacy is scrutinized and lack of credit/recognition or rewards.
Issues surround beauty standards based on male standards.
Internal competition and disharmony between women in the AP community.
Lack of support of women, exclusion, and lack of participation.
It is harder for women to prove themselves.

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## **Appendices**

## APPENDIX A

Sexism – Overall

1. Please tell me about the punk scene that you are involved in.
2. Please tell about your involvement in the punk scene.
3. Have you been involved in the punk scene in different places?
4. What does it mean to be an anarchist punk? What made you become an anarchist punk? Why do you think others join the scene? Do you think that men and women join the scene for similar or different reasons? Please explain.

Numerical Domination

5. What is the ratio of women to men in the scene? What are the reasons for this ratio?
6. Are most of your punk friends men or women? Why do you think this is so?
7. How do you think men and women are treated and perceived within the scene? Are they treated and perceived equally/differently? Please explain. Why do you think this is so? How do you think male punks treat female punks; how do they treat other male punks? How do female punks treat other female and male punks?
8. Do you think daily experiences of female punks are alike or differ from those of male punks? If so, please explain.
9. What are women's and men's roles within the scene? How are they alike and how do they differ? What are the accomplishments of women and men in the scene? Do you think that men's and women's accomplishments are alike or do they differ?
10. What are the benefits and disadvantages for women of being in the scene? What are the benefits and disadvantages for men of being in the scene? Do you think both men and women benefit and are at a disadvantage in similar or different ways? Please explain.

Anticipated Manifestations of subtle sexism:

11. What do you think is the ratio of men to women in punk bands? Do you think, overall, men and women play the same type of instruments in punk bands?
12. Who do you think runs distros and record labels, men or women? Why is this so?

13. If a male friend told you he wanted to start a distro, label or band, would you support this decision? How do you think people would respond to your male friend who endeavored in such activities?
14. If a female friend told you she wanted to start a distro, label or band, would you support this decision? How do you think people would respond to your female friend who endeavored in such activities?
15. Have you ever been involved in organizing a protest or a show in which you worked with both men and women? What did their roles entail? Did you notice a difference in the types of work that women and men took on or were given? Or did they do the same type of work?
16. Do you think men and women can like punk equally and believe in its ideologies in the same ways? Can men and women equally be a force in social change? If not, what differences would you expect?
17. Do you think men have been excluded from being in bands? Why is this so?
18. Do you think women have been excluded from being in bands? Why is this so?
19. Do you think men have been excluded from being a part of the decision-making processes for activities such as running distros, setting up shows, organizing protests, etc...? If so, please explain. Why do you think this is so?
20. Do you think women have been excluded from being a part of the decision-making processes for activities such as running distros, setting up shows, organizing protests, etc...? If so, please explain. Why do you think this is so?
21. Do you think beauty standards exist in the scene? If so, are they different for men and women, or do they affect men and women equally in the scene?
22. Do you think male punks view female punks as their equals, possessions or sex objects? Please explain. Do you find male punks in this scene protective of females? Or are they equally as protective of females as well as males?
23. Do you think female punks view male punks as their equals, possessions or sex objects? Please explain. Do you find female punks in this scene protective of males? Or are they equally as protective of males as well as females?

Gender

24. Do you think sexism (refers to unequal and harmful treatment of individuals based on their sex) is a problem in the scene that should be addressed and challenged?
25. Can you compare the extent of sexism within the anarchist punk scene to that of the general punk scene?
26. Does sexism occur at lesser, equal or greater extent in the anarchist scene than other punk scenes?
27. Do you think feminism (defined as “the advocacy of social equality for men and women” Macionis 2003: 345) has a place in the anarchist punk scene? Do you think feminism, as an issue, is more important to women than men? Do you hear men talking about sexism and feminism. Is their talk positive/negative regarding sexism and feminism? Incidentally, do you hear women talking about sexism and feminism? Is their talk positive/negative regarding sexism and feminism?
28. Have you done anything to combat sexism in general or in the scene? Do you think sexism is a problem within this community? Do you think something further needs to be accomplished to eradicate sexism?

