

MASCULINITY CONTINGENCY AND SEXISM

By

KAYLIE M. BECHTEL

Bachelor of Science, Psychology

University of Central Missouri

Warrensburg, Missouri

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Jennifer Byrd-Craven, Ph.D.

Thesis Adviser

Demond Grant, Ph.D.

Sheila Kennison, Ph.D.

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Name: KAYLIE M. BECHTEL

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Abstract: Previous research has established that when a man experiences a threat to his masculinity, this has often been related to engagement in anti-social behaviors like hostility towards women (Eisler, et al., 2000; Fanchina, et al., 2001; Jakupfak, et al., 2002; Moore et al., 2008; O'Neil et al., 1986). In the current study, levels of sexism, aggression, affect, and scores on the Masculinity Contingency Scale (Burkley, Bell, & Wong, 2016) were examined after inducing a masculinity boost or a masculinity threat. Using a 3 x 2 design, 4 main hypotheses were examined: 1) men who have just experienced a masculinity threat will have higher scores on the MCS than men who have experienced a masculinity boost, 2) men who experience a masculinity threat will have higher scores of benevolent and hostile sexism than men who experience a masculinity boost 3) that men in the threat condition will also have higher scores of aggression and negative affect than men who experience a masculinity boost, 4) men who experience neither a masculinity threat nor masculinity boost will have lower scores on the MCS than men who did experience a boost or a threat. After analyzing all of the predictions with a one-way ANOVA, there were no significant findings to support any of the hypotheses, $F(2, 225) = 1.748, p = .177$; $F(2, 221) = .027, p = .973$; $F(2, 221) = .582, p = .559$; $F(2, 218) = .461, p = .631$; $F(2, 225) = 1.748, p = .177$.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is no secret that throughout human history, women have fought a long and laborious battle against oppression and violence. From extreme atrocities such as genital mutilation and rape, to more surreptitious instances of sexism such as benevolent sexism in the workplace and endorsement of rape-myth culture, there is no denying that sexism and sex-based crimes occur across cultures, countries, and continents. Even so, the nature of that reality does not discount the tribulations of men that women may never experience. It is important to understand why men may engage in risky behaviors and/or embrace misogynistic beliefs, so that researchers might identify a way to decrease the prevalence of such discriminatory mindsets. One misconception is that enrolling young males who have violent or aggressive tendencies into sports should decrease his urge to engage in violent behavior (e.g. physical fights). Kreager (2007) reports the opposite effect: engagement in contact sports does not inhibit the occurrence of violence in males and that adolescent football players may actually be more likely than their non-football playing peers to get into a violent fight. The same trend holds true for adolescent wrestlers

(Kreager, 2007). Previous studies conducted by Copenhaver, Lash, and Eisler (2000), among others, that examined the influence of hegemonic masculine gender norms on male aggression against women found that men who endorse these hegemonic norms (i.e. status, toughness, anti-femininity) do in fact report higher rates of hostility for women (Eisler, Franchina, Moore, Honeycutt, & Rhatagan, 2000; Franchina, Eisler, & Moore, 2001; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Moore et al., 2008; O'Neil et al., 1986).

In order to better understand the underlying motives for adhering to hegemonic masculine gender norms, we turn to the concept of precarious manhood. According to Vandello and Cohen (2008), the status of manhood can only be achieved by social rites of passage while the concept of womanhood seems to be determined by biological developments (e.g. menarche, puberty, childbirth). This indicates that the concept of womanhood is not viewed through the same lens as the concept of manhood. Similar research conducted by Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, and Weaver (2008) elaborates on the precariousness of achieving manhood status in-and-of itself, and confirms the tumultuous nature that comes along with maintaining that status. The authors explained that acquiring manhood requires a greater degree of risk and physical toughness because of the emphasis on social markers, as opposed to the biological markers that characterize womanhood (Vandello, et al., 2008).

This concept of precarious manhood is referenced in the framework of a Canadian study by Funk and Werhun (2011), in which the researchers examined the impact on self-regulation and on cognitive ability when young men go through a 'gender-threatening' experience. In order to create a sense of threatened masculinity, participants assigned to

the *harassment condition* were told they had squeezed the handgrip ‘*like a girl,*’ in a mocking manor by the female experimenter, while those in the *non-harassment condition* did not receive any response about their handgrip performance. The experimenters’ analyses revealed a significant main effect of condition in regards to intellectual ability, as measured via anagrams tests (Funk & Werhun, 2011). For measures of self-regulation, handgrip strength served as the dependent variable and a significant main effect for condition was demonstrated. The researchers originally hypothesized that those in the *harassment condition* would not squeeze the handgrip as long as men who had not been harassed, but their results revealed the opposite effect: men whose masculinity had been threatened exhibited more physical self-regulation but performed worse on the anagrams tests than men who had not been emasculated (Funk & Werhun, 2011).

Vandello and Bosson (2013) report that men are often called insulting names intended to emasculate them or are told to toughen up and be a man during challenging times like financial hardships or physical and emotional traumas. For women, this expectation to be tough or strong during hardships does not seem to apply, as it does for men (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). It was also theorized that maintaining manhood may be experienced as more precarious to men with a high level of masculinity contingency than for men whose self-worth is not as heavily contingent on their sense of masculinity (Vandello, et al., 2008).

