

#VocalWomen: How Does Threatened Masculinity Influence Perceptions of
Women Who Confront Online Misogyny?

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Abstract

Online misogyny is as common as offline misogyny (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2015), and can have detrimental physical and psychological consequences for its targets (Staude-Müller, Hansen, & Voss, 2012, in Poland, 2016). Women who confront online gender harassment are not perceived positively (Becker, Zawadzki, & Shields, 2014; Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dodd, Giuliano, Boutell, & Moran, 2001; Shelton & Stewart, 2004); additionally, research shows that masculinity threat predicts various forms of prejudice (Willer, Conlon, Rogalin, & Wojnowicz 2013; Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner, & Weinberg 2007), and specifically prejudice promoting male superiority (Munsch & Willer, 2012). The present study investigated whether masculinity and masculinity threat influences men's perceptions of women who confront misogyny online. Results show that conformity to masculine norms predicted rating the female confronter negatively. Additionally, post hoc analyses show that the interaction between conformity to masculine norms related to controlling women and masculinity threat predicted rating the female confronter negatively. These findings introduce a unique perspective on the relationship between masculinity threat and perceptions of female confronters that can be further incorporated into research on gender harassment in online contexts.

Keywords: Online Gender Harassment, Masculinity, Masculinity Threat, Twitter

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The Internet is an integral part of our lives. It influences communication, enhances the dissemination of public knowledge, and is a modern mechanism of “identity construction” (Paechter, 2013). Because use of the Internet is a standard of modern life, misogyny is as commonplace in online social activity as it is in the “real world” (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2015). Online gender harassment, however, is often disregarded due to its lack of “real world” tangibility, such that its potential to cause real and serious harm is ignored. Poland (2016, p. 90) writes,

Such an argument is like saying verbal abuse in offline spaces isn’t real abuse because there is no physical damage; such reasoning ignores the important connection between verbal and physical violence and must pretend that words have no power to harm even when deployed in manipulative, damaging, and abusive ways.

She continues to discuss the ways in which online and offline realms are becoming less discernable from one another, and therefore “the effects of both types of abuse are incredibly similar.” (Poland, 2016, p. 90). Broadly, the goal of the current study is to investigate the barriers faced in ending online gender harassment.

Gender Harassment Online

What does online gender harassment look like? Common to social networking is the presence of a “troll,” or a person who enjoys “provoking” an online community simply to observe the ensuing conflict (Donath, 1999). *Gender*trolling is an intentional, targeted rebuke towards women who are vocal in online environments (Mantilla, 2013) and is motivated by beliefs that mirror sexism on the street (Poland, 2016). At its extreme, online gender harassment

can take the form of violent threats. Poland (2016, p. 53) writes that although these threats rarely result in a physical follow-up, “The intent of threats is to establish offline patterns of violence against women in online spaces.” It is crucial to identify this form of digital misogyny as “online sexual harassment,” acknowledging the “particular political purpose of male harassing behavior: the silencing of women who dare to speak in the online public sphere,” (Megarry, 2014, p. 53).

Online gender harassment has the potential to cause very serious harm to women. Poland (2016) categorizes the effects of online gender harassment into three categories: professional, psychological, and personal. A women’s online presence may appear tarnished to potential employers because of online harassment, which is out of her control (Poland, 2016). Also, there are significant psychological consequences for victims of online harassment, “including anxiety, fear, shame, depression, reduced personal and professional goals, significantly higher suicidal ideations and attempts, and more,” (Staudé-Müller, Hansen, & Voss, 2012, in Poland, 2016, p. 107). Importantly, these categories are not mutually exclusive.

Extreme online gender harassment precipitates very negative personal, psychological, and professional suffering for women who lead their careers in the online sphere; this issue is prominently brought to light by “GamerGate.” GamerGate is an online movement disparaging feminists who criticized the misogyny in gaming culture (Todd, 2015). Anita Sarkeesian, a successful blogger and the person most famously affected by GamerGate, faced serious career setbacks such as having to cancel public speaking events due to threats of violence. In sum, online misogyny, especially when in the form of violent threats, unequivocally causes tangible harm.

Confronters of Harassment

Although it may be a logical next step, ignoring the trolls (or the Internet altogether¹) is not an effective method for women to reduce the harassment they are facing or online gender harassment in general. Poland (2016, p. 63) writes that “ignoring these cybersexists frequently backfires on the original target by giving the abuser a perceived excuse to escalate their behavior in hopes of receiving a response.” Women specifically face a double-edged sword when involved with a harasser online because avoiding a harasser may secure safety, although at a potential psychological cost.

Alternatively, women may decide to confront their harasser online. Social rejection and interpersonal costs are widely recognized by researchers as barriers facing those who are confronting prejudice targeted at one’s group (Becker et al., 2014; Kaiser & Miller, 2004). Similarly, Rudman (1998, p. 629) describes women as being in a “Catch-22,” suffering “from a *backlash effect* in which self-promotion may enhance perceptions of their qualifications, but at the cost of social rejection.” Again, the parallels between online and offline sexism reveal the negative effects of online gender harassment at its extreme; Poland (2016) notes both that many women are assaulted for simply rejecting harassment on the street, and a similar fear of abuse is very real for women who face gender harassment online.

Although many women fear physical retribution for confronting sexism, research shows that for women who *do* confront sexism, there are some benefits. Directly confronting harassment is both psychologically beneficial to the confronter and potentially effective in reducing harassment:

[...] behavioral coping such as directly challenging and confronting the perpetrator(s) [of sexism] by communicating one’s displeasure with sexist treatment is one of the most

important tools to address interpersonal gender discrimination because it is externally focused and therefore has the potential to reduce sexism. (Becker, Zawadzki, & Shields, 2014, p. 605)

In addition to research that addresses these barriers “offline,” there is a need for research that directly addresses the barriers faced by women when confronting misogyny online. My research recognized social rejection and interpersonal costs as barriers to confronting misogyny for women. “Social rejection” was conceptualized as the negative perceptions that men have of women who confront misogyny; women who confront misogyny experience more online harassment as a result of being perceived negatively (Mantilla, 2015).

This research focused on mechanisms that exacerbate the negative perception that men have of female confronters, and hypothesized a potential link to a core structure of manhood in our culture: masculinity. By experimentally manipulating the presence of masculinity threat, I examined the ways in which masculinity threat influences the intensity of men’s negative perceptions of women who confront sexism (i.e., female confronters). I predicted that masculinity threat is a moderator of negative perceptions of female confronters, such that when a man’s masculinity is threatened, he will be more likely to perceive a female confronter negatively than if his masculinity were to be affirmed.

Perception of female confronters. My research investigated men’s perceptions of women who confront online gender harassment. Many studies to date describe the ways in which female confronters are perceived negatively (Becker et al., 2014; Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dodd, Giuliano, Boutell, & Moran, 2001; Shelton & Stewart, 2004). The current study manipulated the presence or absence of a threat to male participants’ masculinity in order to determine the extent to which threatened masculinity is a moderator of the intensity of negative

perceptions of female confronters. It is important to note that presumably, if a female confronter is perceived negatively, the effectiveness of her message will be diminished, and as a result, the effectiveness (reducing misogyny) of her confrontation will also be diminished.

