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Ironic Masculinity and Femininity: Do Contextual Factors Reverse Attributions Based on Gender Stereotyped Behaviors?

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by

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Abstract

Emerging research highlights the social penalties for men and women who commit cross-gendered behaviors. Here, I examine how and when two contextual mechanisms (competence and credentials) alter people's perceptions of cross-gendered behavior and render actors as less gender-atypical and more gender-typical. In Study 1, I tested the hypothesis that incompetence in cross-gendered behaviors would communicate same-gendered qualities by contrast. In Study 2, I tested the hypothesis that an actor who commits a cross-gendered behavior will receive less gender-inconsistent evaluations if they first demonstrate gender-typical traits. Moreover, Study 2 examines whether or not these credentialed actors change the perception of the behavior's alignment with conventional gender stereotypes. Results were largely mixed but generally failed to support hypotheses. The Discussion focuses on how future research can address these questions.

Introduction

People enact gender-consistent (i.e., same-gender) behaviors and avoid enacting gender-inconsistent (i.e., cross-gendered) behaviors to cultivate socially-sanctioned impressions from observers (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Wood & Eagly, 2010). Behaviors consistent with gender stereotypes result in social approval, whereas violations of these stereotypes result in social penalties (e.g., derogation from peers; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Stated simply, current theory suggests that, both to establish socially accepted gender identities and to avoid backlash, men should do masculine (and avoid feminine) behaviors and women should do feminine (and avoid masculine) behaviors.

In this dissertation, I examine contexts in which cross-gendered behaviors do not threaten, and may in fact strengthen, perceptions of one's gender-normative identity to observers. Because I am suggesting that cross-gendered behaviors can yield stereotype-consistent attributions, I term the resulting attributions *ironic masculinity* and *ironic femininity*. Specifically, I propose two routes by which people can perform behaviors stereotypically associated with the opposite gender (e.g., feminine behaviors for men) but which establish or enhance an identity consistent with their own gender (e.g., masculine identity for men). In what follows, I first define and summarize research on the definition and maintenance of masculine and feminine role norms. I then describe the potential roles of behavioral competence and prior gendered behaviors as contextual variables for modifying expected attributions for gendered behaviors.

Psychological Motives of Gender Conformity

People have a biological sex (male, female) distinct from their gender (man, woman), the latter a social construction derived from psychological, cultural, and social norms (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Perceived and actual characteristics of men and women have remained a focal point of social psychological research for several decades. Most summaries of people's stereotypical perceptions of men and women, both within the United States and cross-culturally, have yielded dimensions of agency and action as descriptive of men (Ashmore et al., 1986; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Gilmore, 1990; Pleck, 1981; Williams & Best, 1990), and warmth and communion as descriptive of women (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Further, these perceived stereotypes often match reality in terms of men's and women's actual characteristics and behaviors (Swim, 1994).

As mentioned previously, gender stereotypes have both a descriptive and prescriptive component. Not only can people describe the social groups of men and women, but people also know and enforce social sanctions prescribing qualities men and women *should* have (Wood & Eagly, 2010). According to the Biopsychosocial framework, people historically observe men and women fulfilling social roles most efficiently accomplished by their sex (e.g., males into manual labor due to physical strength, females into child-rearing due to reproductive capacity). These observations yields expectations that men and women *should* occupy these roles, and have their prerequisite qualities, to perpetuate society's normal functioning (i.e., prescriptive gender stereotypes). Those who fail to adhere to these prescriptive stereotypes or who perform prescriptive behaviors for the opposite gender face social penalties from observers (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 2001). These prescriptive norm violations yield interpersonal derogation and attempts to prevent future

atypical behaviors through sabotage (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Additionally, people who succeed in cross-gendered domains receive personal derogation and reduced liking (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Heilman & Wallen, 2010).

Women's increasing need for independence and financial autonomy (e.g., Twenge, 1997), and increasing expectations for men's sensitivity and nurturance (O'Neil, 2008; Pleck, 1995), often make traditional gender prescriptions counterproductive or harmful. Many people avoid otherwise beneficial cross-gendered behaviors due to feared backlash for committing them. For example, women often refrain from communicating agency due to an implied deficit in communal traits (Heilman et al., 2004). Women also avoid assertiveness in salary negotiations, limiting their income potential relative to men, due to feared backlash (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Conversely, men's avoidance of femininity causes them to seek help less readily for mental health concerns than women (Kessler, Brown, & Bowman, 1981), and to participate in domestic chores less than female spouses who earn similar incomes (Arrighi & Maume, 2000; Thébaud, 2010). In addition, men who violate traditional gender norms by performing stereotypically feminine behaviors fear misclassification as homosexual (Bosson, Prewitt-Freilino, & Taylor, 2005).

Conversely, committing cross-gendered behaviors in the absence of social repercussions can have important benefits for men and women. Cross-gendered behaviors produce temporary increases in psychological well-being for men who do not experience initial self-conscious discomfort (Bosson et al., 2005). Further, men and women experience more satisfying sexual relationships when heterosexual men hold less traditional views about female sexuality (Sanchez, Phelan, Moss-Racusin, & Good, 2012), and when women experience less pressure to conform to

traditional feminine norms (Sanchez, Fetterolf, & Rudman, 2012). Finally, people perceive agentic women as more competitive for high-paying jobs (Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995).

In short, feared evaluations for violating gender role prescriptions cost both men and women flexibility and choice to commit otherwise beneficial behaviors. If these prescriptive norms perpetuating such behaviors derive from consistent observations of men and women naturally fulfilling traditional social roles, research must explore how actors can perform cross-gendered behaviors without experiencing backlash form observers. In what follows, I describe two possible routes through which people might conduct gender-atypical behaviors without suffering the usual penalties.

The Competence Hypothesis

Many features of the context surrounding an actor's behavior influence observers' perceptions and explanations for that behavior. One of the most consistent findings in Western cultures is the fundamental attribution error: people disproportionately explain unfamiliar others' behaviors in terms of internal qualities (e.g., personality traits) rather than external qualities (e.g., circumstances; Bargh, 1994; Heider, 2013; Jones & Harris, 1967). Characteristics of the actors and observers influence this process. For example, the two-step process model of attribution suggests that people first make automatic, internal attributions and then consciously reconsider them to entertain situational attributions, cognitive resources permitting (Gilbert, 1989; Krull, 1993). Thus, this model suggests that final attributions strongly depend on the observer's cognitive load and the capacity to reconsider initial attributions. Actor variables contribute to observers' conclusions about behaviors as well: For example, participants reading an educational article about a masculine topic evaluated the article more positively when supposedly written by a male rather than a female author (Biernat & Manis, 1994). In this instance, behavior

evaluations require consideration of not just the behavior but the actor's group membership (e.g., the genderedness of the behavior and the gender of the actor).

Given that attributions vary with actor and observer variables, this dissertation explored how the specific actor variables of gender and behavioral competence interact to produce resulting attributions. Masculine and feminine prescriptions are often (but not always) mutually exclusive. For example, the feminine prescriptions of *warm* and *emotional* contradict the masculine prescriptions of *stoic* and *rational* (Rudman et al., 2012; Williams & Best, 1990); thus, the implied absence or presence of warmth and emotionality can imply the presence or absence, respectively, of stoicism and rationality.

This first implies that people who perform cross-gendered behavior competently should receive trait attributions consistent with the opposite gender. Women succeeding in traditionally masculine domains are perceived as more competent and agentic but also less communal (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Similarly, men described in more communal terms are perceived as lacking masculine traits of confidence and ambition (Heilman & Wallen, 2010; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010). Moreover, these attributions coincide with social penalties, such as disliking of men and women who succeed in cross-gendered domains (Heilman et al., 2004; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010; Phelan, Link, & Dovidio, 2008; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001).

This secondly implies that people who perform cross-gendered behaviors *incompetently* may signal possession of gender-consistent qualities. To my knowledge, no research has empirically examined this prediction. In other domains, strategically used incompetence communicates desirable qualities to observers. For example, when portrayed as highly competent, people like actors who commit embarrassing blunders more compared to identical actors who do not commit embarrassing blunders (the *pratfall effect*; Aronson, Willerman, &

Floyd, 1966). This results from increased relatability of the highly competent actor to the relatively less competent observer (Helmreich, Aronson, & LeFan, 1970). Those performing in high-pressure situations also strategically communicate inability or incompetence (i.e., *sandbagging*) to lower observers' expectations of their performance (Gibson & Sachau, 2000); doing so reduces the actor's pressure and anxiety, anticipated negative evaluations for incompetence, and theoretically improves an actor's ultimate performance (Gibson, Sachau, Doll, & Shumate, 2002). Finally, while not communicative of positive qualities, actors still can benefit by communicating incompetence: for example, actors attempt to recruit help from others by advertising their weaknesses or need for assistance (*supplication;* Jones & Pittman, 1982).

Given the potential for incompetence to communicate desirable qualities in these other domains, I expect incompetence in cross-gendered behaviors, rather than lowering evaluative pressure or serving as a bid for help, to advertise gender-consistent traits to observers. For example, men who incompetently and unsuccessfully quiet a fussy infant may implicitly convey emotional insensitivity or stoicism, whereas women who incompetently commit physical aggression may convey increased empathy or emotionality. As mentioned previously, prescriptive norms for men and women largely imply an absence of feminine and masculine traits, respectively (Rudman et al., 2012; Williams & Best, 1990), and conducting same-gender behaviors can communicate these prescriptive traits to observers. Study 1 therefore tests the prediction that committing cross-gendered behaviors incompetently achieves ironic masculinity or ironic femininity by signaling to observers more gender-consistent and less gender-consistent trait attributions.

The Credentialing Hypothesis

Not surprisingly, the character attributions observers make about actors strongly depend on observers' additional knowledge both about actors and the behavioral context (e.g., Kelley, 1973). For example, behaviors performed under strong external pressures are less likely to result in stable, internal attributions than those performed under weak external pressures (Kelley, 1973). Similarly, people can safely perform potentially objectionable behaviors when first conveying a socially approved identity: For example, people are more willing and comfortable committing immoral behaviors when first given the opportunity to establish a moral identity (Monin & Miller, 2001).

Other research highlights the importance of prior gender-typical identities in attenuating the perceived and actual repercussions for subsequent gender role violations. Men asked to do a feminine task fear misclassification as homosexual, but this fear attenuates when they have the chance to claim a heterosexual identity (Bosson et al., 2005). Pascoe (2003) terms a related phenomenon among adolescent boys *jock insurance*, referring to the ability for athletic (and thus gender-typical) boys to have greater freedom in violating gender prescriptions without fear of being seen as overly feminine. Women who demonstrate workplace leadership receive less negative judgment when highlighting same-gender qualities (e.g., communality) or behaviors (Phelan, Moss-Racusin, & Rudman, 2008).

In Study 2, I tested a similar hypothesis that explores the influence of prior gender-consistent (or gender-inconsistent) credentials on cross-gendered behaviors. I expected two consequences to result: First, if people learn that a gender-typical (rather than -atypical) person conducts a same-gendered behavior, their explanation for this behavior will derive from the gender-typical qualities they first learned. Indeed, first impressions carry a disproportionate

weight in our holistic evaluations of people (Willis & Todorov, 2006). For example, in the absence of gender-consistent information, people may perceive a man conducting a gender-atypical behavior (e.g., hair-braiding) as effeminate or gay. If they first learn that the man has gender-consistent attributes, however, people may instead view this behavior through their first (masculine) impression of the man, seeing it instead as rebellious, brave, or courageous (masculine qualities).

Second, given that gendered stereotypes exist because of observations of men and women performing stereotypical behaviors (Allport, 1954; Wood & Eagly, 2010), this suggests that gender-violating behaviors themselves (e.g., a man wearing black nail polish) would appear less stereotypically gendered when performed by a credentialed person. Stated differently, a credentialed (i.e., masculine man or feminine woman) person performing a cross-gendered behavior should receive more gender-consistent (and gender-inconsistent) personality attributions. Moreover, I expected observers to construe the behavior itself as less consistent with the original gender stereotype. Study 2 tests both of these predictions.

If supported, these findings would have important implications for understanding the formation and maintenance of gender stereotypes. If repeated observations of men and women enacting specific roles reinforces gender stereotypes, then having men and women commit more cross-gendered behaviors would weaken existing stereotypes. The backlash both men and women receive for doing so, of course, naturally prevents this (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010). If contextual factors can change perceptions of the person and the behavior, this may momentarily change the stereotypical association of that behavior with the groups of men and women. Chronically, then, strategically performing cross-gendered behaviors

in ways that yield same-gendered attributions may eventually weaken the gender-typical associations made for those behaviors.

Precarious Manhood: Unique Consequences for Men?

Thus far, my discussion of gender stereotypes and gender backlash has focused on the ways that men and women experience similar pressures to adhere to gender stereotypes. The precarious manhood hypothesis supplements this research by further arguing that the social status of manhood differs from the status of womanhood (Vandello et al., 2008; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Specifically, society generally construes manhood (but not womanhood) as an achieved rather than ascribed social status conferred by others. Manhood status is both elusive (i.e., requiring effort and affirmation) and tenuous (i.e., "manhood" status can be challenged and lost). Because people associate manhood (compared to womanhood) more strongly with social achievements (Vandello & Bosson, 2013), men feel pressure to earn manhood status through these achievements, and failure in masculine domains threatens men's gender status. Emerging research documents many empirical examples of this. Feedback on a fictional test suggesting low masculinity threatens men's gender status (e.g., Vandello et al., 2008). Additionally, performing feminine behaviors, such as braiding a mannequin's hair (Bosson et al., 2005), or applying floral-scented hand lotion (Weaver, Vandello, & Bosson, 2013), threatens men's gender status. Further, men respond to gender status threats with heightened levels of stress (Caswell, Bosson, Vandello, & Sellers, 2012), and increased proclivity towards risky or aggressive behaviors (e.g., Bosson et al., 2009; Weaver et al., 2010). Additionally, some evidence suggests that observers hold the expectation of precarious manhood. For example, people endorse hypothetical proverbs which describe manhood as an achieved and elusive social status more than identical proverbs about womanhood (Vandello et al., 2008; Study 1a). People also seem implicitly cognizant of

circumstances which could pose threats to men's manhood status (e.g., Michniewicz & Vandello, in press; Schlenker, 2010).

Importantly, some recent research suggests that perceptions of manhood (versus attributions on specific gendered traits) predict unique consequences for men. For example, Michniewicz, Vandello, and Bosson (2014) found that feared manhood loss but not feared evaluations on any traits prescriptive of manhood, predicted men's (but not women's) poorer mental health symptoms. Because of the possibility that global gender status evaluations have separate implications from gendered traits for men, I measured gender status independently of target evaluations hypothetically associated with gender status.

The Current Studies

To summarize thus far, people make personality attributions about actors using both the behaviors (e.g., masculine or feminine behaviors) these actors perform and the prior knowledge held about them (e.g., gender, prior behaviors). The gender fit of behaviors performed by people of both genders influences their social approval by others (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010). However, previous work has not empirically addressed the potential ironic attributions of these behaviors: That is, when can women’s masculine behaviors ironically yield feminine attributions, and when can men’s feminine behaviors ironically yield masculine attributions?

Here, I report two studies to test these ironic attributions. In Study 1, I tested the role of incompetence. Because performing a cross-gendered behavior may implicitly communicate characteristics of the opposite gender (e.g., Williams & Best, 1990), I expected incompetence in cross-gendered behaviors to yield less gender-atypical and more gender-typical evaluations of

targets from observers. I also explored whether or not global gender status (i.e., manhood and womanhood) evaluations followed a similar pattern.