Though there are few that would argue for sexism as a valuable contribution to society, Michneiwicz and Vandello (2015) did predict that people may be more inclined to excuse sexist comments made by a man if that man has just been emasculated by a woman. Emasculating encounters have universally been referred to as masculinity threats

in previous research (Fowler & Geers, 2016; Dahl, Vescio & Weaver, 2015; Taylor, 2014). Some examples of masculinity threats that a man may experience during an in-vivo exchange might include discovering that a he makes less than other colleagues (specifically – female colleagues), being rejected after making sexual advances towards a woman, or losing at a competitive task. While scientists cannot always recreate real-life scenarios in a laboratory setting, many researchers have designed masculinity threat manipulations that mimic emasculating encounters that might occur in a man's everyday life. Fowler and Geers (2016) used expression of toughness as a means to measure masculinity threat. Participants were asked to indicate their selected electric voltage level by turning a dial to reflect the number of millivolts. This was done after they received bogus feedback about personality and general knowledge. The false feedback from the general knowledge assessment was used as the masculinity threat manipulation (Fowler & Geers, 2016).

Dahl, Vescio and Weaver (2015) opted to induce masculinity threat and masculinity boost using a relatively common method in which men are asked to complete a self-report measure and are then given bogus feedback insinuating that they are either very masculine, or not very masculine at all. Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, and Wasti (2009) followed a very similar methodology in which male participants were asked to perform a traditionally feminine task of braiding hair as a means of creating a masculinity threat. In a two-part study, Cheryan and colleagues used the false-feedback method to threaten masculinity by informing men in the *threat condition* that their handgrip strength fell within the female distribution of grip strength, as opposed to the male distribution (Cheryan, Schwartz, Cameron, Katagiri, & Monin 2015). This would

have insinuated to the participants that they were not as strong as other male participants. Weaver, Vandello, and Bosson (2013) used an alternative method to examine what they refer to as *gender threat* and *gender affirmation* in which participants were instructed to try to remember a certain number of behaviors they had committed in the past 30 days that would capture the essence of what a “real man” would do, according to cultural standards. Participants in the *threat* condition were instructed to think of ten behaviors and were told that most men could recall twelve behaviors while those in the affirmation (boost) condition were told to think of two behaviors and informed that most men are only able to remember one behavior. Researchers designed the experiment this way to enhance perceived threat (Weaver, Vandello, & Bosson, 2013).

Just as men experience threats to their masculinity, there are also events that could temporarily enhance a man’s sense of masculinity. Masculinity boosts and masculinity threats are like two sides to the same masculine coin. In a boosted condition, men tend to feel very masculine, whereas in the threatened condition, men generally feel emasculated, or less manly. So, why should researchers, and society, be concerned with how important a man’s masculinity is to his sense of identity? After examining the research presented here, it is evident that men’s responses to experiencing masculinity threats can have the potential to be damaging to others. As scientists, it is up to psychologists to examine male hostility towards women and the related issues that may persist. Results from Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, and Weaver’s (2008) research indicates that manliness is hard to earn and even tougher to hold on to: a man’s sense of masculinity may influence his attitudes that ultimately contribute to his sexist beliefs/attitudes, so researchers have explored what happens when a man’s masculinity is threatened or boosted (Kosakowska-

Berezecka, Besta, Adamska, Jaśkiewicz, Jurek, & Vandello, J. A. 2016; Cheryan, et al., 2015; Dahl, et al., 2015). In instances in which a man feels that he has been emasculated (e.g. unable to support family, getting called 'sissy') that man experiences a masculinity threat. These masculinity threats have reportedly resulted in increased levels of aggression (Cohn, Seibert, & Zeichner, 2009) and lower acceptance of gender equality (Kosakowska-Berezecka, et al., 2016) in men. In another study conducted by Weaver, Vandello, and Bosson (2013), the researchers examined risk-taking behavior in men by measuring the size of their gambling bets. The results of this study revealed that men who experienced a gender (masculinity) threat made larger monetary bets, as compared to men who experienced a masculinity boost (Weaver, Vandello, & Bosson, 2013). Based on these results, it is logical to conclude that men who have had their masculinity threatened may also be more apt to engage in risky, or even violent, behaviors.

The main purpose of this study was to examine some outcomes that could be associated with perceived masculinity threat - specifically, how 'threat' and 'boost' conditions might have influence scores on the Masculinity Contingency Scale (MCS). The MCS is a scale developed by Burkley, Wong, and Bell (2016) that can be used when assessing how much a man perceives threats and boosts to his masculinity, as the result of real or imagined situations. This scale measures the extent to which a man's self-worth is contingent on his sense of masculinity: the researchers referred to this factor as masculinity contingency (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2016). Because the MCS is a newly developed tool, the breadth of evidence that indicates its validity is limited. So far, however; the threat ($\alpha = .87, p < .001$) and boost ($\alpha = .82, p < .01$) subscales of the MCS and the MCS itself were found to be correlated. These associations supported convergent

validity of the scale. In addition to convergent validity, discriminant validity was evidenced in the variations found between the subscales (i.e. boost, threat) of the Masculinity Contingency Scale. Criterion-related validity was also supported when the MCS (including subscales) was found to be significantly associated with multiple forms of prejudice, including benevolent sexism and homophobia (Burkley, Wong & Bell, 2016).

