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# The Anonymous Collective: Operations and Gender Differences

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Although anyone, male, female, or nonbinary, can join the Anonymous movement or contribute to its causes, which frequently involve war, efforts to free political prisoners, and terrorism, there is clearly a central group of males who control the means of communication, such as chat rooms or Twitter accounts. Although these cyberactivists have become well known for addressing pressing social justice issues, what is not known is how the female participants in the movement function in a male-dominated cyber world. In this exploratory study, we look at the differences between the activities of male and female Anonymous members on Twitter as a way to discover similarities and differences in gendered activism. Our general objective is to identify the themes and values shared by female participants in the Anonymous movement. Our findings indicate that women focus primarily on animal rights, whereas men's tweets reflect a broader range of interests. Some possible reasons for women's attraction to animal activism are examined.

**Keywords** Anonymous, activism, feminism, hacktivism, social media

## INTRODUCTION

The collective Anonymous is a loosely organized group of hackers and activists (hacktivists) who have been both vilified and praised for their actions. Anonymous members usually push a particular political agenda, often fighting for the rights of the disenfranchised and maintaining an antigovernment anarchist platform (Anonnews, 2016). Small cells in the group have attacked Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) websites, exposed pedophiles, and outed terrorist bombers, acts for which they have been praised (Torres, 2018). They were, however, also instrumental in falsely identifying a suspect in the Boston Bomber case, which led to public vilification of the individual on social media and the humiliation of the accused's family. Another case of good intentions gone bad

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involves attempts to clear the Internet of pedophiles. Less than subtle vigilante efforts, such as that engaged in by the group Perverted Justice, have the unintended effect of stymieing law enforcement tactics and actually preventing offenders from being found (Torres, 2018). Similar activities, which show how Internet justice can go wrong, have led to frequent criticism of the group (Torres, 2018).

Although anyone, male, female, or nonbinary, can join the Anonymous movement or contribute to its causes, there is clearly a central group of males who control their means of communication, such as chat rooms or Twitter accounts. Although these cyberactivists have become well known for addressing pressing social justice issues, it is not known how the female members of this loose organization function in a male-dominated cyber world. Researchers interested in the impact of technology on our lives have increasingly come to recognize the importance of expanding the scope of their investigations to include the unique contributions and challenges facing women involved in this vital economic institution, which would not have existed without the efforts of many female mathematicians, physicists, and cryptanalysts (Isaacson, 2014; McKay, 2010). Unfortunately, few contemporary studies have attempted to examine the role of females in online groups. The present study helps to fill this gap by examining whether females associated with Anonymous share the same concerns as their male peers or are more likely to align themselves with more “traditionally feminine” concerns.

The general objective of this explanatory study is to identify and analyze the themes and values shared by female participants in the Anonymous movement. The nature of the group’s online activities is presented through analysis of messages posted by the group on social media. To obtain these data, an automatic collector software (Social Internet Network Data Extraction, using Twitter Application Programming Interface (API)) was created, making it possible to extract communications from Twitter (Fortin, 2015) and to identify popular “operations” or ops as they are more commonly known.

## ANONYMOUS

Anonymous, part of a loosely associated international network that promotes social engagement through direct action, is one of many politically or socially motivated hacktivist, or cyberactivist, groups that organize around common causes in an attempt to influence public opinion, conducting sophisticated attacks on whomever they deem to be a proper target. The Anonymous movement is an archetype of the phenomena: it has existed since 2003, generated parallel groups, and influenced public opinion (Pendergrass, 2013). Mainly involved in defending the free flow of information and in maintaining its own freedom and decentralization (Ludlow, 2010), it supports net neutrality and engages in operations to block the websites of those who wish to increase restrictive regulation of the Internet. An informal network of individuals who share the same ethics and culture (Coleman, 2014), it is an open group, with no apparent leader (Olson, 2012). Its motto, according to its website, is “We are Anonymous. We are Legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. Expect us” (Anonhq.com, 2014). The group’s website states that members believe in nonviolent, peaceful civil disobedience and are opposed to overarching ideologies such as religion, socialism, and

capitalism, which they argue are forms of slavery that have stopped human evolution and removed human freedom (Anonhq.com., 2014). (They do not, however, mention gender as one of these systems of control.)

