Group 1
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Communication Studies

“Gender Performance and Political Identity at the January 6 Capitol Riot”
Abstract

The January 6th riot on the U.S. Capitol Building was heavily documented with recorded videos and photos, not just by mainstream news sources but by the rioters themselves. Rioters’ videos uploaded to social media, particularly the conservative-focused website Parler, provide a lens into performances of gender as they intersect with political identity, revealing new ways that communication studies scholars can understand how conservative arguments are constructed within gender performance. In this thesis, I rhetorically analyze rioters’ videos uploaded to Parler using a lens of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, and further outline a conservative masculine and feminine performance of the rioters in attendance. I argue that the masculinity and femininity performed by Capitol rioters rhetorically deflected blame and seriousness away from rioting men and placed a stronger responsibility of care onto rioting women.