

THE BLAME GAME: MASCULINITY THREAT'S ROLE IN RAPE BLAME

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Rape is an endemic social problem with tremendous adverse effects on its victims. Rape victims are at a higher risk for a variety of health consequences when compared to those who have not experienced rape. These consequences include posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, unwanted pregnancy, exposure to sexually transmitted infections, and injury (Moylan & Lindhorst, 2015). Rape and other forms of sexual victimization are serious and prevalent crimes taking place on college campuses, where the majority of victims are acquainted with their attacker, known as acquaintance rape (Osman, 2014). Research has found that victims of acquaintance rape are viewed harshly; not only is the rape taken less seriously but the victim is blamed for causing the rape itself and held responsible for subsequent consequences (Abrams, Viki, Maser, & Bohner, 2003; Cassidy & Hurrell, 1995; Osman, 2014).

Although research on perceptions of acquaintance rape has received attention from social scientists, few studies have examined how these perceptions are affected by contextual or situational variables (Munsch & Willer, 2012). One situational factor that has been identified as being an important contributor to these perceptions held towards victims is masculinity threat, when a man's gender identity status is challenged (Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014). Masculinity threat has been shown to have a range of negative consequences including increased anxiety (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford & Weaver, 2008), aggression (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009), and sexual harassment towards women (Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014). Previous work done on masculinity threat assumes that all men are equally affected by threats to masculinity. However, Burkley, Wong and Bell (2015) argue that men whose self-worth is contingent upon their sense of masculinity are more sensitive and more

impacted by threats to their masculinity; ultimately, stating that there are individual differences in how men react to masculinity threat.

Currently, the psychological literature lacks information regarding the processes that shape these negative perceptions (such as victim blaming). There is also insufficient attention placed on masculinity threat's role in rape blame, and the individual differences between men and how they are affected by masculinity threat. The following study serves as a way to evaluate the claim that masculinity threat affects men's perceptions toward acquaintance rape victims and that masculinity contingency influences how men may be affected by threats to masculinity differently.

Acquaintance Rape and College Campuses

A common cultural stereotype regarding rape is that perpetrators of rape are most often strangers (Frese, Moya & Megias, 2004). However, previous research has dispelled this myth and has shown that acquaintance rape, when the victim is raped by someone they know, is actually far more likely (Krebs, Lindquist, & Warner, 2007; Ullman, Karabatsos, & Koss, 1999). Acquaintance rape however is taken less seriously than stranger rape even though it occurs more often (Osman, 2014). Individuals tend to perceive acquaintance rape as less traumatic, and consider the victim more responsible for the rape taking place. Conversely, victims feel that they have less justification to report the rape than the victims of stranger rape (Frese et al., 2004).

Previous studies suggest that university women are at a greater risk of being a victim of acquaintance rape than women of a comparable age outside of a college setting (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993). It is theorized that this may be due to the close daily interactions between men and women in a range of social situations that are particular to a university setting. The most common of which involves party settings where alcohol is involved

along with settings where there is the potential for consensual sex (Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu, 1998; Beres, Senn, & McCaw, 2014; Johnson & Jackson, 1988). In this study, perceptions towards acquaintance rape victims in a college-aged setting were only be studied because college aged populations would be most likely to encounter an acquaintance rape situation.

The decision to investigate perceptions of acquaintance rape victims only and to not include perceptions towards stranger rape victims based off on findings from Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, (2003). In this study, 65 undergraduate participants (31 men, 34 women) were presented with either an acquaintance rape vignette ($n = 34$) or a stranger rape vignette ($n = 31$) and were asked to rate how much blame they attributed to the victim of the condition they were assigned. The acquaintance rape vignette described a story of a woman (Kathy) who went to a party where she met a man (Jason). Later that night she invited him to her apartment, where, after she had kissed Jason first, he subsequently raped her. In contrast, the stranger rape vignette described a story of a woman (Kathy) who was approached and attacked by a male stranger (Jason) while she was walking home from a restaurant.

After reading the vignette, participants were asked to fill out a seven-item measure that assessed the extent to which participants held the victim responsible for the rape (victim blame). A 7-point Likert-scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely or totally*, or 1 = *Jason* to 7 = *Kathy*) was used to assess victim blame by answering items such as, “How much do you think Kathy should blame herself for what happened”, “How much control do you think Kathy had over the situation”, “Whose fault do you think it is, that things turned out the way they did”. Researchers found that participants who read the acquaintance rape vignette assigned more blame to the victim ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.07$) compared to those who read the stranger rape vignette ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 0.85$). This remained consistent with findings in previous research and suggests that

perceptions of the “appropriateness” of the victim’s behavior may influence the participants’ reactions specifically to victims of acquaintance rape (Abrams et al., 2003).

Victim Blaming and Token Resistance

The current study investigated two specific negative perceptions towards rape victims that are prevalent within the current context of rape culture: victim blaming and token resistance.

Victim Blaming. Victim blaming occurs when the victim of a rape is perceived as being responsible in some way for the harm that befell her (Abrams et al., 2003). Factors such as the victim’s physical attractiveness (Tieger, 1981), provocativeness (Scroggs, 1976), previous sexual activity (L’Armand & Pepitone, 1982; Cann, Calhoun & Selby, 1979), victim resistance (Van Wie & Gross, 1995), degree of victim intoxication (Stormo & Lang, 1997) and clothing at the time of the attack (Workman & Freeburg, 1999) have all been found to influence negative perceptions towards victims of rape. This assigned blame re-traumatizes the victim by delegitimizing the trauma that befell her and does not provide the victim with the compassion needed to recover. Victim blaming has been found to heighten victim anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Campbell & Raja, 2005). Aside from the clinical adverse effects, victim blaming also contributes to victims’ self-blame, self-silencing, and distrust of others (Campbell & Raja, 2005), all of which can negatively affect the victim’s ability to recover from their traumatic event and move forward in her life.

Additionally, beliefs that rape victims are to blame for their assault may alter individuals’ likelihood to view what happened as rape, notify the police, and report incidents to researchers (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Public perceptions affect outcomes for both victims and perpetrators. The opinions of police officers, prosecutors, juries, and judges have a real impact on the treatment of victims and the disciplinary actions taken against perpetrators. The attitudes

of friends, family, physicians, therapists, and community members can also shape the social aspects of the recovery process for victims (Munsch & Willer, 2012).

It is paradoxical to blame the victim for the rape that befell them yet, researchers theorize that individuals may do this as a form of psychological security needed in order to continue to live in a world that is often unpredictable (Harber, Podolski & Williams, 2015). The most commonly cited theory used to explain victim blaming is known as the Just World Theory (Lerner & Matthews, 1967). This theory states that negative perceptions towards a rape victim is a form of overcompensation, assigning blame for a seemingly undeserved act toward a victim. According to this perspective, individuals have a motivational need to believe that the world is a fair place where behavioral outcomes are deserved (“people get what they deserve and deserve what they get”). Thus, individuals are also motivated to maintain a sense of control over their environment (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Rape victims are blamed for what happened to them so that individuals are able to still defend their belief in a just world by appeasing this fear that anyone could become a victim by convincing themselves that the victim did something that would cause this to happen.

Research has found that there are gender differences for those who make social judgments of rape victims. Several studies have reported that females attribute less responsibility to a rape victim than males do (Gilmartin-Zena, 1983). However, some studies have revealed that women attribute more responsibility to victims (Krulowitz & Payne, 1978). Even though there seem to be inconsistencies within the psychological literature, one of the most consistent findings has been that men assign more blame to victims, and less blame to perpetrators, than women (Grubb & Harrower, 2009).