Anonymous was formed in 2003 when individuals with common interests united on the 4Chan imageboard site in what was originally a loose-knit alliance of hackers and mischief-makers. Members initially gained status by out-hacking each other but eventually moved on to targeting corporate and state ventures in cyberspace. Their initial appearance on the global scene came through publicity supplied by Fox News, who called them “hackers on steroids.” In 2008, Anonymous pursued the Church of Scientology and the Westboro Baptist Church with Distributed Denial of Service attacks to counter hateful messages spread by the two groups. In 2008, Anonymous became officially interested in political causes (Coleman, 2014) and has since mobilized an unknown number of individuals to commit offenses for political purposes, bringing to light the oppressive practices of institutions and governments around the world, including those in North America. However, it was their 2010 operation against the financial sector that brought them widespread acclaim. Pay Pal, Visa, and MasterCard had refused to acknowledge charitable donations sent to WikiLeaks’s website and Anonymous responded by shutting down their sites. This placed the collective on the map as a conscientious activist organization (Harbisher, 2016). More recent operations include attacks against the terrorists responsible for the deaths of members of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, Operation Ice ISIS, in which ISIS recruiting websites were shut down, and Operation KKK, where clan member names were publicized (LaCapria, 2015). Their brand of hacktivism has been called a form of political resistance (Machado, 2015) and they have clearly brought a great deal of attention to inequality around the world. Their attempts to deal with gender inequality have included shaming men who sexually assault women (Mannes, 2017).

## HACKTIVISM, GENDER, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Traditional feminist movements and protest movements in general (e.g., social and human rights movements) have developed a number of ways to express civil disobedience: demonstrations, petitions, barricades, illegitimate occupation of places, graffiti, underground press publications, and even sabotage (Kahn & Kellner, 2004; Lavoie, Fortin, & Ouellet, 2013). The development of computer technology and the Internet have made new techniques, often similar to classic methods, available. Grouped under the expression “electronic civil disobedience” (Manion & Goodrum, 2000, p. 14), these new techniques involve the use of computers for resistance and protest with the goal of mobilizing public opinion for social or political change (Karatzogianni, Kambouri, Timikiniotis, & Morgunova, 2013). When such tools take a predominant role, the term “hacktivism” (a combination of “hacking” and activism”), referring to the non-authorized use of a computer to advance a political cause, is often used (Conway, 2003; Ludlow, 2010; Manion & Goodrum, 2000). Hacktivism techniques are as varied as they are original and include virtual occupation, vandalism of Web pages, e-mail bombing, site parodies, Denial of Service attacks, disclosure of confidential information, and messaging on social networks (Auty, 2004; Hampson, 2012; Li, 2013).

There are numerous similarities between the ideology behind hacktivist movements and that of the hackers who have been active since the start of the computer age (Boenish, 2012; Coleman, 2011; Ludlow, 2010).

Hacktivism is mostly young and male; only 28% of Internet activists are female (Hill & Hughes, 1998). According to Riley, Klumpp, and Hollihan (1995), the use of electronic resources is heavily skewed toward current power groups. However, like their earlier sisters who were active in achieving fair labor practices and voting rights for women (Traister, 2016), women have made inroads into the cyberactivism world, in part due to the nature of communication on the Internet. A recent study by the Pew Research Center shows that social activism has changed significantly by gender since these earlier studies (Anderson, Toor, Rainie, & Smith, 2018). The survey shows that 37% of women and 31% of males have taken part in a group that shares an interest in an issue or cause. Females (35%) are also more likely than males (29%) to have encouraged others to take action on issues that are important to them (Anderson et al., 2018).