In addition to the Masculinity Contingency Scale, the following dependent variables were included: aggression, affect, and sexism. Unlike much of the previous research on masculinity threats and boosts, the current experiment included a ‘neutral’ condition in its framework so as to closely examine the differences among conditions and strengthen the claim that any differences were directly caused by the proposed manipulation. The framework of the current study was conceptually similar to that of a previous study conducted by Babl (1979) in which sex-typed (stereotypically ‘masculine’ men) males reported increased rates of antisocial behavior and an over-exaggeration of masculinity, directly after their masculinity was threatened. In that research, men in the threat condition listened to an audio recording claiming that there has been a dip in the masculinity levels of American men in college, while participants in the non-threatening condition heard an audio message stating that masculinity levels of the American male college student have remained unchanged (Babl, 1979). Just as in the methodology of this study, participants in the neutral condition of Babl’s (1979) experiment received irrelevant, neutral information unrelated to the topic of masculinity. By including this third, neutral condition, instead of only including ‘threat’ and ‘boost’ conditions, as was a common practice in earlier research ((Kosakowska-Berezecka, et al., 2016; Cheryan, et

al., 2015; Michneiwicz & Vandello, 2015; Dahl, et al., 2015; Weaver, Vandello, & Bosson, 2013; Cohn, Seibert, & Zeichner, 2009; Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009), the framework used in the design of this study provided a more comprehensive examination of group differences on each of the dependent variables. Based on the previously mentioned empirical research, this study was designed with three hypotheses regarding men in the 'threat' condition, and one regarding the neutral control condition. The first prediction was that men who have just experienced a threat to their masculinity will have higher scores on the MCS than men who have just experienced a boost to their masculinity. Second, men who experience a masculinity threat will have higher scores of hostile and benevolent sexism than men who experience a masculinity boost. Third, men in the threat condition will also have higher scores of aggression and negative affect than men who experience a masculinity boost. In addition to predictions made about men in the threat condition, it was hypothesized that - similarly to the findings from Babl's (1979) study - men in the control condition would have lower scores of aggression than men in all other conditions ('threat' and 'boost'). Finally, the researcher also predicts that men in the neutral condition will actually have lower scores on the MCS than men in all other conditions.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

A final sample size of 193 male participants were recruited for this study from a pool of undergraduate students (ages 18 – 24) at a large Southwestern university. Participants were recruited from psychology courses via the online SONA recruitment system. As part of the required curriculum for psychology courses at the university, students were required to complete a minimum number of hours of research participation through the SONA participation system. Once individuals signed up for this study through SONA, they were then e-mailed a personal link to the online survey forum called Qualtrics. As compensation for completing this study, participants were all awarded .5 SONA credits for their contributions, which they can apply to their psychology course as part of their final grades.

Procedure and Materials

Immediately after participants signed up for the study on SONA, they received an individual link in their e-mail accounts to the survey on Qualtrics. After they had indicated their informed consent by clicking the box labeled

“I consent,” at the beginning of the survey, participants were then randomly assigned to one of three conditions: masculinity boost, masculinity threat, or the neutral control condition. After random assignment had been completed, all participants (regardless of condition) went on to complete measures of masculinity contingency, sexism, aggression and affect, in addition to a small demographics section at the end.

Masculinity Boost vs. Masculinity Threat. Participants who were assigned to the ‘boost’ condition were given a fake measure of manliness scale, fabricated by the researchers to create either a masculinity boost or masculinity threat. This decoy questionnaire had scores that range from ‘0’ (*least manly*) to ‘10’ (*most manly*). Some examples of items on this questionnaire included “*I have a high level of physical toughness,*” and “*I go on dates, regularly.*” Once participants completed this part of the questionnaire, they then received bogus feedback informing them that they received a score of ‘10,’ or a higher-than-average level of masculinity (boost). The false score of ‘10 / 10’ for this condition was selected by the researcher because it was crucial to the study to ensure that all males in the ‘boost’ condition truly perceived a masculinity boost. If the men in this condition had received feedback indicating anything less than 10 out of 10, participants could have perceived that information as the likelihood that some other man had scored higher than him, and this perception could have hindered the intended boost on his masculinity. It was important for males in the ‘boost’ condition to be as boosted as possible, within the parameters of the experiment. Participants who were assigned to the ‘threat’ condition were given the same false manliness measure as those in the boost condition, however; this group’s bogus feedback indicated that they had received a ‘2’, or lower-than-average level of masculinity (threat). The false score of ‘2 /

10' for this condition was selected by the researcher to ensure that the participants perceived that they were very low in masculinity without becoming unbelievable. It was a distinct possibility that, because of social desirability bias, these men would have indicated something very masculine about themselves (whether true or not) at some point in the questionnaire, so it was detrimental to the integrity of the experiment that the threatening score be believable to each of the participants.

Neutral Control. Participants randomly assigned to this condition received neither a threat nor a boost to their masculinity. Instead, these participants were given Morizot's (2014) Big Five Personality Trait Short Questionnaire (BFPTSQ) and then received false feedback about their personality that was irrelevant to the purposes of this study. All men in the neutral control condition were shown the same filler information, which read as follows: *"The test you just completed is designed to measure various personality traits. The results of your test indicate that, compared to the average, you scored above the average in levels of Openness and Conscientiousness. Your scores of Extraversion and Agreeableness are within the average range."* The researcher chose to use this particular phrasing because the ranking of 'above average' as opposed to 'average' or 'below average' on every personality trait could have resulted in different reactions from participants, including spikes in aggression or masculinity threat. It was especially important to avoid invoking masculinity threat for this condition because the data from the neutral condition served a crucial role in indicating the validity of the manipulation. Once the false personality feedback was displayed to the participants, they were then directed by Qualtrics to the successive questionnaires.