## Demographic Information:

Sex (M/F):

Age:

Race/Ethnicity:

Education (Highest Level Achieved):

Location (City):

Occupation:

Length of time in scene (years/months):

Role within the scene (band, zine, organizer, etc...):

## APPENDIX B

## INITIAL EMAIL FOR ONLINE INTERVIEWS

Dear Participant (name):

My name is Donna Manion, and I am a student researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University. I am conducting interviews on gender roles and attitudes in the anarchist punk community. We would like to invite you to participate in an interview that will help gather knowledge on the impact of gender roles and attitudes in this subculture and consider you to be a valuable participant in this study.

If you agree to be interviewed, please send me a reply email indicating that you would like to take part of this study. If within a week, we have not received your response, we will send another email to remind you of the invitation of your participation. Participation is strictly voluntary. After you decide to participate by noting this in your email response, you will be given more information about the purpose of this study and the interview process. At this time, if you are not comfortable with participating, you can decline the interview. We hope that you will want to participate and would appreciate your participation. The interview will require about from 90 minutes to however long it takes you to answer the questionnaire.

Thank you for giving this request your full consideration.

Sincerely,

Donna Manion

## APPENDIX C RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Roles and Attitudes of Males and Females in the Anarchist Punk Community

VCU IRB NO.: 4401

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Sarah Jane Brubaker

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the interviewer to explain any words that you do not clearly comprehend. You may take home an unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision to participate in this study.

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Donna Manion

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to examine gender roles and attitudes within the anarchist punk community. The emergent data will illuminate various roles and attitudes within this subculture and demonstrate how these roles and attitudes affect this community.

**Description of the Study and Your Involvement:** Gender roles and attitudes affect women and men on a daily basis. Male and female punks within the anarchist punk community may have different roles and attitudes which lead to varied experiences and perceptions due these factors. This study is intended to document the manifestations of these roles and attitudes within this subculture.

Approximately 30 anarchist punks (15 men and 15 women) will participate in the study. You are being asked to be in this study because you have identified yourself as an anarchist punk and are a part of this subculture. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand how you will participate or what will be expected of you.

You will be asked a range of open-ended questions, which will be tape recorded. If being recorded makes you uncomfortable, you can request that the interviewer take notes by hand. To protect confidentiality, your name will not be recorded on tape. The interview may last from 30 minutes to a few hours depending on how much you decide to talk.

**Risks and Discomforts:** As an individual within the anarchist community, you will be asked about your experiences related to gender roles and attitudes, which may include stressful experiences. If you find an incident upsetting, you are not obligated to answer

questions that you find upsetting or problematic, and you may end the interview at any time.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. Information gathered in this study may be used to better understand roles and attitudes of men and women within the anarchist community.

**Costs:** The only cost involved in participation of this study is the time associated with in the interview.

**Confidentiality:** This study is confidential. We will not disclose your name or answers obtained from you; however, information obtained from the study and the consent form you signed may be viewed and/or copied for research or legal purposes by the sponsor. Findings from the study may be published in papers, journals or presented at meetings; however, your name will never be presented in papers or at conferences. Data will be presented at the aggregate level as to protect your confidentiality. The interviews will be tape-recorded without last names. Tapes and notes will be stored in a secure location. After interviews are transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:** You are not obligated to participate in this study. If you decide not to participate or to end the interview, you may do so at any time without penalty. Additionally, you are not obliged to answer any question you do not wish to answer.

#### Why Is The Study Investigator Doing This Study?

The benefit of this study is to gain knowledge of gender roles and attitudes within the anarchist punk community. The emergent data will illuminate various roles and attitudes within this subculture and demonstrate how these roles and attitudes affect this community.

**Questions:** If you have more questions regarding your participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator by the method of choice at the following addresses:

Dr. Sarah Jane Brubaker, Ph.D.  
Sociology Department  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
820 W. Franklin Street  
P.O. Box 842040  
Richmond, VA 23284  
Phone: 804-827-2400  
Fax: 804-828-1027  
[SBRUBAKER@VCU.EDU](mailto:SBRUBAKER@VCU.EDU)

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research Subjects Protection  
 Virginia Commonwealth University  
 800 East Leigh Street, Suite 111  
 P.O. Box 980568  
 Richmond, VA 23298  
[ORSP@vcu.edu](mailto:ORSP@vcu.edu)  
 (804) 828-0868

Consent: I have read the consent form and understand the information provided to me regarding this particular study. Questions that I have regarding this interview and study have been answered. My signature states that I have read the above, and I am willing to participate in this study.

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Participant name	Participant signature	Date
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Signature of person executing informed consent	Date
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Investigator signature (if different from above)	Date
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## APPENDIX D

### Script for face to face interviews:

My name is Donna Manion, and I am a student researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University, in which I am studying gender roles and attitudes in the anarchist punk community. Data collected will illuminate various roles and attitudes within this subculture and demonstrate how these roles and attitudes affect this community. Approximately 30 anarchist punks (15 men and 15 women) will participate in the study. You have been invited to be in this study because you have identified yourself as an anarchist punk and are a part of this subculture. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand how you will participate or what will be expected of you. We would like to ask you a series of questions so that your answers may help to understand more clearly gender roles and attitudes in the anarchist punk community.

Even though you have agreed to participate in the interview and have come to the interview, you still have the option of declining to be interviewed. Even after the interview begins, you are not obligated to answer all of the questions, and you may end the interview at any time that you wish to stop. Your participation is strictly voluntary. We will ask that you sign a consent form only if you are willing to participate. We value your involvement in this study. We think that your ideas can be helpful to understanding gender roles and attitudes in this community.

Your responses to the questions asked in the interview will be tape recorded. Tapes and notes will be stored in a secure location. After interviews are transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed. Your name and other identifying information about you will not be recorded so that you are assured confidentiality. Again, you may choose not to answer any question at any time. If you choose to respond, we ask that you be as candid and honest in your comments as possible. The interview may last from 30 minutes to a few hours depending on how much you decide to talk.

If you have any questions before we begin the interview, we will be glad to answer them now. After your questions are answered and you are still willing to participate, we can begin the interview.

## APPENDIX E

## SCRIPT FOR ONLINE INTERVIEWS:

My name is Donna Manion, and I am a student researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University, in which I am studying gender roles and attitudes in the anarchist punk community. Data collected will illuminate various roles and attitudes within this subculture and demonstrate how these roles and attitudes affect this community. Approximately 30 anarchist punks (15 men and 15 women) will participate in the study. You have been invited to be in this study because you have identified yourself as an anarchist punk and are a part of this subculture. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked a series of questions that your answers may help to understand more clearly gender roles and attitudes in the anarchist punk community.

Even though you have agreed to participate in the interview, you still have the option of declining to be interviewed. Even after the start of the questionnaire, you are not obligated to answer all of the questions, and you may end the interview at any time that you wish to stop. Your participation is strictly voluntary. As soon as you receive the questionnaire, you will have two weeks to complete the questionnaire. If you do not respond in the two weeks, we will assume that you have decided not to participate in this research. We value your involvement in this study. We think that your ideas can be helpful to understanding gender roles and attitudes in this community.

Your questionnaire responses will be loaded into a word processing program. Your original emails sent to me will be deleted as soon as they are uploaded into a word processing program. Notes that I make regarding the questionnaire will be stored in a secure location. Your name and other identifying information about you will not be located anywhere so that you are assured anonymity. Again, you may choose not to answer any question at any time. If you choose to respond, we ask that you be as candid and honest in your comments as possible. The questionnaire may take 30 minutes to complete to a few hours, depending on how much you decide to write.

Thank you for giving this request your full consideration.

Sincerely,

Donna Manion

## APPENDIX F

## EMAIL FOR OBTAINING ADDITIONAL RESPONDENTS

Dear Participant (name):

Thank you for participating in this study and completing the questionnaire. We consider your participation to be valuable in helping to gather knowledge on gender roles and attitudes in this subculture.

If you know of anyone who would also like to participate in this study, please let me know. The best way is for you to contact this person and ask if they would be interested in participating in this study and if so, please ask if you could give me their email address for participation.

We appreciate your participation in this study and your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Donna Manion

## APPENDIX G

## ONLINE RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Roles and Attitudes of Males and Females in the Anarchist Punk Community

VCU IRB NO.: IRB4401

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Sarah Jane Brubaker

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the interviewer to explain any words that you do not clearly comprehend. You may take time to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision to participate in this study. If you do not wish to participate in the study, then please do not reply to this email.

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Donna Manion

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to examine gender roles and attitudes within the anarchist punk community. The emergent data will illuminate various roles and attitudes within this subculture and demonstrate how these roles and attitudes affect this community.

**Description of the Study and Your Involvement:** Gender roles and attitudes affect women and men on a daily basis. Male and female punks within the anarchist punk community may have different roles and attitudes which lead to varied experiences and perceptions due these factors. This study is intended to document the manifestations of these roles and attitudes within this subculture.

Approximately 30 anarchist punks (15 men and 15 women) will participate in the study, who are at least 18 years old. You are being asked to be in this study because you have identified yourself as an anarchist punk and are a part of this subculture. If you decide to participate in this research study and have any questions regarding the study, you may participate after all your questions have been answered and understand how you will participate or what will be expected of you. To participate, you must be 18 years or older.

You will be asked a range of open-ended questions in the questionnaire, which will be sent via email. Even after the start of the questionnaire, you are not obligated to answer all of the questions, and you do not have to complete the questionnaire. Your name and

other identifying information about you will not be located anywhere so that you are assured anonymity. The questionnaire may take 30 minutes to complete to a few hours, depending on how much you decide to write.

**Risks and Discomforts:** As an individual within the anarchist community, you will be asked about your experiences related to gender roles and attitudes, which may include stressful experiences. If you find an incident upsetting, you are not obligated to answer questions that you find upsetting or problematic, and you may end the interview at any time.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. Information gathered in this study may be used to better understand roles and attitudes of men and women within the anarchist community.

**Costs:** The only cost involved in participation of this study is the time associated with the questionnaire interview.

**Confidentiality:** This study is confidential. We will not disclose your name or answers obtained from you; however, information obtained from the study may be viewed and/or copied for research or legal purposes by the sponsor. Findings from the study may be published in papers, journals or presented at meetings; however, your name will never be presented in papers or at conferences. Data will be presented at the aggregate level as to protect your confidentiality. Your questionnaire responses will be loaded into a word processing program. Your original emails sent to me will be deleted as soon as they are uploaded into a word processing program. Notes that I make regarding the questionnaire will be stored in a secure location. Your name and other identifying information about you will not be located anywhere so that you are assured anonymity.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:** You are not obligated to participate in this study. If you do not wish to participate in the study, then please do not reply to this email. If you decide not to participate or to end the interview, you may do so at any time without penalty. Additionally, you are not obliged to answer any question you do not wish to answer.

#### Why Is The Study Investigator Doing This Study?

The benefit of this study is to gain knowledge of gender roles and attitudes within the anarchist punk community. The emergent data will illuminate various roles and attitudes within this subculture and demonstrate how these roles and attitudes affect this community.

**Questions:** If you have more questions regarding your participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator by the method of choice at the following addresses:

Dr. Sarah Jane Brubaker, Ph.D.  
Sociology Department  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
820 W. Franklin Street  
P.O. Box 842040  
Richmond, VA 23284  
Phone: 804-827-2400  
Fax: 804-828-1027  
[SBRUBAKER@VCU.EDU](mailto:SBRUBAKER@VCU.EDU)

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research Subjects Protection  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 111  
P.O. Box 980568  
Richmond, VA 23298  
[ORSP@vcu.edu](mailto:ORSP@vcu.edu)  
(804) 828-0868

## VITA

Donna Manion was born on June 10, 1966 in Rome, New York. She is a U.S. citizen. She graduated from SUNY Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Applied Sociology in May 2000. She is currently a Sociology Masters Degree candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University. She taught two introductory Sociology courses at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College from August 2006 to December 2006. Additionally, she was a TA from January to May 2005 at Virginia Commonwealth University for Introduction to Sociology course. She presented her thesis at the at the 2006 Eastern Sociology Society Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. She obtained travel scholarships from the Sociology Department and from the Graduate School (Student Travel Grant). Research experience included two independent studies. The first of which was conducted for Department Chair At SUNY IT on Trust Project in which she downloaded data sets into QSR NUDIST, a qualitative analysis database, and queried for data analysis to be used for research papers. Second, she created a course for Dr. Christina Turner on transgender behavior and attitudes, which examined the phenomena of cross/transgender identity from a cross-cultural perspective.