Previous research on women in general and feminists in particular has not suggested that interest in animal rights is a central matter. Major issues for women have been suggested to include reproductive rights in the United States (Arnold, 2014; Fried, 2013; Paltrow, 2013) and abroad (Becker & Diaz, 2013; Jungari, 2016; Velez & Diniz, 2016), violence against women (Bohra et al., 2015; Chee, 2014; Kiss, Schraiber, Hossain, Watts, & Zimmerman, 2015; Nilan, Demartoto, Broom, & Germov, 2014), sexual harassment (Quick & McFadyen, 2017; Stockdale, Logan, Sliter, & Berry, 2014), economic justice (Goyette, 2018; Molders, Brosi, Bekk, Sporrle, & Weipe, 2018; Murphy, 2018), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer concerns (Porta et al., 2017; Sutter & Perrin, 2016), and job discrimination (Hess, 2013; Sandberg, Tomroos, & Kohvakka, 2018; Torre, 2014). Feminist researchers worry about diminished reproductive rights but also examine immigration, economic, racial, and health care inequality (Kelly & Gauchat, 2016).

According to Sampaio and Aragon (1997), women's "narrative" has been given a renewed sense of legitimacy through computer communications. They assert that the "text" of computer conversations involves stream of consciousness, inductive reasoning, and the use of lived experience as evidence, validating a previously defined "feminine" type of communication. Although these new forms of language use are not free from the constraints of power, ownership, and control, they can challenge traditional forms of social control (Sampaio & Aragon, 1997). The traditional subjects of Western learning, such as philosophy, science, and math, understood primarily as autonomous, rational, and masculine, have been disrupted by these new forms of communication, which has led to separation from an essential self/referent for males. (Sampaio & Aragon, 1997). In the space of the Internet, "these individuals have been depersonalized, decentered, multiplied, and reconstructed" (Sampaio & Aragon, 1997, p. 8). In addition, gender cues are removed from texts, emasculating the communication, which becomes "neither distinctively masculine nor feminine but anonymous," (p. 8). allowing for the construction of imaginary selves. In this space, females are free to construct their identities in any manner they choose. This does not, however, mean that the Internet has enabled a fully anonymous democratic space where all users can engage in complete identity reconstruction free from hierarchies, but it does open the door to a more substantial critique of systems of power (Sampaio & Aragon, 1997).

Recent efforts in the Middle East mimic earlier outcomes in national liberation struggles, in which women have participated alongside men only to have their shared “gender interests” receive little attention from the new, supposedly democratic regime (Molyneux, 1985). Although women actively participated in demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, they have been sidelined since the protests have ended. They have been excluded from the negotiating table and their rights have diminished after the uprisings (Estandiari & Heideman, 2015). In addition, violence against women in these countries has increased (Johansson-Nogues, 2013). This tendency for the evaporation of gender equality from social change agendas is due to the male bias that underlies social movements. Strong resistance within the “deep structure” of movements prevents measurable change. The “deep structure” here is the taken-for-granted assumptions about the place of women in organizations. These assumptions exist below awareness level and, although not talked about or challenged, determine how people act and think (Bhattacharjya, Birchall, Caro, Kelleher, & Sahasranaman, 2013). This has led to the separation of women from male-dominated movements and the creation of collective female communities.

When women gather on the Internet to form communities, the collectives they construct tend to create new codes and forms of community and identity (Hurwitz & Taylor, 2012). This is the case with the formation in 2015 of Anonymiss, a social justice collective created to address social issues neglected by the male-dominated Anonymous. “I see it as the genesis of a women's movement which seeks to include both women and men; to work towards the freeing of the female underclass in all societies” (Boingboing, 2011). Its top three priorities, according to its founder, are education, women and girls, and reproductive rights.