Measures

Masculinity Contingency. The Masculinity Contingency Scale (MCS) is a scale introduced by Burkley, Wong, and Bell (2016) whose purpose is to measure the extent to which a man's perception of self-worth is dependent on how masculine he feels – his masculinity. This 10-item Likert scale included items similar to, “When I act manly, I feel good about myself,” and responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) – 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicated higher rates of masculinity contingency. In the final session of a 4-part pilot study using the MCS, 47 male participants completed the MCS once (*Time 1*), and then again two weeks later (*Time 2*). Alpha coefficients for the MCS overall scale at *Time 1* was .93, and at *Time 2* was .94. Alpha coefficients for subscale MCS-Threat at *Time 1* was .91, and at *Time 2* was .93, while coefficients for the MCS-Boost subscale were .92 at *Time 1*, and .96 at *Time 2*. MCS overall score ($r = .72$), MCS-Boost subscale ($r = .70$), and MCS-Threat ($r = .68$) scores from *Time 1* were all significantly related to their respective scores from *Time 2*, which would support the MCS test-retest reliability (Burkley, et al., 2016).

Sexism, Affect, and Aggression. Levels of sexism were evaluated using Glick and Fiske's (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). This 22-item scale measures levels of both hostile and benevolent sexism using a Likert-style rating system ranging from 0 (*disagree strongly*) – 5 (*agree strongly*). Buss and Perry's (1992) Aggression Questionnaire was used to measure participants' scores of aggression after receiving intervention based on group assignment (i.e. threat, boost, neutral). This 29-item Likert-scale had a rating system that ranged from 0 (*extremely uncharacteristic of me*) – 5 (*extremely characteristic of me*). To measure positive and negative affect/emotions of participants, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule was used (Watson & Tellegan,

1998). This 20-item Likert-scale included items such as “interested,” “upset,” or “hostile,” and used a rating system that ranges from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) – 5 (*extremely*).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

A total of 240 male students volunteered their participation in this study but some cases were excluded from the final analyses because of incomplete responses or if the amount of time it took for the participant to complete the survey was excessively long or short (that is – if the duration of the survey (in minutes) was more than three standard deviations away from the mean ($M = 13.38$, $SD = 7.44$). After these cases were excluded from the sample data and the final analyses were run, the sample sizes for each hypothesis were slightly smaller than the total number of collected responses. Recall that this study posited 4 separate hypotheses. As for the first hypothesis, a 2 x 3 (Group x Condition) analysis of variance with a final sample size of $n = 228$ was used to test whether men who have just experienced a masculinity threat will have higher scores on the Masculinity Contingency Scale than men who have just experienced a boost to their masculinity. Although the means did appear to be trending in the direction hypothesized by the researcher, the results of this data did not reveal a significant main effect, $F(2, 225) = 1.748$, $p = .177$. The reported mean of the masculinity threat condition was $M = 41.03$, while the mean for the masculinity boost condition was $M = 36.2$. The mean for

those in the neutral condition, where participants' masculinity was neither boosted nor threatened was unexpectedly higher than anticipated ($M = 38.95$).

For the second hypothesis - men who experience a masculinity threat will have higher levels of sexism, as indicated by scores on the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory subscales, than men who experience a masculinity boost – a 2 x 3 design in an analysis of variance with a final sample size of $n = 224$ was used. On the ASI subscale for benevolent sexism, there were also no significant differences, $F(2, 221) = .027, p = .973$, between conditions. Contrary to the predictions, the mean score for the boost condition ($M = 3.56$) was barely higher than the reported mean for the threat condition ($M = 3.57$). On the subscale measure for hostile sexism, there was also no significant main effect. $F(2, 221) = .582, p = .559$. Similarly to the mean differences discovered for benevolent sexism, the reported group means for hostile sexism indicated that those in the boost condition ($M = 3.29$) actually displayed higher levels of hostile sexism than that of the threat condition ($M = 3.12$). These findings are also contradictory of the researcher's initial hypothesis that men who experience a threat to their masculinity will have higher scores of both benevolent and hostile sexism than men who experience a masculinity boost. The means of the neutral control group for benevolent and hostile sexism were $M = 3.59$, and $M = 3.27$, respectively, thus the results of this test lend no evidence to support the researcher's second hypothesis.

For the third hypothesis, it was expected that men in the threat condition would have higher scores of aggression and negative affect than men in the boost condition. The second part of this hypothesis predicted that, similarly to the findings from Babl's (1979)

study, men in the control condition will have lower scores of aggression than men in all other conditions. As was the case for the first two hypotheses, a one-way analysis of variance was used to accurately assess all predictions made in the third hypothesis. A 2 x 3 design with a final was used to assess the scores on the two subscales (physical aggression, hostility) of the Aggression Questionnaire, and for the PANAS subscales (positive affect, negative affect). The results of the ANOVA with a final sample size of $n = 224$, on the AQ subscales indicated that there was no significant main effect for neither the physical aggression X condition interaction, $F(2, 221) = .680, p = .508$. The results of the one-way ANOVA for the hostility subscale had a final sample size of $n = 230$ and indicated no significant effect $F(2, 227) = .972, p = .380$. The negative affect x condition interaction was also non-significant, $F(2, 223) = 1.12, p = .328, (n = 226)$. While the group mean for the threat condition ($M = 2.24$) was not higher than the group mean of the boost condition ($M = 2.31$) for the hostility subscale; the scores for the threat condition ($M = 2.59$) were, on average, higher for the physical aggression subscale than those in both the boost condition ($M = 2.43$), and the neutral control condition ($M = 2.45$). Ponderously, the group mean of the neutral condition ($M = 2.44$) on the hostility subscale was higher than the means for both the boost and threat conditions – which is exactly contradictory to original predictions. Group means for the negative affect subscale revealed that the threat condition ($M = 2.00$) had the lowest group mean out of all the conditions. The neutral control condition actually had the highest group mean ($M = 2.18$) out of all the conditions, while the boost condition had a group mean of $M = 2.11$. The evidence of these results did not lend any support for the researchers' third hypothesis.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis that men in the neutral condition will actually have lower scores on the MCS than men in all other conditions was not supported $F(2, 225) = 1.748, p = .177, (n = 228)$. While the neutral condition ($M = 38.96$) did have a lower group mean than the threat condition ($M = 41.04$), the group mean for the boost condition was $M = 36.2$ – thus lacking the evidence needed to reasonably conclude that the hypothesis was supported.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