Researchers have proposed two main reasons for men's negative perceptions of female confronters of misogyny: (1) Men are angry that female confronters defy gender norms by engaging in confrontational encounters with others (Berdahl, 2007; Mantilla, 2015), and (2) men believe female confronters are self-interested because they are defending their own group (target "ingroup" members) and therefore are "playing the sexist card" (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998). I will first review research findings that report men's negative perceptions of female confronters and potential explanations for why men perceive female confronters in this way. I will then synthesize existing literature on both masculinity and masculinity threat as justification for the current experimental method.

Because women are stereotyped to be submissively "nice" (Rudman & Glick, 2001), it can be understood that women who defy this standard will be perceived as threatening by the greater online community, and therefore will more likely face online harassment (Mantilla, 2015). Although what it means to "defy" this standard is subjective, we can imagine that a woman who is vocal about her opinions in a male-dominated sphere would be perceived as defying gender expectations for women (i.e., to remain complicit, agreeable, and avoid conflict). Women who are vocal in online communities are subject to increased rates of harassment via gendertrolling perpetrated by men. This phenomenon is particularly evident on Twitter due to its male-dominated nature (Citron, 2009; Jane, 2012; Megarry, 2014).

The specific increased rate of harassment experienced by women who are vocal in online communities is also supported by research investigating gender harassment in the workplace,

drawing a parallel between male-dominated professions and Twitter as a male-dominated online space: “[...] women in male-dominated organizations who had relatively masculine personalities were sexually harassed the most,” (Berdahl, 2007, p. 425). Women who are vocal in male-dominated online spaces may face higher rates of harassment as the result of their gender-defying traits.

Research finds that women who confront sexism are also perceived as “overreacting, whiny, oversensitive troublemakers, interpersonally cold, or fearful of retaliation,” (Becker et al., 2014, p. 606). Additionally, women who confront sexism are generally disliked more by men compared to women who do not confront sexism (Dodd et al., 2001) and are perceived as “complainers,” (Shelton & Stewart, 2004). From these findings, we can conclude that a potential reason for men’s negative perceptions of female confronters is due to the inherent defiance of gender norms in the act of confrontation.

Alternatively, women who confront sexism are perceived negatively by men potentially because women are the “target ingroup” of the harassment that they are confronting. In other words, because women are defending harassment faced by their own group (gender harassment), they are seen as “playing the sexism card,” and are perceived to be biased and self-interested. We learn from classic persuasion literature that this phenomenon is generalizable across contexts and identities, such that “any communicator [...] will be more effective and will be seen as more credible when he is arguing for a position opposed to his own best interest, than when arguing for changes obviously in his own best interest,” (Walster, Aronson, & Abrahams, 1966, p. 325).

Focusing on the perspective of the *perceiver* of this communication, research conducted by Eagly and Chaiken (1975) demonstrates that a perceiver will assume truth in a communicator’s words if they are “unexpected.” Similarly, Petty, Fleming, Priester, and

Feinstein (2001, p. 418) find that “a violation of group interest induces surprise [...] and produces enhanced rather than reduced message processing [...]” Conclusively, when a communicator breaks expectations, their message is more effective.

When specifically discussing messages that directly confront prejudice and harassment, similar dynamics remain relevant. Following the logic of classic persuasion research, because targets of discrimination are *expected* to confront perpetrators of harassment (Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998), they may be less effective to the perceiver (Czopp & Monteith, 2003). Research also shows that “target” confronters are also perceived as “unreasonable and overacting,” and less guilt about the prejudice/harassment was evoked in the perceiver when faced with a “target” confronter compared to a “nontarget” confronter (Czopp & Monteith, 2003).

Masculinity

My analysis of *why* men perceive female confronters of prejudice negatively relies on a broader discussion of gender and specifically of masculinity as the quality of being a man. Placing the current study in context, I will briefly discuss masculinity in order to emphasize the significance of masculinity threat and its relation to gender harassment.

The interesting facet of masculinity is its pervasiveness. Hearn (2012, p. 590) writes in the context of masculinity that “Hegemony and the hegemonic are fundamentally political-economic-cultural in addressing processes of construction of commonsense realities.” In other words, hegemonic masculinity is the presiding cultural script of manhood. Masculinity relates to the perpetration of online gender harassment because of the collective nature of online gender harassment, such that gender harassment is a community building activity for men who subscribe to hegemonic masculinity. Research shows that even from a young age, boys are monitoring the

masculinities of their male peers in order to strengthen the bonds of their friendships (Reigeluth & Addis, 2016).

In his book *Guyland*, Kimmel (2008) discusses the qualities of manhood. In what he refers to as “The Guy Code,” he lists qualities of hegemonic masculinity such as “Boys Don’t Cry” and “Take It Like a Man,” among others. By interviewing men, he determined that men learn about what masculinity means from other men in their lives, who act as “gender police.” Importantly, he writes on this topic: “The possibilities of being unmasked are everywhere. Even the most seemingly insignificant misstep can pose a threat or activate that haunting terror that we will be found out [as feminine]” (Kimmel, 2008, p. 48).

Potentially, men perpetrate online gender harassment in order to prove their manhood to other men As Poland (2016, p. 35) writes,

Men don’t seek out women to harass simply because women are natural targets and men are natural aggressors. The motivation for cybersexist activities is deeply linked to believing that’s true, however; cybersexism is used to create, support, and enforce norms of male dominance in online spaces.

In addition to creating the growing number of Men’s Rights Activists groups online, which collectively publish misogynist and anti-feminist rhetoric (Schmitz & Kazyak, 2016), men have threatened outspoken women online to such a degree that women’s safety and careers have been put at serious risk.

Masculinity threat. Relevant and critical to my study is Kimmel’s (2008, p. 48) language of “threat.” Research on masculinity threat is becoming more widespread and diverse; however findings remain consistent: when masculinity threat is experimentally induced, the prevalence of values and behaviors linked to hegemonic masculinity increases (Kosakowska-

Berezecka et al., 2016; Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003; Munsch & Willer 2012; Willer, Conlon, Rogalin, & Wojnowicz, 2013).

When a man's masculinity (or gender identity) is threatened, he "will compensate by expressing hegemonic masculine attitudes that reflect a greater valuation of men and masculinity relative to women and femininity" (Munsch & Willer, 2012, p. 1129). Due to the consistency of these results across many studies, I hypothesized that masculinity threat increases men's negative perception of female confronters of online gender harassment based on the pervasive cultural significance of hegemonic masculinity and the strong body of existing psychological research on masculinity threat; I expected male participants to have negative perceptions of the female confronter across conditions, however I hypothesized that the presence of masculinity threat exacerbates this effect to a significant degree.

Generally, threatened masculinity leads to increased levels of intergroup hostility and harassment, including but not limited to increased gender harassment of women (Maass et al., 2003), increased victim blaming of female victims of sexual assault (Munsch & Willer, 2012), reduced support for gender equality (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016), an increased promotion of homophobia and war (Willer et al., 2013), and an increase of prejudice toward effeminate gay men (Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner, & Weinberg, 2007). Threatened masculinity also increases the prevalence of hegemonic masculine stereotypes in male participants, such as an increased pain tolerance (Berke, Reidy, Miller, & Zeichner, 2016) and increased "interest in purchasing an SUV" (Willer et al., 2013, p.993).