Women on the Internet have created communities to address a variety of concerns, but many operate instead as solitary hackers and have been responsible for millions of dollars of damage to data, computers, and funds. Two of the top 10 female hackers, as rated by Computer Science Degree Hub, are known for their work on social justice causes as well as working against child porn and for protection of intellectual property, whereas the other eight are security specialists who protect data and hardware from other hackers or are interested in stealing money and destroying data for kicks. (CSD, 2018). One of the most notorious female hackers, whose name is Xiao Tian, began a group she calls the China Girl Security Team that is reported to have 2,200 members, all female, who hack corporation and government websites. The founder is currently facing jail time. The motivations of these female hackers and hacktivists seem to be as varied as those of the male hacktivists who began Anonymous and other cyber collectives (CSD, 2018).

## METHODOLOGY

To explore the interests of women cyberactivists, we created a general repository of all tweets with the #Anonymous hashtag from November 1 to December 31, 2015. We then used a query to filter out all accounts that had posted at least two #Anonymous tweets in both November and December 2015. This methodological choice was made in an attempt to prevent the accidental or singular retweet of a tweet (selected participants needed to have tweeted using the #Anonymous hashtag on at least four occasions) and to identify accounts

that were active over time: users were required to have tweeted two messages with the #Anonymous hashtag in two different months.

A list of 1,267 users was created (out of approximately 3 million tweets).

We then randomly picked profiles that had been previously identified as having a female or male surname. We validated the list by assessing gender according to the general aspect of the profile: name, general look of the profile, colors used, and first tweets. We also validated profiles by looking for patterns that may indicate that the account was a legitimate profile and that it was not a “bot” (profile creation date, profile information last 10 tweets, number of followers, number of followees, number of tweets and retweets). We fixed the limit at 400 validated users in each gender category. The final sample included 388 female profiles and 392 male profiles. (Some individuals were dropped because of technical issues such as closed, suspended, or unavailable accounts.) We then created a separate database for males and for females and extracted 3,000 of the latest tweets for each profile. The database contained 1,068,464 tweets for females and 1,041,469 tweets for males. (The difference occurred because some users have fewer than 3,000 tweets in their feed. As well, some people had 3,000 tweets during the last year but some of these were retweets.)

RESULTS

In this section, we present similarities and differences in the most tweeted operations and describe the aim of the most important themes. Table 1 presents a summary of the most prevalent operations according to gender.

TABLE 1  
Summary of the 15 Most Prevalent Operations by Gender.

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Tweets by men</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Tweets by women</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>+/-</i>
1	#opkillingbay	4,088	12.4	#opkillingbay	9,162	18.9	same
2	#opdeathaters	4,005	12.1	#opseaworld	8,380	17.3	+5
3	#opsafewinter	3,739	11.3	#opwhales	7,736	16.0	+6
4	#opleakagejp*	3,012	9.1	#opbeast	3,933	8.1	+9
5	#opchemtrails	2,787	8.4	#opmrsyang	3,036	6.3	absent
6	#opisis	2,458	7.5	#opsafewinter	2,939	6.1	-4
7	#opseaworld	1,817	5.5	#opiceisis	2,279	4.7	+1
8	#opiceisis	1,802	5.5	#opisis	2,226	4.6	-2
9	#opwhales	1,659	5.0	#opexposecps	1,976	4.1	absent
10	#opserenashim*	1,509	4.6	#opchemtrails	1,861	3.8	-5
11	#opnimr	1,467	4.4	#opdeathaters	1,754	3.6	-9
12	#opamnistia	1,234	3.7	#opamnistia	986	2.0	same
13	#opbeast	1,215	3.7	#opnimr	946	2.0	+2
14	#opflint*	1,201	3.6	#opparis	660	1.4	+1
15	#opparis	993	3.0	#optndm	609	1.3	absent
	Total	32,986	100	Total	48,483	100	

\*Operations not found among women.



