

Proposal: Women, Females, and Gender Nonconforming Musicians in Punk Rock

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In this research paper I will interview women, females, and gender nonconforming (GNC) musicians who have a growing presence and influence in the punk rock music scene. I will attend concerts near the Washington D.C. area. Events to consider include Girlpool (February 7th) and Diet Cig (February 28th). Concerts are one of musicians most visible and accessible interactions with the public. I expect the audience reflects what the musicians represent such as their attitude, worldview and presentation.

Bands with women, females, or GNC folks shaped my identity because of their true-to-self, empowering voice and presence. These musicians advocate for women by challenging structures of patriarchy, misogyny, and politics. Others in the scene create less political music that is equally as powerful. They do what they love, and they do it unapologetically. Of these musicians many practice radical vulnerability and intimate relatability. One side fights with an explicit voice, and the other with visibility, reminding women and society that girls, women, GNC, and female at birth folks can and will play music too. So, does gender affect how musicians, who are not born biologically male, navigate the punk rock music scene?

More specifically, do women, female at birth, and gender nonconforming musicians experience acceptance or rejection because of their gender? Are there perks, obstacles, and/or barriers, real or perceived, tied to gender as a women, female, NGC person? How does gender shape the experience of produced and touring musicians?

I will research concerts that fit the genre, buy tickets, and drive or carpool to the Venue, and assume an observational role at the show and take notes on my phone. I may take note of what people wear and how they present themselves (ex. various haircuts and stylistic choices). I will ask a sample of audience to answer a short three to five question survey or questionnaire and record their answers with a notepad. I will introduce myself, my pronouns, a brief description of my research and request consent. The observations will be recorded separately (ex. hair length)

from interpretation (ex. assumed gender or sexual orientation) using a double-entry note taking method.

Research includes searching for bands with women, female gender nonconforming folks in the punk rock music scene. I will then contact musicians via email, introduce myself and briefly describe my research. I will send a consent form, acquire consent, and agree on a date for an interview. The interview will be recorded and executed in person, on Skype, or by phone call.

If anyone declines I will politely accept and will not pressure or shame them. The consent form provides the interviewee's preference for confidentiality. My research questions will be reviewed by a variety of peers and my professor to expose bias and leading questions.

My research timeline begins with secondary research on the punk scene by February 17th. Research will include insight into the origin of punk, a condensed history, what the scene represents, and a brief look into male dominance in the scene. In that time frame I will create a list of eligible concerts to attend and musicians to contact. By February 24th I will create research questions and contact the musicians. Then I will review, refine, and edit research questions with assistance from my peers and professor by March 7th. For the next couple weeks, I hope to conduct interviews with the musicians (depending on their availability) and compile the information. By March 17th interviews will be transcribed. The next couple of days the data and interviews will be analyzed. The draft will be done on March 22nd and I will do peer reviews. Final revisions for the essay will be complete March 27th.