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The Fear of Femininity: How Men's Motivation to Maintain
Manhood Status Influences Performance

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Management

by

Benjamin Alexander Everly

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Fear of Femininity: How Men's Motivation to Maintain
Manhood Status Influences Performance

by

Benjamin Alexander Everly

Doctor of Philosophy in Management

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Margaret Shih, Chair

In this dissertation, I find that men's motivation to maintain manhood status explains why working with an openly gay opponent can increase performance. Study 1 finds that the prospect of competing against a gay male opponent causes men to be more implicitly aware of their masculinity. Study 2 demonstrates that men's motivation to reaffirm their manhood status actually increase performance on a masculine-typed task when the opponent is openly gay rather than openly straight. Finally, Study 3 finds that when the task is feminine-typed and thus performing *better* than a gay opponent would be threatening, men who compete against an openly gay opponent perform worse than men who compete against an openly straight opponent. Thus, it is men's concern about maintaining manhood status that influences performance when competing against an openly gay opponent.

The dissertation of Benjamin Alexander Everly is approved.

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2013

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Manhood, Masculinity Threat, and Performance

Studying the implications of interacting with gay, rather than straight individuals is becoming more important as more lesbian and gay people are interacting openly with others. For example, since Don't Ask, Don't Tell was repealed in 2011, gay and lesbian armed services members are able to serve openly in the military. Additionally, companies are quickly adopting human resources policies that support lesbian and gay employees, which could help create supportive work environments in which gay and lesbian employees feel more comfortable being open about their gay identities (Everly & Schwarz, in press). Finally, with Jason Collins recently becoming the first male athlete in a major US sport to disclose his gay identity, the professional sports world has also begun to wonder how performance might be affected by the presence of openly gay individuals in fields in which gays have previously been invisible. Therefore, in the present dissertation, I examine whether men perform differently in competitions against gay, rather than straight opponents. Additionally, I show that men's concerns about preserving their manhood status help explain these differences in performance.

Lay Perceptions: Femininity Threatens Manhood Status

Achieving manhood status, or possessing a masculine gender identity, is a "risky, failure-prone process" (Pleck, 1981). Unlike womanhood, manhood is dependent on the successful passage of social, rather than physical milestones (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009; Vandello & Cohen, 2008). Because of the social nature of manhood, challenges to manhood are frequent and can result in the loss of manhood status. For example, participants in a study that measured perceptions of manhood were more likely to agree that manhood, compared to womanhood, is not assured, can be lost, and is not a permanent state (Vandello, Bosson,

Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). Because manhood status is not guaranteed and can be easily lost, researchers have conceptualized manhood as a status that is both tenuous and requires continued social proof (Vandello et al., 2008).

How can manhood status be so easily lost? There are several reasons, including the definition of manhood itself. Researchers have defined the masculine gender role as the eschewal of all things feminine (Bosson, Taylor, & Prewitt-Freilino, 2005; Thompson, Grisanti, & Pleck, 1985). Therefore, any feminine behavior or trait can be viewed as a violation of the masculine gender role and thus a threat to manhood status. For example, when the same braiding task was framed as “hairstyling” rather than “rope reinforcing”, male participants rated the “hairstyling” task as more feminine and reported more self-conscious discomfort after completing the task (Bosson et al., 2005). Due to the limited acceptance of behaviors associated with femininity in men and the constant presence of feminine-typed objects, roles, behaviors, and symbols in the surrounding environment, men have been conceptualized as a sort of “gender police” who are sensitive and responsive to masculinity threats (Kimmel, 1994).

This recent work on men’s reactions to femininity is consistent with previous work in psychotherapy detailing men’s general fear of the feminine (Kierski & Blazina, 2009). For years, scholars have acknowledged how men’s fear of femininity influences perceptions of gender roles (Kierski & Blazina, 2009), misogyny (Dinnerstein, 1977), cultural views (Gruen, 1984), and have argued that men’s fear of femininity is a basic psychological phenomenon that affects men (Kierski & Blazina, 2009).

The argument that the presence of femininity is directly threatening to manhood status is slightly at odds with the gender and androgyny literature that views masculinity and femininity as two separate constructs (Constantinople, 1973; Bem 1974). The androgyny perspective argues

that masculinity and femininity are not distinct ends of a continuum, but are independent constructs (Ballard-Reisch & Elton, 1992). Thus, a lack of masculinity, not the presence of femininity should be related to the loss of manhood status.

However, despite this distinction in the literature, the lay view of gender identity is consistent with the notion that masculinity and femininity are situated at opposite ends of the same gender continuum (Willer, Rogalin, Conlon, & Wojnowicz, 2013). Therefore, the presence of feminine characteristics and the lack of masculine characteristics should be perceived as a threat to manhood by the lay perceiver. This conclusion is consistent with evidence that men actively anticipate losing manhood status and being misclassified as homosexual if they engage in stereotypically feminine behavior (Bosson et al., 2005). Because the presence of femininity is threatening to manhood status and manhood status is easily lost, men actively protect their manhood status by avoiding associations with femininity.

Compensating for Masculinity Threat Created by Associations with Femininity

But what happens when men are unable to avoid femininity? Literature on masculinity threat has shown that when men are confronted with false feedback about their gender identity, indicating that they are more feminine than masculine on a gender identity continuum (Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003; Willer et al., 2013; Vandello et al., 2008), men feel threatened and engage in stereotypically masculine behaviors to overcompensate and regain manhood status. For example, when given false feedback that they were more feminine than masculine, male participants were more likely to display homophobic attitudes, support war, and purchase an SUV instead of a car (Willer et al., 2013). Men whose manhood is challenged are also more likely to sexually harass a woman (Maas et al., 2003), endure stronger levels of

electric shock (Holmes, 1971), and exaggerate their sexual experiences (Cheryan, Cameron, Katagiri, & Monin, 2008).

These recent studies on masculinity threat are also consistent with work on hegemonic masculinity and identity management (Chen, 1999). Using structured interviews with Chinese American men, Chen identified four different strategies Chinese American men used to achieve masculinity in the face of stereotypes associating Asian men with femininity (Chen, 1999). One of the strategies identified by Chen, compensation, involved purposefully excelling at masculine activities in order to “cut against” the stereotype that Asian men are feminine. Taken together, Chen’s work along with those that manipulate participants’ perceived masculinity and femininity suggest that men will behave in ways to restore their masculinity if and when their manhood status is in question by themselves or others.