Race also plays a role in how individuals perceive acquaintance rape. Varelas and Foley (1998) found that White participants were more likely than Black participants to attribute responsibility to perpetrators and to believe victims should notify authorities. Personal ideologies have also been found to further influence acquaintance rape perceptions. Individuals who endorse traditional gender-role stereotypes (Abrams et al., 2003; Simonson & Subich, 1999), who are high in Benevolent Sexism (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002), and who endorse “rape myths” (Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004; Varelas & Foley, 1998) are more likely to blame victims and exonerate perpetrators. For the purpose of the current study, perceptions of victim blaming were examined because this is a prominent negative perception towards victims that is assigned more by men (compared to women) towards victims of acquaintance rape (Abrams et al., 2003).

Token Resistance. Token resistance is a form of sexual miscommunication regarding sexual intent where saying no to sexual intercourse actually is perceived to have an underlying meaning of saying yes (Sprecher, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova, & Levitskaya, 1994). This is a perception that is circulated within media where women are depicted to be resistant to sex, while actually desiring it and just saying “no” as a way to seem less promiscuous or as a sexual game. Researchers have determined that this perception, for some, is believed to be a part of the sexual script for engaging in sexual intercourse; to be resistant yet ultimately give in where protests (saying no) should not be taken seriously (Jackson, 1978). There are three main reasons proposed by researchers Muehlenhard and Rogers (1998) as to why women actually do engage in initial resistance to sex when they actually intend to engage in sexual intercourse: practical reasons (fear of appearing promiscuous), inhibition-related reasons (moral/religious concern), and manipulative reasons (desire to be in control).

There is evidence to show that men who perceive that women use token resistance are more likely to hold rape-supportive attitudes than men who do not believe that women use token resistance, specifically belief in rape myth acceptance (Garcia, 1998). A recent study conducted by Osman (2003) collected data from 131 male undergraduate students and had them fill out the Token Resistance to Sex scale (TRSS; Osman 1999). This scale measured the belief that women use token resistance. The scale consisted of eight items that were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items from this scale include, “Women usually say ‘no’ to sex when they really mean ‘yes’” and “Going home with a man at the end of a date is a woman’s way of communicating to him that she wants to have sex.” The participants were then given one of three possible vignettes to read: a rape condition, a consent condition, and an ambiguous condition. Each vignette presented a couple (Lisa and Marc) that go out on a date to the movies and later end up at Marc’s apartment in a situation where either consensual sexual intercourse (consent condition) or date rape occurs (ambiguous condition or rape condition). After Marc and Lisa kiss on the couch, the scene progresses until Marc is on top of Lisa and penetration is about to occur. In the consent condition, Lisa says, “yes” to sexual intercourse. In the rape condition, Lisa says “no” to sexual intercourse. In the ambiguous condition, Lisa gives no verbal response.

After reading the scenario, participants responded to items measuring perceptions of date rape. This measure contained five statements with which respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*). Examples of questions asked include: “Lisa wanted to have intercourse with Marc,” “Lisa was willing to have intercourse with Marc,” “Lisa enjoyed having intercourse with Marc,” “Lisa’s rights were violated by Marc,” and “Lisa was date raped by Marc.”

Results showed that that men with a strong belief in token resistance were less likely to interpret a date rape scenario as "rape" ($M = 14.3$, $SD = 4.4$) compared to men who had a low belief in token resistance ($M = 18.6$, $SD = 5.3$). Therefore, the results suggest that "no" did not mean refusal to the men who strongly endorsed token resistance. Token resistance is problematic due to the miscommunication regarding consent and thus has become a large issue contributing to rape culture (Osman & Davis, 1999). For rape victims, token resistance is the belief that a victim of rape actually wanted the sexual contact to occur (Osman & Davis, 1999). This then delegitimizes the victim's trauma and (similar to victim blaming) acts as a barrier to the victim's recovery. For the purpose of the current study, perceptions of token resistance were examined because this is a prominent negative perception towards victims that plays a vital role in rape culture (Osman & Davis, 1999).

Masculinity Threat

In many cultures, the perception of masculinity is rooted in the idea that men are made, not born. In order to become a man, young boys often must prove that they possess the qualities associated with manhood by undergoing various rituals (Vandello et al., 2008). One example includes the Sambian highlanders of New Guinea who undergo a bloody, painful scarification ritual to earn manhood status (Herdt, 1982). Although cultural rituals of attaining masculine status may differ cross-culturally, one common theme is that masculine status is something that is earned through a public/social demonstration. In western cultures, we do not see this same public demonstration that acts as a fixed marker of a boy attaining manhood; instead masculine status is patrolled through adherence to gender norms.

Relative to womanhood, manhood is widely viewed as a precarious, tenuous status that is difficult to attain, easy to lose, and must be continually demonstrated and defended (Caswell,

Bosson, Vandello, Sellers, 2014). Men may lose manhood status by enacting stereotypically feminine behaviors, such as braiding hair (Bosson, Prewitt- Freilino, & Taylor, 2005), or by failing to demonstrate adequate levels of psychological or behavioral masculinity. For example if a man cries he is not adhering to the concept of men being psychologically “tough” (Vandello et al., 2008, Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Thus, anything that calls one’s manhood status into question, may be something that can lead to threat related emotions in men whose masculine identity is challenged (Vandello et al., 2008). Manhood has a state-like quality that is not seen in beliefs about womanhood.

Consistent with this idea, Vandello et al., (2008) found that individuals view manhood as a status that fluctuates according to varying societal factors, rather than stable biological factors that are considered to be associated with womanhood. In their study, Vandello and colleagues (2008) had 141 heterosexual-identified undergraduates who were randomly assigned to complete one of two versions of an online questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire contained several statements about the tenuous and uncertain nature of either manhood or womanhood that were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 7 (*very true*). A few examples of statements rated include; “It is fairly easy for a man (woman) to lose his (her) status as a man (woman),” “A male’s (female’s) status as a ‘real man’ (‘real woman’) sometimes depends on how other people view him (her),” and “Some boys (girls) do not become men (women), no matter how old they get.” For the second part of their study, participants used the same 7-point scale to rate the truthfulness of two statements about the physical and social underpinnings of the transition to adulthood: “The transition from boyhood (girlhood) to manhood (womanhood) occurs because of something physical or biological, e.g., hormonal changes” and “The transition from boyhood (girlhood) to manhood (womanhood) occurs because of something social, e.g.,

passing certain social milestones.” The researchers found that participants strongly associated the transition from boyhood to manhood with social factors (achieving goals) than to biological ones (reaching puberty). Conversely, the transition from girlhood to womanhood was associated more strongly with biological factors and not as strongly with societal factors. Thus, manhood itself seems to be considered a tenuous, state-like role.

After experiencing a threat to masculine identity, men typically respond to these threats to masculine identity by making efforts to prove their masculinity. For example, Bosson and colleagues (2009) induced a threat to masculinity by having 31 male participants perform either a feminine activity (having the male participant braid the hair of a wigged female mannequin head) or a gender-neutral activity (having the participant braid with three pieces of rope) where the participant was told that they would be filmed and that his videotape would later be viewed by “between 10 and 20 students.”