There are a few possible reasons as to why the findings of this experiment were not more similar to the plethora of comparable studies whose results did lend support to ideas similar to the ones addressed here. Perhaps the nature of the manipulation, itself, is a limitation: it is plausible that, despite efforts made by the researcher to make the boosts and threats believable, participants may not have been persuaded into perceiving them as being so. A plausible reason that our results did not support the predictions could have been the online format of this research study. This is a key difference between this study and earlier studies – the previous research all included in-lab manipulations in which the boosts and threats were likely more effective than when presented in an online survey format. Another possibility might be that the MCS was not the best fit or an adequate measure for the design and/or purposes of this study.

Sexism, sex-based crimes, and male hostility towards women is not merely limited to specific countries or cultures. Sexism is not bound by the same borders as those who cling to their sexist ideologies. In the current study, the researcher analyzed certain outcomes (i.e. masculinity contingency, sexism, aggression, affect) that may arise when a

man experiences a threat to his masculinity. Previous empirical evidence has exemplified - a man's perception of being emasculated is often related to anti-social behaviors like violence (Kreager, 2007) and hostility towards women (Eisler, et al., 2000; Fanchina, et al., 2001; Jakupfak, et al., 2002; Moore et al., 2008; O'Neil et al., 1986) and may also contribute to a reduction in men's intellectual ability, directly after the emasculating event (Funk & Werhun, 2011). This study examined whether sexism, aggression, affect, and scores on the MCS are influenced when a man experiences a boost or a threat to his masculinity. Although the data revealed no significant differences, the evidence presented here does not completely discount the possibility that men do experience negative outcomes associated with threatened masculinity. While there is a solid foundation of evidence examining masculinity threats and boosts, there is only one other study (Burkley, et al., 2016) that has used the MCS to measure a man's sense of masculinity directly after it has been threatened or boosted. If a man whose masculinity is invaluable to his sense of identity encounters emasculation, does this man exhibit a different, perhaps even more violent, reaction than the man whose sense of identity is not as heavily reliant on his masculinity? Burkley et al., (2016)'s results indicated support for this idea. These results, however, were not precisely replicated in the outcome of the present study, it remains crucial that researchers dedicate their efforts to investigative potentially negative, anti-social outcomes/behaviors that do arise in many instances (Vandello, et al., 2008; Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009; Cohn, Seibert, and Zeichner, 2009; Bosson, & Vandello, 2011; Caswell, Bosson, Vandello, & Sellers, 2014; Kosakowska-Berezecka, et al., 2016; Burkley, et al., 2016). By inspecting the relationships that exist between masculinity threats/boosts and the responses to them

that occur in men, scientists and society will then be better equipped to identify potentially hostile situations and, ideally, deter them. If scientists are presently working to unveil a man's deep-rooted sense of masculinity, then perhaps future researchers can then examine ways in which to disentangle that man's sense of identity from his masculinity and ultimately decrease levels of sexism, thus reducing the occurrence of disdainful actions against both women and men. The results of this study will contribute, notably, to expanding scientific understanding of masculinity and which outcomes may be associated with perceived masculinity threats in males. One key difference between the design of the proposed study and the designs of much of the previous literature is this: within the proposed study, there are three conditions (boost condition, threat condition, neutral control) while much of the pre-existing literature only accounts for two (boosted and threatened conditions). This design affords psychologists the opportunity to closely compare variations between-groups and within-groups. The results of the current study may ultimately be related to important social issues including, but absolutely not limited to, rape-myth culture, sexism, and endorsement of traditional gender roles.

Because our findings were not comparable to previous results, it is detrimental to consider that this very likely resulted because of the mere fact that the masculinity threats and boosts were attempted by the researcher to be incited via online surveys, perhaps reducing the effectiveness of the boosts and threats. It is a distinct possibility that the threats and boosts to participants' masculinity would have had a greater effect on the participants if this study were to be conducted in an in-lab setting, so that the masculinity threats or boosts could be carried out in a more direct, face-to-face interaction. This is why future research should also consider conducting similar manipulations of their own

in a laboratory setting. Psychologists should also consider examining the differences between masculinity threats induced with a female researcher and threats induced by a male member of the research team. In some of the previous research referenced throughout the current study, the masculinity threats/boosts were to be incited specifically by a by female researcher (Funk & Werhun, 2011) – it would be a logical direction, in terms of research, to compare whether the effect experienced by these males was influenced by the sex of the researcher. This should be a consideration for future directions in masculinity threat research.