Hunt and Gonsalkorale (2014) have conducted research using masculinity threat to determine willingness of a man to endorse gender harassment (conceptualized in their study as sending sexist jokes to a woman). Their research demonstrates that men whose masculinity was

threatened and who found conformity to masculine norms important were more likely to “accept” feedback from another male participant who criticized their perpetration of gender harassment. Alternatively, the present study used a similar format to determine the extent to which a man’s threatened masculinity influences his negative perceptions of a female confronter.

Twitter and Online Gender Harassment

Online gender harassment is different than offline harassment because of the Internet’s inherent qualities (e.g. the potential for anonymity and 24-7 access to an infinite amount of users). Online gender harassment, having inherited the characteristics of the Internet more broadly, possibly affects women in a more severe way than offline gender harassment (Poland, 2016). Also, studying the consequences of stereotypes in an online context is crucial due to the Internet’s increased involvement in identity development (Paechter, 2013) and communication; as a result, a portion of women’s identity development is occurring in the presence of online gender harassment, which induces many negative psychological (and potentially physical) outcomes.

Because women both experience gender harassment and use the Internet at high rates, I investigated masculinity threat’s influence on perceptions of women who confront misogyny online, *specifically on Twitter*. Activity on Twitter is increasingly political; for example, analyzing self identified “activists,” Potts, Simm, Whittle, and Unger (2014, p. 69) determined Twitter “to be most effective in *Giving people a place to voice their opinions* and *Discovering information on current campaign and issues*” compared to other social networking sites (SNS). Power dynamics, however, make activism on Twitter more achievable for men than women. Research shows that men have more vocal power on Twitter than women (Citron, 2009; Jane,

2012; Megarry, 2014), thus reducing online activist social communities to unwelcome spaces for women.

STUDY 1

My research broadly addressed relationships between masculinity and perceptions of women who confront misogyny. Specifically, Study 1 established the relationship between degree of conformity to masculine norms and negative perceptions of a female confronter of sexism. Male participants rated their perceptions of a woman who confronted sexism in the context of Twitter after they read her confrontation of a sexist tweet. Participants then responded to a series of measures that allowed me to determine the degree to which they conform to masculine norms; I determined if high conformity to masculine norms was a significant predictor of perceiving the female confronter negatively.

Hypotheses

Study 1 aims to reveal a predictive relationship between conformity to masculinity norms and perceptions of a female who confronts sexism. Broadly, I hypothesized that higher conformity to masculine norms predicts more negative perceptions of the female confronter. I operationalized negative perceptions of the female confronter into four distinct dependent variables (organized by four separate sub-hypotheses) so that my findings are more readily applicable in a real-world context. I analyzed the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and each variable of negative perception separately, thus allowing me to investigate a broad concept such as negative perception in a more detailed and relevant way. I will provide scholarly support for each sub-hypothesis.

In the first sub-hypothesis, part (a), I hypothesized that higher conformity to masculine norms predicts negative ratings of the female confronter on a variety of personality traits. I

believed high conformity to masculine norms would be a predictor of holding less than egalitarian views in an online context because preservation of masculinity itself is a key motivator for perpetrating gender harassment online more generally (Poland, 2016). I also based this hypothesis on a foundation of literature that determines the negative perception of women who confront sexism (Becker et al., 2014; Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dodd et al., 2001; Shelton & Stewart, 2004).

In the second sub-hypothesis, part (b), I hypothesized that higher conformity to masculine norms predicts disliking the female confronter; previous research shows that women who confront sexism are disliked more than women who do not confront sexism (Dodd et al., 2001).

In the third sub-hypothesis, part (c), I hypothesized that higher conformity to masculine norms predicts disagreeing with the female confronter. Because women are ingroup members of the discrimination target group, it is assumed that they will confront the prejudice; therefore, the perceiver will more likely find less truth in the female confronter's words (Eagly & Chaiken, 1975; Petty et al., 2001).

In the fourth and final sub-hypothesis, part (d), I hypothesized that higher conformity to masculine norms predicts finding the encounter (between the male harasser and the female confronter) to be useless. Parts (c) and (d) aim to investigate the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and tolerance of online gender harassment broadly by asking participants about the general encounter, rather than asking participants about perceptions of the female confronter herself.

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 268$) consisted of European American, heterosexual men ages 18-25 years old ($M = 21.94$), and were recruited and compensated through Qualtrics Survey Software.² The study took place remotely, online, and using the participants' computer. All participant information and data are anonymous.

Procedures

Participants were told that our research is investigating “the appeal of Twitter content and personal attitudes.” After consenting to participate (Appendix E), participants responded to a variety of demographic measures (e.g. age, race, gender, sexual orientation, political ideology, education, etc.). To enhance the believability of our cover story, participants were prompted to respond to many questions about Twitter usage, attitudes, and behaviors that will not be used in analyses.

All participants then viewed the Twitter profile of a female journalist, held constant across conditions, that was rated as believable and realistic in a pilot study. Participants were asked to analyze the content of her profile along many measures, and were asked to review and assess many harassing tweets that have been made in response to her. This Twitter profile was mixed in with other fake Twitter profiles that were unrelated to the female journalist (such as a Twitter user who tweets about food or travel), so as to not reveal our research question.

To specifically analyze the interactions between conformity to masculinity norms and negative perceptions of female confronters, the current research asked participants to focus on a specific encounter between a harassing male and a female confronter (Appendix C). Participants were shown a tweet, which included gender harassment, that the harassing male presumably

wrote to the female journalist. Participants were also shown a tweet from a female confronter, responding to the harassing male by addressing his misogyny.

Importantly, participants responded to a variety of measures that addressed their perceptions of the female confronter: they rated their impressions of the female confronter across dimensions that included an adapted list of negative feminist stereotypes, stereotypes of confronters of prejudice, and stereotypes of women (hypothesis part a; Appendix D). Additionally, participants were asked if they “like” the female confronter (hypothesis part b) and if they “agree with” the female confronter (hypothesis part c). Next, they were asked to indicate if they find encounters “like these” (i.e. encounters in which a female is confronting online gender harassment) useful on Twitter (hypothesis part d).

Participants then responded to an abbreviated (11 item) version of the Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI, Mahalik et al., 2003) along with a variety of questions related to Internet use and communication on Twitter. I used responses to the CMNI in order to assess participants’ degree of conformity to masculine norms in relation to their perceptions of the female confronter.

Measures

Conformity to masculine norms. My research implements the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory, a validated and widely used scale, to measure participants’ conformity to hegemonic masculinity; in order to more accurately represent the multidimensional nature of masculinity, this scale is divided into 11 sub-scales that each embody a different aspect of masculinity: Winning, Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Violence, Power Over Women, Dominance, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Primacy of Work, Disdain for Homosexuals, and Pursuit of

Status (CMNI, Mahalik et al., 2003). (The 11 items analyzed in the abbreviated CMNI scale (Appendix A) had good reliability ($\alpha=.783$).