A general overview of the operations suggests that the most tweets from women using #Anonymous were related to protection of or bad treatments of whales. As shown in Table 1, the top three operations involved 52.1% of all tweets [*#opkillingbay* (18.9%), *#opseaworld* (17.3%), *#opwhales* (16.0%)]. The hashtag *#opkillingbay* was the most tweeted operation for both men and women. The release of the documentary film *The Cove* in 2009, which exposed the very questionable dolphin-hunting methods used in Taiji, Wakayama, Japan, increased public awareness on this topic. Each year since 2014, in September, when the fishing season begins, *#OpKillingBay* has targeted a number of industries that are directly and indirectly related to the hunting of dolphins (unions, media, tourism, government). A similar situation occurs with the hunting of whales in the Faroe Islands in Denmark. The same theme is involved in *#opseaworld*, which began targeting Sea World, an organization in charge of marine mammal parks, after the activist documentary *Blackfish* was released. *Blackfish* exposed the treatment of mammals and trainers in parks owned by Sea World and the main targets of *#opseaworld* are marine mammal parks, particularly in the United States. *#opwhales* is an operation aimed at whale hunters in Iceland and Norway. The operation describes the hunting practices as unnecessary slaughter and its main targets are the Icelandic government, the Norwegian government, and the Icelandic Whaling Company Hvalur.

A sample of tweets extracted from the operation *#opseaworld* are presented in Table 2. We were able to distinguish three types of activism actions in tweets. First, we identified tweets aimed directly at stakeholders. Example 1 discredits a financial stakeholder, whereas example 2 challenges the targeted company, and example 3 targets all investors. The second type of action involves action by the movement itself, with examples aimed at increasing activist momentum and describing actions already in motion. Finally, there are general calls to the population at large proposing a boycott or encouraging at least a retweet to show support. It is also worth noting that some tweets include many operations; for instance, "*#OpSeaWorld #OpWhales #OpKillingBay #OpBeast #OpFunKill #Anonymous* will forever shine a light into the darkness." We found no evidence that there was a difference in how activism was conducted in various operations. We hypothesize that the way online activism functions may be related to the media used, in this case Twitter.

Animal protection appears to be an important theme as *#opbeast* is the fourth most tweeted operation by women in our sample and the 13th by men. *#opbeast*, originally focused on Denmark, is about bestiality, whaling in the Faroe Islands, and euthanizing "surplus" endangered animals in zoos. The primary focus at present is on countries that do not ban bestiality or pornographic websites that show bestiality. Figure 1 is a word cloud of operations tweeted about by women.

Finally, still following the animal protection theme, there is *#opmrsyang*. This operation is different in that there is a fraud component in the events that triggered it. A charity organization called World Protection for Dogs and Cats in the Meat Trade, known as No To Dog Meat (*#NTDM*), raised funds for Yang Xiayun, a local activist in China who prevents some dogs from being killed for the annual Yulin Dog festival. However, the major part of the donated funds was not sent to the cause. *#opmrsyang* targeted the charity organization and the people responsible for the fraud.



TABLE 2  
Sample of Tweets in #opseaworld.

<i>id</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Tweet</i>
1	Engage stakeholders	@CreditSuisse #SeaWorld is a disaster zone for investment and it's not just #Blackfish #OpSeaWorld #Anonymous [LINK]
2	Engage stakeholders	hey @SeaWorld #Anonymous challenge you to make public the Shamu stadium historic water quality records #OpSeaWorld
3	Engage stakeholders	Investing in #SEAS Do you think this will EVER go away? #NYSE #Shares FYI We Wont #Anonymous #OpSeaWorld [LINK]
4	Describe what #Anonymous does	[LINK] #Anonymous expose #Seaworlds desire for wild caught Belugas #OpSeaWorld
5	Describe what #Anonymous does	We will continue to fight with the facts, because the facts are on our side #Anonymous#OpSeaWorld [LINK]
6	Describe what #Anonymous does	Check out 'Anonymous Operation SeaWorld' on Vimeo [LINK] #Vimeo #anonymous #blackfish #OpSeaWorld
7	Boycott/general call	Don't go to captive shows this summer #SeaWorld #OpSeaWorld #Anonymous #blackfish [LINK]
8	Boycott/eneral call	We can change the world by realizing that ALL LIVES MATTER! #OpSeaWorld#OpKillingBay#OpWhales #Anonymous [LINK]
9	Boycott/general call	Rt if #OpSeaWorld #Anonymous inspire you to fight against captivity and cruelty