After the braiding activity (feminine or neutral), participants were able to choose a second task of either an aggressive task, “a boxing task, where you’ll punch a punching bag” or a masculine but nonaggressive activity, “a basketball task, where you’ll shoot some hoops.” For men who chose the boxing task, their punching force was collected with a punching pad that consisted of a 275×200 mm, battery-operated pressure sensor embedded in several layers of $650 \times 400 \times 20$ mm foam rubber. A digital counter at the top of the pad displayed the impact pressure (on a scale from 0 to 250 pounds per square inch). Researchers found that as a group, men who completed the feminine task of braiding hair ($M = 38.29$, $SD = 5.30$) punched the pad harder than did men who braided rope ($M = 33.85$, $SD = 5.64$) (Bosson et al, 2009, Study 1).

The researchers performed a follow up study using an identical procedure as before with 45 male participants, but this time offered them a choice between an aggressive masculine task

“a boxing task, where you’ll punch a punching bag” and a nonaggressive neutral task “a puzzle task, where you’ll rearrange several puzzle pieces into the shape of a square.” Men who had completed the feminine activity of braiding a wig were more likely to select the manhood-restoring aggressive boxing task as a follow-up activity (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009, Study 2). This suggests that threats to masculinity, even in the form of benign, noncompetitive activities such as hairstyling, are lead to negative emotions which restore status as a coping mechanism to alleviate the negative feelings that come from a threat to their masculine identity (Caswell et al., 2014).

These different ways of utilizing masculine identified domains (such as the use of physical aggression) after receiving a threat to masculine identity can help men bolster their status as a “real man” and assuage feelings of gender role stress. Examples of ways that men may also choose to display masculinity and reaffirm their own masculine status could include drinking heavily, using physical aggression, bragging about sexual exploits, and driving fast (Vandello et al., 2008). All of these illustrations are associated with adherence to masculine gender roles that are also associated with the societal expectations for men to be physically tough, attain power/status, and to avoid anything that may be thought of as feminine (Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

Unfortunately, some of the ways men may choose to reaffirm their masculine identity can carry negative consequences for the man himself and also for those he may interact with. Researchers Hunt and Gonsalkorale (2014) conducted a study with 74 heterosexual male undergraduates who received a threat to masculinity before being exposed to a gender in-group member confederate whose reaction to sexist jokes was manipulated. The masculinity threat manipulation was done through receiving false feedback after taking the Conformity to

Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI). The CMNI is a 94-item inventory that examines behaviors and cognitions related to 11 different masculine norms. The 11 masculine norms include:

Emotional Control Dominance (“In general, I must get my way”); Power over Women (“In general, I control the women in my life”); Winning (“Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing”); Risk-Taking (“Taking dangerous risks helps me to prove myself”); Violence (“I am disgusted by any kind of violence” [reverse-scored]); Playboy (“If I could, I would frequently change sexual partners”); Self-Reliance (“I hate asking for help”); Primacy of Work (“I am often absorbed in my work”); Disdain for Homosexuals (“Being thought of as gay is not a bad thing” [reverse-scored]); Pursuit of Status (“Trying to be important is a waste of time”).

Participants were told that this was a personality test and were then given feedback on three dimensions: introversion/ extroversion; openness to new experiences; and masculinity/ femininity. Feedback remained the same for the first two dimensions but differed in the last dimension of masculinity/femininity where men would either be placed in a masculinity threat condition (told they scored below average on the personality test) or the masculinity affirmed condition (told they scored in the average range on the personality test). After receiving the false feedback, participants were told they would be interacting online with two participants at a nearby school (a female and male confederate). The participant was given instructions to send jokes to each confederate; one of the joke options was a sexist joke towards women. The participant was either encouraged, where the male confederate wrote a positive comment about the sexist joke, or discouraged, where the male confederate wrote a negative comment about the sexist joke.

The researchers found that men who rated high on conformity to masculine norms altered their behavior to correspond with feedback from the male confederate after a masculinity threat,

whereas men low on conformity to masculine norms rejected gender in-group feedback (feedback from the male confederate) after a masculinity threat. These results suggest that the perceived response of other members of the gender in-group, but not members of the gender out-group, influence men's proclivity to enact gender harassing behaviors after receiving a threat to masculinity (Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014). So, with this connection of masculinity threat leading to sexual harassment towards women, does this mean that men would also show similar aggression in the form of victim blame towards a victim of rape?

Researchers Munsch and Willer (2012) investigated this question by conducting a study where they threatened men's masculinity and rated perceptions towards a female rape victim and the perpetrator of that rape. The researchers assessed gender identity threat by giving 91 undergraduate students (36 men and 55 women) a "Gender Identity Survey." The Gender Identity Survey includes 60 adjectives thought to possess cultural associations with masculinity ("competitive"), femininity ("compassionate"), or neither masculinity nor femininity ("unpredictable"). Each participant indicated how much he or she could be described by each of the 60 adjectives on a scale from 1 (*never or almost never true*) to 7 (*always or almost always true*). After completing the survey, participants were told that the experimenter would score their results and would provide feedback to the participant. After about five minutes the experimenter returned with an envelope that had the participants feedback inside. Participants were placed in one of two conditions: either they were in the nonthreatening condition (participant received feedback that they had an average score consistent with the participant's gender) or a threatening condition (participant received feedback that they had an average score of the opposite gender of the participant).

After receiving their false feedback, the participants filled out a survey that contained eight vignettes of incidents that were supposedly brought before a judicial board at another university, one of which depicted a date rape. Participants read each vignette and were asked to assign a percentage of responsibility to each individual in the vignette as well as to “other/extraneous” factors. The researchers found that men whose masculinity was threatened ($M=44.1$, $SD = 10.2$) assigned more blame to the date rape victim compared to men in the non-threatening condition ($M = 32.9$, $SD = 17.1$). Men whose masculinity was threatened ($M = 53.8$, $SD = 8.06$) were also found to assign less blame to the perpetrator compared to the non-threatening condition ($M = 61.71$, $SD = 20.2$). Threatened men also perceived the victim as less likable ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.32$) compared to non-threatened men ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.79$). These results suggest gender identity threat affects men’s perceptions of acquaintance rape victims because men whose masculinity was threatened assigned more blame towards victims and assigned less blame to perpetrators.

Given these examples, masculinity threat may play a role in greater societal endemic issues such as sexual harassment (Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014), and (as proposed in the current study) rape blame (Munsch & Willer, 2012). It is also important to note how the standard deviation scores for those in the threatened conditions in the examples presented above show a wide variance, suggesting that men whose masculinity is threatened respond in various different ways. If the standard deviation was smaller (similar to scores in the non-threat conditions) this would show that men react to masculinity threat similarly. However, because we do not see this, there seems to be something missing when investigating masculinity threat because men whose masculinity is threatened are responding differently. This may be due to some form of individual

difference between men that is causing this difference. I propose that this individual difference is masculinity contingency, how important one's masculine identity is to the self.

Masculinity Contingency. Much of literature on masculinity threat generally assumes that all men are equally affected by threats to their masculinity and does not take individual differences into consideration. Burkley, Wong and Bell, (2015) proposed the concept of masculinity contingency (the degree to which a man's self-worth is derived from his sense of masculinity) and developed the Masculinity Contingency Scale (MCS) as a way to account for individual differences in masculine identity. The MCS, along with its subscales (boost and threat), have been found to be valid through the various tests of validity done by the researchers who developed this scale.