Traits of the female confronter. Part (a) of my hypothesis required the collection of personality traits on which participants would rate the female confronter. Traits (Appendix D) were adapted from previously determined stereotypes of women, feminists, and confronters of prejudice. Participants' ratings of the female confronter along these six traits were averaged and consequentially conceptualized as a general rating of her personality. Three traits were stereotypes of feminists (Roy, Weibust, & Miller, 2007): (1) Not Overbearing / Overbearing, (2) Stupid / Intelligent, and (3) Insecure / Confident. Two traits were stereotypes of women who confront prejudice (Becker et al. 2014; Shelton & Stewart, 2004; respectively): (4) Reasonable / Over-Sensitive and (5) Not Complaining / Complaining. Additionally, I included (6) Not Biased / Biased, supported by research showing that when targets confront discrimination themselves (as would be the case when a woman confronts sexism), they are perceived as less effective (Czopp & Monteith, 2003).

Results and Discussion

To investigate the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and perceptions of the female confronter, I conducted a series of simple linear regressions, using scores on the CMNI as the dependent variable and each of the four parts of my hypothesis as test variables.

To gain a better understanding of how participants rated the female confronter more generally, see the report of the mean responses for each test variable in Table 1. Personality ratings of the female confronter were measured on a scale of 1 (negative traits) to 6 (positive traits), liking the female confronter was measured on a scale of 1 (disliking) to 4 (liking),

agreeing with the female confronter was measured on a scale of 1 (disagreeing) to 4 (agreeing), and finally, finding the encounter useful was measured on a scale of 1 (useless) to 4 (useful).

Using a simple regression, part (a) of my hypothesis was supported (Table 2), meaning that higher conformity to masculine norms significantly predicted negative ratings of the female confronter. Interestingly, contrary to expected results, significant findings emerged from simple regressions regarding the test variables for parts (b) and (d) of my hypothesis that supported relationships *opposite* to the hypothesized relationships; higher scores on the CMNI significantly predicted the participant both liking the female confronter and finding the encounter involving the female confronter useful (Table 2). Findings did not support part (c) of my hypothesis; higher scores on the CMNI did not significantly predict that the participant will agree with the female confronter.

STUDY 2

Study 2 of my research had two components. First, I aimed to replicate my findings from Study 1; Study 2 also assessed the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and negative perceptions of a female confronter of sexism. Second, Study 2 additionally introduced a manipulation of masculinity threat. Participants' perceptions of the female confronter were analyzed after participants' masculinities have either been threatened or affirmed; this allowed me to investigate the specific effect of *threatened* masculinity on perceptions of the female confronter. Additionally, my analyses explore an interaction between threatened masculinity and conformity to masculine norms.

Hypotheses

The first component of Study 2, embodied by Hypothesis 1, aimed to replicate findings from the four sub-hypotheses of the previous study. I hypothesized that greater conformity to

masculine norms would predict (Hypothesis 1a) negative ratings of the female confronter on a variety of personality traits, (Hypothesis 1b) disliking the female confronter, (Hypothesis 1c) disagreeing with the female confronter, and (Hypothesis 1d) finding the encounter (between the male harasser and the female confronter) to be useless.

The second component of Study 2 is addressed by Hypothesis 2, introducing the masculinity threat component. Previous findings show masculinity threat to be a predictor of various forms of prejudice (Willer et al. 2013; Glick et al., 2007). Furthermore, research has shown masculinity threat to be a predictor of holding specifically gendered prejudicial attitudes and behaviors, such as an increased propensity to blame female sexual assault victims (Munsch & Willer, 2012), a reduced support for gender egalitarian ideals (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016), and an increased likelihood of harassing women (Maass et al., 2003). I hypothesized that having one's masculinity threatened (rather than affirmed) would predict (Hypothesis 2a) negative ratings of the female confronter on a variety of personality traits, (Hypothesis 2b) disliking the female confronter, (Hypothesis 2c) disagreeing with the female confronter, and (Hypothesis 2d) finding the encounter (between the male harasser and the female confronter) to be useless.

Hypothesis 3 addressed the possibility that masculinity threat and conformity to masculine norms influence participants' perceptions of the female confronter when considered simultaneously. Threatened masculinity increases conformity to hegemonic masculinity norms (Berke et al., 2016; Willer et al., 2013), thus I hypothesized that after controlling for the effect of conformity to masculine norms, the masculinity threat condition would predict (Hypothesis 3a) negative ratings of the female confronter on a variety of personality traits, (Hypothesis 3b) disliking the female confronter, (Hypothesis 3c) disagreeing with the female confronter, and

(Hypothesis 3d) finding the encounter (between the male harasser and the female confronter) to be useless.

Method

Participants

Male participants ($N = 113$) were recruited for and compensated for this study using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. The data received from 9 participants were deleted (4 participants provided responses which were either automated or clearly fake; 5 participants guessed the exact hypothesis of the study or did not believe the deception).

Of the remaining participants ($N = 104$), 83 (79.81%) were White, 96 (92.31%) were heterosexual. Participants were ages 21-68 years old ($M = 32.18$, $SD = 8.16$). The study, utilizing Qualtrics Survey Software, took place remotely, online, and using the participants' computer. All participant information and data is anonymous.

Procedures

Participants were informed that they would participate in a study about social attitudes and personal interactions on Twitter. After giving informed consent (Appendix E), participants responded to the Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI, Mahalik et al., 2003) (Appendix A), having been told that they were taking a "personality test that gives scores along a variety of different personality dimensions" to help us develop a dating website. Similarly to Study 1, I used responses to the CMNI to assess the degree to which participants conform to hegemonic masculine norms.

After participants completed this set of questions, they were given a false personality assessment (Appendix B), seemingly in comparison to other men who have taken the same survey. Participants received false feedback regarding their masculinity, in addition to receiving

feedback on other personality traits. Although feedback for the other personality traits was held constant across conditions, feedback regarding participants' level of masculinity was manipulated: participants were randomly assigned to either the threat condition (their masculinity was threatened) or the no-threat condition (their masculinity was affirmed).³

Participants were then instructed to view the same Twitter profile of a female journalist (held constant across masculinity threat conditions) that was used in Study 1. Similar to Study 1, this Twitter profile was included with other fake Twitter data as to not reveal our research interests. Participants then responded to her profile on measures similar to those used in Study 1.

The same encounter between a harassing male and a female confronter that was used in Study 1 was used again in Study 2 (Appendix C); however, because I experimentally manipulated the presence of masculinity threat, the use of this encounter not only allowed me to analyze the relationship between conformity to masculine *norms* and perceptions of a female confronter, but also the relationship between masculinity *threat* and perceptions of a female confronter. Participants rated the female confronter along the same personality measures used in Study 1 (Appendix D); additionally, participants were asked if they “like” the female confronter, if they “agree with” the female confronter, and if they find encounters “like these” (i.e. encounters in which a female is confronting online gender harassment) “useful” on Twitter.