The top tweeted operations for men involved a wider range of operations. As already discussed and illustrated in Table 1, the first was #opkillingbay (12.4%). The #opdeatheaters was second with 12.1% of all operation tweets. Figure 2 is a word cloud of male tweets.

The objective of #OpDeathEaters was expressed by the slogan “Lift the pedosadist/trafficking networks and the entire global oligarchy will be in the net” (Twitter, 2014). The operation targets any person known to the media who has been accused of rape. This has apparently become a “permanent” operation, as the Twitter account specifically dedicated to this operation continued to show activity at the time of this study. The objective of #opsafe-winter was to highlight the situation of the homeless throughout the world and to build a resource network for donations of food, blankets, clothes, socks, and so on. The purpose of this operation was somewhat different in that it is not attempting to shut something down but to inform the population about a situation and to create support for those who are homeless.

#OpLeakageJp, which was ranked at #4 for men although it was not in the most tweeted operations by women, raises some specific concerns. We did not place restrictions on the geographical placement of Twitter users in our sample and this operation appeared after the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, following criticism of the management of the disaster and the transparency of information provided to the public. The goal of this operation was to leak information to the public about how the event was being managed and its main targets were the Tokyo Electric Power Company, the government of Japan, and the Japanese atomic energy commission. #OpChemtrails also deals with a concerns about transparency, in this case with regard to the chemtrail conspiracy theory, which is the unproven belief that long-lasting trails, so-called chemtrails, left in the sky by high-flying aircraft consist of chemical or biological agents deliberately sprayed for sinister purposes. This operation is intended to make such conspiratorial ideas available to the public (Cairns 2016). Finally, a hashtag found

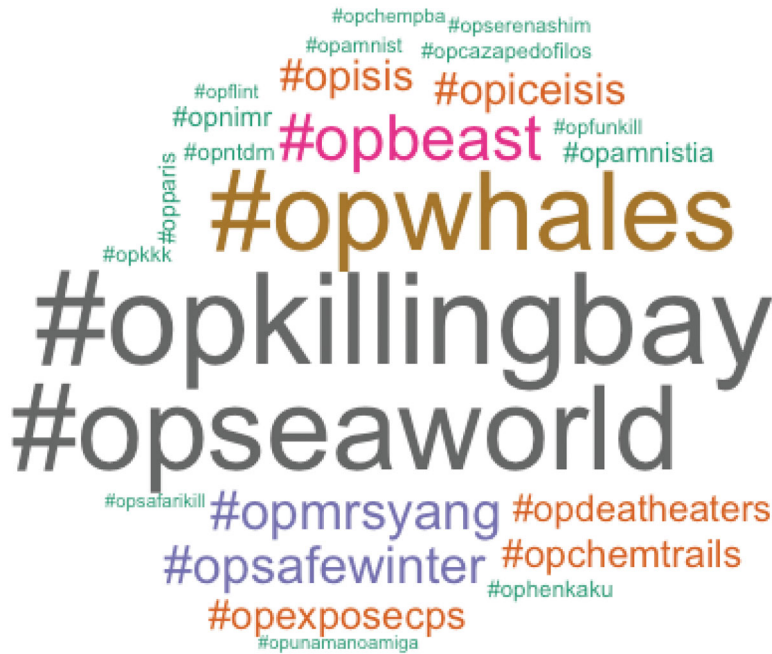


Figure 1. Wordcloud representing the most tweeted operations on #Anonymous by women.

among both genders but with very different rankings was #OpIsis. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, alias ISIL or ISIS, is a well-known terrorist organization. The group behind #OpIsis collected and published lists of tens of thousands of Twitter accounts that it claimed belonged to members of ISIS or its sympathizers. Its targets were websites or social media accounts related to ISIS.

There were also three operations in the woman's top 15 that were not on the list for men. Two related operations—#opmrscopyang and #opntdm—deal with animal protection whereas #opexposecps was an operation to expose alleged corruption and “rampant” child abuse in the Child Protective Services (Anonhq.com., 2014). Similarly, there were two operations in the men's top 15 that were not on the women's list. The first was #opleakagejp and the second was #opserenashim, which dealt with many of the “suspicious circumstances surrounding the car crash that resulted in Serena Shim's death” (Vandita, 2015, p. 1). Shim was a TV reporter in the Middle East. Finally, Anonymous began #opFlint to report on the Flint water contamination crisis (Anonnews, 2016), and this tweet shows up among the most tweeted for men, but not for women.

## DISCUSSION

From the analysis, it can be seen that female and male Anonymous members have very different concerns. For females, the five most frequent op tweets were in support of animal

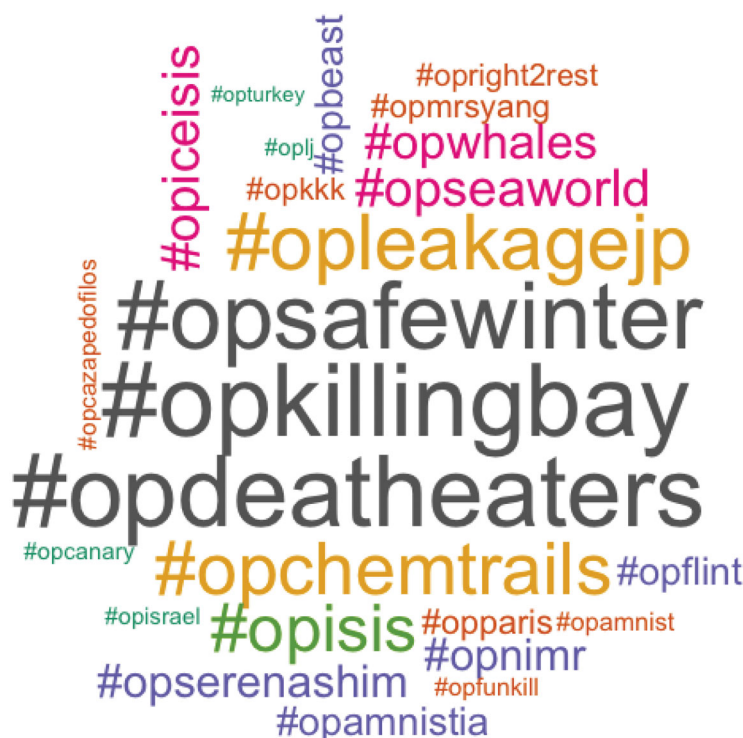


Figure 2. Wordcloud representing the most tweeted operation with #Anonymous by men.

rights, whereas frequent tweets for men varied from animal rights to the chemtrail conspiracy to ISIS. This is not to suggest that men on Anonymous are not concerned about animal rights, because such ops clearly show up on their list of concerns, but rather that animal rights is not one of their primary concerns. Interest in animal rights among women is not new (Gaarder, 2011; Kemmerer, 2011). Even though one of the founding members of Anonymiss publicly stated that their top concerns are education, population growth, investment in women and girls, and reproductive rights (Oxblood, 2016), there is a clear preference for animal rights ops in our analysis.

Emily Gaarder's *Women in the Animal Rights Movement* and Lisa Kemmerer's *Sister Species* both suggest that women sympathize with animals because they, like women, have been subjected to abuse at the hands of males. Gaarder (2011) describes such concerns as resulting from the interlocking oppressions of sexism and male dominance. Kemmerer (2011), on the other hand, asserts that patriarchy is the origin of all suffering and suggests that advocating care for animals requires women to confront opposition from patriarchy, male dominance, and corporate interests. In addition, women are expected to be caring and concern for animals is one aspect of such care. Kemmerer advocates "feminist veganism" as a way to end animal suffering.

Although feminist theory can offer much to the female members of Anonymous and Anonymiss, members do not self-identify as feminists—if they did, they would probably

have called the collective AnonyMs. Instead, members of these communities tend to replicate the old patterns of sexual segregation that fail to address the patriarchal structure under which they operate. The male monopoly of technology is a source of power for this structure. Indeed, education, youth culture, family, and the mass media all transmit meanings and values that identify masculinity with technological competence. Although women can obviously acquire technological skills, it is not sufficient simply to acquire such skills, when they are embedded in a culture of masculinity (Wajcman, 2004). As more women join the group, perhaps they will include feminists who understand that the success of any social movement depends largely on the strength it can garner among the most marginalized (Bhattacharjya et al., 2013). For example, texts intended for potential members include the following:

So you want to be a modern girl. You want more freedom. You want more power. You want to have fun. You want to prove that women are more courageous than men. And you love the internet. We need you.

Welcome on board, Anonymiss. (Teteau-Surel, 2012)

And:

Gentlemen, tell your girlfriends, your wives, your sisters, your mothers, that we protect their freedom of speech all around the world. And tell them that it will be even more protected if they protect it themselves. And if they don't do it for the fun, tell them to do it for the innumerable censored women all over the planet. Don't be a wanker: share our ideal! (Teteau-Surel, 2012).

Although the intention may have been to help make gender visible, such texts seem to be a clumsy way to encourage empowerment (Teteau-Surel, 2012). Great strides have been made by women for women over the last 100 years, but there is always backlash and regression (Bhattacharjya et al., 2013). The female members of Anonymiss have taken the important first step of creating their own collective. Perhaps with time they will be more effective at battling gender inequality than their Anonymous counterparts.

We have shown that Anonymous members who tweet about operations that matter to them differ by gender but were unable to determine whether this is an effect of exclusionary practices or simply a personal preference. Our findings indicate that females tweet more frequently about animal rights issues, whereas males in the group are more concerned with war, political prisoners, and terrorism. This does not mean that women are not concerned about these issues, but their tweets reflect a concern for animals.

Although it is true that anyone, male, female, or nonbinary, can join the Anonymous movement or contribute to their cause, there is clearly a central group of males who control means of communication, such as chat rooms or Twitter accounts (Mansfield-Devine, 2011). Control is obtained in a variety of ways, including gender bias. Nilizadeh et al. (2016) asserted that gender presented in social media profiles likely frames interactions. Their "action-identity" theory states that actions and identities influence visibility, and visibility is

power. Their results from an examination of more than 94,000 Twitter users show that gender frames communication and allows gender inequality to persist online. The powerful, visible male leaders have no reason to address this inequality because it benefits them. Although these cyberactivists have become well known for addressing pressing social justice issues, more research needs to be conducted to examine how the female members of this loose organization function in a male-dominated cyber world.

## CONCLUSION

In this project, we explored differences between male and female activities on Twitter as a way to discover similarities and differences in gendered activism. Findings indicate that women focus primarily on animal rights, whereas male tweets reflect a broader range of interests. One possible reason for women's attentiveness to animal activism is that concern for animals allows women to confront the patriarchy that oppresses them. Another reason may be that females prefer not to follow the lead of male Anonymous members and therefore focus on operations other than war and terrorism. Although our findings are interesting, more work needs to be done to ascertain the reasons and motivations for the different attention given to specific operations. We suggest that future research include interviews with Anonymiss members to explore their motivations. Also recommended are follow-up studies of this type to monitor how the conversations have changed over time.

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