Tables

Table 1.0

Analysis of Variance by Condition

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Masculinity Contingency Scale	Between Groups	458.068	2	229.034	1.103	.334
	Within Groups	39468.710	190	207.730		
	Total	39926.777	192			
Physical Aggression (AQ Subscale)	Between Groups	.526	2	.263	.387	.680
	Within Groups	129.323	190	.681		
	Total	129.850	192			
Hostility (AQ Subscale)	Between Groups	.993	2	.497	.533	.588
	Within Groups	177.172	190	.932		
	Total	178.165	192			
Negative Affect (PANAS Subscale)	Between Groups	.420	2	.210	.434	.648
	Within Groups	91.932	190	.484		
	Total	92.353	192			
Benevolent Sexism (ASI Subscale)	Between Groups	.214	2	.107	.180	.835
	Within Groups	112.588	190	.593		
	Total	112.802	192			
Hostile Sexism (ASI Subscale)	Between Groups	1.110	2	.555	.617	.541
	Within Groups	170.961	190	.900		
	Total	172.071	192			

Table 2.0

Means for Aggression Subscales, Negative Affect, and ASI Subscales

CONDITION		<i>n</i>	MEAN	SD
Masculinity Contingency	Neutral	96	39.4271	14.76821
	Threat	50	41.3400	13.25513
	Boost	47	37.0000	14.84705
Physical Aggression (AQ Subscale)	Neutral	96	2.4144	.82654
	Threat	50	2.5289	.77650
	Boost	47	2.4019	.87076
Hostility (AQ Subscale)	Neutral	96	2.4063	1.04110
	Threat	50	2.2400	.75797
	Boost	47	2.3005	1.00056
Negative Affect (PANAS Subscale)	Neutral	96	2.1500	.74424
	Threat	50	2.0400	.64650
	Boost	47	2.0872	.63984
Benevolent Sexism (ASI Subscale)	Neutral	96	3.5663	.79968
	Threat	50	3.5618	.75407
	Boost	47	3.6422	.72192
Hostile Sexism (ASI Subscale)	Neutral	96	3.2008	.93438
	Threat	50	3.1055	1.03691
	Boost	47	3.3191	.87646

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent

(Will be presented to participants via online survey forum, Qualtrics)

The Department of Psychology supports the practice of protecting human participants in research. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. Your participation is solicited but strictly voluntary.

The purpose of this study is to look at how students' attitudes relate to common issues. During the study you will be asked to provide your responses to a set of questionnaires. Your participation in this study is not expected to take any longer than 20 minutes.

Although unlikely, you may experience some discomfort during participation in this study, but that discomfort would be no greater than what is experienced in day-to-day activities, such as attending college courses. Even though participation in this study may not directly benefit you, we believe the information you provide will be useful in helping scientists better understand the attitudes of students in relation to common issues.

Even if you agree to participate, it should be noted that you are free to withdraw at any time and/or skip any question you do not wish to answer and will still receive credit for your participation. If you decide not to participate in the study, you do not need to tell the researcher your reasons for choosing not to participate.

Any responses you provide will be confidential and will not be associated in any way with your name. No information that could identify you will be released in any form. All data will be kept on a password protected hard drive on a computer in a locked room and will only be accessible by the lead researchers of this study.

There are no direct benefits associated with participation in this study and participants in this study will receive no monetary or other compensation for completion or participation in this study.

I have had the opportunity to read this consent form, and I am prepared to participate in this project. If you have any questions, please ask or contact:

Jarrold Bock, M.S.

304 North Murray Hall

bockj@ostatemail.okstate.edu

Kaylie Bechtel, B.S.

304 North Murray Hall

kaylie.bechteli@okstate.edu

Recruitment Script

The purpose of this study is to investigate how people's attitudes relate to modern issues.

In this research study you will be presented with various stimuli and asked to make judgements toward the stimuli. You will also be asked a series of questions about yourself and your attitudes. Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to skip any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. You will receive .5 SONA credits for your participation. Participation will take 10-35 minutes for completion.

Debriefing

Thank you for participating in this study.

In this study, you completed a series of questionnaires designed to measure different implicit attitudes towards sexism, masculinity, and some demographic information.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the levels of sexism, aggression, and other variables commonly associated with perceived threats to masculinity. We thank you for your participation in this study because your responses will help us determine if our measure is useful to other researchers.

Confidentiality is a big part of research. As we mentioned on the consent form, we maintain the confidentiality of our participants, but it is expected that participants maintain the confidentiality of the researchers as well. We will be conducting this research until the end of the semester so we ask that you not discuss this experiment with your friends or others who may participate in this study at a future date. You may unknowingly tell someone else who is scheduled to participate in this study, and this would ruin our findings.

If you were interested by this research and wish to learn more about it and other related research, please contact Kaylie Bechtel (kaylie.bechtel@okstate.edu) or Jarrod Bock (jarrod.bock@okstate.edu). She/he will be happy to discuss this and any related projects with you.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

APPENDIX G

Description of Conditions

Masculinity Threat Condition Those participants randomly assigned to the Masculinity Threat condition will be given a false “Measure of Manliness” measure and receive the following false feedback: “The test you just completed is designed to measure your level of manliness, or how manly you are. The results of your test indicate that your score is ranked as a ‘2’ on a scale ranging from ‘0,’ being *least manly*, and ‘10,’ being *most manly*. This ‘2’ indicates that you have a very low level of masculinity, in comparison to the average.” Once this false feedback is presented on their screen, participants will then complete the series of questionnaires (in Appendix G) designed to measure masculinity, sexism, aggression, and a demographic questionnaire.