Burkley, Wong, and Bell (2015) assessed the different types of validity by investigating the different relationships with various other scales that the MCS scale could be correlated with and performed various tests of validity to ensure that the MCS was measuring what they truly intended it to. The other scales included are as follows: the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI-46; Parent & Moradi, 2011), the Male Gender Role conflict Scale (GRCS-SF; Wester, Vogel, & Danforth, 2012), the Attitudes Towards Women Scale (AWS; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), the centrality subscale of Leach and colleges (2008), Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1991), Traditional Egalitarian Sex Roles Scale (TESR; Laresen & Long, 1988), Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMA; Burt, 1980), Homophobia Scale (HS; Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965).

Burkley, Wong, and Bell (2015) concluded that the convergent validity of the MCS was supported because the MCS and both its subscales (boost and threat) significantly and positively

related to conformity of masculine norms, gender role conflict, and centrality of masculine identity. In regards to discriminant validity, the MCS and its subscales (boost and threat) were found to significantly and negatively correlate to social desirability, suggesting that social desirability was not a major concern within this scale. Criterion-related validity was found to be supported because the MCS and both its subscales were all significantly related to traditional gender role attitudes and rape myth acceptance, but negatively related to pro-feminist attitudes. This suggests that men whose self-worth is contingent upon their masculinity are more likely to hold sexist beliefs towards women and are also more likely to endorse beliefs that justify sexual violence towards women and blame women for what happened to them.

Other commonly used masculinity measures such as the Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil, 2013; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986) and the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried, & Freitas, 2003; Parent & Moradi, 2009), assess the concept of masculinity through examining specific masculine behaviors and attitudes, where the Masculinity Contingency Scale (MCS) specifically examines how important a man's masculinity is to his sense of self. Typically when we think of masculinity, we tend to associate behaviors or actions as a way to define what masculinity is, (e.g. "aggression", "toughness", "heavy drinking", "sexual exploits") and tend to not focus on how masculine identity may be more important to some men and less important to others.

According to the literature on contingencies of self-worth (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001), individuals base their self-worth on certain domains over others. Thus, feedback in a contingent domain (one that is important to the individual and their sense of self) will have a greater impact on the individual than feedback in a non-contingent domain (one that is not important to the individual and their sense of self) (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2015). As a result, men whose

masculine identity is important to their identity and sense of self may react more strongly to a masculinity threat compared to someone whose masculine identity is not an important part of their sense of self.

When someone receives feedback to a highly contingent domain, positive feedback has a more positive effect on the individual and negative feedback has a more negative effect. Yet when feedback is in regards to a non-contingent domain, positive feedback produces little benefit and negative feedback produces little threat (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2015). This would suggest that men who receive a masculinity threat and whose masculine identity is a highly contingent domain would experience a stronger reaction to threat compared to men whose masculine identity is a non-contingent domain. Due to the precarious nature of manhood, the current study investigated the role that masculinity contingency plays in how men will be affected by a threat to masculinity.

Overview and Hypotheses

Do these threats to masculine identity truly lead men to hold harsher and more judgmental perspectives of rape victims? Does their masculinity contingency play a role in those judgmental perspectives? To assess these possibilities, I manipulated the degree of threat where in one condition, male participants were told they received a lower than average masculinity score on a gender knowledge test compared to other men who have taken the gender knowledge test. This condition comprised the threat manipulation. In the other condition, participants were told that they received an average masculinity score compared to other men who have taken the gender knowledge test. This condition served as the control. Participants also completed the Masculinity Contingency Scale (MCS) as a way to assess for individual differences in men and how they may be affected by a threat to masculinity.

Participants were then asked to read a vignette describing an acquaintance rape situation and to rate their perceptions of victim blame and token resistance towards the rape victim in the vignette. I predicted that differences in the ratings of victim blame and token resistance toward the rape victim in the threat and no threat conditions for masculinity threat will motivate attitudes toward rape blame. I also predicted that masculinity contingency will relate to the amount of blame expressed toward the victim from the vignette, specifically that men high in masculinity contingency will have higher ratings of victim blame and token resistance.

Method

Participants

Participants were 70 male students (age: $M = 20.30$ years, $SD = 1.63$) at Ball State University who participated for credit toward a course requirement. In terms of racial background, 82.9% were White non-Hispanic, 8.6% were African American, 5.7% were Hispanic/Latino, 1.4% were Asian, and 1.4% were Multiracial. In order to be eligible for the study, participants had to identify as being “exclusively heterosexual.” This controlled for sexual orientation in the sample. The decision to only use heterosexual men in this study was based on previous research that found heterosexual men express higher ratings of victim blaming, especially in an acquaintance rape setting (Abrams et al., 2003). I also specifically chose to work with a college age sample because research has supported that acquaintance rape situations are prominent with this population (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Thus, by collecting data on a college campus using a college student sample, I collected data from the population that is most likely to encounter acquaintance rape situations.

Design

The design of this experiment was a mixed model design (between subjects). The independent variable is threat condition (threat or no threat). The participants were randomly assigned to one of the two resulting conditions with equal numbers in each. The dependent variables were ratings of victim blame and token resistance towards a rape victim. I also investigated masculinity contingency as a covariate for masculinity threat, due to how masculinity contingency could be a variable that could potentially play a predictive role in how men may react differently to threats against their masculinity (Burkley et al., 2015).

Materials

Critical materials in the experiment are the personality questionnaire used to manipulate threat, the masculinity contingency measure, the vignettes, and the dependent measures regarding victim blame and token resistance ratings that follow the vignettes.

Masculinity-threat manipulation. The independent variable of threat involves the participant receiving false feedback on a personality test. Participants read written instructions displayed on a computer screen. The instructions informed them that this personality test is a measure of people's gender identity and that it consists of questions about common gender related knowledge. They were also told that after they completed the test, the computer would calculate their score and give them their feedback.

This personality test is adapted from the Gender Knowledge Inventory (GKI: Bosson, Weaver, Caswell, & Burnaford, 2012). The test consists of 32 difficult forced choice questions that pertain to stereotypically masculine (sports, cars, home repair) and feminine (childcare, cooking, fashion) topics. The questions are written to be extremely difficult so that the participants will not be able to guess their scores and would be more likely to believe the false

feedback that they receive. Sample items include: “NBA star Steve Nash is from: South Africa or Canada?” and “Cesare Catini sells a product that you wear on your: Face or Feet?” (Bosson et al., 2012). When participants completed the personality test, the computer appears to be computing their score. In about 5 seconds it gives them their results, which is actually the false feedback. Based on random assignment participants learned that they scored at either the 37th percentile (*threat* condition) or the 83rd percentile (*no threat* condition) compared to the other men at their university. This feedback was bolstered by a continuum that is anchored with endpoints labeled “Feminine Gender Identity” and “Masculine Gender Identity.” The feedback displays an arrow labeled “Your score” that is pointed toward either the feminine (*threat*) or masculine (*no threat*) end of the continuum.

Participants were be asked to record their results on a form that is given to them and were told that the research assistant will look over it to make sure they filled out the form correctly. This was done in order to make the threat manipulation more salient and public so that the participants knew that someone would see their scores. Once the participant recorded their scores and the research assistant looked over their form, this form was be displayed in front of the participant for the rest of the experimental session as a way to keep their scores salient to them in order to prevent the manipulation effect from dissipating quickly. It is important that the manipulation task happened directly before the participant read the vignette to ensure that the threat manipulation persisted throughout the experimental trial.

Masculinity contingency scale (MCS). Masculinity contingency served as a covariate within this study. The participant filled this scale out within the demographics section. The demographics section was the first section competed by participants. There was a question at the beginning of the demographics section that asked them if they identified as male or female,

because we used all male participants, all reported that they identified as male. When a participant responded by identifying as male, they were routed to the Masculinity Contingency Scale. This was one of early question in the demographics section in order to provide multiple other questions for the participant to respond to before filling out the Gender Knowledge Inventory so that the MCS does not influence participants to already be thinking about their gender identity.

The Masculinity Contingency Scale was adapted from the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSWS) (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003) and was developed by Burkley, Wong, and Bell (2015). The scale consists of 10-items that assess the extent that a man's self worth is derived from his masculine identity. The overall masculinity contingency score ranges from 10 to 70. This scale contains two subscales, 1) MCS–Threat, self-worth is threatened by a lack of masculinity and 2) MCS–Boost, self-worth is boosted by confirmation of masculinity. The MCS-Threat subscale contains five items, an example would include: “I can't respect myself if I don't live up to what it means to be a 'real man.'” The MCS-Boost subscale contain five items, an example would include: “When I act manly, I feel good about myself.” All of the proceeding questions are rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

In general, high masculinity contingency scores were found to be associated with negative social and personal outcomes, through the various scales measuring negative perceptions such as the sexism measure and homophobia scale used (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2015). Due to this strong connection to negative perceptions (such as rape blame/victim lame being studied in the current study) I analyzed the overall MCS score. I did not investigate the subscales separately.

Vignettes. The vignette described a somewhat ambiguous situation, yet it was clear that it described an acquaintance rape situation because the rape victim knows the perpetrator and clearly does not give consent to engage in sexual activity. This scenario and corresponding questionnaire are both directly adapted from Abrams et al. (2003). The vignette described a man and a woman (Jason and Kathy) who met at a party. At the end of the party Kathy invited Jason over to her apartment and once at her apartment Kathy kissed Jason. When Jason started to advance too quickly Kathy asked him to stop, Jason held down Kathy and forcibly had sex with her.

Dependent measures. There were six items that correspond to ratings of victim blaming. A 7-point Likert scale will accompany all questions measuring the dependent variables that ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*completely or totally*). There is one item that included a Likert scale that will range from 1 (*Jason*) to 7 (*Kathy*) that was asking who was at fault for the rape that occurred. These items were averaged to provide a victim blame score for each participant. The items “How much control do you think Jason had over the situation?” and “How much sympathy do you feel for Kathy?” were reverse coded before the composite scores were calculated. Higher scores indicated more victim blame that the participant associates with the rape victim in the vignette. Sample items include: “How much do you think Kathy should blame herself for what happened”, “How much control do you think Jason had in the situation”, and “Whose fault do you think it is that things turned the way they did” (Abrams et al., 2003).

There were four items that correspond to ratings of token resistance. A 7-point Likert scale will accompany all questions measuring the dependent variables that will range from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*completely or totally*). These items were averaged to provide a victim blame score for each participant. The higher the score is indicated the more token resistance the participant

associated with the rape victim in the vignette. Sample items include: “Kathy really wanted to have sex with Jason”, “Kathy wanted Jason to overcome her initial resistance”, and “Kathy wanted Jason to ‘take her’” (Abrams et al., 2003).

Procedure

The participant came to the lab and was greeted by a female research assistant. I only had female research assistants to control for researcher gender in order to avoid any potential confounds that could have influenced the participant's responses. The research assistant introduced herself and asked the participant to sit at the computer. Participants were run individually and the experimental sessions took place in 45 minute to one-hour increments. The computer screen was be off when the participant sat down and the participant was instructed to wait for further instructions. The computer software Qualtrics was used to run the experimental measures used within this study.

Next the research assistant acquired the participants' informed consent. The participant was asked to sign two copies of the consent form for this study. One copy was for the participant and the research assistant would collect the other copy for confidential storage. For this study, there was a section underneath the area where the participant signs to show their intent to participate. This section was for the debriefing where we asked participants to sign in order to show that they felt they had been fully debriefed, at this time they were asked to not sign this section. This will be discussed further when discussing the debriefing procedure in this study. After informed consent was acquired, the research assistant placed both signed informed consent sheets on the table next to the participant and instructed the participant about the first part of the study.

The research assistant instructed the participant that they would be told that there are three parts to the experiment. First they filled out a short demographics section. Second they completed a personality test that measured gender identity that would automatically calculate their scores directly after finishing the test, and that he received feedback about his personality. The participant was given a form that they were asked to record the information they were given from their test results. Third, they read a short vignette and were asked to answer questions about the character in the vignette.

After these instructions were given, the research assistant turned on the computer monitor and asked them to fill out the brief demographics section. Within the demographics section, the participant filled out the Masculinity Contingency Scale (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2015) after they were asked if they identify as male or female. The participant was automatically routed through Qualtrics to answer the MCS when they answered that they identified as male. This was one more way to control for participant gender because if they did not identify as male and answered that they identified as 'female,' Qualtrics would route them to a page that thanked them for their participation and informed them that were done with the study. There were no instances of this happening in the current study.

After the participant completed the demographics and the subsequent MCS, they then completed the Gender Knowledge Inventory that was comprised of gender knowledge related questions that the participants would answer (Bosson et al., 2012). After completing the inventory, participants received false feedback that either threatened their masculinity or provided no threat to their masculinity. After the participant filled out the results form, the research assistant looked over the form to ensure that the participant had filled in all sections. This also served as a manipulation check in order to ensure that the threat to masculinity will be

public, where someone else will witness the threat. This is an important aspect of masculinity threat where the public display of threat makes the threat to self more salient (Bosson et al., 2005; Caswell et al., 2014; Vandello et al., 2008). The participants' results were placed in front of them after the research assistant looked over the result form, as a way to ensure their feedback remained salient to them throughout the rest of the experiment.

Next, participants were instructed about the last section the study. In this part of the study, the participant read a short vignette that described an acquaintance rape situation with a female victim. After the participant read the vignette, they completed a set of questionnaires that comprised the dependent measures of the perceived victim blame and token resistance ratings of the rape victim in the vignette. After this part of the study was completed, the participant was verbally questioned about potential suspicions during the experiment. This was given in order to probe for suspicion to determine if a participant's data was not usable due to his suspicion ratings, we did not need to remove anyone due to this in analyses. The research assistant started off by telling the participant that the experiment was over but that she just wanted to talk to him a bit about the experiment. The research assistant then asked the following questions/statements to the participant: "I was wondering if you had any ideas about what we were expecting to find," "Did you have any feelings of suspicion about anything that happened during this session," and "Was there ever a time when you suspected that I was lying to you about anything?" If the participant answers these questions the research assistant is instructed to ask follow up questions such as "What made you think that," "Could you tell me a little bit about that," "What specifically made you feel that way," and "Do you think that having that suspicion might have influenced any of your responses during the session?" These follow up questions were meant to ensure that the participant was not able to guess the hypothesis of the study. The research

assistant coded these responses on an overall scale ranging from 1 to 5 and recorded one number for each participant's suspicion level, which were recorded in the laboratory log next to the participant number.

The scale was as follows: 1 (*No suspicions at all, totally believed everything, never occurred to him to be suspicious*), 2 (*Slight suspicion; had vague, mild suspicions but had no idea what was really going on*), 3 (*Definitely suspicious, and strongly suspected that he was being lied to at times, but wasn't sure what was really going on and claims that his suspicions did NOT affect his responses*), 4 (*Suspicious, knew he was being lied to and had some pretty clever guesses about what was really going on (but isn't completely correct), and/or admits that his suspicions may have influenced his responses*), and 5 (*Very suspicious; knew pretty much what was going on the whole time, guessed the nature of all or most deceptions, and couldn't respond naturally because of it*).

Participants whose ratings were 5 would have been deleted from the data set due to their high suspicions, which could have negatively affected the results of the study. Again, we did not need to delete anyone in the current study due to this.

After probing for suspicion, the research assistant continued with debriefing where they started to explain the true purpose of the study. When the research assistant described the Gender Knowledge Inventory, she made sure to clearly state that the feedback from this test was false and to follow up by asking, "Did you have any idea that the test and feedback were not real?" This was another way to probe for suspicion to make sure our manipulation worked. The research assistant also informed the participant that their scores will not be analysed by themeslevs and that we were looking at societal perceptions that are broad so the participant's responses would not be isolated in our analyses.

After the research assistant explained the purpose of the vignettes and dependent measures (victim blaming and token resistance), she then asked if there were any questions in regards to the study and its purpose. After all questions and concerns had been attended to, the research assistant took out the informed consent sheets, where both were placed on the table next to the participant. The section that participants were instructed to not sign at the beginning of the study was then attended to. Participants were asked to read the following phrase, "I have been informed of the true purpose of this study and all of my questions/concerns have been attended to. I consent to my responses being used in this study" and were asked to sign if they consented. After both copies had been signed, the research assistant collected the second copy and handed the participant the other copy of the informed consent, which listed resources such as the counseling center if they were having any feelings of distress. The primary investigator's email (myself) was listed along with the faculty advisor's email (Dr. Gaither). The participant was thanked for participation and was asked to not share the true purpose of the experiment with fellow students.

Results

A one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to determine whether male participants who were assigned to the masculinity threat condition would have higher ratings of victim blame and token resistance toward the female rape victim. For the MANCOVA, victim blame and token resistance were grouped by threat condition, and masculinity threat served as the covariate control. Pearson's r was used to measure the relationship between victim blame, token resistance, and masculinity contingency.

Descriptive Statistics

This study had a similar overall victim blame mean ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.91$) when compared to Abrams et al. (2003; $M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.07$). The current study had lower scores for perceived token

resistance ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 0.86$) when compared to Abrams et al. (2003; $M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.02$). This may be an important finding due to how it can represent that views about victim blame and token resistance have potentially changed in the past 13 years, where there may be less endorsement of victim blame and token resistance taking place.

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of MCS total ($\alpha = .85$), MCS Threat ($\alpha = .81$), and MCS boost ($\alpha = .88$). These scores were similar to the original Cronbach's alpha scores reported by Burkley, Wong, and Bell (2015), which were MCS total ($\alpha = .91$), MCS Threat ($\alpha = .92$), and MCS boost ($\alpha = .92$). Although both scales were considered reliable, the alpha scores of the current study were slightly lower than Burkley, et al., (2015). This difference may be attributed to the difference in sample sizes between the current study ($n = 70$) and Burkley et al. ($n = 223$).

Masculinity Threat

To test the hypothesis that masculinity threat would have an effect on higher victim blame and token resistance scores, I performed a one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) for victim blame and token resistance. The dependent variables were grouped by threat condition, and masculinity contingency served as the covariate control. There was not a significant multivariate effect in victim blame and token resistance scores for the threat manipulation, $F(2,66) = .73$, $p = .48$. This indicated that there was no difference between the threat and no threat conditions for the dependent measures (victim blame and token resistance). However, there was a significant effect for masculinity contingency, $F(2,66) = 3.31$, $p = .04$ and ratings of victim blame and token resistance.

I also decided to run a MANOVA without running MCS as a covariate in order to ensure completely that there was no effect for threat condition. Specifically by removing MCS, which we already know MCS has an effect, we can see if threat has any effect. When running the MANOVA for just threat condition, there was still no significant result $F(2,67) = 1.57$, $p = .21$, yet the p-value

for this MANOVA went from .48 (in the MANOVA mentioned above) to .21, suggesting that masculinity contingency scores truly may have more of an effect on scores of victim blame and token resistance than masculinity threat. Ultimately, my first hypothesis was not supported.

Masculinity Contingency

To test the second hypothesis that masculinity contingency will relate to higher victim blame and token resistance ratings (especially for men in the threat condition), I first ran a *t*-test comparing condition (threat vs. no threat) on MCS. This analysis indicated that there were no significant differences between men in the threat and no threat condition on MCS $t(68) = 0.502, p = .617$. Next, I investigated the difference in victim blame and token resistance scores for men who scored high and low in MCS. I first used the frequencies function to calculate three equal MCS score cut points (low, medium, and high) for three equal groups. The low group consisted of participants who scored from 14 to 27. The high group participants scored from 32 to 43. In order to reduce noise, only the high and low group data was analyzed. I then performed a MANOVA where I compared condition (threat vs. no threat) and MCS (high vs. low) in relation to the dependent measures. Results showed that there was a marginal effect for MCS $F(2,46) = 3.02, p = .059$ no main effect for condition $F(2,46) = 1.77, p = .181$ and no interaction effect between MCS and condition $F(2,46) = 1.12, p = .335$. The MANOVA also indicated that there was a significant effect of MCS (high vs. low) on both the victim blame $F(2,46) = 4.67, p = .036$ and token resistance scores $F(2,46) = 4.40, p = .041$.

In order to provide more support that men who are high in MCS score higher on both dependent measures an independent samples *t*-test was performed. These results indicated that there was a significant difference between contingency score (high vs. low) in regard to victim blame $t(49) = -2.189, p = .033$ and token resistance $t(49) = -2.117, p = .039$. Men who were low in contingency ($M = 2.24, SD = .82$) had significantly lower victim blame scores than men who were high in

contingency ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.09$) having a moderate effect ($d = 0.65$). Men who were low in contingency ($M = 1.51$, $SD = .62$) scored significantly lower on ratings of token resistance than men who were high in contingency ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 1.13$) having a moderate effect as well ($d = 0.63$).

Overall these results indicate that men whose masculine identity is highly important to them may be more likely to express negative perceptions towards a female rape victim compared to men whose masculine identity is not very important to them. This suggests that individual differences such as masculinity contingency endorsement may have more of an effect on negative perceptions towards a female rape victim compared to situational contexts such as having their masculinity threatened or not threatened.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that masculinity threat did not have an effect on how participants scored for victim blame and token resistance. These results also suggest that masculinity contingency does have an effect on participants' scores for victim blame and token resistance, where high scores in masculinity contingency indicate higher scores for victim blame and token resistance when compared to men who scored low for masculinity contingency. I will discuss in the following sections reasons as to why the current study did not find an effect for masculinity threat, and why our findings regarding masculinity contingency are important.

Masculinity Threat

The current study did not replicate a main effect for masculinity threat that has been found in previous research (Bosson et al., 2005; Bosson et al., 2012; Caswell et al., 2014; Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014; Munch & Willer, 2012). There may be various reasons as to why masculinity threat was not supported in this study. One possible reason may be an issue of social desirability, the tendency to have survey respondent answer questions in a manner that will be viewed as favorable

by others. After reading the vignette about the female rape victim, participants may have worked to be perceived as a “good man” even if they felt that the female victim was at fault, increasing the desire to be perceived as not blaming the victim and responding in a socially desirable way. This may have contributed to men potentially reporting lower endorsement for victim blame and token resistance than they may have actually felt.

Another potential explanation could include the geographical location of Ball State University. The university is located in Indiana, which is considered the Midwestern United States. Much of the masculinity threat research that has found significant results for inducing threat have been in southern states such as Florida. Due to the culture of honor, which is described as being a predominantly southern cultural norm where men tend to maintain traditional gender role norms and work to maintain a reputation for not accepting improper conduct by others (Henry, 2009). This may explain why I was not able to replicate previous findings. Men in the Midwest may not adhere to the culture of honor in the same way as individuals actually from the South. Even though the state of Indiana is usually considered to be a conservative state, there is a difference in the culture of honor that is specific to the concept of “southern pride” or pride in southern culture that is not explicitly connected to conservative political ideologies (Glick, Sakalli-Uğurlu, Akbaş, Orta, & Ceylan, 2015). Specifically, men who may adhere to the culture of honor could potentially be more likely to interpret the rape victim’s actions as being inappropriate and thus may be more likely to blame her.

The culture of honor typically views women in a framework similar to benevolent sexism where women are expected to be subordinate, potentially justifying violence against them (Glick et al., 2015). According to Abrams et al., (2003) benevolent sexism endorsement was a major contributor to victim blame ratings. Thus, if this study were run in a southern state that was more likely to have a present culture of honor, the hypotheses may have been supported.

Masculinity Contingency

The current study is extremely unique with regard to how our findings seem to suggest that individual differences of masculine identity may have a larger trait-based role than a situational context such as masculinity threat. This highlights previous critiques that have been brought up by researchers where the masculinity threat theory seems to assume that all men would react the same way to masculinity threat (Addis & Schwab, 2013; Chrisler, 2013). However, for the current study, we did not find this. Instead we supported the idea that there are individual differences in men and how they may react to different situations.

Based on what we have learned from the current study, we can make the argument that contingency is an important aspect of masculinity research that needs to be developed further. Masculinity contingency can also help us to better understand the wide variance of scores seen in masculinity threat research (Boson, Weaver, Caswell, & Burnaford, 2012; Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014; Munch & Willer, 2012). Perhaps this is due to masculinity contingency and differences in how men in previous samples emphasized their masculine identity. Given what we have learned, future studies should implement the MCS to control for individual differences within their sample, and to further investigate how these individual differences effect negative perceptions held toward minority communities. Burkely et al.(2015) found that MCS was positively related to benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, and homophobia. All of which can be highly problematic, especially within rape culture where benevolent and hostile sexism have already been found to be closely related to victim blame and token resistance (Abrams et al., 2003).

Limitations

Some of the possible limitations of the current study could include that the threat manipulation may not have been salient or ecologically valid enough to the participants. Previous studies have

used more overt ways of inducing masculinity threat such as having male participants braid the hair of a wig (Bosson, Prewitt- Freilino, & Taylor, 2005). Even though there have been numerous studies that have found significant results by implementing a personality-like test as a means of threat (Cohn, Seibert & Zeichner, 2009; Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner & Weinberg, 2007; Hunt & Gonsalkorale, 2014; Munsch & Willer, 2012), I speculate that future studies need to implement a more ecologically valid threat manipulation that is similar to what men may face in their everyday life (i.e. being called gay or called a woman by a fellow man). My undergraduate research assistants reported that while they were running, some male participants would ask them clarifying questions about the measure or during debriefing would respond by insinuating they knew that test could not have been real. This could have been a hindsight bias or potentially participants really did not believe that the feedback they received was true.

Another limitation to the study is the potential for a history effect where currently sexual assault is a cultural topic that may have threatened the validity of the current study. President Obama and Vice President Biden have work to bring awareness of the issue of sexual assault, especially taking place on college campuses. The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (“Task Force”) has implemented various forms of systematic change such as increased funding for campuses to enhance prevention enforcement. This directly affects the current study because Ball State University has implemented the Campus SaVE Act (an extension of the Violence Against Women act designed to promote awareness about sexual misconduct, dating violence, sexual assault, awareness of rape, acquaintance rape, and stalking) in accordance to the current Administration’s efforts to prevent sexual violence and improve the response to it at colleges and universities.

The Campus SaVE act was signed into law March 7, 2013 and has been implemented here at Ball State University where incoming freshman are required to go through a mandatory training regarding these sexual violence issues. This is particularly problematic for the current study because many of the participants reported being within their sophomore year here at Ball State University ($M = 4.07, SD = 2.04$). Due to this mandatory training, and given that most of our sample seems to be within their second year, it is very likely they were required to take this mandatory training and are more likely to be aware of issues of sexual assault. Having participants who already may aware of sexual violence issues could account for why our mean scores for victim blame and token resistance were lower than what Abrams et al. (2003) reported. The sample for the current study may have been more aware of issues of sexual assault and may have wanted to present themselves in a desirable way. Knowing that these negative perceptions may not be socially desirable participants may be expressing lower ratings for victim blame and token resistance. However, the current study showed lower scores on victim blame and token resistance than Abrams et al. (2003) originally reported. If Abrams had higher scores in 2003 before the Campus SaVE act was initiated, and they are now showing lower scores for victim blame and token resistance, this may be indicative of how educating college students about these issues may be reducing the acceptance of two problematic perceptions toward rape victims.

In regard to the possible history effect, within the past few years there has been more information about gender identity. More public attention is being paid to the transgender community with celebrities such as Caitlyn Jenner and celebrity activists such as Laverne Cox who have worked to spread awareness of the issues faced by the transgender community. This increased awareness of exploring gender identity may also have played a potential role where men could have become more aware of different expressions of gender identity that stray away from stereotypic ideas of

masculinity. This might lead to potential future research directions that may want to try and isolate a more stereotypic hyper masculine sample that could rate higher in masculinity contingency.

Future Direction

Future studies may want to further investigate how masculinity contingency affects men who are members of all male groups on college campuses such as fraternities and all male sports teams. According to Kimmel (2005), men who are members of these hyper masculine organizations put a lot of effort into maintaining their masculine identity. They even police one another as a means of maintaining masculine role norms where a primary objective in proving manhood is to sharply differentiate the self from anything feminine. Due to type of masculine culture, I would speculate that men who are members of these all male groups, may be more likely to have a lot of importance put on their masculine identity, and thus may have much higher masculine contingency scores than men who were in the current study's sample. Future research should focus on these populations to truly test and see if masculinity threat may be achieved with a hyper masculine population.

I would also suggest that future studies use a more ecologically valid manipulation to induce threat. Many of the examples given for threat include male on male interaction where one male says something lowering the status of the other male by saying something such as "Dude, you're a fag." According to Pascoe (2005) adolescent males gain their masculine identity through using the word "fag." She argues that to be called a "fag" essentially equates to the failure of manhood, but by calling someone a fag, men are able to assert their manhood where being called a fag temporarily removes the man's masculine status (Pascoe, 2005). Based on this information, I would suggest implementing a manipulation where men's status is challenged by using a term such as "fag" in reference to their performance on a task.

A particularly new avenue that may be especially interesting to investigate implementing a masculinity threat would be through virtual reality technologies that replicates an environment, real or imagined, and simulates a user's physical presence and environment in a way that allows the user to interact with. This would be particularly helpful as a future direction for the current study because this new avenue of technology could allow for a more natural environment where participants could be put in a virtual setting that may be more consistent with what they would be likely to be in during their everyday lives. In this setting, participants could have an interaction with an avatar (a graphical representation of a character or person) that threatens their masculinity in a way that is more realistic than the false feedback methods currently used. An example of this may be having the participant and avatar work on a task together and the avatar could criticize the participant and call them a “fag” (which is a term that already has been shown through research to reduce a man’s masculine status). This may be a way men could experience a masculinity threat in a way that is more realistic to what they may deal with in everyday life.

I also think it would be beneficial for future research to follow-up by investigating variables such as ambivalent sexism and homophobia/anti-gay prejudice in regard to MCS. Burkely et al. (2015) investigated these variables briefly where they found that MCS was related to each of those variables. I think that future studies may also want to expand upon this conclusion and investigate other variables as well such as transgender prejudice, traditional gender roles, rape proclivity, or even racial discrimination. Another aspect that we did not even scratch the surface on in regards to the current study is thinking about women and how there may potentially be a femininity contingency. These are all areas that would be very important to investigate further in order to better understand masculinity contingency and to see if an effect may be found for masculinity threat through more ecologically valid manipulations.

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**Appendix A: Demographic Questions including Masculine Contingency Scale (MCS)
(Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2015)**

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible by filling in the blanks or circling the appropriate answer.

1. What is your age? [Please enter numbers only]
2. What is your gender? M or F

If response is **Male** then participant routed to the **Masculine Contingency Scale (MCS)**:

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible. 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

- a. I can't respect myself if I don't live up to what it means to be a "real man"
 - b. My self-respect would be threatened if I didn't consider myself macho
 - c. My self-worth suffers if I think my manhood is lacking
 - d. I can't respect myself if I don't behave like a "real man"
 - e. I would feel worthless if I acted like "less than a man"
 - f. When I act manly, I feel good about myself
 - g. My self-esteem gets a boost if I feel macho
 - h. I feel good when I am able to show off my masculine side
 - i. When I feel masculine, I feel good about myself
 - j. I feel proud when I able to demonstrate my manliness
3. What is your sexual orientation?
 - a. Heterosexual (straight)
 - b. Homosexual (gay)
 - c. Bisexual
 - d. Asexual
 - e. Other _____
 4. How many semesters have you been enrolled in college? _____
 5. What is your current enrollment status?
 - a. Part time
 - b. Full time
 - c. Other _____
 6. What is your ethnic identity?
 - a. African American
 - b. Asian
 - c. Multiracial
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Native American
 - f. White, not Hispanic
 - g. Other _____
 7. What is your marital status?

- a. Unmarried
- b. Married
- c. Divorced
- d. Widowed
- e. Other _____

Appendix B: Gender Knowledge Inventory (Bosson, Weaver, Caswell and Burnaford, 2012)

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible and to the best of your ability.

- 1) NBA star Steve Nash is from:
1- South Africa 2- Canada
- 2) Cesare Catini sells a product that you wear on your:
1- Face 2- Feet
- 3) A dime is what kind of play in football?
1- Defensive 2- Offensive
- 4) Botox temporarily erases wrinkles by:
1- Skin Hydration 2- Muscle Paralysis
- 5) The name of the Carolina NHL team is:
1- Thrashers 2- Hurricanes
- 6) The company first to develop hair coloring was:
1- Clairol 2- L'Oreal
- 7) What team did Bob Gibson pitch for as a Cy Young winner in 1970?
1- Cardinals 2- Yankees
- 8) The cocktail known as the Fluffy Pink Slipper contains:
1- Cranberry Juice 2- Coconut Milk
- 9) Which action is legal in Pride Fighting but illegal in the Ultimate Fighting Championship?
1- Kicking an opponent on the ground 2- Elbow striking
- 10) Children typically start to teethe when they are over or under 1 year old?
1- Over 2- Under
- 11) A motorcycle engine turning at 8000 rpms generates an exhaust sound at:
1- 4000 rpms 2- 8000 rpms
- 12) Toilet training should start around the age of:
1- 36 months 2- 12 months
- 13) To help an engine produce more power you should:
1- Inject the fuel 2- Reduce displacement

- 14) Children should not be given which medication?
1- Ibuprofen 2- Aspirin
- 15) What do you call the small gap left between bricks at the bottom of a cavity wall to let water drain out?
1- Straight channel 2- Weephole
- 16) How many cups of water does it take to cook 1 cup of rice?
1- 2 cups 2- 3 cups
- 17) Karate originated as a martial art in:
1- Japan 2- China
- 18) Leftovers that contain dairy can be safely kept at room temperature for up to:
1- 4 hours 2- 2 hours
- 19) The first people to use primitive flamethrowers in battle were:
1- Greeks 2- Turks
- 20) If you don't have baking powder, you substitute baking soda plus:
1- Salt 2- Cream of Tarter
- 21) Polyvinyl chloride is often used in the home for what?
1- Cleansing agent 2- Siding material
- 22) A roux is best described as a:
1- Sauce 2- Cake
- 23) If you need to replace the tank ball in a toilet, ask for a:
1- Flapper 2- Ball cock
- 24) Compared to men, women need more:
1- Iron 2- Zinc
- 25) The paste used for soldering joints is called:
1- Gel 2- Flux
- 26) During pregnancy, morning sickness usually occurs in which trimester?
1- Second 2- First
- 27) When choosing insulation, the R-value should be:
1- High 2- Low
- 28) What was the first website devoted to women?
1- Glamnet.com 2- Ivillage.com
- 29) Hugh Hefner first published Playboy magazine in:

1- 1963

2- 1953

30) Who has written the most romance novels?

1- Betty Hale Hyatt 2- Dame Barbara Cartland

31) What is Jean Claude Van Damme's name in "Bloodsport"?

1- Frank Dux 2- Louis Burke

32) Which magazine was founded first?

1- Vogue 2- Cosmopolitan

Appendix C: Vignette (Abrams, Viki, Munch, Willer, Masser, & Bohner, 2003)

Please read this entire scenario carefully and to the best of your ability.

Jason and Kathy met and got acquainted at a party thrown by a mutual friend. Since they had a lot in common, they spent the night laughing, dancing, talking and flirting with each other. At the end of the party, Kathy invited Jason over to her apartment to talk some more and have coffee. When they got to her room, Kathy started kissing and caressing Jason. Jason then grabbed Kathy and tried to take her clothes off in order to have sex with her. At this point Kathy pushed him away and asked him to stop. However, Jason did not listen to her, and instead used force to hold her down and eventually penetrated her.

Appendix D: Dependent Measures (Abrams, Viki, Munch, Willer, Masser, & Bohner, 2003)

Please answer the following questions about the scenario you just read as accurately as possible and to the best of your ability.

Victim Blaming Measure Questions

“How much do you think Kathy should blame herself for what happened?”

“How much control do you think Kathy had over the situation?”

“How much control do you think Jason had over the situation?”

“How much do you agree Kathy should not have invited Jason over [or walked with Jason] if she/he did not want to have sex with him?”

“Do you think this incident could have been avoided?”

“Whose fault do you think it is, that things turned out the way they did?”

“How much sympathy do you feel for Kathy?”

A 7-point scale accompanied all questions measuring the dependent variable (1 *_ not at all* to 7 *_ completely or totally*, or 1 *_ Jason* to 7 *_ Kathy*).

Token Resistance

“Kathy really wanted to have sex with Jason.”

“Kathy’s resistance to Jason was only so Jason would not think she/he was too forward.”

“Kathy wanted Jason to overcome her initial resistance.”

“Kathy wanted Jason to ‘take’ her.”

A 7-point scale accompanied all questions measuring the dependent variable (1 *_ not at all* to 7 *_ completely or totally*, or 1 *_ Jason* to 7 *_ Kathy*).