In Study 2, I explored ironic masculinity and femininity (respectively) using an actor's prior gendered credentials. I expected an actor demonstrating prior gendered behaviors to cultivate an impression consistent with gendered traits. Further, if this impression causes people to reinterpret a subsequent gender-role-violating behavior as communicating same-gendered qualities, then observers should perceive the cross-gendered behavior, and the actor performing the behavior, as more gender-consistent as a result.

Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study to select the behaviors and contexts needed for both main studies. In Study 1, participants evaluated gendered behaviors: Piloting these behaviors allows the selection of masculine and feminine behaviors equally gendered and sufficiently diverse for external validity. In Study 2, participants evaluated a target on likely occupations, necessitating pilot testing to ensure that observers perceive the final list of masculine and feminine occupations as equally gendered.

Method

Participants

Participants consisted of (*N*=86) undergraduate students (*Md* age = 21) at the University of South Florida who completed an online survey in exchange for course credit. Due to an error with Qualtrics, the survey did not record participant gender for 48 participants. However, of the remaining 41 participants, 15 described themselves as male, 25 as female, and 1 as neither male nor female. Participants described themselves as 57.3% White, 19.1% Black, 5.6% Asian, 7.9% Bi-racial (with no additional information specified), 6.7% as other; 3.4% did not provide information about race or ethnicity.

Measures and Procedure

Participants completed the following items in the order described. Appendix A contains full instructions for all Pilot Testing materials.

Target Vignettes. Participants evaluated five paragraphs, written with the intent of being gender-neutral in content, on three items: "*The person in this paragraph could be a typical man*," "*The person in this paragraph could be a typical woman*," and "*The person in this paragraph is gender neutral (i.e., they do not strike me as more likely to be one gender than the other)*." Participants evaluated these items on a scale ranging from *1 = Strongly Disagree* to *9 = Strongly Agree*. Participants saw all paragraphs in a randomly-presented order.

Gendered Behaviors. Participants evaluated eleven masculine and twelve feminine behaviors on five questions. Responses to the first, "*How feminine or masculine is the behavior*," ranged from *1 = Very Feminine* to *9 = Very Masculine*. The remaining four, answered on a scale from *1 = Not at All* to *9 = Extremely*, consisted of "*How likely is it that a man would do this behavior*," "*How likely is it that a woman would do this behavior?*" "*How much of a gender-role violation would it be for a woman to do this behavior*," and "*How much of a gender-role violation would it be for a man to do this behavior*" Participants saw all behaviors in a random order.

Gendered Occupations. Participants evaluated five masculine and five feminine occupations, randomly ordered and presented, on a scale ranging from *1 = Very Feminine* to *9 = Very Masculine*. These occupations come from existing reports on the occupations people stereotypically associate with each gender (Focus Bari, 2010; YouGov, 2012). Feminine occupations consisted of *receptionist, nurse, daycare provider, hairdresser,* and *elementary school teacher*, while masculine occupations consisted of *construction worker, airplane pilot, plumber, firefighter,* and *football coach*.

Results and Discussion

Tables 1-3 contain means and standard deviations for each of the pilot test measures.

Target Vignettes. Participants' evaluations of the targets differed significantly on all three measures associated with the target vignettes. Specifically, I conducted one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs on each measure, and each test for differences between vignettes yielded a significant result: for perceptions that the target could be a typical man, $F(4,332) = 20.79$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .20$; for perceptions that the target could be a typical woman, $F(4,332) = 7.53$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$; for perceptions that the target could be a member of either gender, $F(4,332) = 4.31$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$.

The significant variability in vignette evaluations suggests that use of only one vignette in follow-up studies would be inappropriate, as these differences imply baseline differences in trait attributions used as primary dependent measures. However, all ratings of the vignettes on perceptions that the target could be a member of either gender fell above the scale midpoint, all $t(88) > 3.14$, all ps $< .01$, suggesting that participants saw the vignettes as sufficiently ambiguous in spite of differences. In both studies, I therefore included all five vignettes among a pool of possible vignettes participants might see and evaluate in the context of the larger study. While these significant differences exist, randomly assigning these paragraphs to condition adjusts for any individual differences in the paragraphs themselves.

Gendered Behaviors. I had five measures to consider when choosing gendered behaviors. I ultimately intended to select those which were clearly gendered (i.e., masculine behaviors that were evaluated as more masculine than feminine and vice versa for feminine behaviors). A second goal involved ensuring that behaviors were evaluated as being moderately gender-role violating for the opposite gender to conduct. For example, if *ironing clothes* was considered a very weak gender-role violation, then treating this behavior as a representative of gender-role violations in the context of further studies would be inappropriate. Conversely, if *ironing clothes*

was considered a strong gender-role violation, then the behavior may overwhelm the context's ability to motivate participants' evaluations. Thus, I sought moderately role-violating behaviors, which would theoretically have the benefit of the consensus that it is indeed gender-role violating but without the ability to overshadow the contextual information I am testing.

In selecting the appropriate masculine behaviors, I did not consider evaluations on the item "*How feminine or masculine is this behavior?*" as all masculine behaviors fell above the midpoint (in the masculine direction) and all feminine behaviors fell below the midpoint (in the feminine direction). Instead, I used how likely men would be to conduct, and how much of a gender-role violation it would be for men to conduct, feminine behaviors and vice versa for masculine behaviors. All masculine items fell above the midpoint on the scale for likelihood of men conducting the behavior, and all feminine fell above the scale midpoint for likelihood of women conducting the behavior. Finally, because participants evaluated all gender-consistent behaviors as weak gender-role violations for their gender, I only considered the extent to which the behaviors were gender-role violations for the opposite gender.

For feminine behaviors (as masculine gender-role violations), I eliminated *arranging flowers* and *wearing black finger nail polish*, as these specific behaviors not only had the lowest likelihood of a man doing them, but participants agreed more that these were gender-role violating behaviors than that men would be likely to do them. For masculine behaviors (as feminine gender-role violations), I eliminated eliminate *hunting a wild animal, organizing a fantasy football league, defending oneself in a fistfight*, and *chopping down a tree with a chainsaw* for the same reasons. All remaining behaviors were eligible for use based on these criteria.

Gendered Occupations. Gendered occupations much more clearly corresponded to the anticipated gender of the target. Specifically, participants evaluated all feminine occupations below the scale midpoint and all masculine occupations above the scale midpoint.

Study 1: The Role of Competence in Evaluations of Others

Study 1 tested whether behaviors typical for the opposite gender, when performed incompetently, can cause actors to appear more gender-typical and less gender-atypical as a result. Further, I explored if the usual consequences for men for gender-atypical behavior (i.e., lower manhood evaluations), attenuate following incompetently performed behaviors. Thus, Study 1 employed a task ostensibly gauging participants' first impressions of others. To this end, participants evaluated hypothetical men and women who competently or incompetently perform gender-typical (masculine for men, feminine for women) or gender-atypical (feminine for men, masculine for women) behaviors. Participants then evaluated that target on positive and negative masculine and feminine traits. The design is thus a target gender (man, woman) x gender-typicality of behavior (gender-stereotypical, gender-atypical) x competence (high competence, low competence) mixed factorial design, with repeated measures on all factors but target gender. Additionally, participants viewed floating target gender (male, female) control conditions in which they evaluated a non-descript man or woman, yielding 10 total cells.

Given the ability for gender backlash to influence men and women, and for gendered behaviors to communicate possession of gender-consistent and absence of gender-inconsistent qualities, I expected the same pattern of results for men and women on gendered traits. Specifically, I hypothesized:

1) I expect a gender-typicality of behavior x competence interaction on trait measures. For gender-stereotypical behaviors, I expect that competently performed (relative to incompetently performed) same-gendered behaviors will result in greater gender-consistent trait attributions and less gender-inconsistent trait attributions. For cross-

gendered behaviors, I expect incompetently performed (relative to competently performed) behaviors will result in greater gender-consistent trait attributions and less gender-inconsistent trait attributions.

2) Relative to the control (no gender behavior information) condition, incompetently performed opposite-gendered behaviors will result in greater gender-consistent trait attributions and less gender-inconsistent trait attributions.

Target gender may also influence the predicted interactions. Because male gender status is precarious (Vandello et al., 2008), I expect the degree of competence in conducting the behavior to more strongly influence the gender status perceptions people hold of men's gender status evaluations. I expect perceptions of women's gender status not to differ analogously for two reasons. First, existing longitudinal trends suggest that women are embracing more masculine traits over time while men are not becoming respectively more feminine (Twenge, 1997). This suggests that the standards for acceptable gender-atypical behavior may differ for men and women, which findings on penalizing cross-gendered behaviors support (Feinman, 1981, 1984; Levy, Taylor, & Gelman, 1995; Sirin, McCreary, & Mahalik, 2004). Second, perceptions of womanhood do not vary as markedly in situational contexts as perceptions of manhood (Vandello et al., 2008); thus, most behaviors do not bear as strongly on perceptions of women's womanhood as men's manhood. For evaluations of gender status, I expect the following:

3) I expect a target gender x genderedness of behavior x competence interaction. For gender-stereotypical behaviors, I expect a competence x target gender interaction on gender status evaluations. Competently performed (relative to incompetently performed) behaviors will result in higher gender status evaluations for men, but not women. For cross-gendered behaviors, I expect a competence x target gender interaction on gender status evaluations. Incompetently performed behaviors (relative to incompetently performed behaviors) will result in higher gender status evaluations for men, but not women.

4) Relative to the control condition, incompetently performed cross-gendered behaviors will result in higher gender status evaluations for men but not women.

Method

Participants

Participants consisted of 118 undergraduate students from SONA Systems (age *Md* = 20, 15.6% men). Participants described themselves as 51.9% White, 11.9% Black, 13.3% Hispanic, 6.7% Asian, 1.5% Biracial (with no additional information); three participants did not report their race or ethnicity.

Materials

Gendered Evaluations. Participants evaluated each target on 18 traits by rating their agreement (from *1 = Completely Disagree* to *9 = Completely Agree*) that the particular trait described the target. Of these traits, sixteen items, drawn from Bosson and Michniewicz (2013), varied on the dimensions of social desirability (desirable, undesirable) and genderedness (masculine, feminine). Positive masculine traits included *adventurous, daring*, *competitive,* and *enterprising* (α = .96), positive feminine traits included *appreciative, emotionally expressive, enthusiastic,* and *humble* (α = .87), negative masculine traits included *arrogant, coarse, boastful,* and *reckless* (α = .95), and negative feminine traits included *fussy, melodramatic, insecure,* and *weak* (α = .91)[1]. The remaining two items, evaluated on the same scale, simply read *masculine* and *feminine*.

Gender Status. Participants evaluated each target on two items, drawn from Michniewicz, Vandello, and Bosson (2014), assessing the target's gender status. These items were evaluated on the same scale as gendered evaluations (from *1 = Completely Disagree* to *9 = Completely Agree*) and read *Manly (Womanly)* and *Like a Real Man (Woman)*. The gender status composite was the average of responses to both items.

[1] While I did not hypothesize or test differences as a function of trait valence, I included both positive and negative traits to ensure that potential findings did not reflect a bias in overall valence for positive and negative traits.

Competence Ratings. After all questions about a particular target's traits, participants evaluated the competence of the behavior performed as a manipulation check. Participants evaluated their agreement with the statement that the behavior was performed competently on a scale from *1 = Completely Disagree* to *9 = Completely Agree*.

Procedure

Appendix B contains full instructions and behavior details. After learning that the study concerned impression formation given limited information, participants read about five hypothetical targets and provided gendered evaluations for each. They learned the target's gender (man or woman) and that the target recently completed a same-gender or cross-gender behavior competently or incompetently. The fifth (control) condition described no behavior (and thus no information regarding its competence). Qualtrics randomly assigned the particular paragraph and behavior to each target, and each behavior and paragraph contained an ending statement describing the behavior as being done competently or incompetently. All participants saw an incompetently performed masculine behavior, incompetently performed feminine behavior, competently performed masculine behavior, competently performed feminine behavior, and control condition with either all male or all female actors. After each paragraph, participants completed gender trait ratings of the target. Participants answered manipulation check questions for each behavior and questions regarding demographic information at the end of the survey.

Results

Manipulation Check

I submitted perceptions of behavioral competence to a target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA. As expected, only a main effect

for competence emerged, $F(1,115) = 67.87$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .37$; all other tests $F(1,115) < 1.07$, ps > .30. Participants judged competently described behaviors as more competent (M = 6.88, SD = 1.67) than incompetently described behaviors (M = 4.74, SD = 1.99).

Gendered Traits

To fully explore participants' gendered evaluations, I submitted each composite of gendered traits (masculine positive, masculine negative, feminine positive, feminine negative) to a target gender (man, woman) x behavior typicality (same-gender, cross-gender) x behavioral competence (competent, incompetent) mixed factorial ANOVAs with repeated measures on all the last two factors[2]. In what follows, I describe the outcome of each ANOVA.

Positive, Gender-Typical Traits. The target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA on positive, same-gendered trait ratings yielded an unexpected significant three-way interaction, $F(1,113) = 4.63$, $p < .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$ (see Figure 1). For male targets, the hypothesized (*Hypothesis 1*) behavioral competence x behavioral genderedness interaction reached significance, $F(1,58) = 8.78$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Simple effects tests showed that, as expected, participants evaluated men performing a masculine behavior competently as more consistent with positive, masculine traits (M = 5.57, SD = 1.69) than men performing a masculine behavior incompetently (M = 4.92, SD = 1.64), $F(1,59) = 6.06$, $p < .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Additionally, participants evaluated men performing feminine behaviors incompetently as marginally more consistent with positive, masculine traits (M = 5.10, SD = 1.67) compared to performing feminine behaviors competently, (M = 4.71, SD = 1.56), $F(1, 59) = 3.05$, $p < .09$, η_p^2

[2] Including participant gender as a factor did not produce any participant gender main effects or interactions for any dependent measures, all $p > .10$. However, because the sample consisted largely of women, future research on gender differences in these perceptions would require a more balanced sample.

= .05. Failing to support Hypothesis 1, for women, the behavioral competence x behavioral genderedness interaction did not reach significance, $F(1, 57) = .30$, $p < .59$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. The main effect for behavioral competence also failed to reach significance, $F(1, 57) = 2.41$, $p > .12$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. However, the behavioral genderedness main effect did reach significance, $F(1,57) = 19.01$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$. Participants viewed women completing feminine behaviors as more consistent with positive, feminine traits ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 1.43$) compared to women completing a masculine behavior ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.15$), regardless of behavioral competence.

Negative, Gender-Typical Traits. The target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA on negative, same-gendered trait ratings did not yield a significant three-way interaction, $F(1,113) = 2.58$, $p > .11$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$ (see Figure 2). Likewise, the hypothesized (*Hypothesis 1*) behavioral competence x behavioral genderedness interaction did not reach significance, $F(1,113) = .23$, $p > .63$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$; the behavioral genderedness x target gender interaction did not reach significance, $F(1,113) = .51$, $p = .48$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. Finally, the behavioral competence x target gender interaction did not reach significance, $F(1,113) = 1.89$, $p > .17$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$. The main effect for behavioral competence did not reach significance, $F(1,113) = 1.45$, $p > .23$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$. However, the behavior genderedness main effect did reach significance, $F(1,113) = 14.44$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. This effect suggests that participants viewed targets who committed masculine behaviors, regardless of competence, as more consistent with same-gendered, negative evaluations (negative, masculine traits for male targets, and negative, feminine traits for female targets; $M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.65$), compared to targets who committed feminine behaviors, ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.65$).

Positive, Gendered-Atypical Traits. The target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA on positive, opposite-gendered trait ratings yielded an unexpected significant three-way interaction, $F(1,113) = 8.96$, $p < .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$ (see Figure 3). For men, the hypothesized (*Hypothesis 1*) behavioral competence x behavioral genderedness interaction reached marginal significance, $F(1,59) = 3.47$, $p < .07$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Failing to support Hypothesis 1, simple effects tests did not show a significant difference in positive, feminine trait evaluations between men performing a masculine behavior competently ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.59$) versus incompetently ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.62$), $F(1,59) = 0.23$, $p > .63$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. However, supporting Hypothesis 1, among men performing feminine behaviors, behavioral competence yielded marginally higher positive, feminine trait evaluations ($M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.33$) compared to behavioral incompetence ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.25$), $F(1,59) = 3.95$, $p < .06$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. For women, the hypothesized (*Hypothesis 1*) behavioral competence x behavioral genderedness interaction also reached significance, $F(1, 56) = 5.88$, $p < .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Supporting Hypothesis 1, simple effects tests showed that women performing a masculine behavior competently received higher evaluations on masculine, positive traits ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.81$) compared to women performing masculine behaviors incompetently ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.85$), $F(1, 56) = 5.53$, $p < .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$. However, failing to support Hypothesis 1, women who performed a feminine behavior competently ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.80$) did not receive significantly different evaluations on masculine, positive traits compared to women who performed feminine behaviors incompetently ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.68$), $F(1,56) = 1.72$, $p > .19$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

Negative, Gender-Atypical Traits. The target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed,

incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA on negative, opposite-gendered trait ratings did not yield a significant three-way interaction, $F(1,113) = .964$, $p > .32$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$ (see Figure 4). Likewise, the hypothesized (*Hypothesis 1*) behavioral competence x behavior genderedness interaction did not reach significance, $F(1,113) = 1.22$, $p > .27$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$; the behavioral competence x target gender interaction did not reach significance, $F(1,113) = .04$, $p > .83$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. However, the behavior genderedness x target gender interaction did reach significance, $F(1,113) = 6.21$, $p < .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Simple effects tests show that men performing a masculine behavior ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 2.29$) did not significantly differ from men performing a feminine behavior ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 2.30$) on feminine, negative traits, $F(1,116) < .01$, $p > .92$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. However, participants viewed women performing a masculine behavior as significantly higher on masculine, negative traits ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 2.39$) compared to women performing a feminine behavior ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 2.31$), $F(1,116) = 9.91$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$.

In summary, results largely failed to support Hypothesis 1: Among all comparisons, men who committed masculine behaviors competently appeared more consistent with positive masculine traits, and men who committed feminine behaviors incompetently appeared more consistent with positive masculine traits and less consistent with positive feminine traits.

Masculinity and Femininity

Masculinity. I submitted the single item of masculinity to the target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA. The three-way interaction was not significant, $F(1,115) < .02$, $p > .90$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$ (see Figure 5). While the behavior genderedness x target gender interaction, $F(1,115) = 2.71$, $p > .10$, $\eta_p^2 < .03$, and the hypothesized (*Hypothesis 1*) behavioral competence x target gender interaction, $F(1,115) < .06$, p

> .80, η_p^2 < .01, failed to reach significance, the behavioral competence x behavior genderedness did reach significance, $F(1,115) = 5.83$, $p < .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Simple effects tests suggest that, for masculine behaviors, perceptions of masculinity did not differ between competently ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 1.62$), or incompetently performed behaviors ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.91$), $F(1,115) = 1.63$, $p < .21$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$. However, for feminine behaviors, people perceived targets as higher in masculinity when incompetently performing behaviors ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.54$) than when competently performing behaviors ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.82$), $F(1,115) = 5.66$, $p < .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Finally, an unsurprising main effect for target gender emerged, $F(1,115) = 30.50$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$, indicating that people perceived men ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.37$) as more masculine than women ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.50$). The main effect for behavior genderedness was not significant, $F(1,115) = .41$, $p > .52$.

Femininity. I submitted the single item of masculinity to the target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA. The three-way interaction was not significant, $F(1,115) < .29$, $p > .59$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$ (see Figure 6). While the behavior typicality x target gender interaction, $F(1,115) = 1.82$, $p > .18$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$, and the hypothesized (*Hypothesis 1*) behavioral competence x target gender interaction, $F(1,115) < .60$, $p > .45$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, failed to reach significance, the behavioral competence x behavior typicality did reach significance, $F(1,115) = 12.64$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Simple effects tests suggest that, for masculine behaviors, perceptions of femininity differed marginally between competently ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.72$), or incompetently performed behaviors ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.90$), $F(1,115) = 3.31$, $p < .08$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. However, with feminine behaviors, people perceived targets as higher in femininity when competently performing behaviors ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.81$) than when incompetently performing

behaviors (M = 5.10, SD = 1.71), $F(1,115) = 10.70$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Finally, an unsurprising main effect for target gender emerged, $F(1,115) = 27.33$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$, indicating that people perceived women (M = 5.42, SD = 1.42) as more feminine than men (M = 4.75, SD = 1.50). The main effect for behavior genderedness was not significant, $F(1,115) = 1.16$, $p > .28$.

Gender Status

I submitted the two-item composite of gender status to the target gender (man, woman) x behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) mixed factorial ANOVA. The hypothesized (*Hypothesis 3)* three-way interaction was significant, $F(1,115) = 6.10$, $p < .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$ (see Figure 7). I thus examined the behavior genderedness (same-gender, opposite-gender) x behavioral competence (competently performed, incompetently performed) factorial ANOVA separately for men and women. For women, only a main effect for behavior genderedness emerged, $F(1,56) = 14.89$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$, indicating that targets performing feminine behaviors (M = 5.73, SD = 1.46) were viewed as more womanly than targets performing masculine behaviors (M = 5.57, SD = 1.65). All other effects were not significant, both $F(1,115) < 1.70$, $p > .19$, $\eta_p^2 < .03$.

For men, in contrast, the behavior typicality x behavior competence interaction was significant, $F(1,59) = 5.95$, $p < .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Supporting Hypothesis 3, simple effects tests suggest that, for masculine behaviors, perceptions of manhood were higher when men competently performed behaviors (M = 5.91, SD = 1.45), versus incompetently performed behaviors (M = 5.46, SD = 1.50), $F(1,59) = 4.61$, $p < .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. However, failing to support Hypothesis 3, for feminine behaviors, no difference in manhood perceptions emerged for competently performed behaviors (M = 5.28, SD = 1.75), versus incompetently performed

behaviors (M = 5.55, SD = 1.60), $F(1,59) = 2.03$, $p > .15$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. All other effects were not significant, both $F(1,59) < 2.38$, $p > .13$, $\eta_p^2 < .04$.

Incompetence Versus Control

To explore whether incompetence in cross-gendered behaviors creates desirable evaluations relative to the control (no behavior) condition (*Hypotheses 2 & 4*), I evaluated pairwise comparisons of incompetent, cross-gendered behaviors to the control condition on all gendered evaluations of Study 1.

Men. For men, significant differences did not emerge for positive, same-gendered traits, negative opposite-gendered traits, femininity, masculinity, or manhood evaluations (specific to Hypothesis 4), all $F(1,115) < 1$, all ps > .41. However, supporting Hypothesis 2, men incompetently performing feminine behaviors received significantly higher evaluations on masculine, negative traits (M = 3.72, SD = 2.47), compared to control (M = 3.04, SD = 2.54), $F(1,115) = 9.74$, $p < .01$, $d = .27$, and significantly lower evaluations on feminine, positive traits (M = 5.23, SD = 2.07), compared to control, (M = 5.92, SD = 2.11), $F(1,115) = 6.26$, $p < .02$, $d = .33$.

Women. For women, significant differences did not emerge for positive, opposite-gendered traits, femininity, or masculinity, all $F(1,115) < 1.74$, all ps > .37. However, inconsistent with Hypothesis 2, women incompetently performing masculine behaviors received significantly lower evaluations on feminine positive traits (M = 5.06, SD = 2.28), compared to control (M = 5.73, SD = 2.20), $F(1,115) = 9.11$, $p < .01$, $d = .30$, and significantly higher evaluations on masculine, negative traits (M = 3.56, SD = 2.65), compared to control, (M = 2.62, SD = 2.63), $F(1,115) = 14.73$, $p < .01$, $d = .36$. Supporting Hypothesis 2, women incompetently performing masculine behaviors received significantly higher evaluations on feminine, negative

traits (M = 3.69, SD 2.72), compared to control, (M = 3.08, SD = 2.56), $F(1,115) = 6.34$, $p < .02$, $d = .23$. Finally, inconsistent with Hypothesis 4, women incompetently performing masculine behaviors received significantly lower evaluations on womanhood (M = 5.33, SD = 2.45), compared to control, (M = 6.07, SD = 2.41), $F(1,115) = 6.28$, $p < .02$, $d = .30$.

Discussion

In Study 1, I asked participants to evaluate a hypothetical man or woman on positive same- and opposite-gendered traits, negative same- and opposite-gendered traits, masculinity, femininity, and gender status. For all evaluations (except gender status), I expected that competently (relative to incompetently) committing same-gendered behaviors, and incompetently (relative to competently) committing opposite-gendered behaviors, would yield attributions consistent with same-gendered traits and inconsistent with opposite-gendered traits. For gender status, I expected an analogous pattern to emerge for men, who have a precarious gender status (Vandello et al., 2008; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Results were largely mixed and inconsistent, though the results of male target ratings were somewhat more supportive of hypotheses than ratings of female targets.

For men, results of this Study yielded only modest evidence in support for these predictions. Supporting hypotheses 1 and 3, competent (versus incompetent) masculine behaviors yielded higher evaluations on positive masculine traits and manhood but lower evaluations on abstract femininity. Moreover, incompetent performance of feminine behaviors yielded higher attributions on positive, masculine traits and lower attributions on positive, feminine traits. Failing to support these hypotheses, however, I found that committing a masculine behavior (regardless of competence) yielded higher evaluations on negative masculine traits, and competence (relative to incompetence) did not cause significant differences on

evaluations of positive feminine traits, negative feminine traits, and masculinity. For feminine behaviors, incompetence did not yield significant differences in negative masculine traits, negative feminine traits, masculinity, femininity, or gender status.

These findings, in addition to other unexpected findings, may still partially support the notion that men can strategically commit cross-gendered behaviors incompetently and benefit. Specifically, participants perceived both men and women who incompetently conducted feminine behaviors as significantly higher on abstract masculinity and lower on abstract femininity. For men, who experience regular pressure to avoid femininity (see O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986; Thompson, Grisanti, & Pleck, 1985), incompetence may serve a viable last resort for at least avoiding feminine attributions when forced to complete feminine behaviors.

Given the mixed findings generally, however, predictions about future studies using other related measures (e.g., gender backlash, perceived liking of gender-atypical targets) becomes difficult. For example, little research has examined how strongly particular traits (e.g., positive and negative masculine and feminine traits) predict gender backlash. While emerging research suggests that gender backlash specifically derives from men's reduced social status or women's enhanced social status (i.e., the *status incongruity hypothesis;* Moss-Racusin et al., 2010), the question of how the current traits predict backlash remains unclear. If a future study's goal involves preventing gender backlash, then, future research must first establish the importance of each of Study 1's specific evaluations in predicting gender backlash before the findings here can be fully utilized.

For women, a different pattern of results emerged that failed to support Hypothesis 1. Women received more feminine (positive and negative) attributions for enacting feminine

behaviors regardless of behavioral competence. Further, women enacting masculine behaviors received higher evaluations on masculine negative traits regardless of behavioral competence and higher evaluations on masculine positive traits only when enacting masculine behaviors competently. Women (like men) also generally received higher attributions of trait masculinity and femininity when performing masculine and feminine behaviors, regardless of competence. Unexpectedly, women received a boost in gender status evaluations following feminine behaviors compared to masculine behaviors, regardless of that behavior's competence.

The tendency for women's social behaviors to have little influence on their perceptions of their femininity seems consistent with research on precarious manhood (Vandello et al., 2008; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Even though women received higher masculine evaluations for competently performing masculine behaviors, this did not result in reduced femininity. Generally women relative to men have greater flexibility in, and receive less punishment for, cross-gendered behaviors (e.g., Feinman, 1981, 1984; Levy, Taylor, & Gelman, 1995; McCreary, 1994; Sirin, McCreary, & Mahalik, 2004). These findings may thus reflect a weaker reaction to women's behaviors, as they may by virtue of the target's gender seem less in violation to observers. This interpretation implies a need for future research to use more extreme gender-role violations for women. For example, given women's expectations to avoid status gains (e.g., Rudman et al., 2008) and to remain sexually and morally purer than men (Vandello & Hettinger, 2012), behaviors which imply violations in these domains may have produce results more analogous to men's. More broadly, this raises the question of domain-specificity in cross-gendered behaviors and whether behavioral competence has specific influence in certain domains. This again remains an important question for future research.

Study 1 has two important limitations. First, given some evidence that competence and incompetence influence people's actor perceptions, examining how behavioral incompetence mitigates backlash or other penalties for cross-gendered behaviors remains an important question. Given that observers seek to sabotage gender-atypical targets (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), people may view strategic incompetence as conformity to gender-role norms. Alternatively, genuine self-sabotage (i.e., that which is not seen as strategic) may reflect to observers a genuine incapacity to commit cross-gendered behaviors. In the former, actors may have more awareness and ostensible respect for maintenance of gender-role norms and receive less backlash than the latter, who may attempt (and fail) to violate gender-role norms. Ultimately, future research should investigate the role of the actor's intentions, as well as their ultimate competence, in completing these behaviors on observer's backlash towards these targets.

Relatedly, future research should examine observer's perceptions of the target's intentions differently as a function of target gender. Given that people are cognizant generally of men's motivations to remain vigilant against manhood threats (Vandello et al., 2008), observers may expect a stronger motive for men's incompetence relative to women's. This would then imply that people's perception of the exact motive for conducting the behavior (e.g., legitimate incompetence versus strategic incompetence), and thus the resulting attributions, differ for actor gender. This again remains an important direction for future research.

Study 2: Gender-Atypical Behaviors Yielding Ironic Masculinity

Study 2 tests the ability of a prior impression, cultivated by information regarding prior gender-typical or gender-atypical behaviors, to influence the way people construe subsequent gender-role violations. Specifically, I tested if people would view cross-gendered behaviors as less atypical when performed by a gender-typical (i.e. credentialed) person compared to a gender-atypical person. Further, I tested whether the usual consequences of conducting cross-gendered behaviors for men (e.g., less manhood status) attenuate when men first hold masculine credentials. In Study 2, participants read a study vignette describing a man or a woman who has gender-typical, gender-atypical or gender-neutral hobbies before evaluating that target on masculine and feminine traits. Participants then read a second vignette describing a gender-atypical behavior performed by the same actor and evaluated the target again. Thus, the study design was a target gender (man, woman) x prior behavior (gender-typical, gender-atypical, control) between-subjects factorial design on character evaluations of the actor and perceptions of the behavior.

As discussed previously, I expected participants to evaluate men differently as a function of their initial gendered behaviors. Men face high costs for committing cross-gendered behaviors, including negative interpersonal evaluations (e.g., Rudman & Fairchild, 2004) and lowered manhood status (Vandello et al., 2013). Moreover, observers generally perceive manhood as subject to threat when reading about men committing feminine behaviors (Schlenker, 2010; Vandello et al., 2008). Consequently, I expected observers to attribute

different causes, resulting in different attributions, to men who have a prior masculine identity compared to a prior feminine identity. For masculine men, observers should use qualities of the masculine identity (e.g., bravery, confidence) to interpret the feminine behavior, ultimately leading to heightened masculine attributions of the actor.

Because a prior feminine identity coincides with a subsequent feminine behavior, observers should experience less of a need to reinterpret the feminine behavior. While people may perceive female targets as relatively more feminine versus masculine due to their prior behaviors, I did not expect these same results for women as I did men. As discussed previously, women have more flexibility to conduct masculine behaviors (e.g., Feinman, 1981, 1984; McCreary, & Mahalik, 2004; Twenge, 1997). Ultimately, then, I made the following predictions:

1. I expect a target gender (man, woman) x prior behaviors (masculine, feminine, neutral) x evaluation time-point (before atypical behavior, after atypical behavior) interaction on trait evaluations. Masculine men who perform a feminine behavior will be evaluated as more masculine and less feminine following the feminine behavior compared to prior to the feminine behavior. Evaluations of feminine and neutral men, and all women, will not differ across time-points.

In addition to changes in actor perception over time, I will examine perceptions of the behaviors. Given that I expect masculine men to garner more masculine perceptions for gender-atypical behavior, I expect a similar pattern of results to emerge for perceptions of the gender-atypical behaviors. Specifically:

2. I expect a target gender (man, woman) x prior behaviors (masculine, feminine, neutral) interaction on behavioral evaluations. Observers will view atypical behaviors committed by masculine men as less feminine compared to the same behaviors when committed by feminine men or neutral men. For women, prior behaviors will not produce a difference in evaluations of behavior's masculinity.

Finally, as an ancillary measure of the target's gender-typicality, I asked participants to evaluate targets on the likelihood of having certain jobs. This secondary measure enables an

exploration of target's gender-stereotype consistency beyond trait and gender status evaluations. I predicted the following:

3. I expect a target gender (man, woman) x prior behaviors (masculine, feminine, neutral) interaction on job likelihood. Observers will expect masculine credentialed men as less likely to have feminine jobs and more likely to have masculine jobs compared to feminine men or neutral men. Among women, no differences in job likelihoods are expected.

Method

Participants

Participants consisted of 182 subscribers (*Md* age = 30, 48.2% men) to the website Mechanical Turk (www.mturk.com). Participants described themselves as 78.0% White, 9.3% Black, 6.1% Hispanic, 4.4% Asian, 1.1% Pacific Islander, 0.5% Biracial (with no additional information); one participant did not report their race or ethnicity.

Materials

Gendered Evaluations. As in Study 1, participants evaluated the target on 18 items by rating their agreement (from *1 = Completely Disagree* to *9 = Completely Agree*) that the particular trait described the target. These sixteen items, drawn from Bosson and Michniewicz (2013), varied on the dimensions of social desirability (desirable, undesirable) and genderedness (masculine, feminine). Positive masculine traits included *adventurous, daring, competitive,* and *enterprising* (Time 1 α = .82, Time 2 α = .86), positive feminine traits included *appreciative, emotionally expressive, enthusiastic,* and *humble* (Time 1 α = .83, Time 2 α = .78), negative masculine traits included *arrogant, coarse, boastful,* and *reckless* (Time 1 α = .91, Time 2 α = .91), and negative feminine traits included *fussy, melodramatic, insecure,* and *weak* (Time 1 α = .90, Time 2 α = .91). Finally, participants evaluated the target on two items, *masculine* and *feminine*.

Gendered Occupations. Participants evaluated how likely the target held a specific occupation (scale endpoints *1 = Not at all Likely, 9 = Extremely Likely*) from a pool of ten occupations. Masculine occupations consisted of *fire fighter, football coach, airplane pilot, plumber,* and *construction worker* ($\alpha = .88$), whereas feminine occupations consisted of *nurse, receptionist, daycare provider, hair dresser,* and *elementary school teacher* ($\alpha = .91$).

Procedure

Appendix C contains full instructions and materials for Study 2. After learning that the study concerned impression formation given limited information, participants read about a hypothetical target. Participants learned the target's gender and prior behaviors (masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral hobbies). Qualtrics randomly selected one paragraph from the pool of five piloted vignettes to assign to the target. Masculine hobbies consisted of "lifting weights at the gym, shooting a bow and arrow, and playing video games online with friends;" feminine hobbies consisted of "ballroom dancing, assembling fashionable outfits online, and decorating rooms;" gender-neutral hobbies consisted of "watching movies, listening to music, and hanging out with friends."

After reading the paragraph about the target and learning about their hobbies, participants completed gendered evaluations. They then proceeded to the next page and learned an additional piece of information about the target; specifically, the target spent an evening with some friends where they mentioned in discussion partaking in a particular behavior. Participants always learned that the target engaged in a gender-atypical behavior, though the specific behavior was randomly assigned from a pool of five possible behaviors. Feminine behaviors (for male targets) consisted of *take a class in ballroom dancing, decorate a birthday cake for a friend's party, decorate a room in a friend's new house, change the diaper of a friend's baby,* and *iron some*

clean laundry. Masculine behaviors (for female targets) consisted of *chug a beer in one go, build a computer from nothing but spare parts, play a video game online with friends, shoot a bow and arrow at an archery range,* and *lift heavy weights at the gym*. After learning of this gender-atypical behavior, participants completed the behavioral evaluations and then completed the gendered evaluations a second time. They then completed demographic questions and were thanked and debriefed.

Results

Target Attributions

The first hypothesis predicted a difference in target's evaluations between the first and second time points. Given the interest was in evaluations of gender-typicality and –atypicality, I recoded the variables such that rather than examining positive masculine traits as the DV, for example, I examined gender-typical, positive traits as the DV (i.e., masculine positive traits for men and feminine positive traits for women)[3].

I submitted gendered perceptions (positive same-gender traits, positive opposite-gender traits, negative same-gender traits, and negative opposite-gender traits) to separate target gender (man, woman) x prior behavior (masculine, feminine, neutral) x evaluation timepoint (time one, time two) factorial ANOVAs. Below I report the results separately for each of the dependent measures.

Positive, Gender-Stereotypical Traits. A significant three-way interaction emerged for target gender x prior behavior x evaluation timepoint on positive, gender-stereotypical traits, $F(2,176) = 3.99$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$ (see Figure 8). I thus examined the prior behavior x evaluation time point separately for each target gender.

[3] Including participant gender as a factor did not produce any participant gender main effects or interactions for any dependent measures, all $p > .24$.

For men, the prior behavior x evaluation time point was marginally significant, $F(2,88) = 2.39$, $p < .10$ $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Neither the main effect for evaluation time point, $F(1,88) < 1$, $p = .82$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, nor for prior behavior, $F(2,88) = 1.77$, $p = .18$, $\eta_p^2 < .04$, were significant. I assessed simple effects at each level of prior behavior across evaluation time points. These analyses suggest a feminine prior, $F(1,88) = 1.57$, $p > .21$ $\eta_p^2 < .02$, or a neutral prior, $F(1,88) = .39$, $p > .53$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, did not yield changes in evaluations across time points on positive masculine traits. However, a masculine prior marginally did, $F(1,88) = 2.83$, $p < .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$: Participants evaluated men with masculine hobbies as more masculine prior to learning of a feminine behavior ($M = 5.59$, $SD = 1.32$) than afterwards ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.51$).

For women, the prior behavior x evaluation time point interaction was not significant, $F(2,88) = 1.82$, $p = .17$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Moreover, neither the main effect for prior behavior, $F(2,88) = 0.95$, $p = .39$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, nor the main effect for evaluation time point, $F(1,88) = .94$, $p = .34$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, were significant.

Negative, Gender-Stereotypical Traits. The three-way interaction for target gender x prior behavior x evaluation time point on negative, same-gendered traits was not significant, $F(2,175) = 0.66$, $p = .52$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$ (see Figure 9). All remaining two-way interaction effects were not significant: time x prior interaction, $F(2,175) = .24$, $p = .79$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, time x target gender, $F(1,175) = 0.03$, $p = .86$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, target gender x prior, $F(2,175) = .49$, $p = .62$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. The main effect for evaluation time point, $F(1,175) = 2.64$, $p = .11$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$, and for prior, $F(2,175) = 2.26$, $p = .11$, $\eta_p^2 < .03$, were also not significant. However, the main effect for target gender was, $F(1,175) = 4.50$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, indicating simply that women were rated as less consistent with negative feminine traits ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 2.29$) than men were rated as consistent with negative masculine traits ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 2.29$).

Positive, Gender-Atypical Traits. The three-way interaction for target gender x prior behavior x evaluation time point on positive, same-gendered traits was not significant, $F(2,176) = 0.71$, $p = .50$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$ (see Figure 10). The time x prior interaction was also not significant, $F(2,176) = 1.23$, $p = .11$, $\eta_p^2 < .03$. However, the time x target gender interaction was significant, $F(1,176) = 14.98$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Simple effects suggest that women were seen as more consistent with masculine, positive traits after committing a masculine behavior ($M = 6.40$, $SD = 2.44$) compared to before ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 2.23$), $F(1,176) = 61.46$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$. Further, participants viewed men as more consistent with positive, feminine traits after committing a feminine behavior ($M = 6.10$, $SD = 2.02$) compared to before, ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.86$), $F(1,176) = 5.58$, $p < .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

Negative, Gender-Atypical Traits. A marginal three-way interaction emerged for target gender x prior behavior x evaluation timepoint on negative, opposite-gendered traits, $F(2,175) = 2.78$, $p = .07$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$ (see Figure 11). I thus examined the prior behavior x evaluation time point separately for each target gender.

For men, the prior behavior x evaluation time point was significant, $F(2,88) = 3.87$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.08$. This interaction qualified the significant main effect of evaluation time point, $F(1,88) = 9.58$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. The main effect of prior was not significant, $F(2,88) = 0.02$, $p = .98$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. I assessed simple effects at each level of prior behavior across evaluation time points. These analyses suggest a masculine prior behavior, $F(1,88) = 0.04$, $p = .84$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, did not yield significant changes in evaluations across time points on negative feminine traits. However, a feminine prior marginally did, $F(1,88) = 3.47$, $p = .07$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$: Prior to committing a feminine behavior, men with feminine hobbies were evaluated as higher on negative feminine traits ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 2.88$) than afterwards ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 3.47$), $\eta_p^2 = .04$. A neutral prior,

$F(1,88) = 13.31$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, revealed a similar pattern: Prior to committing a feminine behavior, neutral men were viewed as more consistent with negative feminine traits ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 2.97$) compared to after committing a feminine behavior ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 3.06$).

For women, the prior behavior x evaluation time point interaction was not significant, $F(2,87) = 0.86$, $p = .45$, $< .02$. However, the main effect of evaluation time point was significant, $F(1,87) = 16.85$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$, indicating that women were always evaluated as higher on negative, masculine traits after committing a masculine behavior ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.99$) than before (M = 2.83, $SD = 1.75$). A main effect for prior also emerged, $F(2,87) = 3.41$, $p = 0.04$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Post-hoc tests show that women described as having masculine hobbies were evaluated as higher on negative masculine traits ($M = 3.66$, SD=3.16) than women described as having feminine hobbies ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 2.83$), $F(1,58) = 6.81$, $p < .02$, $d = .39$; However, feminine women and nondescript women did not differ significantly, $F(1,58) = 1.24$, $p > .20$, and masculine and nondescript women did not differ significantly, $F(1,58) = 1.24$, $p > .21$. In summary, no evidence emerged on trait measures for the hypothesis that prior gendered credentials yielded more gender-consistent attributions following a gender-atypical behavior.

Perceptions of the Behavior

The second hypothesis concerned whether or not people's perceptions of the behavior's gender typicality would differ as a function of the actor gender and prior credentialing. I submitted the four items separately to target gender (man, woman) x prior behavior (masculine, feminine, neutral) factorial ANOVAs (see Figure 13).

Behavior Gender-Typicality. For the behavior gender-typicality measure, the target gender x prior behavior interaction was not significant, $F(2, 175) = .18$, $p > .83$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. The main effect for prior behavior was also not significant, $F(2, 175) = 1.57$, $p > .21$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$. A

main effect for target gender emerged, however, $F(1, 175) = 5.16$, $p < .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, indicating that people viewed men's gender-role violations as more feminine ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.57$) than women's gender-role violations ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 1.51$; (see Figure 14).

Gender Threat. For the gender threat item, the target gender x prior behavior interaction was not significant, $F(2, 175) = .15$, $p > .87$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. The main effect for prior behavior was also not significant, $F(2, 175) = 1.72$, $p > .18$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$. A marginal main effect for target gender emerged, however, $F(1, 175) = 2.90$, $p = .09$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$, indicating that people viewed men's gender-role violations as more gender-threatening ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 2.17$) than women's gender-role violations ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.99$).

Violating for Men. For the violating for men item, the target gender x prior behavior interaction was not significant, $F(2, 175) = .03$, $p > .97$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. The main effect for prior behavior was significant, $F(2, 175) = 6.85$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Post-hoc tests suggest that the behavior was viewed as more violating for men when the target engaged in masculine hobbies ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 2.22$) compared to neutral hobbies ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.49$), $F(1,118) = 7.59$, $p < .01$, $d = .65$, and masculine hobbies differed marginally from feminine hobbies ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.83$), $F(1,118) = 3.63$, $p < .06$, $d = .43$. Feminine hobbies did not significantly differ from no hobbies, $F(1,118) = 0.45$, $p > .50$, $d = .21$. The main effect for target gender was not significant, $F(1, 175) = 2.38$, $p > .13$, $\eta_p^2 < .02$.

Violating for Women. For the violating for women item, the target gender x prior behavior interaction was not significant, $F(2, 175) = .23$, $p > .79$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. The main effect for prior behavior was also not significant, $F(2, 175) = .33$, $p > .72$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. A main effect for target gender emerged, however, $F(1, 175) = 71.16$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .30$, indicating that people

viewed men's gender-role violations as more violating for women (M = 3.84, SD = 2.29) than women's gender-role violations (M = 1.52, SD = 1.26).

Employment Likelihood

The third set of hypotheses concerned the likelihood that participants would perceive the target as having gender-typical or -atypical jobs. As with previous analyses, I recoded the masculine and feminine job composites as same-gender and opposite-gender jobs. Same-gender jobs for men thus comprised masculine jobs and for women thus comprised feminine jobs, whereas opposite-gender jobs for men comprised feminine jobs and for women thus comprised masculine jobs. I then submitted these evaluations to a target gender (man, woman) x prior behavior (masculine, feminine, neutral) x evaluation type (same-gender, opposite gender) mixed factorial ANOVA with repeated measures on evaluation type. In this analysis, the three-way interaction effect was significant, $F(2,176) = 26.70$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$ (see Figure 12). I thus explored the prior behavior x evaluation type interaction separately for men and women targets.

Male Targets. For men, the prior behavior x evaluation type interaction effect was significant, $F(2,88) = 16.29$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .27$. I thus conducted simple effects tests across levels of prior behavior at each type of job. For opposite-gender jobs, no significant differences emerged, $F(2,88) = 1.15$, $p = .32$, $\eta_p^2 < .03$, indicating that perceptions of the likelihood of target men having feminine jobs did not differ significantly as a function of the prior behavior performed. For same-gender jobs, however, significant differences did emerge, $F(2,88) = 23.96$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .35$. Pairwise comparisons suggest that men performing masculine prior behaviors were ascribed a higher likelihood of holding masculine jobs, M = 5.34, SD = 2.40, relative to men committing feminine prior behaviors, M = 2.76, SD = 2.80, $F(1,58) = 44.48$, $p < .01$, d = .99, or neutral behaviors, M = 3.66, SD = 2.47, $F(1,58) = 21.67$, $p < .01$, d = .69. Finally, men

committing feminine prior behaviors significantly differed from men committing neutral prior behaviors, $F(1,58) = 5.22$, $p < .03$, $d = .34$.

Female Targets. A slightly different pattern emerged among women. Here, the prior behavior x evaluation type interaction effect was significant, $F(2,88) = 11.43$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$. I thus conducted simple effects tests across levels of prior behavior at each type of job. For opposite-gender jobs, significant differences emerged across levels of prior behaviors committed, $F(2,88) = 6.29$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Pairwise comparisons suggest that women committing masculine prior behaviors were ascribed more masculine jobs, $M = 4.73$, $SD = 2.56$, relative to women committing feminine prior behaviors, $M = 3.15$, $SD = 2.25$, $F(1,58) = 12.42$, $p < .01$, $d = .66$, or neutral behaviors, $M = 3.67$, $SD = 2.60$, $F(1,58) = 4.82$, $p < .03$, $d = .41$. However, women committing feminine prior behaviors did not significantly differ from women committing neutral prior behaviors, $F(1,58) < 1$, $p > .99$.

For same-gender jobs, significant differences again emerged, $F(2,88) = 5.26$, $p < .01$. Pairwise comparisons suggest that women committing masculine prior behaviors were ascribed less feminine jobs, $M = 4.18$, $SD = 2.55$, relative to women committing feminine prior behaviors, $M = 5.51$, $SD = 2.25$, $F(1,58) = 9.18$, $p < .01$, d = .55, or neutral behaviors, $M = 5.50$, $SD = 2.59$, $F(1,58) = 7.95$, $p < .01$, d = .51. However, women committing feminine prior behaviors did not significantly differ from women committing neutral prior behaviors, $F(1,58) < .01$, $p > .99$.

Discussion

In Study 2, I examined the extent to which an actor's prior gendered behaviors influence observers' perceptions of men and women who commit gender-atypical behaviors. Specifically, I presented participants with a paragraph about a hypothetical person who had either gender-consistent hobbies, gender-inconsistent hobbies, or gender-neutral hobbies, before asking them

to make evaluations about these targets on gendered traits. Participants then learned that the target made a gender-atypical behavior before reevaluating the target on the same gendered traits.

While I expected actors to perceive masculine men differently between time points after committing an atypical behavior, results did not match this prediction. In most cases, evaluations of targets did not change after the target committed a gender-atypical behavior. Contrary to my hypotheses, masculine men's gender-atypical behavior produced marginally lower evaluations on positive masculine traits, and for feminine and neutral men, a gender-atypical behavior produced evaluations less consistent with negative, feminine traits. Stated differently, on one measure masculine men suffered and feminine and neutral men benefited by virtue of being viewed as less consistent with undesirable feminine qualities. Whether or not greater inconsistency with negative feminine traits outweighs heightened consistency with positive masculine traits remains a question for future research.

While I did not expect evaluations of women to differ across time points, these results suggest that women, regardless of prior behavior, generally received increased evaluations of positive and negative masculine evaluations after committing a masculine behavior. Previous research highlights women's benefits in leadership roles by conveying conventional masculine qualities (e.g., leadership, assertiveness) while simultaneously conveying feminine qualities (e.g., warmth, emotionality; Phelan et al., 2008; Rudman, 1998). Given that perceptions of women on feminine traits did not change, this could suggest that women may experience benefits from having simultaneously high masculine and feminine attributions by conducting masculine behaviors similar to those used in this study. Alternatively, the behaviors used in this study may not have constituted those for which women typically receive backlash. Much of women's

backlash comes from claiming higher social status (Moss-Racusin et al., 2010); while I did not measure the status gains, the behaviors used in Study 2 (e.g., chugging a beer, playing a video game online with friends) do not ostensibly convey higher status in the same way that other masculine behaviors (e.g., gainful employment, holding a managerial position) might. Again, this highlights the need to demonstrate the relationship between trait evaluations and previously used measures of gender backlash to appropriately inform reductions in backlash.

Following all information from the target, participants evaluated the gender-atypical behavior on several measures. I expected people to perceive feminine behaviors as less feminine or threatening to a man's manhood status when committed by masculine men, theoretically due to a reinterpretation of the behavior through the initial impression of the man as masculine. Instead, I found that people's perceptions of the behavior were driven largely by the genderedness of the behavior: People viewed feminine behaviors as more feminine than masculine behaviors, and they viewed feminine behaviors as more threatening to men's gender status than masculine behaviors to women's gender status. These findings coalesce with precarious manhood theory (Vandello et al., 2008), but they unfortunately do not support the possibility of observers reinterpreting gendered behaviors based on their actors' prior credentials. Because I did not collect information on presumed motives or explanations for target's behaviors, I suggest this as a next step for future research. Gender-atypical behaviors conducted for gender-typical reasons may prove a viable strategy (e.g., applying black fingernail polish to rebel), but Study 2 did not measure how observers perceived actors' motivations. If indeed ironic masculinity and ironic femininity require these motivations, then future work should emphasize how to construct such contexts to properly explore their utility.

Finally, I explored how the combination of prior hobbies and subsequent gender-atypical behaviors influence observers' perceptions of the likelihood of men and women having certain gender-typical and gender-atypical occupations. I expected observers to predict masculine men to be less likely to have feminine jobs and more likely to have masculine jobs. Instead, I found that likelihood of men having a feminine job did not significantly differ among men's priors. Observers rated masculine men as the most likely to have masculine jobs, followed by neutral men, followed by feminine men. Given that my predictions about employment likelihood hinged on the unsupported prediction that participants would reinterpret the targets and their behaviors, these findings seem consistent with previous research. To the extent that male gender role violations chiefly involve status and that the masculine jobs used in this Study ostensibly communicate higher status, participants may have evaluated job likelihood as a proxy for gender status evaluations. These findings again highlight the need for future research on ironic masculinity to explore how and when reinterpretation of behaviors and character attributions occur.

Interestingly, observers estimated that women with prior masculine hobbies would be less likely to have feminine jobs and more likely to have masculine jobs. As mentioned previously, women who performed masculine behaviors benefited from both gender-typical and gender-atypical attributions. This highlights the need to explore the role of status in the behaviors used in this study: If indeed the masculine jobs used in this study reflected higher social status, this may suggest that women who commit masculine behaviors unassociated with status may benefit from attributions of masculine qualities required for masculine jobs without the corresponding deficit in feminine qualities required of the female gender-role (communality deficit cite). If so, a promising direction for future research involves exploring how women might benefit from

strategically displaying masculine hobbies which do not violate norms associated with the gender status hierarchy to achieve more favorable evaluations when they do hold higher status positions (e.g., masculine jobs).

As with Study 1, the complex nature of Study 2's findings highlights the needs to connect gendered trait evaluations with measures of gender backlash. As noted previously, for example, observers perceived men with feminine and neutral hobbies as less consistent with stereotypically feminine qualities, which men who seek to avoid femininity should find desirable. Future work should examine, then, the general traits ascribed to victims of gender backlash to inform strategies of avoiding such backlash and changing perceptions of gender-atypical behaviors.

General Discussion

Men and women avoid cross-gendered behaviors because of the social penalties from observers for doing so (Rudman et al., 2008; Vandello et al., 2013). Much cross-gendered behavior can benefit men and women, however, highlighting the need for psychological research to explore how reducing social penalties might arise. In two studies, I attempted to create situational contexts wherein observers would learn of an actor of one gender committing cross-gendered behaviors but make attributions more consistent with the actor's gender, results I termed ironic masculinity and ironic femininity.

Conventional stereotypes about gender suggest that masculine and feminine attributions are often mutually exclusive. For example, expectations for male stoicism and rationality often compete with female norms of (and male restrictions against) warmth and emotionality (Rudman et al., 2012; Williams & Best, 1990). Thus, if competently conducting behaviors yield gender-consistent attributions and allay gender-inconsistent attributions by contrast, I tested the natural prediction in Study 1 that behavioral incompetence in cross-gendered behaviors could yield greater gender-consistent and less gender-inconsistent attributions. In Study 1, mixed support for this hypothesis emerged. Specifically, men's incompetence of feminine behaviors yielded higher attributions on positive, masculine traits and lower attributions on positive feminine traits. Women's evaluations, however, largely reflected the genderedness of the behavior performed rather than the behavioral competence.

As an alternative route to ironic masculinity and femininity, I tested in Study 2 the role of prior credentials in people's interpretations of subsequent behaviors. Before people commit moral transgressions, they can and do strategically commit moral behaviors to establish a more moral identity and lessen the backlash from their potentially immoral behaviors (Monin & Miller, 2001). By some accounts, this reduced backlash derives from the perception that the behavior itself is less immoral. Study 2 tested this logic in the domain of gender by exploring whether or not gendered credentials can cause a reinterpretation of a behavior as less gender-atypical. Moreover, Study 2 tested the possibility that men's feminine behaviors, given the social pressure of earning and defending precarious manhood status (Vandello et al., 2008), would lead to heightened attributions of masculinity on gendered traits and anticipated employment domains. Results did not support either of these predictions.

Although the current studies largely did not find evidence of ironic masculinity and femininity, I optimistically speculate that this comes from flaws in the designs of the studies rather than the non-existence of the phenomena. One direction for future research that might strengthen both studies involves investigating observers' perceptions of men's perceived motivations in performing these behaviors. Findings from Study 1 suggests that men's incompetence in feminine behaviors can yield lower perceptions on feminine traits but not necessarily higher perceptions on masculine traits. As masculinity and manhood hold central themes of agency and action (Ashmore et al., 1986), incompetence likely raises the question to observers of whether or not men deliberately sabotage their own behaviors to avoid feminine attributions or if their incompetence derives from a sincere lack of femininity. In the former case, failing to act conveys little information about agency, action, or general competence, which may explain the lack of benefit on positive masculine traits. Alternatively, inaction or self-sabotage

may convey a lack of confidence, assertiveness, or bravery, which may similarly undermine positive masculine attributions. This suggests the need for future research to assess a more nuanced understanding of observer's perceptions of men's motives and how these perceptions predict corresponding trait attributions.

In Study 2, I expected people to reinterpret men's behaviors as reflecting traits expressed through feminine behaviors. The lack of support for my predictions suggests that observers did not do this, again highlighting the need for future research to explore perceptions of men's behavioral motivations. Men can and do commit feminine behaviors without experiencing backlash (Pascoe, 2003) or discomfort (Bosson et al., 2005), theoretically due to a solidly established masculine identity, but the reason remains unclear. Examining people's perceptions of successful men's motivations may inform future research attempting to create contexts which establish ironic masculinity using masculine credentials. Moreover, the attempt to create artificial vignettes to control for the individual contributions of each behavior and vignette may have unintentionally prevented participants from forming the desired impression of the target. Future research examining this limitation may therefore benefit from examining specific, realistic contexts at the sacrifice of generalizability.

Of course, future research also needs to examine the relationship between masculinity, femininity, defining traits of masculinity and femininity, and outcomes which predict avoidance of cross-gendered behaviors (e.g., gender backlash). While the present study did not use traits associated with status, emerging research suggests that status increase for women and status decrease for men strongly predict social penalties for gender role violations (Rudman et al., 2012). If so, future studies would benefit from surveying participant's expectations of actor backlash and the extent to which trait attributions predict this backlash. Alternatively, threats to

broader, subconscious motives can result in reinforcement of existing social beliefs (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006), suggesting that threats to these motives can produce gender backlash. Supporting this idea, gender backlash results from disruption of beliefs in a gender status hierarchy (Michniewicz & Vandello, 2014). In this account, perceptions of an actor's motives may vary according to and be informed by observers' current psychological states.

Finally, future research would benefit from examining actual men and women's behaviors in similar contexts. If an ultimate goal of ironic masculinity and femininity research constitutes encouraging men and women to enact cross-gendered behaviors, then observer's judgments of actors may have less impact relative to actor's perceptions. First, observers' opinions of hypothetical actors may provide little information if actors do not utilize these strategies. Second, some research suggests that men hold exaggerated expectations about the penalties they would receive for committing gender-atypical behaviors (e.g., losing a job; Michniewicz, Vandello, & Bosson, 2013) or for the benefits they would receive for committing gender-typical behaviors (e.g., physical aggression; Vandello, Ransom, Hettinger, & Askew, 2009). In service of promoting cross-gendered behaviors that reduce the strength of gender stereotypes, future research would benefit from constructing contexts which accurately or otherwise convince actors that mild gender transgressions have some rewards.

Tables

Table 1. Gendered Evaluations of Target Paragraphs

Paragraph	Typical Man	Typical Woman	Either Gender
Alex has lived in Florida since childhood. Like most people, Alex has some personality weaknesses but has some very good qualities too. Alex prefers a certain amount of change and variety and becomes dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. For hobbies, Alex prefers reading, hiking, and hanging out with friends.	6.33 (2.23)	5.86 (2.19)	6.65 (2.32)
Jamie feels like a unique person. Jamie is disciplined and self-controlled on the outside, but at times can be worried and insecure. To close friends, Jamie shares inner thoughts and feelings but does not open up so easily with strangers. For hobbies, Jamie enjoys going to the movies with friends, listening to music, and playing with a pet dog.	4.74 (2.46)	6.30 (2.39)	5.81 (2.59)
Robin recently ended a long-term relationship and has begun dating again. Robin finds that some people are interesting and they seem to "click," but many do not. Robin tends to be good at identifying some personal strengths and weaknesses but often fails to notice others. All in all, Robin feels like a good person. Robin enjoys visiting coffee shops to study and also socializing with friends.	5.21 (2.27)	6.91 (2.02)	5.80 (2.52)
Taylor is at times extroverted, friendly and sociable, while at other times introverted and reserved. Taylor can be modest but does not hesitate to demonstrate talents when appropriate. Taylor enjoys several hobbies, including walking dogs, jogging, and watching sitcoms on television. Taylor also plays a musical instrument for fun.	5.82 (2.29)	6.26 (2.22)	6.63 (2.24)
Lee has recently taken an interest in politics. Lee enjoys reading the local newspaper and also watching political shows on MSNBC. Lee works part time at a grocery store to earn extra income while going to school. It seems that Lee has many talents which have yet to be utilized to their full potential. Lee also enjoys other hobbies, including playing tennis with friends and swimming.	6.91 (2.05)	5.56 (2.27)	6.02 (2.53)

Table contains means followed by standard deviations in parenthesis.

Table 2a. Likelihood Ratings and Gender-Norm Violation Ratings for Masculine Violations.

Behavior	Likelihood	Violation
Ironing clothes	5.75 (1.90)	2.41 (1.70)
Decorating a birthday cake	4.39 (1.80)	3.47 (2.20)
Arranging flowers	3.77 (1.80)	4.53 (2.48)
Sewing a button onto a shirt	4.47 (1.91)	3.27 (2.21)
Changing an infant's diaper	6.02 (2.06)	2.39 (2.14)
Assembling a fashionable outfit	5.20 (2.03)	3.41 (2.18)
Ballroom dancing	5.03 (1.47)	2.87 (1.81)
Singing a lullaby	4.86 (1.97)	3.33 (2.17)
Decorating a room	4.40 (1.91)	3.37 (2.10)
Comforting a friend	6.12 (1.76)	2.47 (1.76)
Applying black fingernail polish	2.77 (1.52)	5.93 (2.51)

Table 2b. Likelihood Ratings and Gender-Norm Violation Ratings for Feminine Violations.

Behavior	Likelihood	Violation
Lifting weights	5.17 (2.01)	3.23 (2.14)
Shooting a bow and arrow	4.97 (1.55)	2.77 (1.66)
Mowing the lawn	4.06 (1.98)	3.34 (2.33)
Playing a guitar solo	5.33 (1.81)	2.77 (2.01)
Hunting a wild animal	3.79 (1.77)	4.23 (2.41)
Building a computer from parts	4.14 (1.56)	3.23 (2.20)
Chugging a beer	4.70 (1.89)	3.93 (2.39)
Organizing a fantasy football league	3.30 (1.59)	3.99 (2.25)
Defending oneself in a fistfight	4.33 (2.07)	4.39 (2.35)
Playing video games	5.11 (1.69)	2.70 (1.81)
Chopping down a tree with a chainsaw	2.63 (1.65)	5.09 (2.80)
Wearing a football jersey	5.41 (1.99)	2.84 (2.02)

Table 3. Evaluations of Gendered Occupations

Masculine Occupations	**Genderedness**	**Feminine Occupations**	**Genderedness**
Construction Worker	7.98 (1.41)	Receptionist	2.87 (1.60)
Airplane Pilot	6.53 (1.70)	Nurse	3.61 (1.54)
Plumber	7.78 (1.58)	Daycare Provider	2.43 (1.33)
Firefighter	7.24 (1.70)	Hairdresser	2.87 (1.68)
Football Coach	8.08 (1.36)	Elementary School Teacher	3.39 (1.51)

Table contains means followed by standard deviations in parenthesis.

Figures

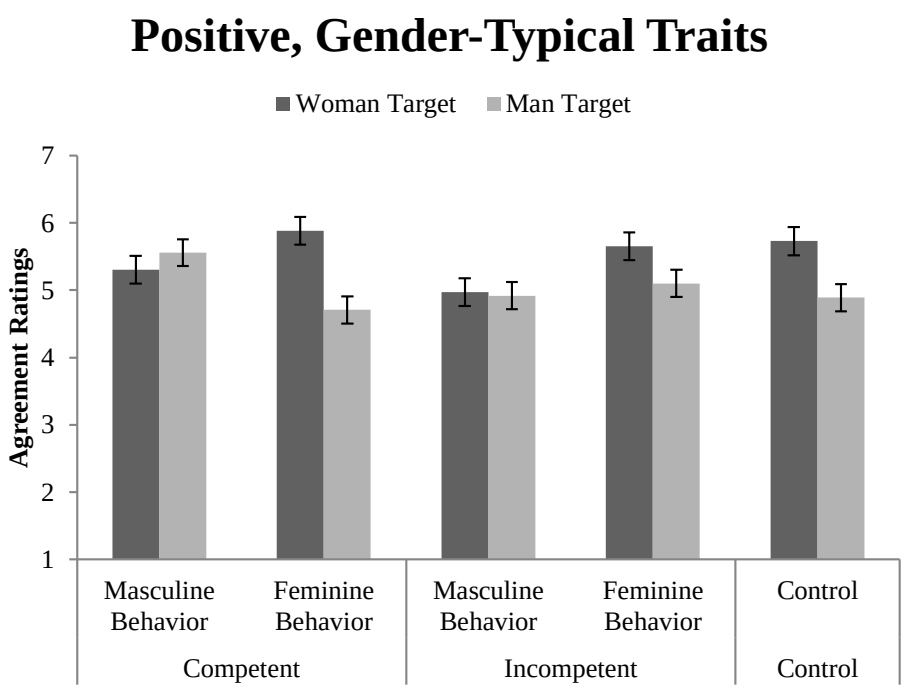

Figure 1. Study 1: Mean Trait Evaluations for Positive, Gender-Typical Traits as a Function of Target Gender, Behavior Typicality, Behavioral Competence.

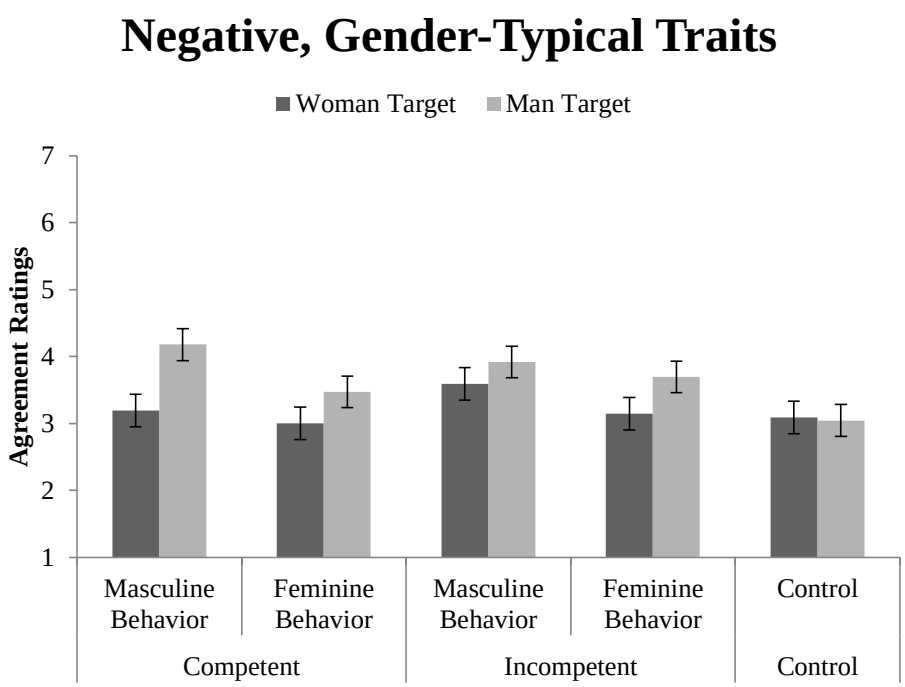

Figure 2. Study 1: Mean Trait Evaluations for Negative, Gender-Typical Traits as a Function of Target Gender, Behavior Typicality, Behavioral Competence.

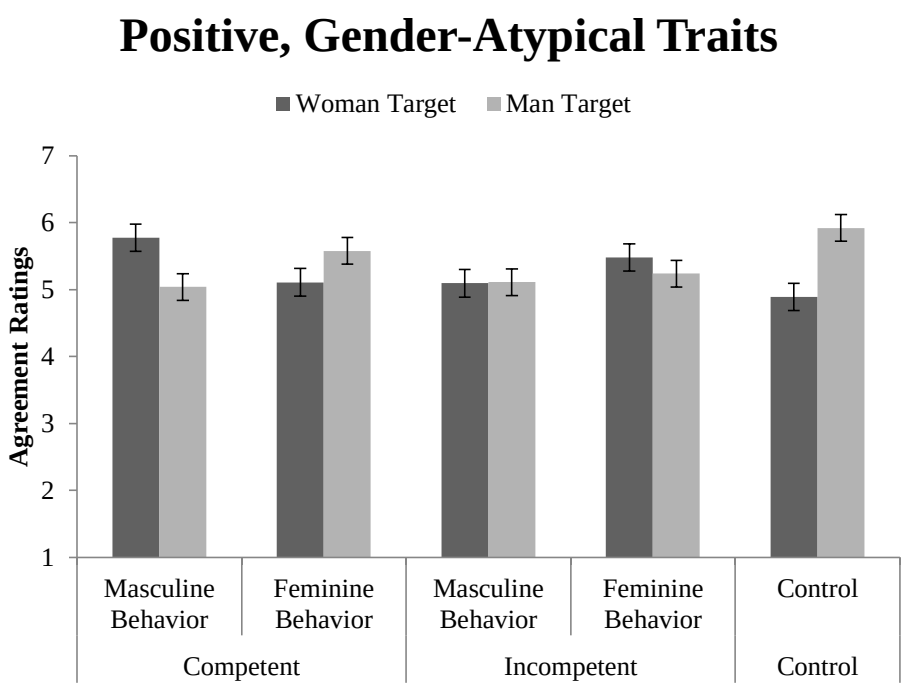

Figure 3. Study 1: Mean Trait Evaluations for Positive, Gender-Atypical Traits as a Function of Target Gender, Behavior Typicality, Behavioral Competence.

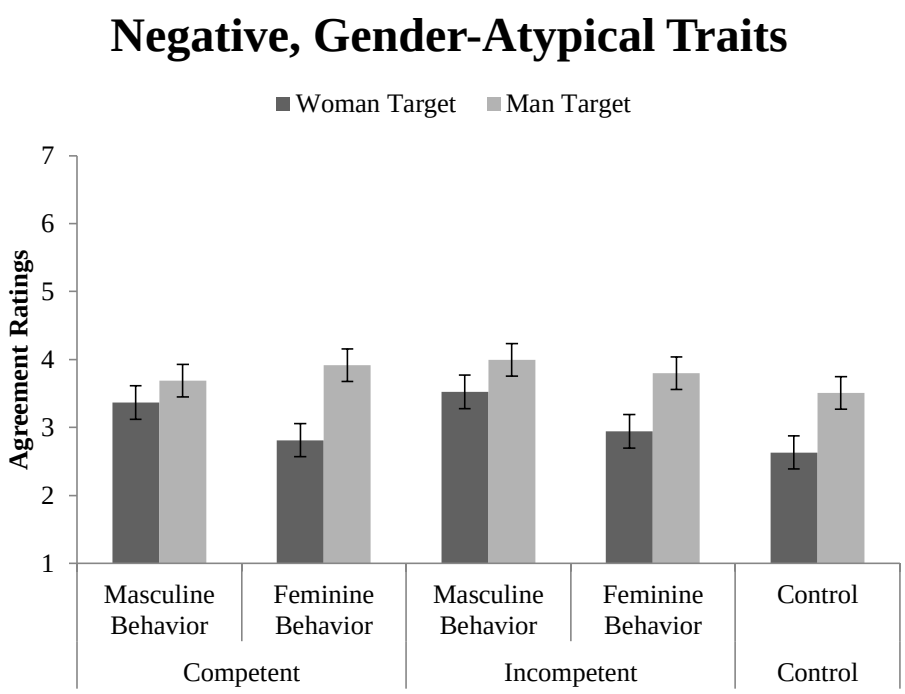

Figure 4. Study 1: Mean Trait Evaluations for Negative, Gender-Atypical Traits as a Function of Target Gender, Behavior Typicality, Behavioral Competence.

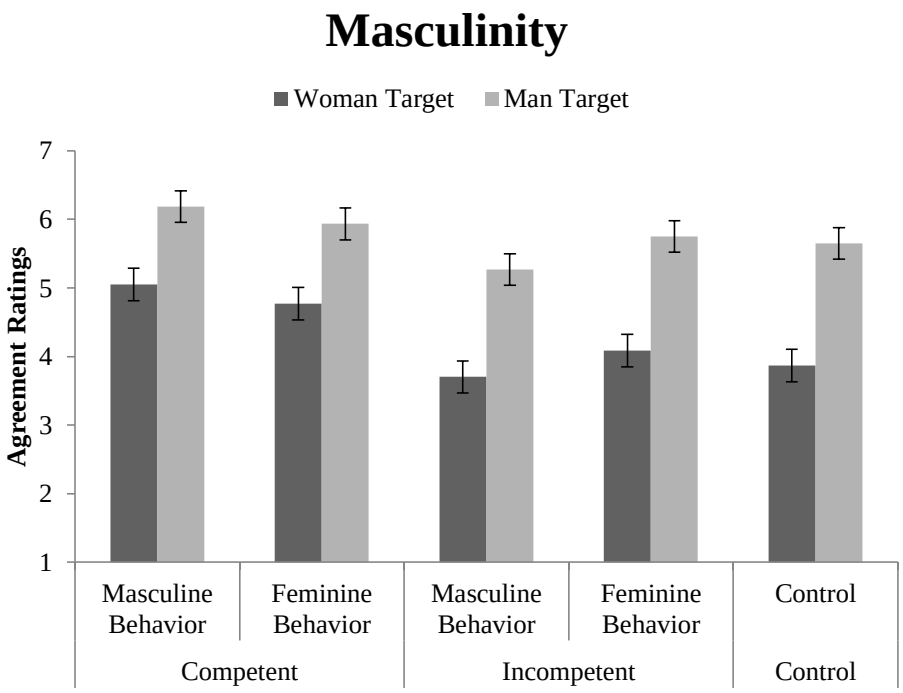

Figure 5. Study 1: Mean Masculinity Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender, Behavior Typicality, Behavioral Competence.

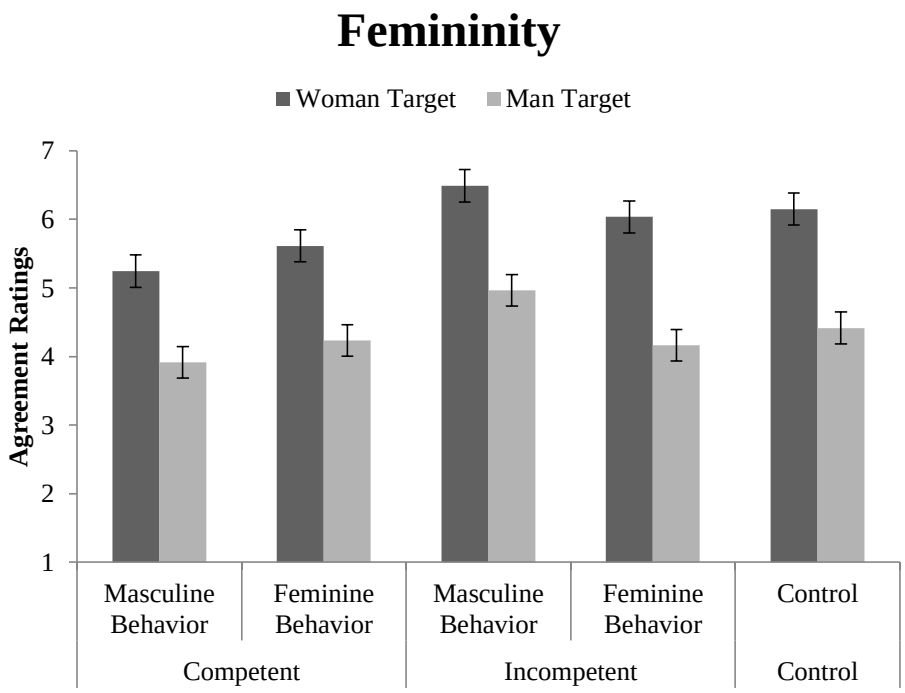

Figure 6. Study 1: Mean Femininity Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender, Behavior Typicality, Behavioral Competence.

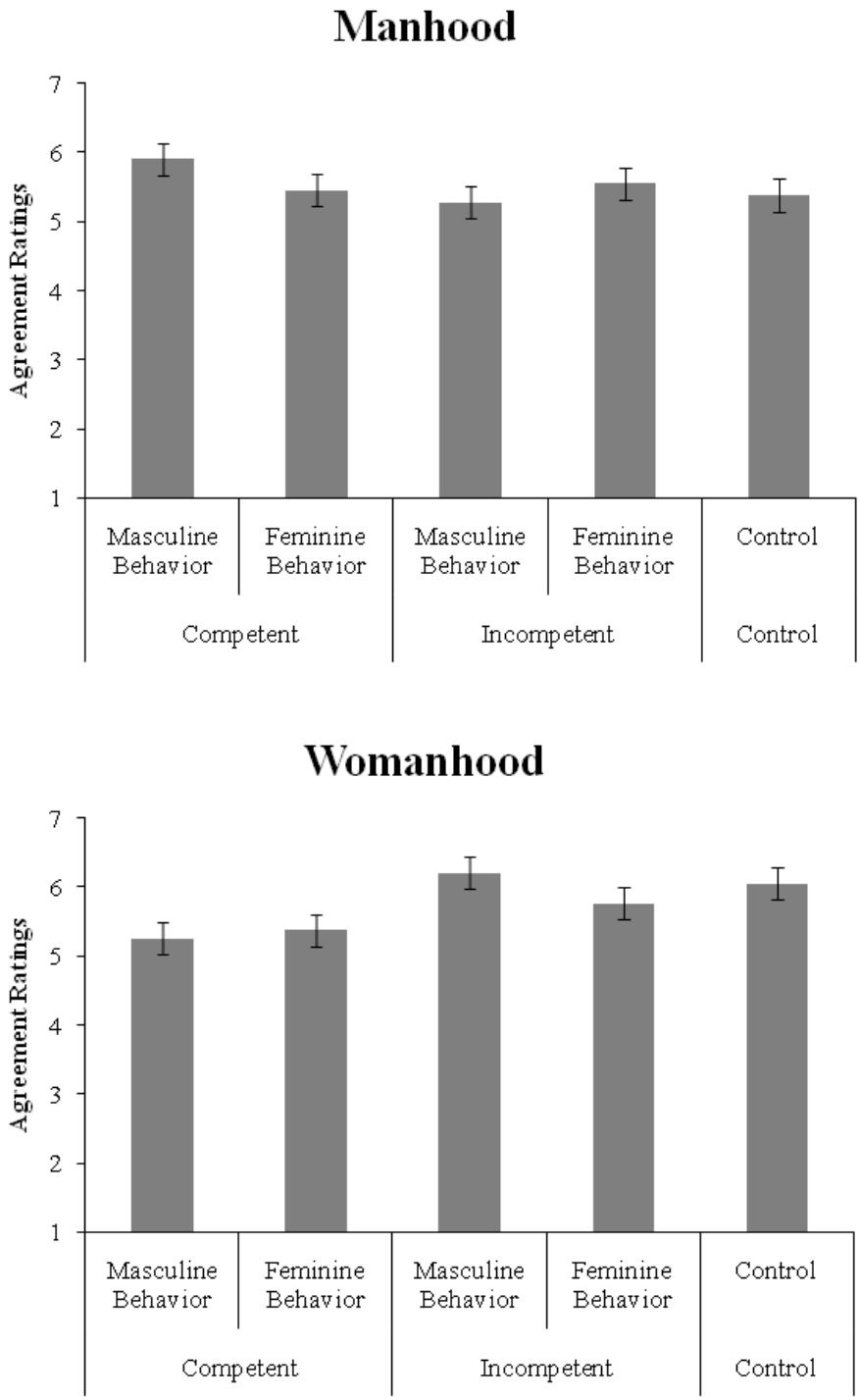

Figure 7. Study 1: Mean Manhood and Womanhood Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender, Behavior Typicality, Behavioral Competence.

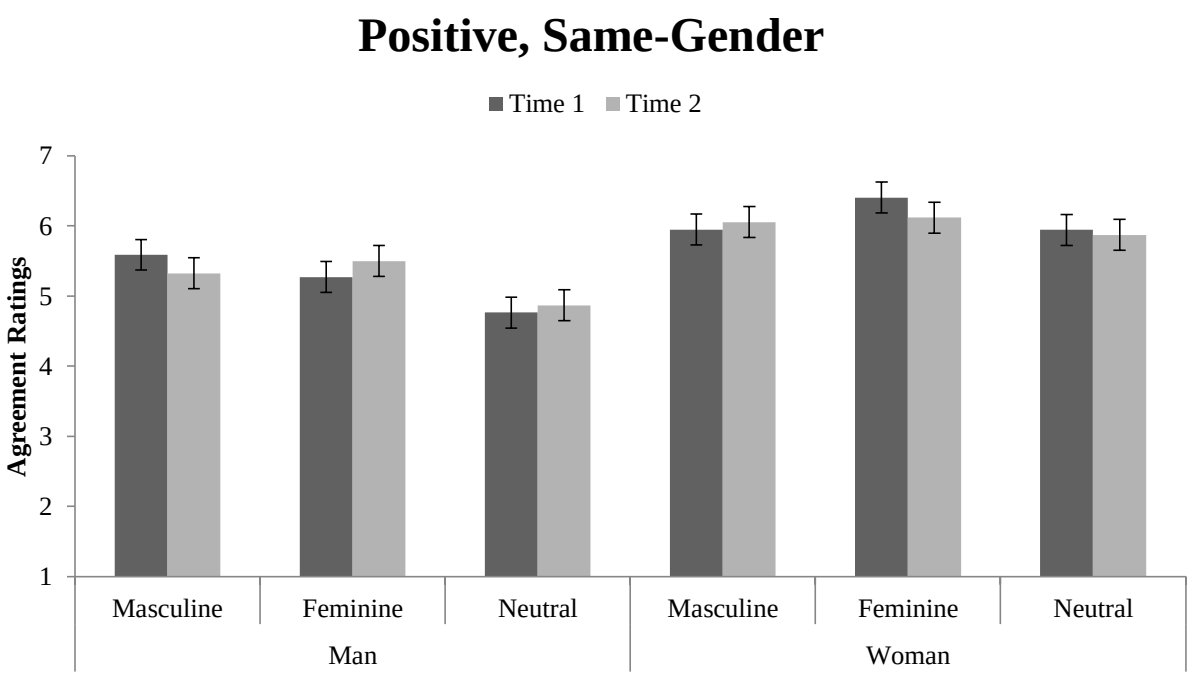

Figure 8. Study 2: Mean Positive, Same-Gendered Trait Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender, Prior Hobbies, and Evaluation Time Point.

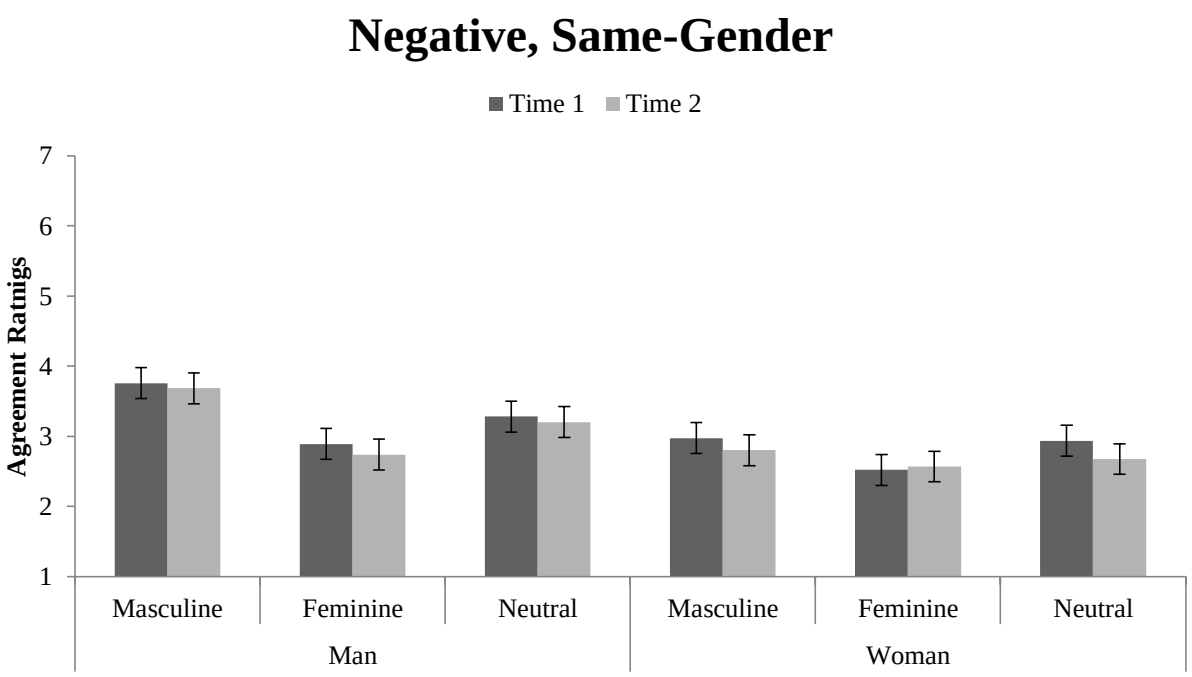

Figure 9. Study 2: Mean Negative, Same-Gendered Trait Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender, Prior Hobbies, and Evaluation Time Point.

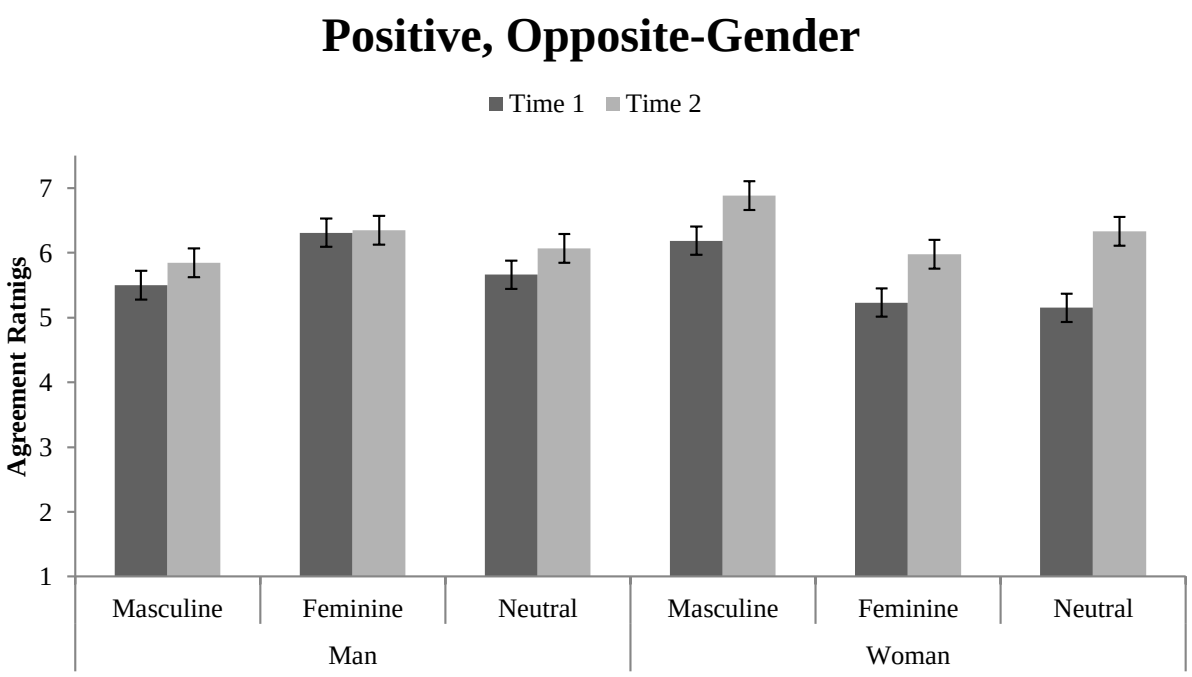

Figure 10. Study 2: Mean Positive, Opposite-Gendered Trait Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender, Prior Hobbies, and Evaluation Time Point.

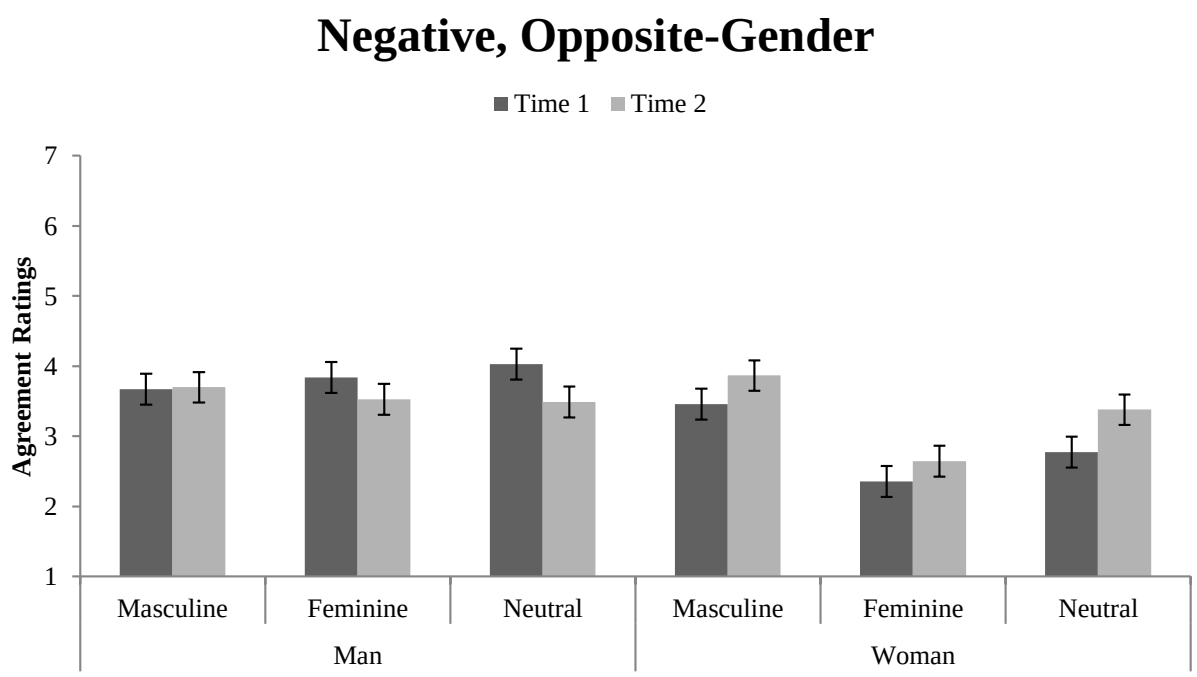

Figure 11. Study 2: Mean Opposite, Negative-Gendered Trait Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender, Prior Hobbies, and Evaluation Time Point.

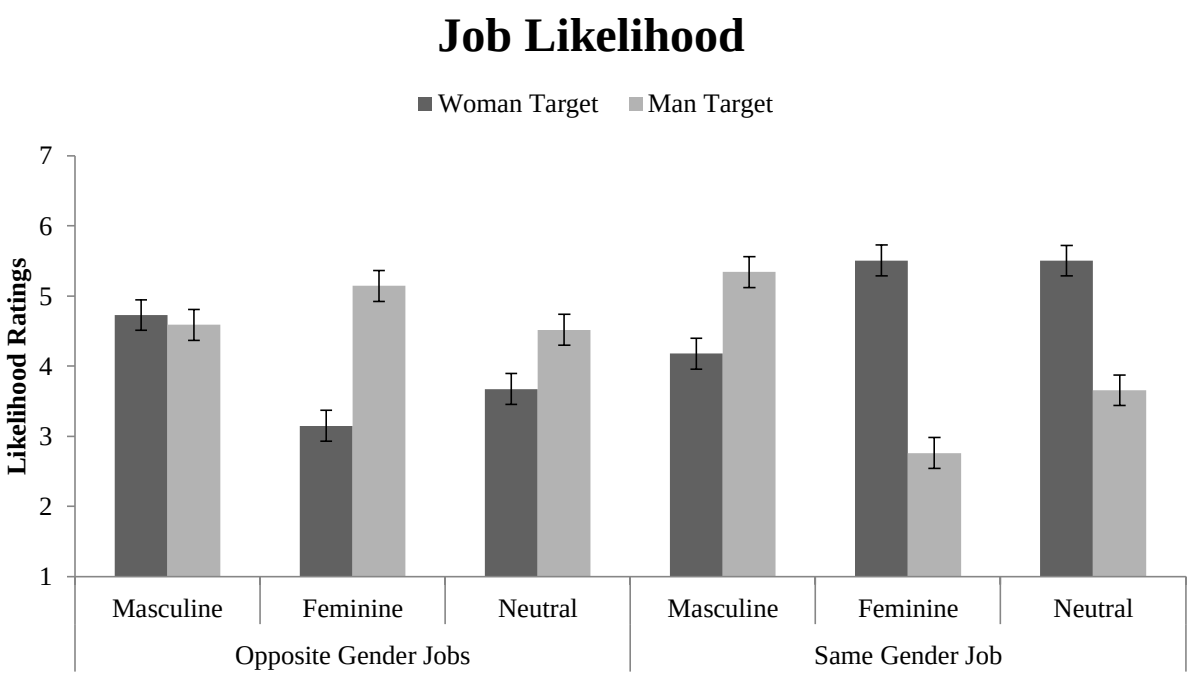

Figure 12. Study 2: Mean Job Likelihood Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender and Prior Hobbies.

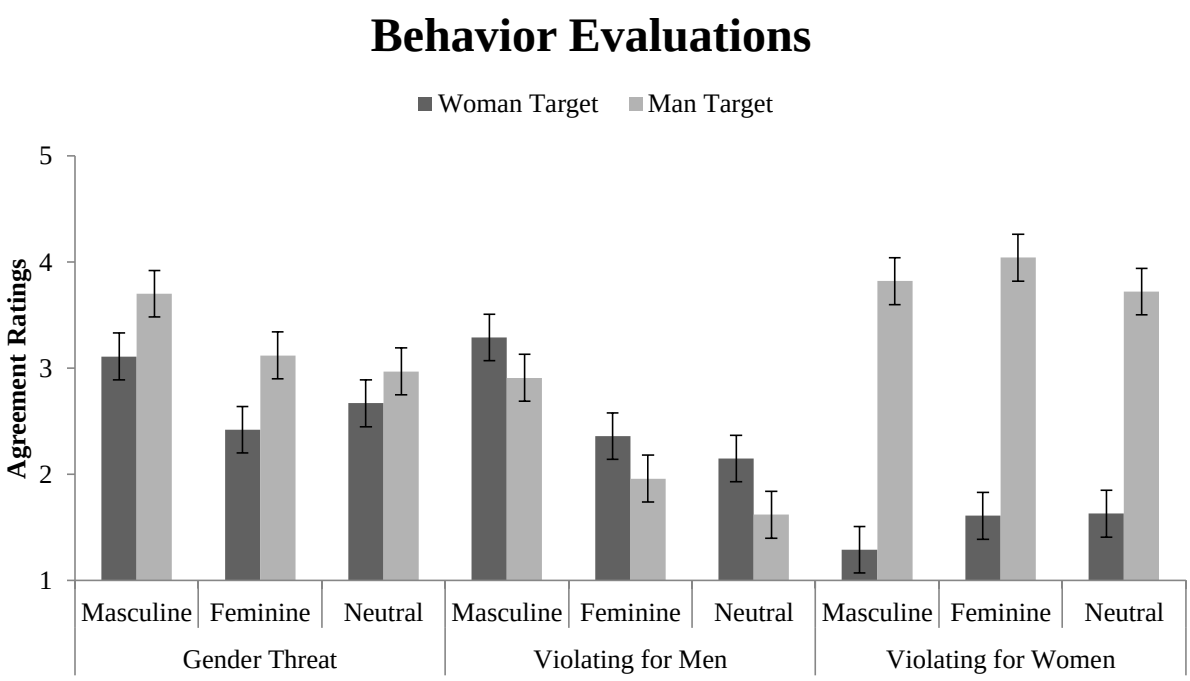

Figure 13. Study 2: Mean Behavior Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender and Prior Hobbies.

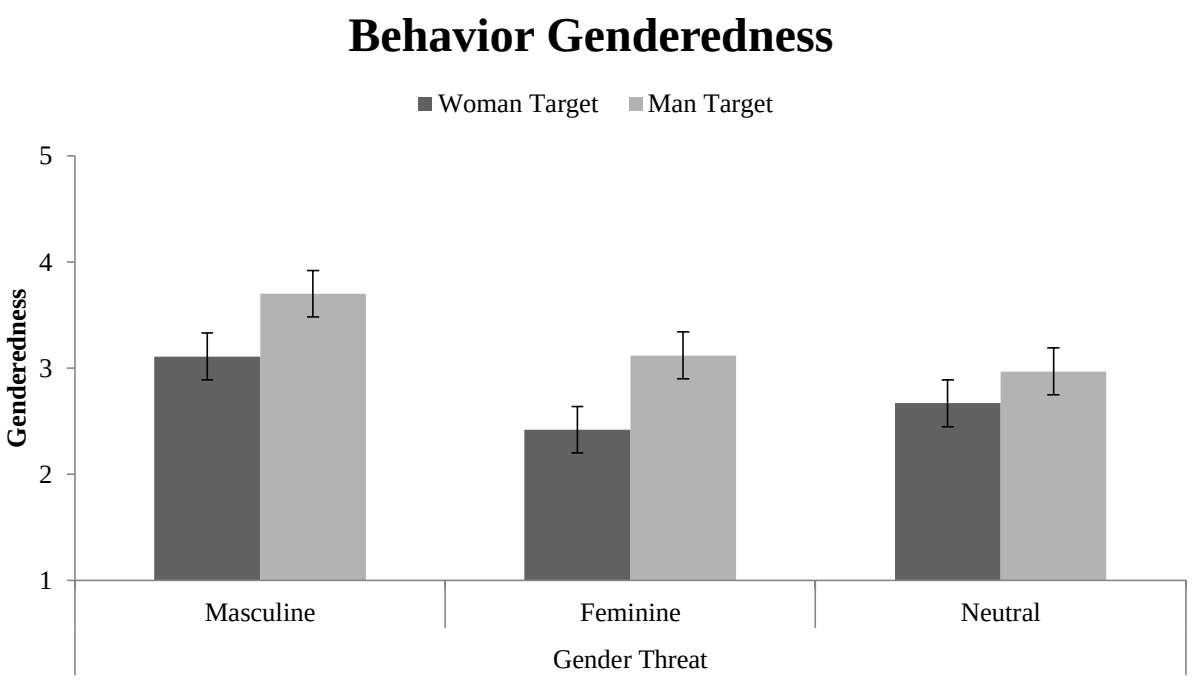

Figure 14. Study 2: Mean Behavior Evaluations as a Function of Target Gender and Prior Hobbies.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pilot Study Materials

Vignette Paragraphs

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 9 = Strongly Agree)
The person in this paragraph could be a typical man
The person in this paragraph could be a typical woman
The person in this paragraph is gender neutral (i.e., they do not strike me as more likely to be one gender than the other)

1. Alex has lived in Florida their whole life. Alex has some personality weaknesses but has some very good qualities too. Alex prefers a certain amount of change and variety and becomes dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. For hobbies, Alex prefers reading, hiking, and hanging out with friends.

2. Jamie considers themselves to be a unique person. Jamie is disciplined and self-controlled on the outside, but sometimes seems to be worrisome and insecure. To close friends, Jamie shares inner thoughts and feelings but does not open up so easily with strangers. For hobbies, Jamie enjoys going to the movies with friends, listening to music, and playing with their dog.

3. Taylor is at times extroverted, affable and sociable, while at other times introverted, wary and reserved. Taylor can be modest but does not hesitate to show their talents. Taylor enjoys several hobbies, including walking dogs, jogging, and watching sitcoms on television. Taylor also plays a musical instrument for fun.

4. Lee has recently taken an interest in politics. Lee enjoys reading the local newspaper and also watching political shows on MSNBC. Lee works part time at a grocery store to earn extra income while going to school. It seems that Lee has many talents which have yet to be utilized to their advantage. Lee also enjoys other hobbies, including playing tennis with friends and swimming.

5. Robin recently ended a long-term relationship and has begun dating again. Robin finds that some people are interesting and seem to "click," but many do not. Robin tends to be good at identifying some of his/her strengths and weaknesses but often fails to notice others. All in all, Robin considers themselves to be a good person. Robin enjoys visiting coffee shops to study and also socializing with friends.

Gendered Behaviors for Pilot Testing

On the following pages will be a listed behavior. After reading each behavior, on the scale provided, indicate what kind of impression you would have of this behavior. Choose the number which corresponds to your choice.

(1 = Very Feminine, 9 = Very Masculine)
How feminine or masculine is the behavior?

(1 = Not at all, 9 = Extremely)
How likely is it that a woman would do this behavior?
How likely is it that a man would do this behavior?
How much of a gender-role violation would it be for a woman to do this behavior?
How much of a gender-role violation would it be for a man to do this behavior?

1) Ironing clothes
2) Decorating a birthday cake
3) Arranging flowers
4) Sewing a button onto a shirt
5) Changing an infant's diaper
6) Assembling a fashionable outfit
7) Ballroom dancing
8) Singing a lullaby
9) Decorating a room
10) Comforting a friend
11) Applying black fingernail polish
12) Lifting weights
13) Shooting a bow and arrow
14) Mowing the lawn
15) Playing a guitar solo
16) Hunting a wild animal
17) Building a computer from parts
18) Chugging a beer
19) Organizing a fantasy football league
20) Defending oneself in a fistfight
21) Playing video games
22) Chopping down a tree with a chainsaw
23) Wearing a football jersey

Gendered Occupations for Pilot Testing

Below is a list of occupations. For each occupation, using the scale provided, indicate how masculine versus how feminine you consider that occupation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very Feminine								Very Masculine

1. Receptionist
2. Nurse
3. Daycare provider
4. Hairdresser
5. Elementary school teacher
6. Construction worker
7. Airplane Pilot
8. Plumber
9. Firefighter
10. Football coach

Appendix B: Study 1 Materials

Welcome to the study. This study concerns impression formation. Previous psychological research suggests that people are skilled at making accurate first impressions of other people based on very limited information about them. Here, we are going to provide a single piece of information about a person, and we want you to try to evaluate them on the personality traits provided. There are no right or wrong answers.

Alex has lived in Florida their whole life. Alex has some personality weaknesses but has some very good qualities too. Alex prefers a certain amount of change and variety and becomes dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. For hobbies, Alex prefers reading, hiking, and hanging out with friends. Recently, Alex decided to try organizing a fantasy football league[1], and the team came in first place.

Please evaluate Alex on the traits provided using the following scale. Again, there are no right or wrong answers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Completely Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree				Completely Agree

My impression of Alex is that Alex is…

1. Masculine
2. Feminine
3. A real man (woman)
4. Manly (Womanly)

My impression of Alex is that Alex is…

1. Arrogant	9. Adventurous
2. Coarse	10. Competitive
3. Reckless	11. Daring
4. Boastful	12. Enterprising
5. Fussy	13. Appreciative
6. Melodramatic	14. Emotionally Expressive
7. Insecure	15. Enthusiastic
8. Weak	16. Humble

Appendix C: Study 2 Materials

Welcome to the study. This study concerns impression formation. Previous psychological research suggests that people are skilled at making accurate first impressions of other people based on very limited information about them. We are going to show you a short paragraph that describes a person. Please imagine this person as vividly as you can in your mind while reading the description, as we will be asking you questions about your impressions of this person on the following pages.

[Sample vignette:]

Alex has lived in Florida their whole life. Alex has some personality weaknesses but has some very good qualities too. Alex prefers a certain amount of change and variety and becomes dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. For hobbies, Alex prefers going to car shows, watching sports on TV, and lifting weights. He also recently spent an evening at a couple of friends' house: There, he attempted to change a young child's diaper and did so quickly; the diaper remained snug and comfortable.

Your Impressions.
Now that you have read a little bit about **Alex**, we are interested in your impressions of him/her. Please read the following traits and rate how much you think they characterize Alex.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Completely Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree				Completely Agree

My impression of Alex is that Alex is…

1. Masculine
2. Feminine
3. A real man (woman)
4. Manly (Womanly)

My impression of Alex is that Alex is…

1. Arrogant	9. Adventurous
2. Coarse	10. Competitive
3. Reckless	11. Daring
4. Boastful	12. Enterprising
5. Fussy	13. Appreciative
6. Melodramatic	14. Emotionally Expressive
7. Insecure	15. Enthusiastic
8. Weak	16. Humble

[Page 2]

A man named Alex.

On this page, we have presented the same initial information Alex. However, we have added some additional information beneath it in bold. Please read this new information about Alex and answer the questions that follow.

Alex has lived in Florida their whole life. Alex has some personality weaknesses but has some very good qualities too. Alex prefers a certain amount of change and variety and becomes dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. For hobbies, Alex prefers going to car shows, watching sports on TV, and lifting weights. **He also recently spent an evening at a couple of friends' house: There, he attempted to change a young child's diaper and did so quickly; the diaper remained snug and comfortable.**

Consider the behavior of "changing a child's diaper." Then, on the scale provided, indicate what kind of impression you have of this behavior.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very Feminine								Very Masculine

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at All								Extremely

1) How likely is it that a man would have done this behavior?
2) Sometimes when people perform gendered behaviors, it can cause them to feel like their manhood has been threatened. How much do you think Alex felt that the behavior, "changing a child's diaper," was threatening to Alex's manhood?
3) How much of a gender-role violation would it be for a woman to do this behavior?
4) How much of a gender-role violation would it be for a man to do this behavior?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Completely Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree				Completely Agree

My impression of Alex is that Alex is…

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2. Feminine
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My impression of Alex is that Alex is…

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8. Weak	16. Humble

Please read the following occupations and rate how likely it is that ${e://Field/name1} has that job.

1) Construction Worker
2) Airplane Pilot
3) Plumber
4) Firefighter
5) Football Coach
6) Receptionist
7) Nurse
8) Daycare Provider
9) Hairdresser
10) Elementary School Teacher

Appendix D: Demographic Measures for Studies 1& 2

Demographics

Is English your first language?

a. Yes
b. No

What is your race?

a. White/Caucasian
b. African American
c. Hispanic
d. Asian
e. Native American
f. Pacific Islander
g. Bi-racial_____
h. Other_____

What is your age? _____

What is your gender?

a. Male
b. Female
c. Neither of these

What is your sexual orientation?

1 = Exclusively Heterosexual to 4 = Bisexual to 7 = Exclusively Homosexual

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter

USF
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

4/15/2014

Kenneth Michniewicz, M.A.
USF Department of Psychology
4202 East Fowler Ave., PCD 4118G
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**
IRB#: Pro00016591
Title: Ironic Masculinity and Femininity: Do Contextual Factors Reverse Attributions Based on Gender Stereotyped Behaviors?

Study Approval Period: 4/15/2014 to 4/15/2015

Dear Mr. Michniewicz:

On 4/15/2014, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
IRB Protocol.doc

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John A Schinka, Ph.D.

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board