Masculinity Boost Condition Those participants randomly assigned to the Masculinity Boost condition will be given a false “Measure of Manliness” measure and receive the following false feedback: “The test you just completed is designed to measure your level of manliness, or how manly you are. The results of your test indicate that your score is ranked as a ‘10’ on a scale ranging from ‘0,’ being least manly, and ‘10,’ being most manly. This ‘10’ indicates that you have a very high level of masculinity, in comparison to the average.” Once this false feedback is presented on their screen, participants will then complete the series of questionnaires (in Appendix G) designed to measure masculinity, sexism, aggression, and a demographic questionnaire.

Neutral Control Condition Those participants randomly assigned to the Neutral Control condition will be given a personality measure that is irrelevant to the purpose of this study and receive the following false feedback: “The test you just completed is designed to measure various personality traits. The results of your test indicate that, compared to the average, you scored above the average in levels of Openness and Conscientiousness. Your scores of Extraversion and Agreeableness are within the average range.” Once this false feedback is presented on their screen, participants will then complete the series of questionnaires (in Appendix G) designed to measure masculinity, sexism, aggression, and a demographic questionnaire.

Glick & Fiske (1996). Ambivalent Sexism Inventory.
Likert style rating ranging from 0 (*disagree strongly*) – 5 (*agree strongly*).

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale:

- 0 = disagree strongly;**
- 1 = disagree somewhat;**
- 2 = disagree slightly;**
- 3 = agree slightly;**
- 4 = agree somewhat;**
- 5 = agree strongly.**

-
- ___ 1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.
 - ___ 2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality."
 - ___ 3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.
 - ___ 4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.
 - ___ 5. Women are too easily offended.
 - ___ 6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.
 - ___ 7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.
 - ___ 8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.
 - ___ 9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.
 - ___ 10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.
 - ___ 11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.
 - ___ 12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.
 - ___ 13. Men are complete without women.
 - ___ 14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.
 - ___ 15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.
 - ___ 16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.
 - ___ 17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.
 - ___ 18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.
 - ___ 19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.
 - ___ 20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.
 - ___ 21. Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.
 - ___ 22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

Buss & Perry (1992). Aggression Questionnaire.

Likert scale rating ranging from 1 (*Extremely uncharacteristic of me*) – 5 (*Extremely characteristic of me*)

Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to your characteristics, using the following scale:

- 1 = Extremely uncharacteristic of me.
- 2 = Somewhat uncharacteristic of me.
- 3 = Only sometimes characteristic of me.
- 4 = Somewhat characteristic of me.
- 5 = Extremely characteristic of me.

-
- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Once in a while I can't control the urge to strike another person. | _____ |
| 2. Given enough provocation, I may hit another person. | _____ |
| 3. If somebody hits me, I hit back. | _____ |
| 4. I get into fights a little more than the average person. | _____ |
| 5. If I have to resort to violence to protect my rights, I will. | _____ |
| 6. There are people who pushed me so far that we came to blows. | _____ |
| 7. I can think of no good reason for ever hitting a person. | _____ |
| 8. I have threatened people I know. | _____ |
| 9. I have become so mad that I have broken things. | _____ |
| | |
| 10. I tell my friends openly when I disagree with them. | _____ |
| 11. I often find myself disagreeing with people. | _____ |
| 12. When people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them. | _____ |
| 13. I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me. | _____ |
| 14. My friends say that I'm somewhat argumentative. | _____ |
| | |
| 15. I flare up quickly but get over it quickly. | _____ |
| 16. When frustrated, I let my irritation show. | _____ |
| 17. I sometimes feel like a powder keg ready to explode. | _____ |
| 18. I am an even-tempered person. | _____ |
| 19. Some of my friends think I'm a hothead. | _____ |
| 20. Sometimes I fly off the handle for no good reason. | _____ |
| 21. I have trouble controlling my temper. | _____ |
| | |
| 22. I am sometimes eaten up with jealousy. | _____ |
| 23. At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life. | _____ |
| 24. Other people always seem to get the breaks. | _____ |
| 25. I wonder why sometimes I feel so bitter about things. | _____ |
| 26. I know that "friends" talk about me behind my back. | _____ |
| 27. I am suspicious of overly friendly strangers. | _____ |
| 28. I sometimes feel that people are laughing at me behind my back. | _____ |
| 29. When people are especially nice, I wonder what they want. | _____ |
-

Burkley, Wong, & Bell (2016). Masculinity Contingency Scale.
Likert scale rating ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) – 7 (*Strongly agree*).

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement, using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree**
- 2 = Disagree**
- 3 = Somewhat disagree**
- 4 = Neither agree nor disagree**
- 5 = Somewhat agree**
- 6 = Agree**
- 7 = Strongly Agree**

-
- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. I can't respect myself if I don't live up to what it means to be a "real man." | _____ |
| 2. My self-respect would be threatened if I didn't consider myself macho. | _____ |
| 3. My self-worth suffers if I think my manhood is lacking. | _____ |
| 4. I can't respect myself if I don't behave like a "real man." | _____ |
| 5. I would feel worthless if I acted like "less than a man." | _____ |
| 6. When I act manly, I feel good about myself. | _____ |
| 7. My self-esteem gets a boost if I feel macho. | _____ |
| 8. I feel good when I am able to show off my masculine side. | _____ |
| 9. When I feel masculine, I feel good about myself. | _____ |
| 10. I feel proud when I able to demonstrate my manliness. | _____ |
-

Watson & Tellegen (1998). Positive and Negative Affect Schedule.
Likert scale rating ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) – 5 (*extremely*).

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and indicate to what extent you generally feel this way, in the space provided next to that word.