Gay Men and Associations with Femininity

Unlike heterosexual men, gay men are traditionally viewed as possessing less masculine and more feminine traits and characteristics (Kite & Deaux, 1987; Taylor, 1983). Studies that have analyzed the content of the gay male stereotype have determined that gay men are strongly perceived as feminine, sensitive, and gentle (Madon, 1997). Additionally, gay men are perceived as *not* acting macho, tough, and masculine (Madon, 1997). Thus, to the extent that heterosexual men are concerned about maintaining their manhood status, they should avoid associations with gay men who are perceived to be feminine and engage in behaviors to reaffirm their masculinity when these associations cannot be avoided. Furthermore, because gay men are associated with femininity, competing against a gay male opponent should lead to concerns about manhood status similar to competitions in which men compete against a female opponent (Pleck, 1976). If this is the case, then men’s motivation to preserve manhood status in competitions against openly

gay opponents could help explain why previous studies have found men perform better against openly gay opponents at certain tasks (Everly, et al., 2012).

The Present Dissertation

Because men value manhood status and actively avoid associations with femininity to protect manhood status, I predict that men's performance while competing against openly gay and openly straight opponents will be affected by the task's impact on men's perceived manhood status. Specifically, when the task is masculine-typed, I predict men who compete against an openly gay opponent will be motivated to do well at the task, since doing well will protect and reaffirm their manhood status and losing to a gay male opponent would be more threatening to manhood status than losing to an openly straight opponent. However, when the task is feminine-typed and performing well at the task would threaten manhood status, I predict that men will be motivated to perform worse against an openly gay opponent relative to a straight opponent since performing better than an openly gay opponent at a feminine-typed task would be more threatening to manhood status than performing better than a straight opponent. These predictions are tested across three studies that examine whether concerns about appearing feminine influence men's performance when competing against an openly gay opponent.

In Chapter 2, the first study examines if the prospect of competing against a gay male opponent causes men to be concerned about their manhood status. Specifically, because gay men are often associated with femininity, I predicted that men who will compete against an openly gay opponent will be more concerned about their manhood status should they lose at the task than participants whose opponent is openly straight.

Next, Chapter 3 reports a second study comparing performance on a masculine-typed task between men competing against an openly gay or openly straight opponent. Specifically, I

predicted that because the task is masculine-typed and performing well will reaffirm participants' sense of masculinity, participants with an openly gay opponent will be more concerned about their manhood status will and therefore perform better than participants whose opponent is openly straight.

However, if concerns about manhood status are affecting men's performance when competing against an openly gay opponent, then men's performance should decline when the competitive task is feminine-typed, since this would create an added threat to masculinity. Therefore, Chapter 4 reports the results of a third study that examines men's performance on a feminine-typed task. Specifically, I predicted that when the task itself is feminine-typed, men who compete against an openly gay opponent will actually perform worse relative to men whose opponent is openly straight.

Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the implications and limitations of this work, including how this research informs our understanding of men's motivations, the implications for teams and work groups in organizations, and whether women might also be susceptible to gender-based threats to femininity that could influence performance.

CHAPTER 2

Study 1: Does competing against an openly gay opponent lead to concerns about masculinity?

Study 1 establishes that the prospect of competing against an openly gay opponent, relative to an openly straight opponent, causes men to be more concerned about maintaining their manhood status. Because manhood is precarious and can be easily lost and men are likely to engage in behaviors that restore their manhood status when it is in question (Vandello et al., 2008), I predict that men who will compete against an openly gay opponent will be more

concerned about their manhood status than men who will compete against an openly straight opponent.

Method

Participants

Twenty-eight undergraduate men were recruited from a University of California, Los Angeles participant database to participate in the study ($M_{age} = 19.96$, $SD_{age} = 2.22$).

Participants were compensated \$5 for completing the 30 minute study.

Procedures

Participants first arrived at a large computer lab and were greeted by an experimenter. The experimenter instructed participants to sit at an empty computer terminal. Participants were then told that they would complete an online shooting game with a randomly assigned opponent chosen from among the people currently participating in the study. They were told that the purpose of the study was to see how first impressions of their opponent affect performance. Therefore, participants were instructed to complete a brief information sheet that they would then ostensibly swap with their opponent in order to create a first impression. In reality, each participant was randomly presented with a completed information sheet that contained the experimental manipulation from the online survey program and would not be meeting the opponent or completing an online shooting game.

Participants randomly assigned to the *gay opponent* condition read that their opponent was an interior design major from San Francisco who enjoyed cooking and dancing. Participants also learned their opponent was in a relationship with a boyfriend named Josh. Participants in the *straight opponent* condition received identical information about their opponent except they were told that their opponent was in a relationship with a girlfriend named Jessica. Therefore, the only

difference between the two conditions was whether the opponent identified himself as gay or straight to the participants (See Appendix A).

After reading their opponents' information sheet, participants answered questions to measure implicit concern about their manhood status, feelings of anxiety, heterosexism, endorsement of male gender role norms, and certainty of the opponent's sexual orientation. After completing these measures, participants were told that the study was finished and they were debriefed.

Measures

Manipulation-check. To assess whether participants were attuned to the sexual orientation of their opponent, participants completed two items: "How certain were you that your opponent was gay?" and "How certain were you that your opponent was straight?" Participants indicated their response on a 1 (*very uncertain*) to 7 (*very certain*) scale.

Implicit Masculinity Threat. To measure whether participants' were concerned about their manhood status, participants were asked to complete a 5-item word completion task. All 5 words could be completed with words associated with masculinity or neutral words: STR_ _ _ (*strong* or *stripe*), TO _ _ H (*tough* or *tooth*), MUS _ _ _ _ (*muscles* or *musical*), COM _ _ _ ES (*competes* or *commutes*), and CON _ _ DE _ _ (*confident* or *considers*). Our dependent variable is the number of completed words associated with masculinity. This measure is consistent with a previously used implicit measure of masculinity threat in which participants completed a word search with both masculinity-related words and non-masculinity-related words (Goff, Di Leone, & Kahn, 2012) (See Appendix B).

Anxiety. Participants assessed their anxiety by indicating the extent to which they agreed with the statement: “I was anxious about meeting my partner after I read his information sheet.”

Ratings were given on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Heterosexism. Participants’ attitudes toward homosexuality were measured using 25-items with ratings given on a 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*agree*) scale (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999). Sample items include, “Gay people make me nervous,” “I make derogatory remarks about gay people,” and “Homosexuality is immoral” ($\alpha = .92$) (See Appendix C).

Male Role Norms. Participants’ endorsement of male gender role norms was measured using the 26-item Male Role Norms Scale (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Sample items include, “When a man is feeling a little pain he should try not to show very much” and “It is a bit embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually filled by a woman.” Ratings were given on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) ($\alpha = .88$).

Results

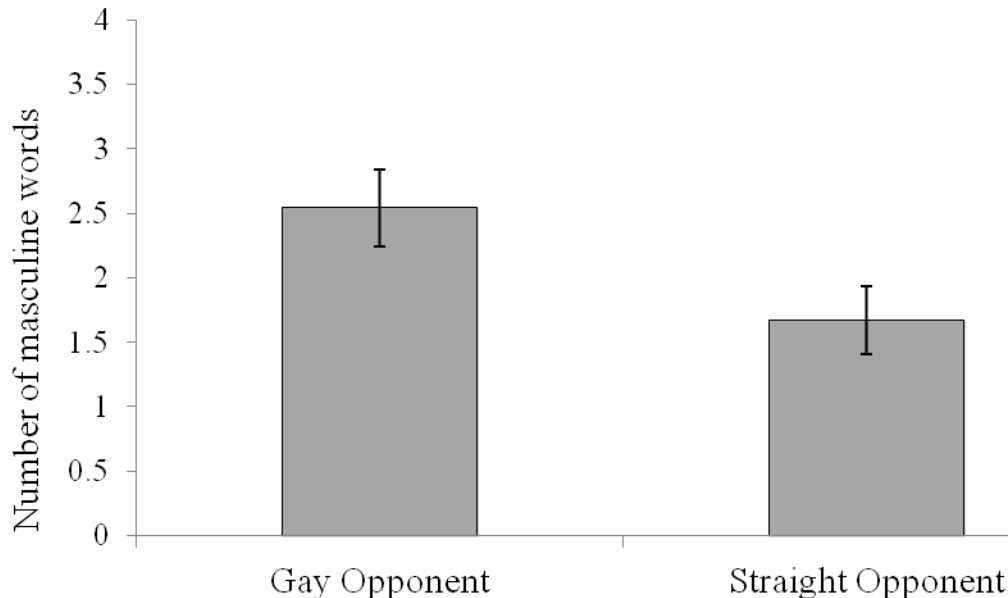
Manipulation-check

To determine whether participants were attuned to the sexual orientation of their opponent, we conducted an independent samples t-test on both of the manipulation check items. The results showed that participants in the *gay opponent* condition were significantly more certain that their opponent was gay ($M = 6.14, SD = 1.35$) than participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 2.53, SD = 1.64$), $t(27) = 6.44, p < .001$. Additionally, when asked how certain they were that their opponent was straight, participants in the *gay opponent* condition were significantly less certain ($M = 2.14, SD = 1.15$) than participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 5.40, SD = 1.84$), $t(27) = 5.18, p < .001$.

Main analysis

Implicit Masculinity Threat. We first examined whether participants with a gay opponent were more likely to be concerned about their manhood status than those with a straight opponent. Therefore, we conducted an independent samples t-test with the number of masculine words completed on the stem completion task as the dependent variable. The results showed that participants in the *gay opponent* condition completed significantly more masculine words ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.05$) than participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .98$), $t(26) = 2.27$, $p < .05$ (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of masculine words completed in the stem completion task



Other Measures. Next, to determine whether there were differences between participants in the *gay opponent* and *straight opponent* conditions with respect to feelings of anxiety, heterosexism, and endorsement of male role norms, we conducted independent samples t-tests on each variable. The results showed that participants with an openly gay opponent were no more anxious ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.50$) than participants with an openly straight opponent ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(26) = -.15$, $p > .05$. There were also no differences in heterosexism between

participants with an openly gay opponent ($M = 2.25$, $SD = .65$) and participants with an openly straight opponent ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.17$), $t(26) = -.70$, $p > .05$. Additionally, there were no differences in the endorsement of male role norms between participants in the *gay opponent* condition ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .74$) and participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .61$), $t(26) = .002$, $p > .05$. Finally, regression analyses revealed that anxiety, heterosexism, and endorsement of male role norms did not moderate the experimental manipulation's effect on the number of masculine words participants answered.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 show that when men believe they will compete against a gay opponent relative to a straight opponent, they are more concerned about their manhood status, but they do not report more heterosexist attitudes and feelings of anxiety. These results suggest that competitive situations with gay men can be threatening to men's sense of masculinity. The results also confirm the sensitive and fragile nature of men's masculinity, adding to previous studies showing that men frequently experience concerns about maintaining manhood status and engage in stereotypically masculine behaviors to reaffirm their masculinity.

It is also interesting to note that Study 1 did not include an actual face to face interaction with a gay male opponent. Simply anticipating a competition over the Internet was enough to create concerns about maintaining participants' manhood status when the opponent was described as openly gay relative to openly straight. However, because Study 1 did not include a measure of performance, it is impossible to tell whether the concerns men experience with competing against a gay male opponent actually lead to performance differences during a competition. Additionally, it is possible that the stem completion task used in Study 1 may have simply been measuring men's implicit identity awareness rather than concerns about manhood

status. In other words, perhaps men who believed they would compete against a gay man were not necessarily concerned about their manhood status, but were simply just more aware of their male identities. Therefore, Study 2 was designed to follow a similar procedure of Study 1 with the inclusion of a masculine-typed performance task and a different implicit measure of masculinity threat.

CHAPTER 3

Study 2: Does competing against an openly gay opponent lead to increased performance at a masculine-typed task?

Study 2 examines whether concerns about preserving manhood status motivate men to perform well at a masculine-typed task when competing against an openly gay opponent relative to an openly straight opponent. Study 2 includes a different measure of implicit masculinity threat in order to rule out the alternative explanation that Study 1's results were simply due to activation of male identity and not concerns about preserving masculinity. Also, participants in Study 2 compete at a video game shooting task that captures sensory-motor performance. Building on the results of Study 1, I predict that because gay men are often associated with femininity and competing against gay men creates concerns about maintain manhood status, men who compete against an openly gay opponent will be more likely to reaffirm their masculinity and will also perform significantly better on a masculine-typed task than men who compete against an openly straight opponent.

Method

Participants

Seventy-four undergraduate men were recruited from a UCLA participant database to participate in the study ($M_{age} = 19.89$, $SD_{age} = 2.06$). Participants were compensated \$10 for

completing the 45 minute study. Of these participants, six either failed the manipulation check or were able to guess the purpose of the study due to errors made by research assistants. Therefore, these six participants were removed from the data analysis, leaving a sample of sixty-eight participants.

Procedure

Participants in Study 2 completed the study individually. When each participant arrived to their study session, the experimenter greeted him and placed him in a room with cubicles. While the experimenter lead the participant to his cubicle, the participant saw that the cubicle next door was occupied by another person who was said to be the participant's opponent in the upcoming study. In reality, this second participant was actually a male confederate research assistant trained to complete the study as if he was an actual participant.

Once the participant was seated in his cubicle, the experimenter informed him that he would be competing against the person next door at a video game task. The experimenter then told the participant that the purpose of the study was to see how first impressions affect performance. To that end, the participant was then instructed to fill out an information sheet that would be exchanged with his opponent to form a first impression before completing the video game task. After completing his information sheet, the participant was given the information sheet that ostensibly belonged to his opponent. The two different information sheets used in Study 2 were identical to those used in Study 1. The information sheets described the opponent as either having a boyfriend named Josh in the *gay opponent* condition or having a girlfriend named Jessica in the *straight opponent* condition. Thus, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two possible conditions. Additionally, the confederate was blind to condition because he did not know whether the participant believed he was gay or straight.

After reading the information about his opponent, the participant and his opponent were brought to a new room where they met in person. After greeting each other for a few moments, the participant and confederate were instructed to play a competitive shooting game on the Wii video game system. The participant and confederate completed the shooting game individually in two rounds so that the participant would have an opportunity to practice the game. However, during both rounds, the participant and confederate were told that their goal was to achieve a higher score than their opponent.

Before the participant played the video game in the first round, the experimenter asked whether he wished to play with a regular Wii remote or if he wanted to use the plastic rifle attachment instead. This question was asked as a way to measure whether participants would reaffirm their masculinity by selecting the rifle attachment, since guns are associated with manhood and masculinity (Kimmel, 2005). If the participant did choose to use the rifle attachment, the experimenter then pretended to remember that the rifle attachment was broken and that the Wii remote would be the only option. This was done in order to make sure all participants completed the shooting task with the same Wii remote.

After completing both rounds of the shooting game, the participant answered survey items measuring his level of experience playing video games, anxiety, heterosexism, endorsement of male gender role norms, and how certain he was of his opponent's sexual orientation.

Measures

Manipulation-check. To assess whether participants were attuned to the sexual orientation of their opponent, participants completed two items: "How certain were you that your opponent was

gay?” and “How certain were you that your opponent was straight?” Participants indicated their response on a 1 (*very uncertain*) to 7 (*very certain*) scale.

Implicit Masculinity Threat. Before playing the video game, participants were asked whether they wanted to use the regular Wii remote or the rifle attachment. Because guns are associated with masculinity and manhood, selecting the rifle attachment was interpreted as a behavior that reaffirmed participants’ masculinity.

Task Performance. Task performance was measured using the video game “Big Game Hunter” for the Wii video game system. Points in the game are earned by accurately and quickly shooting as many birds as possible in two minutes. At the end of each round of shooting, the player is told how many birds they shot within the two minute time limit. We used the total number of birds killed to measure task performance. To help control the confederate’s performance, the confederate was trained to perform at a standard level across trials. After completing the shooting task, participants answered the item “How skilled are you at video games?” on a scale of 1 (*not at all skilled*) to 7 (*very skilled*), to control for previous experience playing video games.

Anxiety. Participants were asked the same anxiety item as Study 1, “I was anxious about meeting my partner after I read his information sheet.”

Heterosexism. Participants’ attitudes toward homosexuality were measured using the same 25-items as Study 1 (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999).

Male Role Norms. Participants’ endorsement of male gender role norms was measured using the same 26-item Male Role Norms Scale as Study 1 (Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

Results

Manipulation-check

To determine whether participants were attuned to the sexual orientation of their opponent, we conducted an independent samples t-test on both of the manipulation check items. The results showed that participants in the *gay opponent* condition were significantly more certain that their opponent was gay ($M = 5.83, SD = 1.38$) than participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 2.47, SD = 1.80$), $t(66) = 8.71, p < .001$. Additionally, when asked how certain they were that their opponent was straight, participants in the *gay opponent* condition were significantly less certain ($M = 2.08, SD = 1.34$) than participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 4.97, SD = 2.07$), $t(66) = -6.90, p < .001$.

Main analysis

Rifle Attachment. We first examined whether participants paired with a gay opponent were more likely to select the rifle attachment to complete the shooting task than participants with a straight opponent. To this end, we conducted a binary logistic regression with participants' choice of the gun as the dependent variable. Participants who turned down the rifle attachment were coded as "0" while participants who chose to use the rifle attachment were coded as "1." The results showed that participants in the *gay opponent* condition were more likely to select the rifle attachment than participants in the *straight opponent* condition, $B = -.96, SE = .50, p = .05$.

Task Performance. Next, to determine whether participants with a gay opponent performed better at the shooting task than participants with a straight opponent, we conducted two ANCOVA analyses with the number of kills in each round as the dependent variable. The ANCOVA analyses controlled for participants previous experience playing video games. The results of the first analysis showed that participants who competed against an openly gay opponent shot significantly more birds in the first round ($M = 88.67 SE = 2.64$) than participants

who competed against an openly straight opponent ($M = 81.24$, $SE = 2.80$, $F(1, 65) = 5.51$, $p < .05$) (See Figure 2). Similarly, the results of the second analysis showed that participants who competed against an openly gay opponent also shot significantly more birds in the second round ($M = 102.47$, $SE = 2.82$) than participants who competed against an openly straight opponent ($M = 95.41$, $SE = 2.99$, $F(1, 65) = 4.05$, $p < .05$) (See Figure 3).

Figure 2. Number of birds shot in Round 1

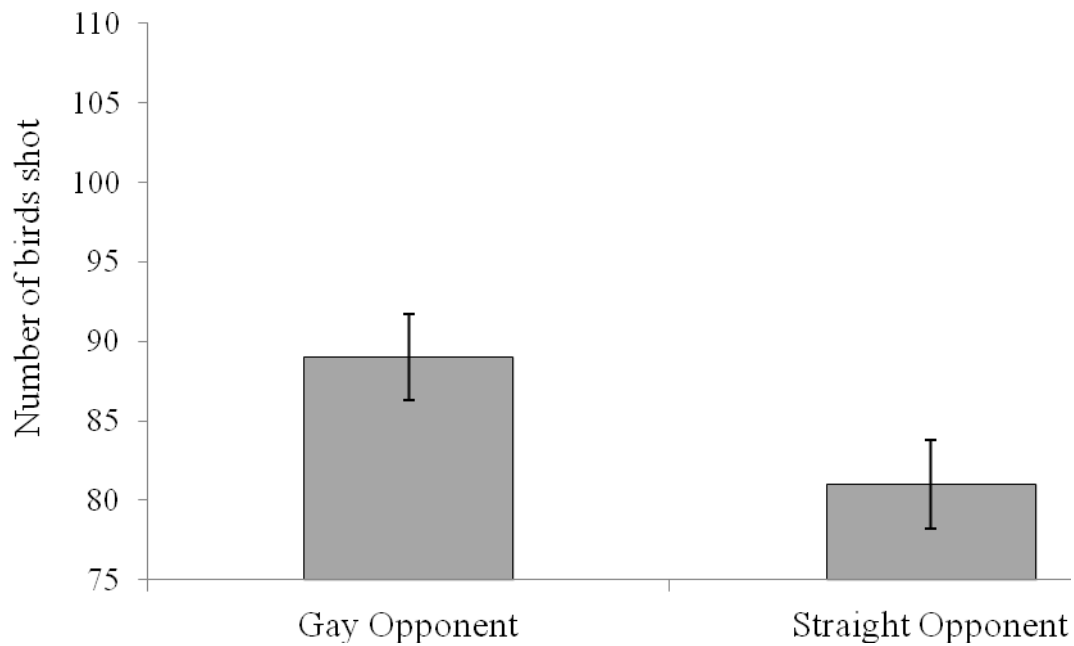
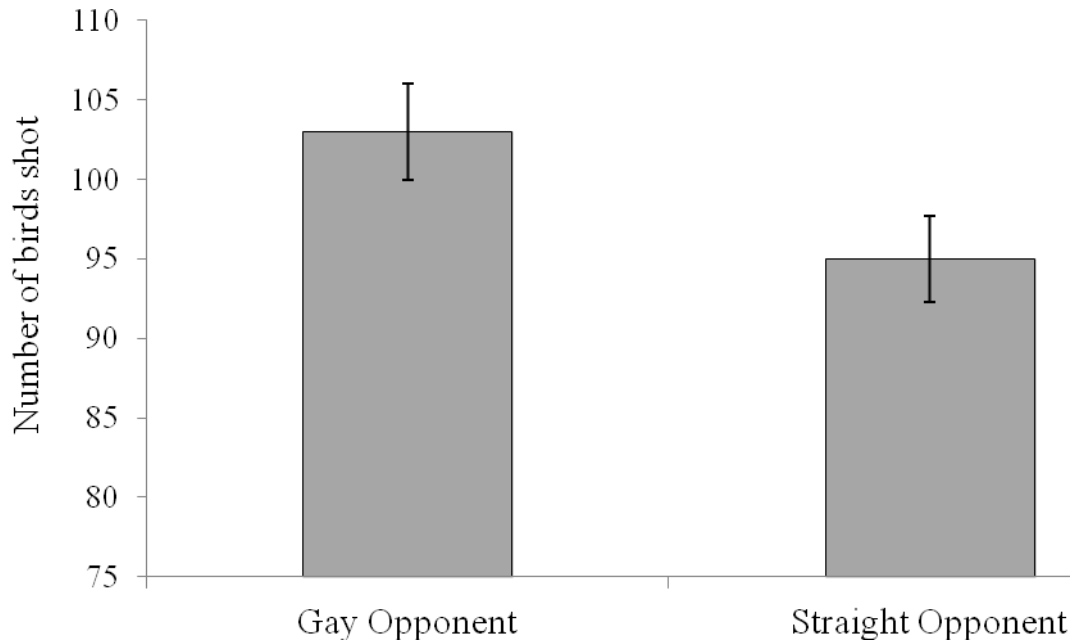


Figure 3. Number of birds shot in Round 2



Other Measures. Finally, we conducted independent samples t-tests to determine whether there were differences between participants in the *gay opponent* and *straight opponent* conditions with respect to feelings of anxiety, heterosexism, and endorsement of male role norms. Similar to Study 1, the results showed no significant differences between the conditions on any of the variables, $ps > .32$. Additionally, regression analysis revealed that neither anxiety, nor heterosexism, nor endorsement of male role norms moderated the effect on task performance. Finally, the unadjusted means and standard deviations for the measured variables are reported below (See Table 1).

Table 1. Unadjusted means and standard deviations of measured variables

	Gay Opponent	Straight Opponent
Round 1: Kills	(89.19, 15.95)	(80.66, 15.70)
Round 2: Kills	(102.83, 18.10)	(95.00, 15.16)
Anxiety	(3.36, 1.53)	(3.06, 1.39)
Heterosexism	(2.37, .95)	(2.45, .99)
Male Role Norms	(3.75, .76)	(3.60, .77)

Discussion

The results from Study 2 replicate the finding from Study 1 that men who are about to compete against an openly gay opponent at a masculine-typed task are more concerned about their manhood status by completing more masculinity-related words (Study 1) or choosing a rifle attachment for video game task (Study 2). This result suggests that competing against an openly gay opponent causes men to be concerned about their masculinity, at least at the implicit level. Additionally, the results of Study 2 show that men who compete against an openly gay opponent perform significantly better at a masculine-typed task than men who compete against an openly straight opponent.

However, there are some limitations with the present study. Because the shooting task used in Study 2 involves a stereotypically masculine set of behaviors (i.e., shooting, killing, and hunting), the results of Study 2 do not provide evidence that men will show increased motivation to perform better when competing against openly gay opponents in all competitive situations. Additionally, because previous literature has found that men are more aggressive and violent toward gay men after receiving threats to their masculinity (Bernat, Calhoun, Adams, & Zeichner, 2001), it is possible that men perform better at the shooting task simply because it is a violent and aggressive task. Therefore, the results of Study 1 and 2 alone do not rule out the

possibility that violence and associations with aggression, not concerns about preserving masculinity, help explain why men perform better against an openly gay opponent. Finally, in Study 2, participants practiced the shooting task in the first round while the confederate was also in the same room. This means that the confederate and participant were watching each other perform the task in the first round. Although the confederate was trained to perform at a standard level across all trials, it is possible that participants' performance in the second round was affected by seeing how well the confederate performed in the first round.

Therefore, Study 3 addresses these concerns by introducing a competition using a feminine-typed baking video game. By changing the shooting task to a baking task, which is stereotypically feminine (Etaugh, Cooley, & Stern, 1981), we can address the explanation that associations with violence are mainly driving men's performance in Studies 1 and 2. In other words, because baking is not associated with violence, any difference in men's performance can be attributed to the experimental manipulation rather than associations with the task itself. Additionally, by giving participants the chance to practice the task alone, then measuring how much their performance improves when competing against an openly gay or openly straight opponent, we can address concerns about participants' performance in the first round being affected by the presence of the confederate during the task. In other words, by having participants complete the task by themselves in the first round and then examining the change in performance when the confederate is present in the second round, we should have a more precise measurement of the confederate's influence on participants' performance. Finally, if it is the desire to preserve and reaffirm men's manhood status that influences men to perform in certain ways, men who compete against openly gay opponents at a feminine task should perform *worse* than men competing against an openly straight opponent. This is because performing well at a

feminine-typed task against an openly gay opponent relative to a straight opponent should make men feel more feminine since they show greater aptitude for a feminine task than a gay male who is already stereotyped to be good at feminine tasks.

CHAPTER 4

Study 3: Do men perform better against an openly gay opponent at a feminine-typed task?

The purpose of Study 3 is to show that male participants are motivated to outperform gay male opponents only if losing at that task will threaten their masculinity and doing well at the task will reaffirm their masculinity. If the task itself is feminine-typed, I predict that instead of outperforming their opponent, male participants will instead underperform against a gay male opponent relative to an openly straight opponent because winning against a gay male opponent at a feminine-typed task would be seen as a threat to one's masculinity while losing against a gay male opponent at a feminine task would preserve manhood status. Therefore, in Study 3, I predict participants with an openly gay opponent will perform worse at the task than participants with an openly straight opponent. Because the task itself is feminine-typed in both conditions, it is likely that performance would be lower in both conditions relative to the previous study when the task was masculine-typed. However, any differences in performance between the two conditions when the task is feminine-typed should still reflect participants' desire to maintain masculinity.

Method

Participants

Forty-two undergraduate men were recruited from a UCLA participant database to participate in the study ($M_{age} = 21.36$, $SD_{age} = 3.43$). Participants were compensated \$10 for completing the 45 minute study. Of these participants, four either failed the manipulation check

or were able to guess the purpose of the study due to errors made by research assistants.

Therefore, these four participants were removed from the data analysis, leaving a sample of thirty-eight participants.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to the same conditions as Study 2. Participants also followed a similar procedure except instead of completing a masculine-typed shooting task, participants completed a feminine-typed baking task using the game “Cooking Mama” for the Wii video game system. The “Cooking Mama” game contains several different recipes that players can make. Each recipe has different steps that must be completed by simulating cooking actions with the Wii remote. The participant and confederate completed the baking game individually in two rounds so that the participant would have an opportunity to practice the game. Unlike Study 2, the participant and confederate practiced the game alone in the first round, so that the participant was not concerned about their opponent watching them perform the task. In the second round, the participant and confederate met in the same room and performed the task again.

Measures

Manipulation-check. To assess whether participants were attuned to the sexual orientation of their opponent, participants completed two items: “How certain were you that your opponent was gay?” and “How certain were you that your opponent was straight?” Participants indicated their response on a 1 (*very uncertain*) to 7 (*very certain*) scale.

Task Performance. Task performance was measured using the “Custard” recipe in the video game “Cooking Mama” for the Wii video game system. Points for this recipe were earned by accurately and quickly performing the different steps needed to prepare the custard. Specifically,

participants needed to crack eggs, whisk ingredients, bake the custard, and remove the custard from its container. After completing the recipe, participants received a total score, which was the sum of their score for each step of the recipe. Because participants practiced the task in the first round alone and did not interact with the confederate until the second round of competition, we measure task performance for this study as the participants' scores during the second round of competition, controlling for their score in the first practice round. If concerns about masculinity are motivating men's performance, then men who competed in the same room as an openly gay opponent in the second round should perform worse than participants who competed against an openly straight opponent, controlling for original performance in the practice round. To help control the confederate's performance, the confederate performed at a standard level across trials. After completing the baking task, participants answered the item "Have you played Wii before?" on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 4 (*yes, often*), to control for experience playing Wii.

Anxiety. Participants were asked the same anxiety item as Studies 1 and 2, "I was anxious about meeting my partner after I read his information sheet."

Heterosexism. Participants' attitudes toward homosexuality were measured using the same 25-items as Studies 1 and 2 (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999).

Male Role Norms. Participants' endorsement of male gender role norms was measured using the same 26-item Male Role Norms Scale as Studies 1 and 2 (Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

Results

Manipulation-check

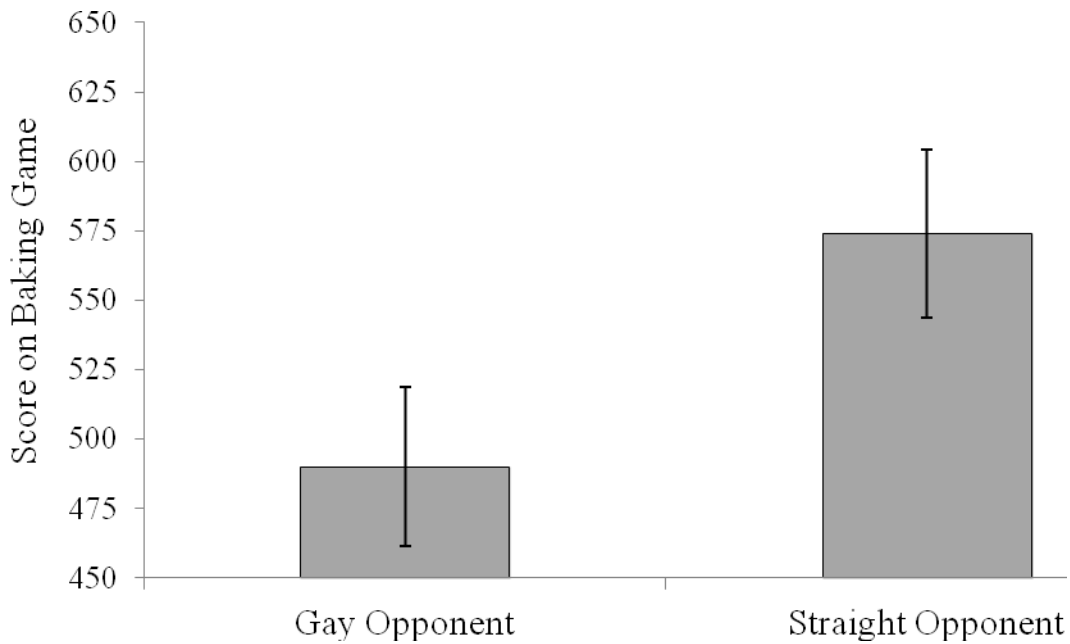
To determine whether participants were attuned to the sexual orientation of their opponent, we conducted an independent samples t-test on both of the manipulation check items. The results showed that participants in the *gay opponent* condition were significantly more

certain that their opponent was gay ($M = 6.10$, $SD = 1.55$) than participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.57$), $t(36) = 7.87$, $p < .001$. Additionally, when asked how certain they were that their opponent was straight, participants in the *gay opponent* condition were significantly less certain ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 1.48$) than participants in the *straight opponent* condition ($M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.96$), $t(36) = -5.93$, $p < .001$.

Main analysis

Task Performance. Next, to determine whether participants with an openly gay opponent performed worse at the baking task than participants with an openly straight opponent, we conducted an ANCOVA analysis with the total score during the second round as the dependent variable. The ANCOVA analysis controlled for participants' previous experience playing video games and their score during the first practice round. The results of this analysis showed that participants who competed against an openly gay opponent earned significantly less points while preparing the recipe in the second round ($M = 490.78$, $SE = 28.82$) than participants who competed against an openly straight opponent ($M = 574.70$, $SE = 30.40$, $F(1, 34) = 3.94$, $p = .05$) (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Adjusted means of points scored at the baking task in Round 2 controlling for Round 1 performance and previous experience playing Wii.



Other Measures. Finally, we conducted independent samples t-tests to determine whether there were differences between participants in the *gay opponent* and *straight opponent* conditions with respect to feelings of anxiety, heterosexism, and endorsement of male role norms. The results showed no significant differences between the conditions on any of the variables, $p_s > .25$. Additionally, regression analyses revealed that neither anxiety, not heterosexism, nor endorsement of male role norms moderated the effect on task performance. Finally, the unadjusted means and standard deviations for the measured variables are reported below (See Table 2).

Table 2. Unadjusted means and standard deviations of measured variables

	Gay Opponent	Straight Opponent
Round 1: Score	(443.10, 172.15)	(385.61, 171.75)
Round 2: Score	(510.65, 187.22)	(552.61, 143.73)
Anxiety	(2.85, 1.42)	(3.44, 1.69)
Heterosexism	(2.47, .98)	(2.14, .90)
Male Role Norms	(4.25, .76)	(3.83, .83)

Discussion

The results of Study 3 show that men competing against an openly gay opponent perform significantly worse than men competing against an openly straight opponent when the task itself is feminine-typed. Specifically, these results suggest that men are not *always* motivated to outperform a gay male opponent regardless of the task. Rather, men's performance is influenced by how the outcome of the competition will affect their manhood status. Similar to Studies 1 and 2, the finding that there is no difference in anxiety between participants in the disclosed-gay and disclosed-straight conditions suggests that although competing against an openly gay opponent leads to more concern about maintaining manhood status, it does not lead to more anxiety in general.

It is interesting to note that in the practice round before participants actually competed against their opponent in the same room, participants who knew they would compete against a gay opponent performed better ($M = 443.10$, $SD = 172.15$) than participants who knew they would compete against a straight opponent ($M = 385.61$, $SD = 171.75$). Although not statistically significant, this difference mirrors the effects of Study 1 and 2; namely that the prospect of competing against a gay opponent seems to increase men's motivation to perform well relative to competing against a straight opponent. However, once the participants realized that the task itself

was feminine-typed and met their opponent in person to begin the competition, the results show that the performance of participants with a gay opponent improved much less than participants with a straight opponent. This relative drop in performance shows that the feminine-typed task coupled with a gay opponent creates a threat to manhood status that men compensate for by underperforming in the actual competition.

The results of Study 3 are also relevant to the literature on men and stereotype threat. Specifically, previous work has discovered that men perform worse when a task is perceived as being feminine-typed relative to when the task is described in a neutral way. For example, when men were asked to complete a task measuring “social sensitivity,” they performed worse than when the same task was purportedly measuring “information processing.” (Koenig & Eagly, 2005). The results of Study 3 extend this work by showing that in addition to any performance decrements associated with completing a feminine-typed task, men with an openly gay partner perform even worse due to the additional concerns about masculinity brought about when their opponent was openly gay rather than openly straight.

CHAPTER 5

General Discussion & Conclusion

Overall, the results of these suggest that the prospect of competing against an openly male opponent can be threatening to men’s sense of masculinity (Study 1) and that men’s performance is ultimately affected by how the outcome of the competition will affect their sense of masculinity (Study 2 and 3). In the event that the task is masculine-typed, men perform especially well against an openly gay opponent relative to an openly straight opponent as a way to preserve their manhood status. However, when the task is feminine-typed, men perform worse when their opponent is openly gay because succeeding at that task creates an added threat to

masculinity that does not exist when the opponent is openly straight. The results of these studies also provide evidence that helps explain why men have been shown to perform better when partnered with a gay teammate (Everly et al., 2012). When losing brings up concerns about losing manhood status, men may actually perform better against an openly gay opponent than an opponent who is openly straight. More broadly, the results of these studies also highlight the extremely sensitive nature of men's manhood status and the lengths men are willing to go in order to preserve or reaffirm their masculinity.

Although previous work has shown that men partnered with an openly gay teammate perform better at cognitive and sensory-motor tasks than men partnered with an ambiguously gay teammate (Everly et al., 2012), the results of these studies temper the interpretation that men always perform better when they know their teammate or opponent is gay. Overall, it seems that although ambiguity may hurt performance of those working with a gay teammate, knowing about one's gay identity might not always lead to better performance, especially if performing well would threaten manhood status.

Although the present studies do not examine performance at an athletic task, such as basketball, these results could have direct implications for athletes like Jason Collins, who disclose their gay identities. On one hand, previous work would suggest that Jason's teammates would perform better now that he has disclosed his gay identity rather than keeping his identity ambiguous (Everly et al., 2012). However, the present studies suggest that because basketball is a masculine-typed activity, Jason's opponents would be motivated to perform especially well against him as a way to preserve their manhood status. Therefore, in addition to his teammates, it is possible that Jason's opponents might perform better when they know about his gay identity. Another possibility however, is that because Jason's opponents are motivated to maintain their

manhood status, they may engage in more aggressive behavior on the court, which could lead to increased fouls and other errors that could decrease their performance. Therefore, future studies should examine the performance implications of masculinity threats on different types of tasks to determine whether performance might be positively or negatively affected by threats to manhood status depending on particular attributes of the task.

Future work could also attempt to distinguish gender-based masculinity threats from concerns straight individuals have about being misclassified as gay. For example, it is possible that in Study 3, male participants performed worse at the baking task when their opponent was gay not because of a desire to protect their manhood status per se, but rather due to concerns about being misclassified as gay by the opponent if they performed well at the feminine-typed task. This explanation is consistent with previous work on identity misclassification (Bosson, Prewitt-Freilino, & Taylor, 2005) and highlights the importance of understanding the psychological underpinnings of masculinity threats.

For organizations looking to maximize the productivity and efficiency of employees, it might be important to consider how men's motivation to maintain manhood status might influence individual and team performance. Although the results of these studies seem to suggest that tasks and teams could be designed to capitalize on men's motivation to maintain manhood status, it is unclear whether this would always lead to desired outcomes. For example, if work is completed individually and does not involve feminine-typed tasks, perhaps highlighting the competitive nature of the work could increase overall performance. However, if work is completed in teams, then perhaps emphasizing concerns about manhood status might increase men's performance, but only at the expense of others in the team. Future research should examine how the disclosure of social identities impacts groups and not just individuals.

By proposing that men who compete against openly gay opponents feel threatened, causing them to perform better, the results of these studies may seem in direct opposition to stereotype threat studies which argue that increased threat leads to decreased performance due to concerns of confirming negative stereotypes associated with one's group (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). However, research on the underlying mechanisms of stereotype threat has shown that there are multiple mechanisms through which stereotype threat can occur (Beilock, Jellison, Rydell, McConnell, & Carr, 2006).

One explanation is that worrying about confirming negative stereotypes introduces distracting thoughts that impair working memory (Ashcraft & Kirk, 2001; Beilock & Carr, 2005). Consequently, tasks that necessitate the use of working memory should be negatively impacted due to stereotype threat (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008). However, a second explanation involves explicit monitoring theory (Baumeister, 1984; Beilock & Carr, 2001), and argues that pressure to perform well increases attention to the specific steps needed to perform well at a given task. When the task at hand is well known and requires automatic execution for optimal performance (Kimble & Perlmutter, 1970; Langer & Imber, 1979), specific attention to each step disrupts the automatic process and results in poorer performance. Finally, a third explanation known as mere effort argues that when the task is relatively simple and the dominant response is the correct response to perform well at the task, increased motivation actually increases performance (Jamieson & Harkins, 2007).

Because the shooting and baking tasks in the present study are simple, not previously practiced by participants, and do not require working memory to complete, the tasks lend themselves to the mere effort explanation, which explains why increased effort leads to greater performance. Additional support that certain tasks have a direct link between effort and

performance comes from studies conducted by motivation researchers. Such tasks include idea generation tasks (Harkins & Petty, 1982; Wegge & Haslam, 2005) and vowel cancellation tasks (Allport, 1924).

Limitations

We should be careful about how much we generalize the results of these studies since the participants in all studies were undergraduate men at UCLA. Because students at UCLA tend to be more progressive and liberal than the average person, the results may not generalize to all men. However, it is possible that a sample of men who believe more strongly in traditional gender roles and norms might actually be more likely to show the motivated performance behaviors in these studies. In other words, men who believe strongly in traditional gender roles might be more likely to interpret different situations as threats to masculinity and may be more attentive to restoring their masculinity when they feel it is in question.

Another limitation of this work is that the current studies lack mediation that directly links implicit measures of masculinity threat to performance. Although masculinity threat is manipulated in Study 3 by making the performance task feminine-typed, a mediation analysis would provide additional evidence that concerns about manhood status directly influence men's performance.

One possible alternative explanation for the results of these studies involves priming. Specifically, it is possible that the results of Study 1 and Study 2, particularly the difference in performance at the shooting task, could be explained by male participants being primed to experience more associations with masculinity and violence when competing against an openly gay opponent. However, the results of Study 3, in which performance on a feminine-typed task is measured, help to address this alternative explanation since there do not seem to be any implicit

associations between gay men and baking that would cause participants to perform worse in that condition.

Another potential issue is that since competition itself is a masculine-typed endeavor and men may perceive an openly straight opponent as a tougher opponent, it is possible that men would feel more masculine by winning against an openly straight opponent relative to an openly gay opponent. Therefore, one might predict that men would actually perform better against an openly straight opponent at a masculine-typed task if their motivation was to increase their self-perceived manhood status. Looking at the results of Study 2 however, we find that any desire men have to increase their feelings of masculinity by performing well against an openly straight opponent is overshadowed by the desire of men who competed against an openly gay opponent to avoid feeling less masculine. Therefore, results of Study 2 may indicate that men's desire to avoid losing manhood status is actually stronger than the desire to gain additional manhood status.

Future Directions

Finally, the present studies only examine men's reaction to competing against other men. Future studies should examine whether men perceive competitions against women the same as they perceive competitions against gay men. If concerns about preserving manhood status influence men's performance, then men should be just as concerned about manhood status in competitions against female opponents. Although there has been some work previously done in this area in which some men performed better against a female opponent relative to a male opponent (Pleck, 1976), it is important to continue examining these questions as attitudes and stereotypes regarding gender may change over time. Additionally, although femininity is less socially determined than masculinity, future work should examine whether women are

susceptible to femininity threats like men are susceptible to masculinity threats. Specifically, could women's performance change depending on how the outcome would affect their sense of femininity?

Conclusion

Overall, the studies presented in this dissertation present one explanation for why men have been shown to perform better when partnered with a gay teammate (Everly et al., 2012). However, the results of these studies also provide a more nuanced understanding of what men perceive as threatening to their masculinity and how men's motivation to preserve and reaffirm their manhood status can motivate their performance beyond the simple desire to win.

Appendix A

Information Sheets

Disclosed-Gay Condition

Information Sheet

Name: Conrad

Age: 19

Academic Interests: Interior design

Hometown: San Francisco, California

Relationship Status: In a relationship with my boyfriend, Josh.

Hobbies/Interests: Dancing, watching movies, cooking

Disclosed-Straight Condition

Information Sheet

Name: Conrad

Age: 19

Academic Interests: Interior design

Hometown: San Francisco, California

Relationship Status: In a relationship with my girlfriend, Jessica.

Hobbies/Interests: Dancing, watching movies, cooking

Appendix B

Stem Completion Task

Name _____

SONA ID _____

Directions: Please fill in the blanks to make a complete word. It's okay if you get stuck and cannot complete a word.

S T R _ _ _

T O _ _ H

M U S _ _ _ _

C O M _ _ _ E S

C O N _ _ D E _ _

Appendix C

Heterosexism Scale

1. Gay people make me nervous.

2. Gay people deserve what they get.

3. Homosexuality is acceptable to me.

4. If I discovered a friend was gay I would end the friendship.

5. I think homosexual people should not work with children.

6. I make derogatory remarks about gay people.

7. I enjoy the company of gay people.

8. Marriage between homosexual individuals is acceptable.

9. I make derogatory remarks like "faggot" or "queer" to people I suspect are gay.

10. It does not matter to me whether my friends are gay or straight.

11. It would upset me if I learned that a close friend was homosexual.

12. Homosexuality is immoral.

13. I tease and make jokes about gay people.

14. I feel that you cannot trust a person who is homosexual.

15. I fear homosexual persons will make sexual advances towards me.

16. Organizations which promote gay rights are not necessary.

17. I have damaged property of a gay person, such as "keying" their car.

18. I would feel uncomfortable having a gay roommate.

19. I would hit a homosexual for coming on to me.

20. Homosexual behavior should not be against the law.

21. I avoid gay individuals.

22. It bothers me to see two homosexual people together in public.

23. When I see a gay person I think, "What a waste."

24. When I meet someone I try to find out if he/she is gay.

25. I have rocky relationships with people that I suspect are gay.

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