The Mascs We Wear: Masculinity Contingency and Sexual Bystander Attitudes

Cody L. Meyer  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, cody_meyer@live.com

Sarah Eagan  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, sarah.eagan@huskers.unl.edu

David DiLillo  
*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, ddilillo@unl.edu

Sarah J. Gervais  
*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, sgervais2@unl.edu

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1) Introduction

Campus Sexual Assault: (Krebs et al., 2016)
- 1 in 5 female students are sexually assaulted in college
- There is a bystander present at 1 in 3 sexual assaults – but too often they don’t intervene

Sexual Bystander Intervention: (Burn, 2008)
- Potentially primary tool in prevention of sexual assault
- Women are more likely to intervene than men
- Men tend to reference peer social norms to decide whether or not to intervene – frequently inaccurately

Bystander Attitudes: (Banyard & Cross, 2008)
- The likeliness that an individual will engage in various bystander behaviors
- Example: “Confront a male friend who is hooking up with someone who was passed out”

Masculinity Contingency: (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2015)
- The degree to which a man’s self worth is derived from his masculine identity
- Example: “I can’t respect myself if I don’t live up to what it means to be a ‘real man’”

2) Research Question

Is there an association between masculinity contingency and how likely a man is to engage in bystander behaviors?

Hypothesis:
Men high in masculinity contingency will be less likely to engage in bystander behaviors.

3) Method

Participants:
- Male students at a large Midwestern university (N=85)
- Age range: 17 to 25 years (x =19)
- Racial Diversity: White 77.6%, Asian 14.1%, Black/African American 3.5%, Native American 1.2%, Pacific Islander 1.2%, Other 5.9%

Materials:
- Masculinity Contingency Scale (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2015)
  - Asks how much one agrees/disagrees with statements
  - Higher scores indicate more masculinity contingency
- Bystander Attitudes Scale – short form (Banyard & Cross, 2008)
  - Asks how likely one is to engage in a behavior
  - Higher scores indicate more likely to engage in behavior
- Demographics questionnaire

Procedure:
- The survey was administered via computer in a campus research lab. All data were collected using Qualtrics.

4) Results

- Simple linear regression was used to predict bystander attitudes
- Results: R^2(84) = .101, p = .003
- Masculinity Contingency: \( \bar{x} = 39.5, \sigma = 10.75 \)
- Bystander Attitudes: \( \bar{x} = 38.8, \sigma = 7.03 \)
- Figure 1 depicts the regression line for the data

Consistent with the research hypothesis, men high in masculinity contingency were less likely to engage in bystander behaviors.

5) Discussion

- This study found that men whose masculinity is central to their self-worth are less likely to engage in bystander behaviors
- Further suggests that gender socialization might predict bystander behaviors in men

Future Research:
- If this effect is a function of gender, does it still occur within queer, trans, and/or genderqueer populations?
- Is there a more ecologically valid way to test these questions? (Virtual Reality Technology?)