Upon completion of the study, participants were debriefed and clearly made aware of the false nature of their personality feedback and all other deceptions that were incorporated into our research (Appendix F).

Measures

I used the Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI, Mahalik et al., 2003) (Appendix A) to assess participants' degree of conformity to masculine norms (46 items, α

=.911). Additionally, the personality traits used to measure participants' perceptions of the female confronter were the same as those used in Study 1 (Appendix D); a detailed explanation of the items used can be found in the method section of Study 1.

Results and Discussion

I conducted simple linear regressions to determine the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and perceptions of the female confronter across the four test variables (Hypothesis 1). Then, I conducted a series of simple linear regressions in order to determine the relationship between threatened masculinity and perceptions of the female confronter across the four test variables (Hypothesis 2). Finally, I conducted a series of hierarchical linear regressions (first step, conformity to masculine norms; second step, masculinity threat condition) in order to determine the effect of threatened masculinity on perceptions of the female confronter (across the four test variables) once controlling for conformity to masculinity norms (Hypothesis 3).

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of how participants rated the female confronter across both conditions, I reported in Table 1 the mean scores for each test variable analyzed in Study 2, adjacent to the means from Study 1 data.

Hypothesis 1 (a-d) aimed to replicate the findings of Study 1. Using a simple regression, I found support for Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c (Table 3). Study 2, replicating results from Study 1, shows that higher scores on the CMNI (46 items) used predict more negative personality ratings of the female confronter. Uniquely, Study 2 shows that higher scores on the CMNI predict both disliking the female confronter and disagreeing with the female confronter. Although these are the results I hypothesized, they are different from Study 1 findings. I also found that higher ratings of CMNI do not significantly predict finding the encounter useless (Hypothesis 1d).

Hypothesis 2 (a-d) aimed to specifically investigate the relationship between masculinity threat and perceptions of the female confronter. Again, implementations of simple regressions did not support Hypotheses 2b, 2c, and 2d, demonstrating masculinity threat's inability to predict disliking and disagreeing with confronter and finding the encounter useless.

Interestingly, however, Hypothesis 2a (investigating masculinity threat's ability to predict negative ratings of the female confronter) produced marginally significant results that reveal the relationship *opposite* to the hypothesized relationship (Table 4). In other words, at a significance level of $p = .06$, masculinity threat predicted *positive* ratings of the female confronter.

These findings were unexpected. I hypothesized that threatened masculinity would predict *negative* personality ratings of the female confronter. Although it may be possible that this is the result of a faulty experimental manipulation, it may also be the case that this threat manipulation is not influential for all male participants. Hypothesis 3 addressed the possibility that the masculinity threat manipulation influences men with high conformity to masculine norms more than those with low conformity to masculine norms; this hypothesis was not supported, but similar additional analyses revealed a more expected relationship between masculinity threat, conformity to masculine norms, and perceptions of a female confronter of sexism.

Hypothesis 3 (a-d) investigated the relationship between scores on the CMNI and masculinity threat in regards to perceptions of the female confronter, which I analyzed using a series of two-step regression analyses. I hypothesized that increased conformity to masculine norms (higher scores on CMNI) would moderate the overall effect of the masculinity threat condition such that men who scored higher on the CMNI and who have had their masculinity

threatened would perceive the female confronter more negatively than men who scored lower on the CMNI and had their masculinity threatened.

I did not find support for Hypothesis 3 on any test variable (Hypothesis 3a, negative ratings of female confronter; Hypothesis 3b, disliking the female confronter; Hypothesis 3c, disagreeing with the female confronter; Hypothesis 3d, finding the encounter involving the female confronter useless). These findings would indicate that high scores on the CMNI are stronger predictors of negatively perceiving the female confronter compared to the masculinity threat condition.

Post Hoc Analyses

Although my findings clearly demonstrate across two studies that higher conformity to masculine norms (as defined and measured by the full CMNI) predict negative personality ratings of the female confronter, my analysis of Hypothesis 3a showed no significant predictive effect (on the same variable) when conformity to masculine norms and threatened masculinity are considered together. I decided to consider additional analyses outside of my hypotheses to further investigate a possible interaction between conformity to masculine norms and threatened masculinity.

As previously discussed, the CMNI used, which contains 46 items, can be sub-categorized into scales addressing 11 core components of masculinity: Winning, Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Violence, Power Over Women, Dominance, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Primacy of Work, Disdain for Homosexuals, and Pursuit of Status (Mahalik et al., 2003). The specific interaction between CMNI and masculinity threat in the context of silencing a female confronter of misogyny is most relevant to the subscale Power Over Women, which includes the

4 items: *In general, I control the women in my life; Women should be subservient to men; Things tend to be better when men are in charge; I love it when men are in charge of women* ($\alpha=.887$).⁴

Conformity to hegemonic masculinity increases when masculinity is threatened (Berke et al., 2016; Willer et al., 2013); additionally, threatened masculinity increases a man's propensity to "compensate by expressing hegemonic masculine attitudes that reflect a greater valuation of men and masculinity relative to women and femininity," (Munsch & Willer, 2012, p. 1129). Thus, my decision to choose the sub-scale "Power Over Women" to represent the core component of masculinity which is most influenced by threatened masculinity is supported in the context of the present study.

Additional regression and interaction analyses were run in order to investigate the possibility that high scores on the Power Over Women subscale interact with the threat condition to predict negative ratings of the female confronter. Centered variables were used in all analyses. By running a regression with the Power Over Women subscale, the threat condition, and the interaction term (Power Over Women score X Masculinity Threat condition), results show that in regards to rating the female confronter across a variety of personality traits, participants who scored higher on the Power Over Women subscale were affected more by the masculinity threat condition than men who scored lower on the Power Over Women subscale ($p = .05$; Table 5).⁵

This means that among participants who had their masculinity threatened, those who conform more to masculine norms of controlling women rate the female confronter more negatively than men who conform less to these norms (Figure 1).

General Discussion

Because online gender harassment is a common and pervasive way in which men demonstrate their desire for dominating women, research investigating the perceptions of those

who try to stop this harassment is both important and necessary in the fight for ending online gender harassment. Also, research that provides empirical evidence for the negative treatment faced by female confronters is not only affirming, but also can encourage women to confront sexism itself.

The goal of my research was to investigate the barriers women face when confronting sexism in online contexts. One of these barriers is the (justified) fear of retaliation perpetrated by men. Situated within a strong body of literature establishing connections between masculinity, masculinity threat, and perceptions of those who confront prejudice, my research questions have provided results that are expected, unexpected, and valuable regardless.

My analyses have revealed two main findings. First, both Study 1 and Study 2 find that high conformity to masculine norms is a predictor of rating the female confronter negatively (Appendix D). This means that men with high conformity to hegemonic masculinity norms rate the female confronter more negatively than men who conform less to hegemonic masculinity norms do.

There is a clear predictive relationship between conforming to masculine norms and negatively perceiving a woman who confronts misogyny. To push this one step further, future research should directly assess the existence of a predictive relationship between conforming to masculine norms and both tolerating harassment towards a female confronter and perpetrating harassment toward a female confronter.

My second main finding is that threatened masculinity predicts negative ratings of the female confronter when moderated by the Power Over Women subscale of the CMNI. Interestingly, the same predictive relationship was not found when analyses were run using the entire 46 item CMNI (Study 2, Hypothesis 3a). This disparity illuminates the complex nature of

hegemonic masculinity. Future research should more closely consider specific aspects of masculinity (rather than masculinity as broadly defined) in experimental manipulations. Additionally, future research must take an intersectional approach to studying masculinity and men's identity. The participants in my research have mostly been White, heterosexual, college aged/educated men; also, the fabricated Twitter personalities that were presented to participants are presumably White as well. I believe that diversifying participants and expanding the identities of those depicted in my materials will allow us to better understand masculinity as it relates to people of all identities.

Limitations

With regards to my findings involving the CMNI and negative perceptions of the female confronter, only the hypotheses assessing negative ratings on personality trait measures were replicated. In other words, analyses of the predictive relationship between strong conformity to masculine norms and (a) disliking the female confronter, (b) disagreeing with the female confronter, and (c) finding the encounter involving the female confronter useless were varied across studies, such that more significance was found in Study 2 analyses than in Study 1 analyses. These inconsistencies call into question the external validity of my replicated findings and call for intensive and careful further research.

A possible reason for this discrepancy, however, is the fact that different CMNI measures were used in Study 1 and Study 2. The CMNI measure used in Study 2 was longer and consequentially more comprehensive than the CMNI used in Study 1, and potentially was able to address the multi-dimensional nature of masculinity in a way that better facilitated my analyses in Study 2 compared to Study 1 (refer to Appendix D; most of the 11 items in the Study 1 CMNI are included in the 46 item Study 2 CMNI). Also, when interpreting the generalizability of these

findings, note the difference in procedure between Study 1 and Study 2. In Study 1, participants rate the female confronter and then respond to the CMNI. In Study 2, participants respond to the CMNI, are presented with either a threat to or an affirmation of their masculinity, and *then* rate the female confronter.

Another interesting and unexpected finding concerns Study 2 Hypothesis 3a. I hypothesized that the masculinity threat condition would be a significant predictor of negative ratings of the female confronter; this hypothesis was not supported. Interestingly, however, a marginally significant finding emerged in the *opposite* direction. That is, masculinity threat was marginally ($p = .06$) a predictor of rating the female confronter *positively* on a variety of character traits (stereotypes of women, feminists, and confronters of prejudice; Appendix D). This calls into question two aspects of my research project.

First, the efficiency of the threat manipulation used should be investigated. In other words, because previous research has proved masculinity threat to be a significant predictor of perpetrating sexism (Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014; Maass et al., 2003), it is therefore possible that my unexpected results were due to the inability of the *specific* threat manipulation used (i.e., false personality feedback) to successfully threaten participants' masculinity (although not to discount the credibility of previous research utilizing this method; see Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001).

Second, future research should determine the method through which the threat manipulation was presented (i.e., online as opposed to an in lab presentation). Although the manipulation, false feedback on a personality test, was pilot tested as believable, it may be more powerful if presented to participants in a laboratory setting.

It is important to note, however, that when an interaction involving the CMNI subscale Power Over Women is introduced into our analyses, the influence of threat returns to the hypothesized direction (rating the female confronter more negatively). My data demonstrate that the effect of scores on the CMNI is a much stronger predictor of negatively evaluating the female confronter than masculinity threat is, however future research may be fruitful in investigating the influences of masculinity threat if the methods are more fine-tuned.

As depicted in the fabricated personality tests provided in Appendix B, both participants in the masculinity threat condition and the affirmed masculinity condition were provided results on three personality traits: the scores for two of these traits were held constant across conditions, while the score on masculinity was manipulated. No *control* threatened identity was included in these results (for example, a low score on intelligence). Without such a condition, we cannot confirm that having one's masculinity threatened causes effects unique from those caused by having *any* aspect of one's identity threatened. Similarly, future research should isolate men's negative perceptions of female confronters of sexism from men's negative perceptions of women who defy gender roles more broadly, possibly achieved by utilizing an additional condition in which a woman is confronting a Twitter user who is *not* perpetrating gender harassment.

Additionally, no expected findings came from analyses of the variable "useful," which asked participants if they found the encounter between the female confronter and the harasser useful. Finding encounters "like these" useful on Twitter was intended to signify intolerance of gender harassment. It is also possible, however, that men who do not support gender harassment may find encounters "like these" *useless* on Twitter due to a belief that nothing productive will come from such an encounter. Alternatively, men who endorse online gender harassment may

have found the encounter useful, having appreciated the harasser's sentiment. Unfortunately, this measure is too ambiguous to use in the making of a major claim about my findings.

More generally, I recognize that a major limitation of my research is a small sample size for both Study 1 and Study 2. Additionally, the sample in Study 2 was more diverse in terms of age and race than the sample in Study 1, which may partially account for the different findings for identical hypotheses between the two studies.

Conclusion

Research to date has demonstrated the various psychological benefits to confronting prejudice (Becker et al., 2014); however, we also know that those who confront prejudice are faced with both physical and psychological consequences that may deter future confrontation and cause harm (Becker et al., 2014; Kaiser & Miller, 2004; Mantilla, 2015; Poland, 2016). My research aimed to investigate men's perceptions of women who confront misogyny in order to specifically understand why men perceive women who confront misogyny negatively.

I found that men with high conformity to hegemonic masculine gender norms more negatively rate a female confronter (across a variety of personality traits) than men who do not conform highly to masculine norms. Additionally, I found that among men who conform highly to masculine norms that specifically address dominance over women are more likely to rate the female confronter negatively (across a variety of personality traits) when their masculinity is threatened rather than when it is affirmed.

Norms of hegemonic masculinity are closely monitored and carefully maintained by men; thus, the more these norms are relevant and important to a man, the more likely masculinity threat is to negatively influence his perceptions of gender non-conforming others, such as female confronters of sexism (who presumably question the hegemonic gender norms that he values and

subscribes to). Female confronters, by circumventing gender expectations, play a unique role in the fight to ending gender harassment. My research adds to a line of scholarship focused on the role that threatened masculinity (and masculinity more broadly) plays in the process of ending gender harassment. Future research on those who confront prejudice should incorporate theories of masculinity, and such research should be prioritized.

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Endnotes

1. Although at times it may seem desirable for women to simply stop using the Internet, avoiding the Internet can be socially and professionally detrimental (Citron, 2009). Avoiding the Internet does not guarantee circumventing online harassment. Although a woman might terminate her personal online profiles, continued and targeted harassment in other online spaces can have personal and professionally detrimental effects (Poland, 2016).

Importantly, suggesting that women should avoid the Internet in order to avoid harassment directly replicates language used to victim blame survivors of sexual assault, and generally victims of any crime. In the context of online gender harassment, Poland (2016, p. 84) writes, “Abusers are never [...] held responsible for their own abusive behavior; all of the responsibility falls to women who are being targeted.” Not only must harassers be held accountable for their abuse, but research has also shown us that avoiding the Internet is not the solution to ending online gender harassment (Megarry, 2014). We must redirect our efforts away from restricting women and toward ending online gender harassment.

2. Funding for Study 1, incorporated in a dissertation in the Psychology Department at University of Michigan, came from Rackham awards received by the dissertation’s author.

3. Participants additionally responded to items measuring reactions to their results (e.g., *“I feel that my results accurately reflect me as a person,”* 1= Strongly agree, 6= Strongly disagree), and their consequential experience of gender-discrepancy distress (e.g., *“Imagine that we publish your personality scores on social media. When you think about your name and scores being published on social media, how unconcerned/anxious do you feel?”*). These responses were not included in analyses.

4. The CMNI-46 has been validated and used widely. Importantly, the Power Over Women subscale is a reliable scale when considered independently. In an in-depth review and analysis of CMNI-46's (and its subscales') internal validity, Parent and Moradi (2011, p. 349) noted that within CMNI-46, the Power Over Women subscale "scores yielded the largest correlation with their intended validity indicator, but also had medium to large correlations with every validity indicator in the study."

5. The same analysis (i.e., a regression with the Power Over Women subscale, the threat condition, and the interaction term *Power Over Women score X Masculinity Threat condition*) was run for all other test variables (disliking the female confronter, disagreeing with the female confronter, and finding the encounter useless). No significant predictive relationships were found.

Also, in the spirit of curiosity, analyses for all hypotheses in both Study 1 and Study 2 that incorporated scores on the CMNI were run again replacing these scores with the Power Over Women sub-scale scores. Findings were either not unique, not significant, or significant to a lesser degree than the results reported.

Appendix A
Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI, Mahalik et al., 2003)

- (*) Items (9) included in the condensed scale used in Study 1. Additionally, two additional items were included in the Study 1 scale (*I must get my way; It feels good to be important*).
- (†) Items (4) used in Power Over Women Subscale.
- All items (1 through 46) were used in Study 2.
- (^R) denotes items that were reverse coded.

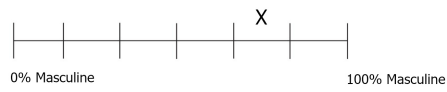
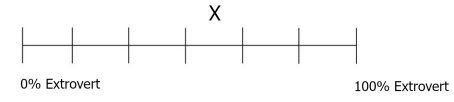
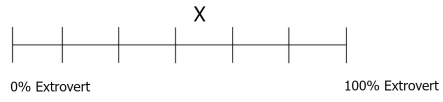
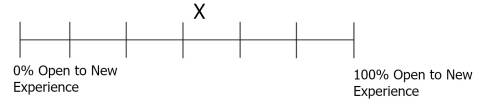
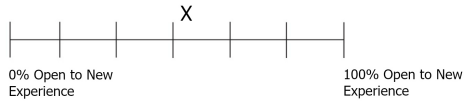
1=disagree strongly, 2 =disagree somewhat, 3 = disagree slightly, 4 =agree slightly,
 5 =agree somewhat, 6 =agree strongly

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. In general, I will do anything to win. *</p> <p>2. If I could, I would frequently change sexual partners. *</p> <p>3. I hate asking for help. *</p> <p>4. I believe that violence is never justified.^R</p> <p>5. Being thought of as gay is not a bad thing.^R</p> <p>6. In general, I do not like risky situations.^R</p> <p>7. Winning is not my first priority.^R</p> <p>8. I enjoy taking risks.</p> <p>9. I am disgusted by any kind of violence.^R</p> <p>10. I ask for help when I need it.^R</p> <p>11. My work is the most important part of my life. *</p> <p>12. I would only have sex if I was in a committed relationship.^R</p> <p>13. I bring up my feelings when talking to others.^R</p> <p>14. I would be furious if someone thought I was gay. *</p> <p>15. I don't mind losing.^R</p> <p>16. I take risks.</p> <p>17. It would not bother me at all if someone thought I was gay.^R</p> <p>18. I never share my feelings.</p> <p>19. Sometimes violent action is necessary.*</p> <p>20. In general, I control the women in my life. * †</p> <p>21. I would feel good if I had many sexual partners.</p> <p>22. It is important for me to win.</p> <p>23. I don't like giving all my attention to work.^R</p> | <p>24. It would be awful if people thought I was gay.</p> <p>25. I like to talk about my feelings.^R</p> <p>26. I never ask for help.</p> <p>27. More often than not, losing does not bother me.^R</p> <p>28. I frequently put myself in risky situations. *</p> <p>29. Women should be subservient to men. †</p> <p>30. I am willing to get into a physical fight if necessary.</p> <p>31. I feel good when work is my first priority.</p> <p>32. I tend to keep my feelings to myself. *</p> <p>33. Winning is not important to me.^R</p> <p>34. Violence is almost never justified.^R</p> <p>35. I am happiest when I'm risking danger.</p> <p>36. It would be enjoyable to date more than one person at a time.</p> <p>37. I would feel uncomfortable if someone thought I was gay.</p> <p>38. I am not ashamed to ask for help.^R</p> <p>39. Work comes first.</p> <p>40. I tend to share my feelings.^R</p> <p>41. No matter what the situation I would never act violently.^R</p> <p>42. Things tend to be better when men are in charge. †</p> <p>43. It bothers me when I have to ask for help.</p> <p>44. I love it when men are in charge of women. †</p> <p>45. I hate it when people ask me to talk about my feelings.</p> <p>46. I try to avoid being perceived as gay</p> |
|---|--|

Appendix B
False personality feedback

Affirmation of Masculinity

Masculinity Threat



Appendix C

Twitter encounter between male harasser and female confronter

The image is a screenshot of a Twitter thread. At the top, a tweet by Carl Wright (@CarlWright) is displayed. The tweet text reads: "Amazing that @eringriffith has such a lucrative career in whining. Thought women were paid less and oppressed. Yet they pay this fraud." Below the text, the tweet has 78 retweets and 125 likes. A row of ten small profile pictures of users who interacted with the tweet is shown. The tweet is timestamped "1:31 PM - 26 Sep 2016". Below the tweet, there is a reply box with a blue egg icon and the text "Reply to @CarlWright". Below the reply box, a reply from Amanda Disher (@AmandaDisher) is shown, dated "Sep 26". Her reply text reads: "Not funny, @CarlWright... it is possible for women to have an opinion and not whine." This reply has 11 retweets and 56 likes.

Carl Wright @CarlWright

Amazing that @eringriffith has such a lucrative career in whining. Thought women were paid less and oppressed. Yet they pay this fraud.

RETWEETS 78 LIKES 125

1:31 PM - 26 Sep 2016

Reply to @CarlWright

Amanda Disher @AmandaDisher · Sep 26

Not funny, @CarlWright... it is possible for women to have an opinion and not whine.

Appendix D
Personality dimensions -- (6-point scale)

Stereotypes of women, confronters of prejudice, and feminists.

(^R) denotes items that were reverse coded

Not overbearing / Overbearing^R

Stupid / Intelligent

Reasonable / Over-Sensitive^R

Not Complaining / Complaining^R

Insecure / Confident

Not Biased / Biased^R

Appendix E
Informed consent

The University of Michigan Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board had reviewed this study and has determined that it is exempt from IRB oversight. This study involves very minimal risk to you as a participant. If at any time during this survey you are uncomfortable or do not wish to answer a question, you are under no obligation to provide a response and may exit the survey by closing your web browser or navigating away from this page. Your participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept anonymous. After the study is completed, your information will be stored in a secure location at the University of Michigan and analyzed for research purposes. If you have any questions about this research, you may contact the researchers at michiganpsychologyresearch@umich.edu.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer a questionnaire and provide background information about yourself. This survey will take most people approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your time!

Appendix F
Participant debriefing

Explanation of Study

Earlier in our consent form, we informed you that the purpose of the study was to assess a scale that we are developing to assess personality and to develop a dating website. In actuality, our study is about assessing the relationship between threats to gender identity and perceptions of women in social media. We hypothesize that men will report greater negative evaluations of the female social media user as an attempt to affirm their masculinity following threats that question their manhood.

At the beginning of the study, you were informed about your scores on a personality inventory. In actuality, you were randomly assigned to receive one of two types of feedback ostensibly comparing scores on gender identity inventory with those of other men who had completed the same questionnaire.

You received false feedback that was meant to either affirm your masculinity or threaten your masculinity through the print copy of scores that displayed results on the personality test. False feedback on your scores allowed us to see whether gender identity threat impacts increased endorsement of ideologies that benefit men both politically and socially.

In order to properly test our hypothesis, we could not provide you with all of these details prior to your participation. This ensures that your reactions in this study were spontaneous and not influenced by prior knowledge about the purpose of the study. Importantly, the feedback that you received regarding your scores on the gender identity inventory do not reflect your actual scores. If we had told you the actual purposes of our study, your ability to threaten gender identity could have been affected. We regret the deception but we hope you understand the reason for it.

Tables

Table 1

*Perceptions of the Female Confronter
Descriptives*

Perception of Confronter	<u>Study 1</u>		<u>Study 2</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Positive Traits	3.52	1.14	3.74	1.35
Like	2.60	.857	2.58	.784
Agree	2.73	.864	2.88	.784
Useful	1.95	.914	2.20	1.361

Note: M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. Personality ratings of the female confronter were measured on a scale of 1 (negative traits) to 6 (positive traits), liking the female confronter was measured on a scale of 1 (disliking) to 4 (liking), agreeing with the female confronter was measured on a scale of 1 (disagreeing) to 4 (agreeing), and finally, finding the encounter useful was measured on a scale of 1 (useless) to 4 (useful).

Table 2

*Conformity to Masculine Norms and Perceptions of the Female Confronter; Study 1
Regression Table*

Perception of Confronter	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Positive Traits	-.197*	.087	-.138
Like	.146	.065	.136
Useful	.271**	.068	.236

*Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

Table 3

*Conformity to Masculine Norms and Perceptions of the Female Confronter; Study 2
Regression Table*

Perception of Confronter	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Positive Traits	-1.264*	.183	-.564
Like	-.522*	.118	-.402
Agree	-.483*	.119	-.372

*Note: * $p < .01$*

Table 4

*Threatened Masculinity and Perceptions of Female Confronter
Regression Table*

Perception of Confronter	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Positive Traits	.498	.262	.185

Note: p = .06

Table 5

*Power Over Women X Masculinity Threat and Perceptions of the Female Confronter
Regression Table*

Perception of Confronter	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Positive Traits	-.431	.271	-.222

Note: p = .05

Figures

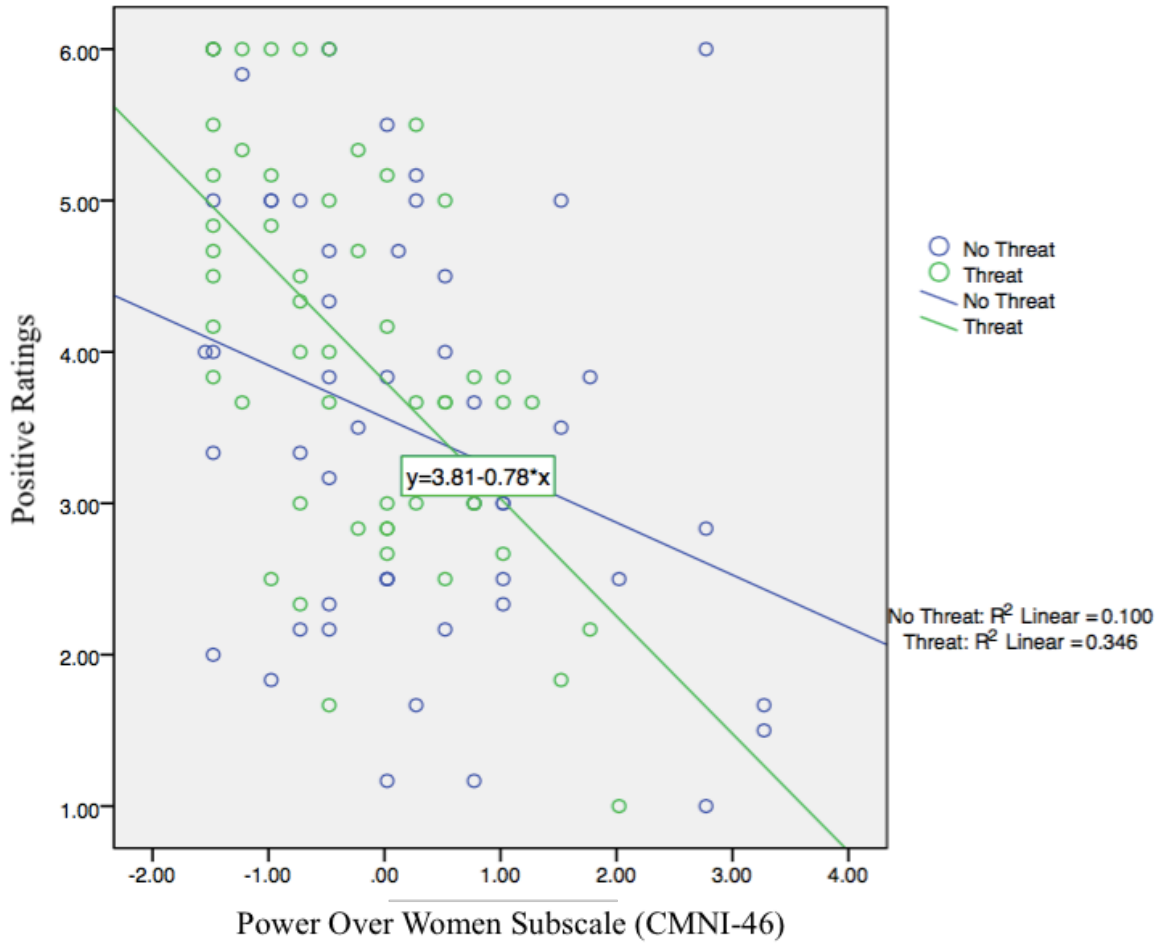


Figure 1. The interaction between scores on the Power Over Women subscale and the masculinity threat condition predict ($p = .05$) negative ratings of the female confronter.