- 1 = Very slightly or not at all**
- 2 = A little**
- 3 = Moderately**
- 4 = Quite a bit**
- 5 = Extremely**

-
- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| _____ interested | _____ irritable |
| _____ distressed | _____ alert |
| _____ excited | _____ ashamed |
| _____ upset | _____ inspired |
| _____ strong | _____ nervous |
| _____ guilty | _____ determined |
| _____ scared | _____ attentive |
| _____ hostile | _____ jittery |
| _____ enthusiastic | _____ active |
| _____ proud | _____ afraid |

Morizot (2014). Big Five Personality Trait Short Questionnaire.

Likert scale rating ranging from 0 (*completely disagree*) – 4 (*completely agree*).

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement, using the following scale:

- 0 = Completely disagree**
 - 1 = Disagree a little**
 - 2 = Neither agree nor disagree**
 - 3 = Agree a little**
 - 4 = Completely agree**
-

I see myself as someone who...

- _____ Is original, often has new ideas.
- _____ Is curious about many different things.
- _____ Is ingenious, reflects a lot.
- _____ Has a lot of imagination.
- _____ Is inventive, creative.
- _____ Likes artistic or aesthetic experiences.
- _____ Is not really interested in different cultures, their customs and values.
- _____ Likes to reflect, tries to understand complex things.
- _____ Has few artistic interests.
- _____ Is sophisticated when it comes to art, music or literature.

- _____ Likes to talk, expresses his/her opinion.
- _____ Is reserved or shy, has difficulty approaching others.
- _____ Is full of energy, likes to always be active.
- _____ Is a leader, capable of convincing others.
- _____ Is rather quiet, does not talk a lot.
- _____ Shows self-confidence, is able to assert himself/herself.
- _____ Is timid, shy.
- _____ Is extraverted, sociable.
- _____ Likes exciting activities, which provide thrills.
- _____ Has a tendency to laugh and have fun easily.

- _____ Has a tendency to criticize others.
- _____ Is helpful and generous with others.
- _____ Provokes quarrels or arguments with others.

- _____ Is lenient, forgives easily.
- _____ Generally trusts others.
- _____ Can be distant and cold towards others.
- _____ Is considerate and kind to almost everyone.
- _____ Can sometimes be rude or mean towards others.
- _____ Likes to cooperate with others.
- _____ Can deceive and manipulate people to get what he/she want.
- _____ I see myself as someone who . . .

- _____ Works conscientiously, does the things he/she has to do well.
- _____ Can be a little careless and negligent.
- _____ Is a reliable student/worker, who can be counted on.
- _____ Has a tendency to be disorganized, messy.
- _____ R Has a tendency to be lazy.
- _____ Perseveres until the task at hand is completed.
- _____ Does things efficiently, works well and quickly.
- _____ Plans things that need to be done and follows through the plans.
- _____ Is easily distracted, has difficulty remaining attentive.
- _____ Can do things impulsively without thinking about the consequences.

- _____ Has a tendency to be easily depressed, sad.
- _____ Is generally relaxed, handles stress well.
- _____ Can be tense, stressed out.
- _____ Worries a lot about many things.
- _____ Is emotionally stable, not easily upset.
- _____ Can be moody.
- _____ Stays calm in tense or stressful situations.
- _____ Can easily become nervous.
- _____ Has a tendency to feel inferior to others.
- _____ Has a tendency to be easily irritated.

"Measure of Manliness"

Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you, using the following scale:

- 1 = Never like me.
- 2 = Often not like me.
- 3 = Sometimes like me.
- 4 = Often like me.
- 5 = Always like me.

- I have more muscular definition than most men my age.
- I go on dates, regularly.
- I engage in sexual intercourse or other sexual activities regularly.
- I have a high level of mental toughness.
- I like it when I catch women 'checking me out.'
- I like it when I catch men 'checking me out.'
- When a woman makes sexual advances towards me, I feel very much like a man.
- When a man makes sexual advances towards me, I feel very much like a man.
- I sometimes behave aggressively to get what I want.
- I am more aggressive than most women I know.
- I enjoy manly activities such as football, hunting, video games, or other physical activities more than girly activities such as having my hair done, shopping with friends, or gardening.
- I have a high level of physical toughness.
- When I compete with another man for a woman's attention, I do so by acting more manly than my competitor.
- I have a sensitive side that not many people know about.
- When I am at the gym, I often compare my physique to others around me, to see if I am more muscular than them.
- I want my significant other to think of me as strong.
- I want my significant other to think of me as a provider.
- When I have money to spend, I feel empowered.

Demographics

What is your age (in years)? _____

What racial group best describes you (you may select more than one option)?

White/Caucasian

African American/Black

Latina/Latino/Hispanic

Native American/Alaskan Native

Asian/Pacific Islander

Other _____

Is English your primary language?

Yes

No

Are you single or in a committed relationship?

Single

Are you seeking a relationship partner?

Yes

No

Committed Relationship

How long have you been in this relationship?

0 – 6

7 – 12

1 – 2 yrs

3 – 5 years

5 + years

What is your sexual orientation?

Homosexual

Heterosexual

Bisexual

Other _____

Kaylie M. Bechtel

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: MASCULINITY CONTINGENCY AND SEXISM

Major Field: Psychology

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2018.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Psychology at University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, Missouri in 2015.

Experience:

Bechtel, M.K., & Hwang, H. (2014). Examination of the relationships among grit, self-control, and subjective well-being: A correlational study. *The McNair Journal*, 24, 4-7.

Professional Memberships: