Negotiating the Gender Spectrum: An Exploration of Femininity Bias within Masculine Defaults

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A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of Psychology

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2023

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Abstract

The Intersectionality of Gender Perceptions: Unraveling the Interplay Between Feminism, Workplace Cultures, and Biases Against Femininity

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This dissertation delves into the intricate landscape of femininity bias in masculine workplaces, examining the cultural interpretations of femininity, the impact of femininity bias on diverse genders, and the potential repercussions of emphasizing gender similarities at work. Chapter Two (theoretical) argues that femininity, often burdened with negative stereotypes such as weakness and insignificance, can lead to femininity bias when these traits are rejected and devalued in influential contexts. This bias impacts not only women but also other genders, particularly in the realms of precarious manhood and gender deviance. Chapter Three (empirical) demonstrates that a feminine gender-expression is negatively associated with feminism for women. However, this chapter takes an intersectional approach and shows that this effect is smaller for Black women compared to White women. Chapter Four (empirical) focuses on the potential paradoxical outcomes of emphasizing gender similarities at work. By conducting multiple studies involving different participant groups, the research reveals that focusing on gender similarities can lead to problematic masculine work cultures being perceived as less troublesome for women, reducing the likelihood of institutional changes that could challenge male-dominated workplace

cultures. Overall, this dissertation illuminates the multidimensional issue of femininity bias in masculine workplaces, underlining the need for an intersectional, nuanced understanding and approach towards gender in the workplace. By recognizing femininity bias and its implications, we move a step closer to fostering more inclusive, equal workplaces that respect and encourage a diverse range of gender expressions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Sapna Cheryan, whose unwavering guidance, expertise, and encouragement were instrumental in shaping this dissertation. Your invaluable insights and dedicated mentorship have made this journey both enlightening and fulfilling. Being a first-generation college student has brought me so much hardship, but the hardship comes with immense responsibility and pride. Dr. Cheryan, I owe a lot to you.

To my family, David, Marina, and Jake: your love, support, and belief in me have been the cornerstone of my pursuits. Your patience during the countless hours spent on this work and the unwavering faith you've had in my capabilities have been a source of immeasurable strength. I am eternally grateful for the sacrifices you've made and the laughter we've shared along the way.

I am also profoundly thankful to my friends from the University of Washington. The camaraderie, brainstorming sessions, and even the light-hearted banter have enriched my experience immeasurably. It's rare to find a group of individuals who offer both academic inspiration and emotional sustenance in equal measure. To all RAs, graduate students, post-docs, and member of the SIBL lab: Thank you!

To my beloved pets: your constant companionship, silent understanding, and unconditional affection provided the much-needed respite during the most stressful moments. Your presence has been a comforting constant amidst the chaos. Lilly, I will never forget you.

This journey, although an individual endeavor on the surface, is deeply rooted in the collective support and encouragement of everyone mentioned above. Thank you for being my anchor, my compass, and my cheerleaders.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Gender bias has long been a topic of study in social psychology, with a significant focus on the challenges faced by women in male-dominated fields. However, recent research has shed light on the concept of masculine defaults (Cheryan & Markus, 2020), which hyper-values masculinity and creates exclusionary workplaces for women. Despite this progress, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding feminine bias. Understanding and addressing feminine bias is crucial for comprehensively examining gender bias (Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

Masculine workplaces emphasize qualities such as boldness, competitiveness, and emotional restraint, which devalue feminine traits and marginalize individuals who do not conform to these norms. The notion that managerial roles and leadership characteristics are innately male traits is deeply entrenched in organizational cultures. For instance, the "think manager, think male" phenomenon posits that people predominantly associate managerial positions with male rather than female characteristics (Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996). Such stereotypes perpetuate the devaluation of femininity in professional settings. The rejection of femininity in these environments has been associated with negative consequences, including social marginalization and limited career prospects for those who deviate from traditional masculine ideals (Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman & Mescher, 2013). This bias not only impacts women, but also men who may feel compelled to suppress feminine-associated traits, leading to diminished self-expression. Moreover, this pressure to conform to societal expectations of masculinity can have detrimental effects on men's well-being, hindering their personal growth and limiting their ability to express a broader range of qualities and traits (Rudman & Mescher, 2013). A more inclusive approach to leadership and organizational behavior, which values a diverse range of traits regardless of gender, could be beneficial in rectifying these biases and fostering more holistic work environments.

Women often find themselves navigating femininity bias in masculine workplaces, where they are expected to downplay or suppress their feminine features to be taken seriously or fit into the prevailing masculine culture. For instance, in certain professional fields like law or finance, women might feel compelled to adopt a more "masculine" way of speaking, dressing, or acting in order to be seen as competent (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Such behaviors can include wearing less colorful clothing, avoiding displays of emotion, or refraining from discussing personal or family-related topics in professional settings. Moreover, women who display traditionally feminine traits, such as being compassionate or nurturing, can be penalized, perceiving them as less capable of leadership (Heilman, 2001). This pressure to conform can lead to a lack of authenticity and incongruence between their true selves and their work identities, resulting in career stagnation and an inability to fully realize their potential (Rudman & Mescher, 2013). The intersection of race and gender further complicates the issue, as women from diverse backgrounds may encounter specific obstacles when race stereotypes intersect with femininity bias in the workplace. For example, Asian women often grapple with the "model minority" stereotype, which can further pigeonhole them into submissive or passive roles, while Black women may face the "angry black woman" stereotype, which can cause them to be excessively cautious about how they express emotion at work (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2009). Understanding these complex dynamics requires adopting a cultural lens that acknowledges the intertwined nature of identity and how intersecting social categories shape individual experiences and opportunities.

To address the pervasive hyper valuation of masculine traits in male-dominated environments, it is essential to promote and value feminine traits regardless of gender. Challenging societal norms and stereotypes that limit the expression and recognition of feminine qualities is crucial for creating more inclusive and equal workplaces (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). By recognizing the value of feminine traits

and expressions, organizations can contribute to the creation of supportive environments that celebrate diversity and foster gender equality. Emphasizing the importance of inclusive practices and nurturing a diverse range of gender expressions is key to dismantling gender stereotypes and promoting a more equitable workplace by reducing masculine defaults (Cheryan & Markus, 2020).

Nonetheless, in order to promote femininity we must first understand that femininity is not a one-size-fits-all. People may express femininity in a variety of ways, and those expressions may vary by things such as cultural background and age. For instance, girliness is often more associated with young women and more stereotyped as feminine, such as wearing pink (Paoletti, 2012). However, other traits like kindness, nurturing, and sensibility are also associated with femininity (Bem, 1974). Before diving into the different ways in which feminity is devalued, it is important to have an overview of the different ways in which people of any gender can express femininity.

Culture meanings of femininity

Femininity is a multifaceted concept, deeply rooted in societal and cultural norms. It encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviors, roles, and attributes traditionally associated with women (Lorber, 1994). Throughout history and across cultures, definitions of femininity vary, challenging the notion of a homogenous femininity. In Western perspectives on femininity, in particular those influenced by European standards, femininity is often tied to physical appearance, traditionally symbolized by beauty, fragility, and passivity (Brumberg, 1998). Women are expected to emphasize certain attributes, such as thinness, youth, and grace. However, in the wake of feminist movements and the growing awareness of gender fluidity, Western societies have been gradually broadening the definitions of femininity, recognizing it as a socially constructed concept that varies based on individual interpretation (Butler, 1990).

In contrast, many African cultures emphasize strength and resilience as fundamental feminine attributes. Ironically, such attributes may be deemed masculine in Western definitions (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002). Historically, African women have played crucial roles in community leadership, warfare, and economic sustenance (Amadiume, 2015). For instance, the Akan people of Ghana attribute femininity to motherhood and its associated responsibilities, signifying strength and authority (Oyěwùmí, 1997). In contemporary African societies, femininity is viewed as an intersection of strength, resilience, and nurturing.

A Note on Gender Fluidity

The Western concept of the gender binary has often overlooked cultures that recognize more than two genders. Non-binary gender concepts provide a broad array of femininities beyond the binary framework. For instance, some Indigenous cultures in North America acknowledge Two-Spirit individuals, who embody both masculine and feminine traits (Lang, 1998). Similarly, the hijra community in South Asia, recognized as a third gender, exhibits femininity in unique ways that challenge binary gender norms (Nanda, 1999). These examples demonstrate that femininity is not set in stone and does not belong to one single gender, especially in a binary construct.

While gender bias research has traditionally focused on the challenges faced by women in male-dominated fields (Acker, 2012), it is imperative to acknowledge and address the issue of femininity bias in masculine workplaces. Research by Rudman and Phelan (2008) has highlighted the negative consequences associated with the rejection of femininity in these environments. Men and women both face pressures to conform to societal expectations, which can significantly impact their well-being, career prospects, and authentic self-expression.

Moreover, the intersection of race and gender further complicates the issue, necessitating a cultural lens to fully understand and address the complexities at play (Acker, 2012). By actively

addressing femininity bias, organizations can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society, fostering an environment that supports the well-being and success of all individuals within their organizations.

To conclude this chapter, femininity, far from being a monolithic concept, varies significantly across cultures and is continually evolving (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Traditional gender roles and expectations continue to morph under the influence of societal shifts, globalization, and growing recognition of gender fluidity (Connell, 2012). These changes prompt the necessity of a more inclusive understanding of femininity that celebrates its multifaceted nature, transcending cultural, and gender boundaries.

Chapter 2: Femininity Bias: The Aversion and Rejection of Femininity

Gender roles have changed dramatically over the past several decades (McCall & Dasgupta, 2007; Diekman & Eagly, 2000). For instance, the proportion of women in the United States workforce has seen a significant growth, from 29.6% in 1950 to 46.6% in 2000. This figure is projected to increase to 47.7% by 2050 (Toossi, 2002). Men are increasingly expected to participate and engage in childcare and domestic tasks more than ever before (Croft et al., 2019). Although individuals of all genders now enjoy greater liberty to diverge from traditional gender roles, societal attitudes towards femininity and masculinity remain nearly unchanged. Masculine traits are often perceived as superior compared to feminine traits (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Even within progressive societies and literature, slogans like "Women can do anything" typically suggest women adopting roles associated with men (Hyde, 2005). Rarely does this happen to those who express themselves in a feminine manner. For instance, individuals are often advised to "lean in" to masculine characteristics – such as competitiveness, assertiveness, and engage in activities deemed masculine like sports rather than fashion – in order to be taken seriously or to achieve career success (Sandberg, 2015). Conversely, "being feminine," often carries negative associations such as perceived weakness, triviality, and insignificance (Rudman & Mescher, 2013). Characteristics, behaviors, and activities linked with femininity are typically devalued and trivialized (Bailey et al., 2019).

In this chapter, femininity bias refers to the systemic devaluation, aversion, and dismissal of femininity. This bias promotes masculinity traits as the gold standard for competence, intelligence, and respect while diminishing individuals who display more feminine traits. This study argues that femininity bias is distinct from - but often intersects with - gender bias against women. A comprehensive literature review on femininity bias, theories on stereotypes, social roles, and threats was conducted to uncover the mechanisms behind femininity bias against different genders. A culturally sensitive approach to

femininity is recommended to mitigate this form of bias.

Femininity Bias Distinguished from Gender Bias Against Women

Femininity bias is a unique form of bias that stands apart from bias against women, despite instances where the two intersect. A compelling argument for distinguishing femininity bias from bias against women lies in the fact that the former can affect individuals across the entire gender spectrum.

Femininity Bias and Men

The meaning and the precarious nature of "manhood" serves as evidence of femininity bias. A "real man" is characterized as being the primary provider (Eagly & Wood, 2016), demonstrating physical strength (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), and embodying a range of other attributes deemed pertinent to men (Eagly et al., 2000). One persistent theme emerges when defining manhood: a pronounced aversion to femininity. The rejection and avoidance of femininity in men find their roots in early psychology, particularly in Freudian theories explaining the development of "typical" manhood. Freud (1937) posited that formation of a healthy manhood is traced back to a male's childhood: specifically to boys distancing themselves from the feminine characteristics that their female caregiver (often their mother) possesses. Upon reaching adulthood, men are expected to distance themselves from anything resembling femininity; the more a man is distanced from anything feminine, the more "manly" he is regarded (Heilman & Wallen, 2010; O'Neil et al., 1986; Thompson et al., 1985).

Precarious Manhood

The aversion and rejection of femininity make the male gender role challenging and fraught with anxiety. Men, striving to retain their social status, feel threatened by femininity due to the apprehension of losing their manhood and status (Vandello et al., 2008). Such a need to continually disengage from femininity to preserve one's manhood imposes a significant toll on men, both physically and psychologically.

In certain societies, adolescent boys are expected to endure great pain without flinching, or even place themselves in highly dangerous situations to prove that they are not feminine (Vandello et al., 2008; Saitoti, 1986). In hyper-masculine contexts (Bem, 1993) men are continuously forced to prove their masculinity through hazardous initiation rituals or other unhealthy assertions of masculinity, such as public displays of sexism and homophobia (Kroeper et al., 2014). Those who refuse to participate in such displays of masculinity have their manhood questioned, thereby risking their social status.

Similarly, societal pressure to reject femininity causes psychological harm to boys and men. Young boys are instructed that "boys don't cry" and that showing signs of emotional distress – viewed as a feminine trait – is met with negative reactions such as being labeled "wimpy" (Heilman & Wallen, 2010; Vogel et al., 2011). Boys then quickly learn that feminine characteristics should be rejected. This kind of socialization is harmful as it results in boys suppressing their vulnerability and emotional expression, adversely impacting their emotional development (Vogel et al., 2011). This behavioral pattern extends into adulthood as men continue to grapple with expressing their emotions in healthy ways (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Vogel et al., 2011). Ultimately, this intense aversion to femininity is reflected in men resorting to dangerous coping strategies, such as aggression (Bosson & Vandello, 2011) and resistance to seeking help when needed, thereby dramatically amplifying their risks of suicide (Oliffe et al., 2016; Reynders et al., 2015). The precarious nature of masculinity lies in its rejection of femininity to such an extent that men are subjected to unnecessary physical and psychological danger.

Consequences of Gender Deviance for Men

When men engage in feminine behaviors or demonstrate femininity, they pay a substantial cost. Feminine qualities are perceived to be inferior to masculine qualities. In a study, men who displayed feminine behaviors by requesting family leave were perceived as weaker and more uncertain than men who did not. These perceptions of femininity predicted a greater risk of demotion and termination within

a company, indicating that femininity can be costly for men (Rudman & Mescher, 2013).

One might anticipate that the aversion to femininity would be primarily observed amongst heterosexual men, as gay men are stereotypically thought of as more feminine (Mitchell & Ellis, 2011). Indeed, these stereotypes and expectations of femininity in gay men may partly explain why heterosexual men, fearing associations with femininity, create significant distance between themselves and gay men, especially those who appear more feminine (Hunt et al., 2016). It is observed that gay men presenting themselves femininely suffer more harassment from heterosexual men (Clarkson, 2007). However, femininity bias also exists within gay community. Feminine gay men suffer more backlash and rejection than their masculine counterparts. For instance, gay men are shown to prefer more stereotypically masculine partners, wish to be perceived as more masculine than feminine, and hold negative attitudes toward more stereotypically feminine gay men (Hunt et al., 2016). These attitudes among gay men suggest that the aversion to femininity is not exclusive to heterosexual men asserting their masculinity to distance themselves from gay men, contrary to what some may have suggested (Kroeper et al., 2014). Although it is possible that heterosexual men may exhibit a higher aversion to femininity than gay men, femininity bias exists regardless of men's sexual orientations, positioning men as both perpetrators and victims of this bias.

Femininity Bias and Women

The aversion to femininity is not only confined to men who wish to establish their manhood or those who transgress their assigned gender norms. Femininity bias also impacts those with assigned feminine gender roles, like women. The social role theory posits that women are presumed and expected to behave according to the female gender role, which includes displaying feminine traits (Bem, 1981; Eagly & Wood, 1999). Examples of feminine traits involve being cheerful and gentle (Bem, 1981), and having concern over physical appearance (Chrisler, 2013), among others that evoke femininity (Bem,

1981; Wood & Eagly, 2012). As such, it's reasonable to assume that women more often endorse and are rewarded for their femininity. To an extent, these presumptions hold true. Feminine women have several advantages for adhering to femininity. For instance, they do not experience the backlash received by less feminine women for violating their assigned gender roles (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013; Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Cheryan et al., 2020). Women who present themselves as more masculine are less liked (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010), perceived as less attractive (Reis et al., 1982), and less socially skilled than their more feminine counterparts (Rudman & Glick, 1999). However, the advantages of being feminine come at a certain cost for women.

Stereotype Content Model (SCM) and Perceptions of Competence

According to the stereotype content model (SCM), stereotypes are organized along with two broad dimensions: competence and warmth (Cuddy et al., 2009). At first glance, both the competence dimension (e.g., being assertive and competitive) and the warmth dimension (e.g., being nice and trustworthy) have positive connotations. However, in reality, individuals who are perceived as very warm are often considered less competent, resulting in lower status and importance (Cuddy et al., 2009). Since warmth is a key component of femininity, the SCM suggests that those with feminine characteristics would be judged as less competent and of lower status. In other words, feminine individuals would be perceived as likable, yet non-threatening, potentially eliciting feelings of pity (Cuddy et al., 2008). This 'pitying' prejudice reflects not just liking, but also disrespect (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 2001). Furthermore, it targets traditionally feminine women (Cuddy et al., 2008; Cuddy et al., 2004; Glick & Fiske, 1996). On the other hand, less feminine individuals such as non-traditional women (e.g., feminists), cisgender, and heterosexual men, although less liked, are considered more competent and respected (Cuddy et al., 2009; Eagly & Kite, 1987; Glick & Fiske, 2001). In sports, female athletes presenting themselves as more feminine are known to be trivialized and face more sexual harassment

(Krane, 2001). Hence, feminine women, despite certain social advantages, lose respect and status, particularly in contexts where competence is essential, such as the workplace.

Feminine women are at a disadvantage in the workplace as they are perceived as less competent, compared to more masculine women. Employees of all genders are often advised to present themselves as more masculine and conceal their femininity in order to be taken seriously and be more successful (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Sandberg, 2015). Masculine traits, such as assertiveness and competitiveness, are generally favored in the workplace compared to more feminine traits, such as kindness and cooperation (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Due to these masculine defaults, people who present themselves as more feminine tend to be seen as ill-fitting in masculine, high-status workplaces and career fields (Cheryan et al., 2009; Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Leslie et al., 2015). For example, attractive women (perceived as more feminine) and women who wear feminine clothing (e.g., dresses and skirts) and makeup are often rated as less qualified and are less likely to be hired than unattractive women (perceived as more masculine) or women who presented themselves as less feminine (e.g., by wearing suits and no makeup) especially for male-oriented jobs which tend to be higher in status (Cash et al., 1977). Similarly, women with feminine appearance are deemed less suited for careers in scientific fields (Banchefsky et al., 2016; Leslie et al., 2015). While these findings may appear to contradict the halo effect, which is the tendency to form positive assumptions about a person's personality based on their attractiveness (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), they suggest that femininity can act as a barrier to assumptions of competence in attractive individuals. In summary, despite some social benefits of femininity for women, those who display femininity are often more devalued and trivialized compared to those who are less feminine.

Women's Rejection of Femininity

The devaluation of femininity is one possible explanation for the growing trend of women to

reject femininity, especially in male-dominated environments such as the workplace. More women are opting to present themselves as less feminine, exhibiting more masculine traits, and distancing themselves from traditionally feminine women (Twenge, 2014). Due to lower perceptions of competence and fit in masculine environments, femininity can be risky for women (and people of all genders). To avoid the risks associated with femininity, some women distance themselves from it and gravitate towards masculinity instead.

Social Identity Threat

The threat of being devalued may prompt many women to downplay their femininity and emphasize masculine characteristics. Such attempts to reject femininity are a result of social identity threats, which arise in contexts where an individual's collective identity is devalued (Steele et al., 2002). In response to this threat, some women distance themselves from the devalued group (i.e., feminine women) to gain acceptance from the high-status group (i.e., men; Ellemers & Haslam, 2011; Turner & Brown, 1976). These attempts to social mobility may manifest in choosing to present themselves as more masculine. For example, in Italy, women faculty in a university described themselves as having equal or even more masculine characteristics (e.g., risk-taking, assertiveness) than their male counterparts (Ellemers et al., 2004). Similar results have been found in other parts of the world (Lückerath-Rovers et al., 2013), where women describe themselves as more ambitious and status-oriented than men in equivalent positions. Distancing themselves from femininity has been observed in women in leadership positions, referred to as the queen bee effect (or "kicking and screaming;" Derks et al., 2011; Derks et al., 2016; Kaiser & Spalding, 2015). These distancing behaviors are also understood as a strategy to elevate their own social status. From a social identity threat perspective, by distancing themselves from other women, particularly feminine women – perceived as low in competence – they can ascend the social hierarchy instead of being grouped with the lower-status group (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005). While it

may seem counter-intuitive, it has been observed that women in power hinder, rather than help, other women's careers, such as by favoring male candidates over female candidates in hiring and mentoring opportunities (Kaiser & Spalding, 2015). Although it may be tempting to vilify women who reject femininity and "queen bees," it is crucial to remember that such behaviors stem from the pressure of operating in a male-dominated environment that consistently devalues femininity. "Queen bees" and women who distance themselves from femininity as a strategy are not only enforcers of femininity bias but also the victims.

Another form of femininity bias amongst women is the perception that feminine women are less feminist. In one study, women who appeared to have more feminine features were judged to be less feminist than women with more masculine features (Gundersen & Kunst, 2019). While campaigns such as "This is what a feminist looks like" aim to change people's perceptions of what feminist men look like, there is no similar campaign to include feminine individuals (McLaughlin & Aikman, 2020). Being perceived as less of a feminist is problematic for several reasons. First, feminine women may be dismissed and trivialized in a social movement that benefits them. Second, being perceived as less of a feminist carries some negative connotations. While feminist women often carry negative labels such as "man-hating" and "always angry" (Bashir et al., 2013), they are also positively evaluated as intelligent, productive, and competent (Twenge & Zucker, 1999). Women who appear to be more feminine, thus judged as less feminist, may then be perceived as less intelligent, productive, and competent as other women. No research has yet to explore the concrete consequences for feminine women being perceived as less feminist, or the reasons for this phenomenon, but it is possible that the same risks associated with femininity behind the queen bee phenomenon could be at play when it comes to judging who is a feminist. Overall, these findings suggest that feminine women are disadvantaged in contexts where competence is important, leading femininity to become a risk that some women choose to avoid.

The Intersection Role of Race and Gender on Femininity

It is important to note that most of the work about femininity is focused on White women (Shields, 2008). However, the experiences of women of color differ significantly from those of White women. For instance, White women seem to have less freedom to violate some gender norms, such as assertiveness in leadership positions, compared to Black and Asian women (Livingston et al., 2012; Toosi et al., 2019). Conversely, Latinas who display assertiveness are characterized as angry and emotionally unstable (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Additionally, femininity holds different meanings for women of different backgrounds. For example, White women who identify as feminists view femininity as conflicting with feminism. White women who identify as feminists describe themselves as more masculine than those who do not. However, for Black women, being feminine (e.g., wearing feminine clothing) was positively correlated with their own identity as a feminist (Cole & Zucker, 2007).

The status of femininity can vary across cultures and even religions. In Brazilian Afro religions such as Candomblé, the most powerful entities (e.g., Pomba Gira, Iemanja) present themselves as feminine both in appearance and mannerisms, embodying femininity as the ultimate sexual and spiritual power. These entities are revered by people of all genders who follow Candomblé (Hayes, 2009). The meaning and status of femininity culture are not universal, and femininity bias may manifest differently when intersectionality is considered.

A Potential Way to Mitigate Femininity Bias: Femininity Through Cultural Lens

Understanding gender identity as a form of cultural expression can help mitigate the negative consequences of femininity bias, thus liberating people of any gender who identify with femininity. Gender identity is deeply rooted in culture. Rather than prescribing how women and men must behave, gender identity is understood as the construct of oneself in relation to what is culturally deemed masculine or feminine (Wood & Eagly, 2009). Although often overlapped with one's gender, these

constructs are not necessarily attached to it, as seen in ‘gay culture’ where some men opt for cultural symbols more associated with femininity (Rabie & Lesch, 2009). Hence, penalizing a person of any gender for being feminine can arguably be viewed as restricting the cultural expressions of oneself.

Forcing individuals to assimilate into a new culture has been shown to be harmful to their well-being. Often, immigrants are burdened with acculturation stress, which consists of psychological and social stresses due to the pressures of distancing themselves from their own culture in exchange for a new cultural identity (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). Forced acculturation has been linked to a variety of negative outcomes for immigrants, such as substance abuse and depression (Dimitrova et al., 2014; Oh et al., 2002; Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014), as well as various physical health problems (D’Anna et al., 2012; Kaholokula et al., 2010). Letting go of one’s cultural identity in exchange for another is a taxing experience for both the body and mind.

While extreme reactions to acculturation stress primarily relate to race and national identity, total denial of one’s gender identity is associated with increased mental health problems and suicide at an early age (Olson et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it is crucial not to sound alarmist: the inability to express one’s femininity (or masculinity) due to risk of being perceived as incompetent is not akin to being denied your gender identity, as is the case for transgender individuals.

Transgender people and immigrants often experience daily denial of their culture and self-identity, but gender-related acculturation stress is typically specific to a single context, such as the workplace (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Another aspect is that expressions of femininity do not deny one’s gender, especially for women, given that womanhood is more stable than manhood (Vandello et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, the less severe nature of gender acculturation does not imply it is not harmful to individuals. Women, and some men who do not wholly identify with masculinity, have been shown to experience stress, feeling of not belonging, and lower performance in contexts where masculinity is the

norm (Cheryan et al., 2009; WoSmith et al., 2013). Women are particularly disadvantaged when entering masculine cultures, as they are not socialized to develop and display masculine traits (Crowley et al., 2001; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2003). Consequently, women less frequently display traits deemed masculine (Hyde, 2005) and have lower chances to succeed when trying to assimilate into masculine cultures. Besides, women also face backlash for violating gender norms, further complicating their situation (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013). Transforming norms and creating cultures that value and reward femininity can alleviate the stress of people of any gender forced to conform to masculinity.

Cultural Meanings of Femininity

Femininity is not a fixed universal construct; rather it is shaped by cultural beliefs, values, and practices. Recognizing cultural relativity reveals that femininity can differ greatly across societies. For example, some cultures might prioritize nurturing, compassion, and interdependence as central to femininity, while others may emphasize assertiveness, independence, and career success (Arnett, 2008; Hofstede, 2001).

Numerous cross-cultural studies have investigated the cultural differences in the perception and interpretation of femininity. These investigations have revealed variations in gender roles, traits, and behaviors associated with femininity across cultures. For instance, research conducted in individualistic cultures, such as the United States, has shown a greater emphasis on independence, assertiveness, and personal achievement as essential aspects of femininity (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Williams & Best, 1990). On the other hand, collectivist cultures, which include many Asian countries, often place more importance on communal values, interdependence, and family-oriented behaviors in defining femininity (Bachnik, 1998; Kim, 2003).

Adding femininity to cultures can potentially mitigate femininity bias and benefit everyone. Masculine cultures, particularly in the workplace, have been described as being overly concerned with

money over well-being, permitting toxic interruptions, and favoring self-promotion over modesty. These factors contribute to stress and poor performance to many employees (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Delph-Janiurek, 2000). In countries perceived to have more masculine cultures (e.g., the United States, Mexico, and China), men generally hold more positions of power, receive higher pay, and are more respected than women. Men in these countries are often taught to reject femininity to maintain their social status (Eagly & Kite, 1987; Hofstede, 2016). However, in countries perceived to have more feminine cultures, such as Norway, Sweden, and Costa Rica, feminine traits (e.g., modesty, tenderness, and a preference for quality of life over money) are encouraged in both women and men (Hofstede, 2016). These countries demonstrate considerably better social and economic outcomes for women including increased male participation in household responsibilities, smaller gender income gaps, higher representation of women in positions of power, and overall greater well-being (Hofstede, 2016; Pasquali, 2020).

Some organizations are already experiencing notably positive outcomes through the adoption of more feminine styles of leadership. The feminine style of management approach is characterized by empathy towards employees, open communication, work-life balance, and collaborative workstyles (e.g., teamwork), while maintaining high-performance standards (Valentine & Price, 1994). These feminine management styles have been shown to be favored by employees of all genders, without compromising work productivity (Faizan et al., 2018). In organizations and other contexts where femininity is the norm, people of all genders can reap the benefits of increased well-being and equality.

The Limitations of Femininity

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that femininity is not always beneficial. While this literature review has discussed the various ways in which feminine individuals can be disadvantaged, the pushback against femininity has roots in social movements intended to advance, rather than harm

women. The second-wave feminist movement, which rejected traditional feminine ideals, did so in response to traditional social roles and stereotypes that curtailed women's rights and excluded women from positions of power (Evans, 2008). Traditional femininity has confined the definition of womanhood as being demure, sweet, preoccupied with household chores, and highly dependent on men (Friedan, 2010). To a certain extent, women with successful careers need not adhere to such traits, otherwise, they may be seen as not fit for the workplace, particularly male-dominated workplaces and leadership roles (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Concerns with physical appearance and romantic partners - both considered feminine concerns - have also been shown to affect girls' math performance (Park et al., 2011).

Femininity may also be harmful in other ways. For instance, some individuals can use femininity as a justification for underrepresentation of women in male-dominated domains (Reges, 2018). Women can internalize unhealthy notions of femininity too. For example, highly feminine young women have been shown to develop an unhealthy obsession with body image, leading to eating disorders and mental health problems (Green et al., 2008). It is important to note that, just as femininity is conceptualized differently depending on race and other backgrounds, the negative consequences of femininity described in this section may not be universally true for all women. For example, body image ideals and satisfaction significantly differ between White and Black women (Thomas, 1989). Therefore, while femininity might have some negative consequences for some women, these consequences may not exist for women of different backgrounds or for individuals of different genders.

Nonetheless, acknowledging that there are downsides to femininity suggests that some aspects of femininity may be harmful to some people, just as some aspects of masculinity are harmful to men and women (Vandello et al., 2008). Thus, efforts to reduce femininity bias must first examine the nuances of which aspects of femininity have positive or negative consequences, and for whom. This understanding is important because our goal should not be to preserve or normalize aspects of femininity that cause harm.

Initiatives to mitigate this bias should also go beyond simplistic gestures, such as abruptly presenting an extremely feminine role model to all women and girls. In fact, this approach – overly feminizing science role models for women – has been shown to backfire, as some women may see it as patronizing (Betz & Sekaquaptewa, 2012). A more effective approach may be to alter cultural favoritism of masculinity, for example, by discouraging hyper masculine behaviors such as interruptions and excessive work focus at the expense of well-being. Instead, institutions could begin valuing traits more associated with femininity, such as cooperation and kindness. Incorporating femininity into cultures (and reducing a focus on masculinity) may also benefit society in general, as many feminine traits seem to improve people's well-being in the long run (Faizan et al., 2018).

On an individual level, people will benefit from being aware that a feminine presentation does not equate to lesser competence. Efforts to mitigate individual-level biases, such as by running implicit bias training and other practices that bring awareness to subtle ways of biases. However, most of these bias mitigations, to the best of my knowledge, include bias against women but not against feminine people. By also focusing on the ways feminine people may be disadvantaged, we may allow individuals to freely express their gender identities, thus improving their psychological and social well-being.

Limitations

Although this work includes several empirical findings in order to support the argument that femininity bias exists in various forms, our arguments are empirical. Therefore, some of the arguments presented in this paper, though related to prior empirical evidence, might not hold in experimental settings. Another important limitation is our lack of discussion on people who are neither women nor men, even though we believe this to be an important, and intellectually interesting area of future empirical investigation. Lastly, this work is not based on critical feminist theory and therefore may lack some crucial historical context. However, we hope that this review on the topic of femininity bias can be

a starting point for future investigation in social psychology.

Conclusion

By examining several theories and evidence from psychology and other social science disciplines, we argue that people of any gender who identify more with femininity than masculinity are disadvantaged in contexts where competence is required or valued. We explore how women and men can be both the perpetrators and victims of femininity bias, and offer a cultural approach that can potentially mitigate this form of bias. For example, both women and men distance themselves from femininity when their competence is at stake. However, when they embrace femininity, they encounter backlash, being perceived as weak, unintelligent, or not worthy to be taken seriously. We propose that a potential solution is to view femininity as a cultural norm, where people should not be forced to assimilate to masculinity. Yet, we acknowledge the obstacles in embracing femininity. Not only is femininity differently understood and perceived depending on racial and ethnic backgrounds, it also has negative consequences. Unfortunately, our understanding of these consequences may be limited due to White women-centered literature on femininity. Future investigations should include an intersectional exploration of femininity across gender, sexuality, race, age, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. By understanding the nuances of femininity, we can identify how femininity bias may present itself differently to each group, other presentations of femininity bias, and more importantly, identify solutions so that feminine people can express their true selves.

Chapter 3: Intersectional Feminism

Feminism has played an instrumental role in dismantling traditional gender roles, promoting gender equality, and reshaping societal norms and attitudes towards women (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007). However, research on the perceptions of feminist women, particularly women of color, remains scant. This chapter aims to fill this gap by taking an intersectional perspective, examining the interplay of race and gender in influencing societal perceptions of women's feminist identities.

Women's experiences are broadly diverse, shaped by myriad factors including cultural contexts, socioeconomic status, geographical location, and notably, race (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Eagly & Riger, 2014). It is at the intersection of race and gender where such heterogeneity becomes especially evident. For instance, societal perceptions of femininity vary between Black and White women. The prevalent narrative often falsely cast Black women as more masculine due to deep-rooted racial biases, unfairly positioning them outside of conventional beauty standards and reducing their identities to a single, stereotyped narrative (Johnson et al., 2012; Ghavami & Peplau, 2013; Harris-Perry, 2011).

Moreover, the intersectionality of race and gender within the realm of feminism uncovers a significant divide. The experiences of Black and White women within feminism diverge significantly. Mainstream feminism, often critiqued as 'White feminism', has been disparaged for primarily focusing on the struggles of White women while overlooking the unique issues faced by women of color (Carastathis, 2014). This divergence underscores the necessity for an intersectional approach to feminism, one that acknowledges the complexity and diversity of women's experiences across different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Women's adherence to gender norms, often expressed through physical appearance, can significantly affect their perceived alignment with feminism (Haines et al., 2016). Conversely, women appearing more masculine might be stereotyped as feminists due to an inaccurate but prevalent

association of feminism with a rejection of femininity (Bem, 1993; Cikara et al., 2010). However, this pattern might differ between White women and women of color. Women of color are often overlooked in discussions about feminism, which is inaccurately portrayed as a movement primarily involving White women (hooks, 1981; Collins, 2000). Racial stereotypes can further influence how femininity or masculinity are perceived (Johnson et al., 2012). 9One possibility is that women of different races describe and act on feminism in distinct ways.

This study examines perceptions of a woman's feminist identification and advocacy based on her race (Black or White) and her gender expression (feminine or masculine). We predict that White women who appear feminine will be seen as less likely to be feminist than White women who appear masculine, and that this pattern will be similar but smaller for Black women. Through this, we aim to enhance our understanding of these intricate intersections and their impact on perceptions and stereotypes.

Study

We began by doing a pretest to create materials and then used those materials to examine the extent to which White and Black women with different feminine expressions (masculine vs. feminine) were perceived as feminist.

Link to pre-registration: https://osf.io/uy2n6

Pretest

Step 1. Open-ended questionnaire

A sample of 71 undergraduate students (31 women, 29 men, one other option not listed), drawn from the psychology subject pool, were asked to generate three traits, three hobbies, and three careers associated with femininity, followed by those associated with masculinity. The participants'

demographics were diverse: 28 identified as Asian/Asian-American, 24 as White, five as Latin, two as Black/African-American, two as Native American, two as Pacific Islander, and one as other (not listed). Out of the 71 participants, 60 were born in the United States.

The questionnaire, in non-randomized order, contained with the following prompts:

1. Please list three characteristics or personality traits that you associate with femininity or that you consider to be feminine.
2. Please list three hobbies or activities that you associate with femininity or that you consider to be feminine.
3. Please list three jobs or careers that you associate with femininity or that you consider to be feminine.
4. Please list three characteristics or personality traits that you associate with masculinity or that you consider to be masculine.
5. Please list three hobbies or activities that you associate with masculinity or that you consider to be masculine.
6. Please list three jobs or careers that you associate with masculinity or that you consider to be masculine.

Upon completion of the open-ended section, participants were asked to self-rate on a scale from 1 (Much more feminine than masculine) to 7 (Much more masculine than feminine) in response to the statement: “Regardless of your gender, how feminine or masculine do you mostly see yourself as?”; (M = 4.08, SD = 2.13).

Step 2. Validation

In order to create a database of traits, hobbies, and careers that are deemed either feminine or masculine, two research assistants selected the responses from the open-ended study that were

represented least twice in each category (traits, hobbies). This selection resulted in 100 traits and 70 hobbies.

We then asked 62 adults (27 women, 32 men, 3 non-binary) in the United States, via Prolific, to rate each trait and each hobby using the prompt "Please rate how masculine, feminine or neither is _____. Please give your most automatic response." on a scale from 1 (most masculine) to 5 (most feminine).

Step 3. Pictures

Two research assistants collected 10 pictures of Black/White, Feminine/Masculine women from public domain sources, using gender labels in Google Search.

Main Study

Participants. We recruited 69 undergraduate participants (#women, ## men, ## non-binary) from the psychology subject pool.

Procedure. This was a between-subject study. Participants were shown one of the conditions, with a picture and a small bio of the target woman. The question: "How feminine or masculine does this person seem to you, regardless of their gender?" was asked to to determine the perceived femininity and masculinity in the pictures.

Method

Transparency and Openness

In adherence to the principles of transparency and openness, all aspects of the study, including sample size (accounting for including power analyses), the experimental procedures, our hypotheses, and the proposed analyses plan were pre registered.

Participants

A total of 350 adults residing in the United States were recruited for this study through the Prolific platform. Of these participants, 175 identified as women, 168 as men, five as non-binary, and one as other. Regarding racial and ethnic representation, 261 identified as White, 41 as Asian/Asian-American, 35 as Black, 26 as Latin, five as Native-American, and five as Middle-Eastern.

Procedures

We employed a between-subject design in this study, wherein participants were randomized to one of four conditions through an online survey. Participants were exposed to a combination of a photograph and a textual vignette featuring a woman. Depending on the condition to which participants were assigned, was either portrayed as feminine-expressing or masculine-expressing, and either Black or White, see below ("Pretest for Vignette"). Subsequently, participants were required to rate their perceptions of the woman's identification with and advocacy for feminism.

Perceived feminism was assessed through two Likert-scale questions ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very much). The first question sought to understand, "How much do you think this person identifies as a feminist?" while the second asked, "How likely do you think this person is to actively advocate for feminism?"

Results

A 2 (Gender-expression: feminine vs. masculine) x 2 (Race of woman: Black vs. White) between-subjects ANOVA was conducted on the perceived feminism of the depicted woman. This analysis revealed a significant main effect for both gender expression, $F(1, 344) = 78.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$, a main effect of Race of woman, $F(1, 344) = 10.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, and a significant Gender-expression x Race of woman interaction, $F(1, 344) = 11.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

As predicted, masculine women ($M = 3.81$, $SD = .76$) were rated as more feminist than feminine women ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .81$), $p < 0.01$. In addition, the Black feminine woman ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .71$) was rated significantly more feminist than her White counterpart ($M = 2.81$, $SD = .81$), $p < 0.01$. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference between how feminist the Black masculine woman was rated ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .75$) compared to the White masculine woman ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .77$), $p = .921$.

Discussion

The present study sought to explore how the intersection of race and gender-expression impacts perceptions of feminism, with a focus on the depiction of Black and White women expressing either feminine or masculine traits. The findings offered insights into how societal perceptions and biases are shaped, reinforcing the critical need to understand intersectionality within the context of gender and race.

Our results revealed a significant main effect of both gender expression and race on the perceived feminism of the depicted woman. Consistent with our predictions, we found that feminine-expressing women were perceived as more likely to identify and advocate for feminism than their masculine-expressing counterparts. This finding aligns with prior research, suggesting that gender expression can influence how feminism is perceived (Liss et al., 2001; Rudman & Phelan, 2007; Twist et al., 2020). However, this raises interesting questions about societal expectations and stereotypes related to femininity and advocacy for gender equality.

More intriguing was the significant interaction between gender expression and race. This interaction underscores the complexity of intersectionality – a single-axis framework may not fully capture the lived experiences of women who navigate the world with multiple marginalized identities. Therefore, the intersection of these identities should be considered when discussing feminism, as it can contribute to differing perceptions and experiences.

While our study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. Our sample was predominantly White, which may limit the generalizability of our findings. Additionally, our study only considered two racial groups and a binary concept of gender expression, thereby not capturing the full spectrum of human identities. Future research could explore more diverse racial and ethnic groups, non-binary and other gender expressions, and further intersections of identities.

With this background, we turn our attention to the historical development of feminism and its relationship with gender expression. The second-wave feminist movement was predominantly focused on securing rights equal to men's, including employment rights, bodily autonomy, and political representation (Freidan, 1963; Freeman, 1975). This pursuit brought to the fore a seeming paradox: a perceived opposition between femininity and feminism rooted in societal gender norms (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007). Moreover, women striving to dismantle patriarchal systems were often stereotyped as 'masculine,' further reinforcing this opposition. This oversimplification risks propagating harmful stereotypes and implies that femininity and feminism are mutually exclusive - a notion both misleading and potentially damaging to the empowerment of all women (Bem, 1993; Cikara et al., 2010).

Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights into the effects of femininity bias and its implications, it is important to acknowledge some limitations. Firstly, the study primarily focuses on Western cultural contexts and may not fully capture the experiences of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Particularly, the study was completed with participants from the United States. The studies may or may not generalize outside of the United States, even other Western countries. This may be partially due to historical meanings of feminism within the United States, prominent American feminists, or any unique American cultural value associated with femininity.

Another limitation is the well documented phenomenon of Black women being perceived as more masculine than White women (Johnson et al., 2012; Bligh et al., 2004). Such perceptions of natural masculinity for black women may be affecting or driving the results and further research should tease out or better control for masculinity across race.

Lastly, the study only measured perceptions of femininity of women identified people. It is viable that the connection between femininity and feminism results in the opposite conclusion if people are perceiving femininity on men. Since feminism is about breaking traditional gender roles (Hooks, 2000), it is possible that men who are feminine could be considered more feminist than men who express themselves as more masculine. Future research should include people of different genders in order to have a thorough understanding of the relationship of femininity and perceptions of feminism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing literature on intersectionality and its role in feminism. Our findings point to the complex and interconnected influences of gender expression and race on perceptions of feminism. This underscores the importance of adopting an intersectional lens in feminist research, activism, and discourse. It's crucial to acknowledge and challenge the stereotypes and biases that may exist, as they can influence the perceived inclusivity and effectiveness of feminist movements. By doing so, we can work towards a more inclusive, equitable, and intersectional understanding of feminism. of complexity. Women of color are often overlooked in discussions about feminism, which is inaccurately portrayed as a movement primarily involving White women (hooks, 1981; Collins, 2000). Racial stereotypes can further influence how femininity or masculinity are perceived (Johnson et al., 2012).

Despite these findings, few studies have explored how race and gender expression intersect to influence perceptions of a woman's association with feminism. To fill this gap, this study examines

perceptions of a woman's feminist identification and advocacy based on her race (Black or White) and her gender expression (feminine or masculine). We predict that femininity will be opposed to ratings of feminism, especially for the White target. Through this, we aim to enhance our understanding of these intricate intersections and their impact on perceptions and stereotypes.

Chapter 4: Thinking About Women as Similar to Men: Implications for Perceptions of Masculine Workplace Cultures

Gender differences is often a topic in popular culture, as exemplified by the bestseller "Men are from Mars, women are from Venus" and numerous other self-help books (Signorella & Cooper, 2011). However, efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in workplaces often adopt a gender similarities approach.

In today's U.S. society, this question of whether women are more similar to or different to men often sparks more debate than agreement. While some believe that women and men are predominantly similar in most aspects of life, many still think they significantly differ such as in emotional expression and interests (Parker et al., 2017). Despite extensive attention devoted to resolving this debate (Hyde, 2005), little is known about the consequences of viewing women as either similar or different than men. In the current work, we draw upon the social identity theory and the expectation state theory to examine how perceiving women and men as either more similar or different can yield unintended consequences at the organizational level.

When the Gender Similarities Mindset Helps

The gender similarities mindset – believing that women and men are more alike than different – is advantageous when attempting to reduce micro gender disparities and the negative impact of gender stereotypes on women. For instance, women who wrote about gender similarities used more agentic words (e.g., achieving goals), and felt more confident as workplace leaders (Martin & Phillips, 2017). Additionally, these women were more likely to take action behaviors, such as deciding whether to go first in a debate.

A gender similarities mindset is also beneficial when aimed at reducing harmful stereotypes about women. For example, women are still commonly thought to be less mathematical, thus less suited than

men for STEM careers (Fennema & Sherman, 1997; Nosek et al, 2009). However, men primed with gender differences tend to endorse negative stereotypes about women in STEM more than those primed with gender similarities (Martin & Phillips, 2019). The inverse also seems true: People who consciously attempt to not be sexist tend to endorse a gender similarities mindset more than endorsing gender differences (Koenig & Richeson, 2010). Thus, gender similarities can be a helpful approach when the goal is to reduce harmful gender stereotypes.

When the Gender Differences Mindset Helps

The gender differences mindset can be advantageous when it is used to address social change. Emphasizing the unique experiences, strengths, and perspectives that each gender brings to the table allows for a more inclusive and diverse environment. It helps foster respect and appreciation for diversity rather than merely tolerance. It is not about promoting one gender over another, but about valuing the unique contributions of each. This shift in mindset can be instrumental in challenging harmful stereotypes and biases, and in promoting a more balanced, equitable society. For instance, instructing first-generation college students to reflect on how their unique life-experiences have shaped their college education serves as an empowerment tool. This mindset improves students' mental health and engagement in college, subsequently increasing their overall GPAs and college retention (Stephens et al., 2014). When the focus is on positive differences between groups, such as unique experiences, rather than on harmful stereotypes, thinking about differences becomes a source of empowerment and pride for those in low-status societal groups.

Recognizing and celebrating differences, or multiculturalism, is also associated with positive outcomes for racial minorities. The endorsement of multiculturalism by White Americans predicts lower bias towards people of racial minorities (Neville et al., 2000; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2006). Additionally, valuing group differences in the workplace promotes inclusive

behaviors and organizational policies geared towards the inclusion of people of color (Plaut et al., 2009; Wolsko et al., 2006).

Another benefit of acknowledging group differences is that it heightens awareness about social disparities. White individuals who downplay racial differences also tend to underestimate the severity of racism in contemporary society (Neville et al., 2001; Zamudio, & Rios, 2006). However, White Americans who learn about differences between people of color and Whites become more cognizant of disparities and are more capable of identifying racism against Black Americans than those not educated about their distinct histories (Nelson et al.,2013). Similarly, endorsement of group differences is associated with support for initiatives aimed at reducing social disparities by specifically helping racial minorities, such as affirmative action (Awad et al., 2005). Focusing on group-differences, especially when these differences are described as historical and social, brings social disparities to the forefront of people's minds, which can in turn be the catalyst for change. However, it should be noted that race essentialism, the belief that racial groups have defining and unchangeable characteristics, is associated with racism and negative attitudes towards minorities.

Recognizing Problematic Cultures

Efforts to address social inequality form the primary tenets of social psychology. Despite the plethora of work providing suggestions on bias reduction, others remain wary of prescribing simplistic solutions to complex, multifaceted issues (Stephen et al., 2014), due to potential unintended and problematic consequences. For instance, advising women to "lean in" and assert in the workplace can inadvertently increase perceptions that women alone bear the responsibility for addressing gender disparities (Sandberg, 2015). Additionally, while hiring passionate employees might seem beneficial for the company, these employees may be more vulnerable to exploitation (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010).

In the present paper, we argue that emphasizing the similarities between men and women can unintentionally reinforce masculine norms in the workplace. We define masculine work cultures as workplaces that value, require or reward behaviors and traits typically associated with masculine social roles, but not with feminine ones (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Such cultures, which value traits like self-promotion (Rudman, 1998; Singh et al., 2002), aggressiveness (Flory et al., 2010; Somerville, 2005), and competitiveness (Jonason et al., 2012), can pose obstacles for women whose socialization may not align with these expectations (Stockard, 2006). More importantly, even when women adopt these masculine traits, they are often met with backlash (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Williams & Tiedens, 2016). It is essential to recognize the potential problems masculine work can pose for women, as efforts to diversify these environments could face resistance if these cultures are not seen as problematic in the first place.

Gender Disparities in Masculine Work Cultures

Promoting gender equality in the workplace necessitates an awareness of the obstacles that perpetuate gender disparities and disadvantage women. A persistent barrier in this regard is the prevalence of masculine norms within workplaces. We define masculine work cultures as workplaces that value, require and/or advantage behaviors and traits associated with masculine social roles, but not women's (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Examples of masculine work cultures are cultures in which employees are hired and promoted based on self-promoting (Rudman, 1998; Singh et al., 2002), being aggressive (Flory et al., 2010; Somerville, 2005) or having a highly competitive mindset (Jonason et al., 2012). These cultures become obstacles for women because the traits and behaviors required for success do not match the way women are generally socialized to be (Stockard, 2006). More importantly, even when women deviate from traditional gender roles and act in more masculine ways, they are met with backlash (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Williams & Tiedens, 2016). Recognizing

masculine work cultures as problematic for women is essential as efforts to diversify such cultures may be met with resistance if masculine work cultures are not seen as problematic in the first place.

Emphasizing gender similarities reduces differences between women and men. While it may be beneficial to downplay some perceived differences like negative stereotypes, an approach that focuses on similarities may also minimize important differences in how women and men experience the workplace (e.g., different socialization and backlash women face when displaying masculine behaviors). In turn, minimizing such different realities may lead individuals to perceive that women do not face as many obstacles within masculine work cultures. In fact, some may erroneously perceive masculine work cultures as equally advantageous for both women and men, therefore perceiving them as less problematic than when being reminded of gender differences.

Perceived Fit of Women in Masculine Work Cultures

Why might thinking about men and women as alike lead to overlooking the problematic nature of gendered contexts? We propose that this might occur because emphasizing similarities might enhance the belief that both men and women suitably fit into prevailing cultural defaults.

Perceived fit is defined as the extent to which an observer perceives "compatibility between individuals and their environment" (van Vianen, 2018). In this context, being perceived by others as compatible with existing workplace norms and resembling other members in an organization is typically beneficial for workplace outcomes (Rivera, 2012). However, evaluating candidates based on this criterion can also perpetuate inequalities and maintain a status quo in the workplace (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016).

In masculine workforce environments, women often face difficulty in attaining perceived compatibility. Women are commonly perceived to possess feminine traits that do not align well with the masculine attributes valued in certain workplaces or occupations (Eagly & Koenig, 2008; Heilman, 1983). This mismatch in perceived fit influences performance expectations, hiring decisions, evaluations,

and promotions, resulting in less favorable outcomes for those perceived to fit less well (Eagly et al., 1992; Heilman, 2012; Heilman et al., 2015; Koch et al., 2015; Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

The perception that women are similar to men might increase the belief that women fit comfortably into masculine workplace contexts. While this perception might bring benefits such as alleviating some of the negative consequences discussed previously, it might also foster a misleading impression that masculine cultures are suitable for everyone. In doing so, the perception of women and men as similar may actually impede momentum towards creating more inclusive workplace environments if individuals fail to recognize masculine-dominated environments as problematic. Thus, in our current research, we aim to investigate whether perceptions of gender similarity might lead individuals to regard problematic workplace cultures as innocuous to women, thus impeding progress toward changing the culture itself.

System-Change Motivations

The failure to perceive a culture as problematic may result in a reduced system-change motivation, or a diminished desire to improve the status quo (Johnson & Fujita, 2012; Choi, 2007). System-change motivation stands in contrast to system justification, which represents the motivation to defend and rationalize the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Kay et al., 2009). The importance of system-change motivation lies in its capacity to drive collective action and systemic change (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Osborneet al., 2019).

System-change motivation can be diminished by both individual characteristics and features of the system itself. For example, personal characteristics can play a role, with individuals more likely to justify systems when they feel disempowered and unable to make change (Choi, 2007; Kay & Friesen, 2011). At the systemic level, people are more likely to justify systems that restrict exit (e.g., countries that are difficult to emigrate from; Laurin et al., 2010). In the current research, we focus on perceptions of

intergroup relations within the system, as precursors to system-change motivation. More specifically, we examine whether perceiving women and men as similar reduces the likelihood of perceiving the system as problematic and leads to lower system-change motivation.

Present Research

The presented research lays out the objectives and methods of two studies aimed at exploring the relationship between gender similarities, perceived fit of women within masculine cultures, and the judgment about the problematic nature of a non-inclusive masculine work culture.

Study 1 examines if emphasizing gender similarities enhances the perceived fit of women within a masculine work environment and investigates how these gender similarities impact individual support for initiatives designed to change a masculine work culture. In Study 2, we adopt a minimal-groups paradigm to probe whether highlighting group similarities leads participants to view a non-inclusive work culture as less problematic for the low-status group and whether the perceived fit of the low-status group mediates this relationship. In the last study, we replicate study 2 but instead of minimal groups, we use women and men in the manipulation to emphasize similarities or differences. Then, we analyse whether support for change in the company is affected by ratings of how problematic the masculine company is. Across the studies, we predict that emphasizing group similarities versus differences will cause people to be more likely to overlook cultures that are problematic for the low-status group.

Study 1

In the first study, we utilize the same materials as those used in Martin and Phillips (2017) study to manipulate beliefs about whether women and men are similar or different from each other. As a non-pre-registered hypothesis, we anticipated that the gender similarities message will increase perceptions that women fit more comfortably within a stereotypically masculine organization, as

compared to the gender differences message. Moreover, we did not expect the same increase in fit perceptions for men.

Consistent with our pre-registration, we predicted that the gender similarities message would decrease system-change motivation, defined as support for culture change aimed at creating a less stereotypically masculine company. We also predicted that perceptions of women's improved fit in the stereotypically masculine organization would mediate lower system-change motivation upon reading about gender similarities rather than differences.

Our pre-registered hypothesis that company's effectiveness in recruiting women would be influenced by the message was found to be statistically insignificant, $t(663.84) = .02$, $p = .98$, $d_s = .002$, and was subsequently excluded from further studies. In addition to this, we also examined other possible alternative mediators, including perceptions of success and belonging.

Methods

Transparency and Openness

We had pre-registered all details related to sample size, including power analyses and exclusions, procedures, hypotheses, and analyses at https://osf.io/smjnv. Any deviations from these pre-registrations were explicitly stated in the methods across all studies. We performed data analyses using R, version 4.0.2 (R Core Team, 2020).

Participants

This study had 756 participants (266 women, 433 men, 4 non disclosed), (17 Black/African American, 395 Asian/Asian American, 34 Latin, 174 White, 135 listed themselves as Other or more than one race), comprising of students from the psychology participant pool ($n = 692$) and from the campus at large ($n = 20$). Consistent with our pre-registration, we excluded participants who failed the manipulation check, resulting in a final tally of 666 participants.

Procedures

Participants were randomly assigned to read one of two articles on gender similarities (e.g., "the most striking thing about men and women is how much they have in common") or gender differences (e.g., "the most striking thing about men and women is how different they are") as employed by Martin and Phillips (2017). To reinforce the manipulation, after reading the article, participants were asked to list examples of either gender similarities (in the gender similarities condition) or differences (in the gender differences condition) depending on the article they read.

Following this, participants read a description of a fictional tech company known for valuing several stereotypically masculine traits (e.g., self-promotion, aggressiveness; Aylin et al., 2019; Boysen, 2017; Rudman, 1998). Participants were then asked about their perceptions of women and men in the company. These measures included perceived fit (i.e., "How much do you think women [men] could fit with the culture of this company?"), perceived enjoyment ("How much do you think women [men] would enjoy the culture of the company as it is?"), perceived success ("How much successful would women [men] be at this company?"), and perceived belonging ("How much would women [men] feel that they belong in this company"). System-change motivation was measured with four questions: 1. How much do you think this company should encourage a more feminine culture?, 2. To what extent do you believe this company should actively work towards reducing gender stereotypes in its culture?, 3. How much do you think this company should implement policies to encourage more diversity and inclusion?, 4.How crucial do you think it is for this company to adjust its culture to be more welcoming to all genders? The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was $\alpha = .846$. All above measures were assessed on scales from 1 *(not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*).

Participants completed a comprehension check question assessing the extent to which they perceived the company culture as masculine or feminine on a scale from 1 (*very masculine*) to 7 (*very*

feminine; reverse scored). Participants also completed a manipulation check item that asked them to write about what the article was about. Two research assistants (1 man, 1 woman) coded the responses for correctness (kappa = .84). Disagreements were resolved through discussion. We collected demographic information at the end.

In the analysis, it is noted that there was no significant interaction of participant gender with the message on women's fit, = $F(1, 656) = 2.95$, $ps = .09$, $\eta_G^2 < .004$, or system change motivation, $F(1, 656) = .03$, $p = .85$, $\eta_G^2 = .0003$. This suggests that participant gender did not significantly influence the impact of the gender similarities or differences messages on their perception of women's fit in the company culture or their motivation for system change.

Results

Masculinity of company culture

As anticipated, the company was perceived as masculine ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.17$), compared to the midpoint of 4, $t(664) = 25.01$, $p < .001$.

Perceived fit

A 2 (Message: gender similarities vs. gender differences) x 2 (Employee gender: women vs. man) mixed-model ANOVA on perceived fit revealed a main effect of Message, $F(1, 664) = 8.33$, $p = .004$, $\eta_G^2 = .009$, a main effect of Employee Gender, $F(1, 664) = 727.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_G^2 = .25$, and a significant Message x Employee Gender interaction, $F(1, 664) = 7.13$, $p = .008$, $\eta_G^2 = .003$. As predicted, but not pre-registered, the gender similarities message ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.48$) led participants to perceive that women would fit significantly better into the company than the gender differences message ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.44$), $F(1, 664) = 10.60$, $p = .001$. There was no significant effect of messages on perceptions that men would fit well into the company (gender similarities: $M = 5.97$, $SD = .91$ vs. gender differences: $M = 5.88$, $SD = .95$), $F(1, 664) = 1.55$, $p = .21$.

System change motivation

Inconsistent with pre-registered hypotheses, there was no significant effect of message on system change motivation (gender similarities: $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.39$; gender differences: $M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(663.99) = 1.04$, $p = .30$, $d_s = .08$. (Welch's *t*-tests for unequal variances were used throughout the paper for all independent samples *t*-tests.) As predicted, but not pre-registered, the more participants perceived that women fit into the company, the lower their system change motivation, $r(664) = -.40$, $p < .001$. Perceptions that men fit into the company did not predict system change motivation, $r(664) = -1.66$, $p = .096$. The relationship between perceptions of women's fit and system change motivation was significantly stronger than the relationship between men's fit and system change motivation, $Z = 6.50$, $p < .001$.

Perceived success and belonging

In a predicted but non-pre-registered analysis, a 2 (Message: gender similarities vs. gender differences) x 2 (Employee gender: women vs. man) mixed-model ANOVA on perceived success revealed a main effect of Message such that the gender similarities message caused increased perceptions that employees would be successful in the company, $F(1, 664) = 6.10$, $p = .014$, $\eta_G^2 = .007$, a main effect of Employee Gender such that men were perceived as more successful in the company than women, $F(1, 664) = 354.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta_G^2 = .11$, and no significant Message x Employee Gender interaction, $F(1, 664) = 1.69$, $p = .19$, $\eta_G^2 = .001$. In a predicted but not pre registered analysis, a 2 (Message: gender similarities vs. gender differences) x 2 (Employee gender: women vs. man) mixed-model ANOVA on perceived sense of belonging revealed a main effect of Message, $F(1, 663) = 2.65$, $p = .104$, $\eta_G^2 = .002$ that the gender similarities message caused increased perceptions that employees belonged in the company, a main effect of Employee Gender such that men were perceived as feeling a higher sense of

belonging in the company than women, $F(1, 663) = 783.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta_G^2 = .32$, and no significant Message x Employee Gender interaction, $F(1, 664) = 1.69$, $p = .19$, $\eta_G^2 = .001$.

In a predicted but non-pre-registered analysis, we regressed system change motivation on perceptions of women's fit, success, and belonging. The overall model was significant, $R^2_{adj} = .17$, $F(3, 661) = 47.48$, $p < .001$. Perceived fit, $b = -.33$, $SE = 0.05$, $t(661) = -6.88$, $p < .001$, and belonging, $b = -.18$, $SE = 0.05$, $t(661) = -3.33$, $p = .001$, remained significant predictors, but perceived success did not significantly predict system change motivation, $b = -.01$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(661) = -.20$, $p = .85$. Based on the non-significant interactions and regression results, perceived fit might serve as a more potential mechanism compared to perceived success or belonging.

Discussion

Those who read that women and men are very similar to one another anticipated that women would fit better into a company with a stereotypically masculine work environment than those who were told that women and men are very different from each other. These differences were not observed in perceptions of men's fit in the company. Perceptions of women's fit predicted lower support for changing the masculine company culture. Messages about gender similarity may obstruct efforts to change systems that are more problematic for women than men (Cheryan & Markus, 2020), even as they have other benefits for women (e.g., beliefs that women fit better and employees have more potential for success).

Inconsistent with our pre-registered predictions, we did not see direct effects of message on system change motivation. One possibility is that system change motivation may be too distant of a downstream consequence to be strongly influenced by articles about gender similarities and differences. In the subsequent studies, we focus on a more proximal dependent measure that is precursor to system change motivation: the extent to which people recognize that a system may be problematic for a particular group.

Study 2

In order to have a "clean" test of our theory, minimizing the effect of participants' preconceived ideas about gender, we used the minimal groups paradigm to test whether group-similarities impact perceptions of how problematic non-inclusive work cultures are. To make the methodology cleaner, we removed the article and primed participants using simple sentences. We also included another dependent variable that we believe could be more proximal to participants: perceptions of the non-inclusive company as problematic. In this study Blickets (the high-status group) is our proxy for men and Moshers (the low-status group) is a proxy for women.

Our hypothesis suggested that portraying the low-status group as very similar to the high-status group would cause participants to judge the company culture as less problematic, compared to when the groups are depicted as very different. We also predicted a positive correlation between perceptions of the company as problematic and support for changing the culture of the company.

Methods

Participants

This study involved 116 undergraduate students p as part of the psychology subject pool, consisting of 71 Asian/Asian-Americans, 26 Whites, 9 Latinx, 10 of other races and/or multiracial. There were 82 women, 34 men).

Procedures

Participants took part in an online survey administered by Qualtrics. After consenting to participate, all participants were asked to "Imagine a lucrative company that exists in a different society". The company was described as being traditionally dominated by a group called Blickets. This company's values, mission statements and policies were developed by and reflected the Blickets. Participants were also informed that in order to succeed in this company, one needed to possess abilities, behaviors and

characteristics similar to the Blickets. Participants were then told that a new group of people, called Moshers, had become a significant portion of the company's employees.

Depending on the condition to which participants were randomly assigned, they read that the Moshers were very similar to or very different from the Blickets in terms of their characteristics, habits, and personalities, and that it was either fairly easy or nearly impossible to identify who was a Blicket and who was a Mosher on any assessment.

Perception of Company Culture as Problematic

We assessed how problematic participants judged this company culture to be for the Moshers using a Likert scale (1- Not at all, 7- Very much so) across 2 questions: "How much do you think the company's current policies, mission statement and values pose a problem for the Moshers (the most recent group)?", and "How problematic for the Moshers is it that this company's policies, mission statement and values reflect those of the Blickets?" The correlation coefficient was r = .829.

Support for Changing Company Culture

We also measured support for changing the current culture using the same Likert scale across two questions: "How supportive would you be of this company changing its current policies, mission statement and values to include more of the Moshers' characteristics?"; "How much would you support an inclusion initiative focused on changing this company's policies, mission statements and values?," The correlation coefficient was *r* = .709.

Perceived Fit of Disadvantaged Group in the Company

Perceived fit was measured using one item: "How well do you think the Moshers fit into this company?" on a Likert scale (1- Not at all to 7- Very much so).

Perceived Success of Disadvantaged Group in the Company

One item was used to measure perceived success: "How successful do you think the Moshers are in this company?" on a Likert scale (1- Not at all to 7- Very much so).

Results

Perception of Company Culture as Problematic

We performed an independent sample t-test to investigate the effect of group-similarities on how problematic participants perceived the company culture. Those who thought that the disadvantaged group (Moshers) were very similar to the advantaged group (Blickets) perceived the non-inclusive company culture as significantly less problematic ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.33$) than those in the group-differences condition ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.23$), $t(113) = -6.64$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.25$.

Support for Changing Masculine Culture Across Conditions

We performed an independent sample t-test to investigate whether group-similarities would affect support for changing the non-inclusive company culture. The analysis revealed a marginal difference between conditions, where those who thought of the groups as very similar supported changing the culture less ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.28$) than those in the group-differences condition ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.40$), $t(113) = -1.89$, $p = .06$.

Correlation Between Perceptions of the Company as Problematic and Support for Culture Change

A Pearson's test of correlation found a moderate, positive, significant correlation between perceiving that the company is problematic and support for changing it, $r = .347$, $p < .01$.

Perceived Fit of Disadvantaged Group in the Company between Conditions

An independent-samples t-test showed that participants in the group-similarities condition perceived the disadvantaged group as significantly more likely to fit within the non-inclusive company

culture ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.42$) than those in the group-differences condition ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(113) = 4.94$, $p < .01$, $d = .93$.

Perceived Fit and Success of the Disadvantaged Group in the Company as Mediators

We used the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) with 10,000 bootstrap resamples (see Figure 1 to assess how much perceived and perceived success of the low-status group in the company predicts judging the company culture as problematic.

Group-similarities caused participants to perceive the non-inclusive company as less problematic than group-differences. It also caused participants to perceive the disadvantaged group as more likely to fit within the non-inclusive company compared to group-differences. Perceived fit of the group predicted how problematic participants judged the company to be.

Discussion

In accordance with our hypotheses, we found that describing a low-status group as very similar to the high-status group in a non-inclusive company culture led participants to perceive the company culture as less problematic compared to those who believed the groups were different. Furthermore, we discovered that this relationship was mediated by the perception that the low-status group would fit well in the non-inclusive company culture.

This study used the minimal-groups paradigm to draw a parallel with gender, which serves as both a strength and a limitation of the research. The main limitation is that we cannot conclude that the results perfectly generalize to gender. In fact, it is possible that participants interpreted the study as being about race. If there is a significant conceptual distinction between how people perceive race and gender, these findings may alter when we explicitly incorporate gender in our methodology. Nonetheless, the use of minimal groups provided us with an opportunity to clearly demonstrate how beliefs about groups affect our perceptions of non-inclusive cultures.

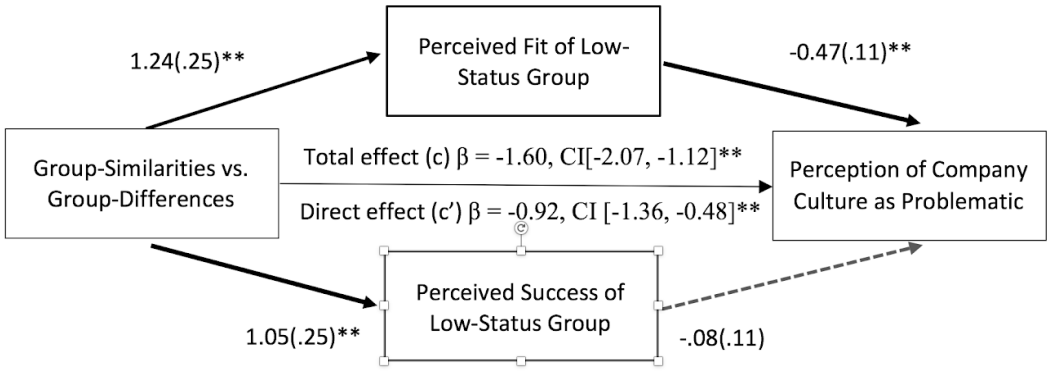

Figure 3. *Mediation model for study 2*

Table 1. Perceived Fit of Low-Status Group in Non-Inclusive Company Culture, Company Culture as Problematic: Correlations ($N = 116$)

Variables	1	2	3
1. Perceived Fit of Women	—	—	—
2. Perceived Success of Women	-.776***	—	—
3. Problematic	-.647***	-.544***	—

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Study 3

Following the minimal group study, we conducted the third study that incorporated genders and companies, maintaining a parallel structure to the previous study. We hypothesized that participants who perceive women as very similar to men would find a masculine workplace culture less problematic for women, compared to those who think about gender differences. We proposed that this relationship would be mediated by perceptions of how well women fit into the existing masculine work culture. Lastly, we predicted that perceiving a masculine workplace culture as less problematic would correlate negatively with support for efforts to change the company's masculine culture.

Methods

Participants

A total of 261 participants were recruited for this study through Prolific, an online research platform widely used by universities and agencies. The participant demographics were as follows: 171 White, 27 Asian, 20 Latinx, 18 Black, and 25 of other races and/or multiracial. In terms of gender distribution, the sample included 144 women, 109 men, 5 non-binary, 3 of other gender or more than one gender).

Procedures[1]

The procedures for this study were similar to Study 2. Participants completed an online survey administered by Qualtrics. After consenting to participate, participants in both conditions saw the description of a tech company called "TechStrike". The company was characterized as being historically dominated by men and largely reflecting societal masculine traits (e.g., "self promoted" and "highly competitive work style"). Then, the participants answered the manipulation check question to confirm

[1] Total counts may exceed the sample size, as participants were allowed to choose as many options as they felt were applicable and may have selected more than one categorical identification.

their understanding that company culture reflected characteristics, values and behaviors typically associated with males.

Depending on the condition to which they were randomly assigned, participants were given a passage that either described women in this company to be very similar to or very different from the male employees, despite the fact that women constituted a large portion of the staff in tech and management positions.

Perception of Company Culture as Problematic for Women

We utilized three items to measure perceived fit, including “How much do you imagine the company's culture (policies, mission statement and values) poses a problem for the women in this company?,” “How problematic for the current women employees is the culture of this company?,” and “How problematic or not problematic is the company's culture for the women who work in it?” Participants answer these questions on a Likert scale (1 - Not at all/Not at all problematic, 7 - Very much so/Very much problematic), yielding a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.941$.

Support for Changing Company Culture

We measured participants’ support for changing the current company culture with the following four questions on a Likert scale (1 - Not at all/Not at all supportive, 7 - Very much so/Very much supportive). These questions included: “How supportive would you be of efforts aimed at changing the culture of this company?,” “How much do you think the company should change its culture?,” “How supportive or not would you be if the company wants to change its current culture?,” and “How much do you support or not support the idea that the company should change its culture?,” with a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.933$.

Perceived Fit of Women in the Company

Participants were asked"How well do you think the women employees fit into this company?" on a Likert scale (1 - Not fit at all to 7 - Fit very well).

Perceived Success of Women in the Company

Participants were asked: "How successful or not successful do you think the women employees are in this company?" on a Likert scale (1 - Not at all successful to 7 - Very much successful).

Perceived Proportion of Women in the Company

We asked "How many women do you imagine work in this company compared to men?"on a Likert scale (1 - Many more women than men, 4 - Equal number of women and men, 7 - Many more men than women).

Perceived amount of discrimination against women in the company

Participants were asked:"How much discrimination do you imagine that the women in this company face, if any?" on a Likert scale (1 - No discrimination at all, 7 - A lot of discrimination).

Perceived Masculinity of Women in the Company

Lastly, we asked this exploratory question "How feminine or masculine do you imagine the women that work in this company to be? (Compared to the average woman)." Participants choose their answer in a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (1 - Very feminine, 7 - Very masculine).

Results

First, we tested our primary hypothesis that emphasizing on gender similarities rather than differences would lead individuals to perceive a masculine workplace culture to be less problematic for women. An independent samples t-test found support for this hypothesis, showing that participants randomly assigned to the gender similarities condition perceived the existing workplace culture to be significantly less problematic ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.58$) than did participants in the gender differences

condition (M = 5.32, SD = 1.41; $t(261) = 4.29$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.53$). This perception correlated positively with support for changes ($r = .66$, $p < .001$), both in the gender similarities ($r = .70$, $p < .001$) and differences condition ($r = .66$, $p < .001$). Thus, the more problematic the existing workplace culture seems to participants, the less likely they were to support changes.

Next, we examined the hypothesis that emphasizing on gender similarities could lead people to perceive that women fit into the existing masculine workplace culture more than emphasizing on gender differences would. Another independent samples t-test supported this hypothesis: participants in the gender similarities condition perceived women as fitting into the existing workplace culture (M = 4.49, SD = 1.50) significantly more than those in the gender differences condition did (M = 3.66, SD = 1.57; $t(260) = 4.39$), $p < .001$, $d = .52$.

We also hypothesized that this perceived fit would mediate the relationship between emphasizing on gender similarities versus differences and perceiving a workplace culture as problematic, as was the case in Study 2. A mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) with 10,000 bootstrap resamples revealed a significant indirect effect (Effect = -.17, 95% CI = [-.28, -.09]). Participants in the similarities condition were more likely to perceive women as fitting well into the current workplace (b = .42, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.23, .60]), and those who believed that women fit well were less likely to view the company's culture as problematic (b = -.42, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [-.53, -.31]).

In an exploratory manner, we examined other potential mediators of this relationship. We entered the perceived fit of women in the company, the perceived success of women in the company, the perceived proportion of women in the company, and the perceived amount of discrimination against women in the company as simultaneous mediators. Using the Hayes (2013) process macro with 10,000 bootstrap resamples, only perceived fit of women into the workplace emerged as a significant mediator (Effect = -.07, 95% CI = [-.15, -.02]). The indirect pathways through the other three meditaros were not

statistically significant, allowing us to replicate our mediation pathway from Study 2 using real gender groups and rule out potential alternative mediators.

Finally, we examined our full model, proposing a multiple mediation pathway from emphasizing gender similarities versus differences to support for change via mediators of perceived fit and perception of the existing workplace culture as problematic. A multiple mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) with 10,000 bootstrap resamples revealed a significant indirect effect (Effect = -.12, 95% CI =[-.19, -.06]). Participants assigned to the similarities condition were more likely to perceive women to fit well into the current workplace (b = .42, p < .001, 95% CI = [.23, .60]) and in turn, participants who believed that women fit into the current workplace were less likely to view the company's culture as problematic (b = -.42, p < .001, 95% CI = [-.53, -.31]). Participants who viewed the company's culture as less problematic were then less likely to support efforts for change (b = .67, p < .001, 95% CI = [.57, .76]). Overall, these results indicate that a gender similarities mindset might hinder efforts to achieve inclusive change.

This study demonstrated that emphasizing gender similarities led participants to perceive the masculine company culture as less problematic, resulting in diminished support for cultural changes. Additionally, a gender similarity mindset led people to believe that women would fit within a company characterized by masculine policy, mission statement, and values. This could explain why participants perceive the culture as less problematic for women.

General Discussion

The present research examined the impact of viewing women as similar or dissimilar to men on perceived fit of women in masculine work cultures, as well as on judgements about the impact of non-inclusive work-cultures. We discovered that emphasizing gender similarities lead participants to perceive women as fitting more comfortably in a masculine work-culture compared to a focus on gender

differences. We also found that while gender similarities did not reduce overall support for altering the company culture, it had a marginal effect on female participants. In the second study, we used a minimal-groups paradigm with fictitious groups serving as proxies for women and men to test the model without participants' preconceived beliefs about gender acting as potential confounders. We found that describing a group of employees as very similar to the normative group in a company led participants to perceive a company culture shaped by and reflective of only the normative group as less problematic, compared to when groups were characterized as being mostly different. This effect was driven by the perceptions that the non-normative group is more likely to fit within the normative culture when groups are described as similar.

Theoretical Contributions

This research broadens our understanding of the impact of viewing women as very similar or dissimilar to men in two ways: 1) by transitioning from individual-level consequences to a systemic level and 2) by proposing a potential negative impact of gender similarities.

Historically, research on the repercussions of gender similarities (often referred to as sex-similarities or gender blindness; Koenig & Richeson, 2010) has concentrated on implications for individuals. For instance, Martin and Phillips (2017) explore the effect of gender blindness on women's self-confidence in the workplace. They also demonstrate that men less frequently endorse negative stereotypes about women in STEM fields primed with gender similarities (Martin & Phillips, 2017). Similarly, Koenig and Richeson (2010) analyzed the relationship between sex similarities and sexism at the individual level. Our current research shifts the focus from individual to systems by not only examining how similarities impact our perceptions of women working in masculine cultures, but also how we perceive the impact that masculine work cultures have on women.

Our research diverges from previous research by suggesting that gender similarities may not always be beneficial for women. As demonstrated by Keonig and Richeson (2010), people aiming to avoid sexism often consider gender similarities as the most suitable approach to gender issues. However, many well-intentioned diversity initiatives have been shown to sometimes be ineffective or even counterproductive, depending on the context (Dover et al., 2014; Brady et al., 2015; Vedantam, 2008). Consequently, it is imperative to understand the limitations of the gender similarities approach when it is used as a strategy to promote gender equality.

A question that may arise is whether women are more similar to or more different than men. While evidence supports similarities in many aspects (e.g., intelligence, cognitive functioning; Colom et al., 2000; Hyde, 2005), gender differences also exist in other facets (e.g., physiological, socialization; Eagly, 1997). The aim of this research is not to resolve this debate or to advocate for one perspective on gender over the other. Our focus lies in exploring the consequences of viewing gender either as similar or different, particularly at broader societal levels such as work cultures. We acknowledge that these beliefs may be descriptive and prescriptive, especially if employed as a strategy to increase equality. Such distinctions are beyond the scope of the current research but would be an intriguing future direction for these findings.

Practical Implications

While it may be premature to recommend actions based on this research, this line of work has the potential to clarify when gender differences or similarities should be promoted in the workplace, depending on the objective. For example, gender similarities might be more effective than differences when the aim is to promote gender equality at an individual level, such as mitigating negative stereotypes about women and promoting better interpersonal relationships between genders. On the other hand,

recognizing the different experiences and realities of women and men may be beneficial when striving for broader cultural changes.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the current work proposes a novel and anticipated consequence of gender similarities, research is still in its infant stages. As such, numerous questions remain unanswered. The next step in this line of research should involve replicating the model from Study 2 using actual gender groups rather than minimal groups.

Additionally, a main concern about emphasizing gender differences is that it could reinforce negative stereotypes based on the notion that women are biologically or cognitively inferior to men. Future research will benefit from investigating which types of similarities and differences yield positive outcomes.

Conclusion

Initiatives to promote gender equality often contain the message that women and men are practically identical and endorse minimizing gender differences. While the gender similarities approach results in numerous benefits on the individual level (such as reducing stereotypes and empowering women), it may hinder progress on a broader level, such as changing problematic work cultures. The decision whether to focus on gender similarities or differences appears to be more nuanced than previously considered and may depend on the societal level at which we are trying to instigate change.

Chapter 5: General Discussion

This work advocates for a cultural shift towards a broader understanding and acceptance of femininity, necessitating inclusive policies that celebrate diversity of gender-expression and identity (Stephens et al., 2014; Verkuyten, 2005; Plaut et al., 2009). Such a shift requires substantial societal and organizational change, demanding further research, robust discussions, and an unwavering commitment to change.

The pressure to step closer to masculinity essentially reflects the dominant patriarchal structures that tend to devalue feminine attributes, thereby indirectly urging women to mold themselves in masculine images to gain credibility or achieve their aspirations. Such a dynamic echoes Paulo Freire in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", where he discusses the nature of oppression and the ways in which the oppressed, in their quest for liberation, may inadvertently adopt the tools and perspectives of their oppressors (Freire, 1970). By this logic, when women are coerced into assimilating masculine traits, they're unwittingly adopting the strategies and views of a system that has historically marginalized them. This not only stifles the diversity and richness women bring to societal roles but also reinforces the same power structures and traits that perpetuate their oppression (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). The internalization of these male-centric ideals can further entrench patriarchal norms, making genuine liberation an even more complex endeavor (Freire, 1970). Thus, for meaningful progress, it is crucial to challenge and reshape these deep-seated societal expectations, allowing all individuals to embrace and express their authentic selves without the burden of oppressive standards.

We begin this work by providing a comprehensive review of the contemporary literature pertaining to femininity bias (Chapter 2), suggesting that this bias is a unique and pervasive issue which permeates societal attitudes across the entire gender spectrum. Femininity bias is not exclusive to women but extends to men as well, significantly affecting their physical, psychological, and emotional wellbeing.

Society's definition of a "real man" often hinges on a sharp avoidance of femininity (Eagly & Wood, 2016; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Eagly et al., 2000). Possibly rooted in early Freudian psychology (Freud, 1937), this bias has enduring and damaging repercussions for men's physical and psychological health. Men are pushed towards harmful behaviors to assert their masculinity, such as dangerous initiation rituals or public displays of sexism and homophobia (Bem, 1993; Kroeper et al., 2014). Femininity bias also leads men and boys to suppress their emotions, which stunts their emotional growth and can lead to harmful coping mechanisms, like aggression or avoiding necessary help (Vogel et al., 2011; Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Oliffe et al., 2016; Reynders et al., 2015).

However, women may arguably be the most direct target of this form of bias. Chapter 2 also highlights the multifaceted impacts of femininity bias on women across various social, occupational, and ideological realms. We demonstrate that femininity is concurrently rewarded and penalized in different contexts, leading to significant contradictions for women navigating their personal identities and gender-expression. As per social role theory and stereotype content model, women adhering to traditional feminine traits are preferred in certain social situations but face bias and are deemed less competent in fields traditionally dominated by men, such as in the workplace and scientific fields (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Cuddy et al., 2009; Cheryan & Markus, 2020). In response to such biases and social identity threats, some women opt to distance themselves from femininity and adopt more masculine traits (Steele et al., 2002; Kaiser & Spalding, 2015; Derks et al., 2011). This “queen bee effect”—where women in power distance themselves from other women and femininity—while initially perplexing, can be better understood as a survival strategy in a patriarchal environment that undervalues femininity (Derks et al., 2011).

Ultimately, the second chapter argues that gender identity can be viewed as a form of cultural expression (Wood & Eagly, 2009). Just as forced assimilation into a new culture can lead to numerous

negative psychological and physical consequences for immigrants (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Dimitorva et al., 2014; Oh et al., 2002; Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014; D'Anna et al., 2012; Kaholokula et al., 2010), so can the forced suppression of femininity lead to negative outcomes. For instance, feelings of stress, not belonging, and lower performance in male-dominated environments (Cheryan et al., 2009; WoSmith et al., 2013).

While these effects of "gender acculturation" may be less severe, they still pose significant harm. Women and men who do not identify entirely with masculinity suffer in environments where masculine traits are the norm (Crowley et al., 2001; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2003). Moreover, women face additional hurdles when attempting to adopt masculine traits, such as backlash for defying gender norms (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013) and a lower likelihood of success in male-dominated cultures (Hyde, 2005). These insights highlight the need for a cultural shift towards valuing and rewarding femininity in order to mitigate the negative effects of femininity bias.

Chapter 3 emphasizes the indispensable role of intersectionality in studying femininity and feminism, by shedding light on the intricate entanglement of race, gender-expression, and feminist identification. Feminism by default is ironically more associated with masculinity than femininity (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007; Szymanski et al., 2011; Williams & Wittig, 1997). Historically this may be due to the fact that the feminist movement has focused on dismantling traditional gender roles pursuing rights denied to women (Freidan, 1963; Freeman, 1975). This pursuit has created a paradox between feminism and femininity, when femininity for women is seen as adherence to traditional gender roles (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007). The prevalent notion of femininity and feminism being mutually exclusive is *excludant* to women whose true selves are more feminine than masculine. Feminine women may feel like they don't belong in feminist circles, impinging on the progress of a comprehensive feminist

ideology (Bem, 1993; Cikara et al., 2010). This nuanced understanding will subsequently aid in creating a more inclusive and representative feminist movement.

Chapter 4 highlights the value and importance of navigating the complex terrain between adopting a gender similarities mindset and a gender differences mindset in organizations. There is a delicate balance to be struck; thinking of gender similarities effectively combats harmful stereotypes, promoting equal treatment and encouraging individuals to embrace roles traditionally associated with the opposite gender (Martin & Phillips, 2017; Fennema & Sherman, 1997; Nosek et al, 2009; Koenig & Richeson, 2010). Conversely, recognizing and appreciating gender differences can foster a more diverse and inclusive environment, increasing awareness of social disparities and paving the way for social change (Stephens et al., 2014; Neville et al., 2000; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2006; Plaut et al., 2009; Neville et al., 2001; Zamudio, & Rios, 2006; Nelson et al., 2013; Awad et al., 2005).

In the context of masculine organizations, adopting a gender similarities approach (even when aimed at reducing gender disparities) can inadvertently reinforce masculine norms and behaviors, perpetuating the very inequalities it seeks to dismantle (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Rudman, 1998; Singh et al., 2002; Flory et al., 2010; Somerville, 2005; Jonason et al., 2012; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Williams & Tiedens, 2016). In the first study, individuals made aware of gender similarities predicted better integration of women in male-centric work cultures, unlike those reminded of gender differences. This could be interpreted as a positive consequence for gender equality, for instance if we believe that such perceptions of fit in masculine domains can lead to increased hiring of women in contexts where they are underrepresented (Cheryan et al., 2017; Ceci et al., 2009).

The second study (116 participants) used the minimal group paradigm, demonstrating that notions of group similarities can influence perceptions about the issues of a non-inclusive company culture.

Participants who saw the groups as similar deemed the non-inclusive culture less troublesome for the marginalized group than those who saw differences. The third study (261 participants) confirmed these results by studying perceptions in a hypothetical workplace. Mediation analysis shows that perceived fit of women in the workplace and views of the work culture as problematic, mediate the relationship between similarity judgments and support for changes. The findings suggest that focusing on gender similarities may lead to the underestimation of the issues in masculine work cultures.

Mitigating Femininity Bias

One method to counteract bias against femininity is by advocating for and practicing gender diversity at all levels of the organization. Research suggests that gender diversity can reduce gender biases, as it encourages equal participation of both genders, and enhances mutual understanding (Cook & Glass, 2014). This approach can be particularly effective in the workplace, where stereotypes about femininity often prevent women from ascending to leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Doing so will increase exposure to feminine traits and characteristics, hopefully in alignment with Contact Theory reduce negative stereotypes about femininity. (Pettigrew, 2005).

Stereotype-disconfirmation, where individuals witness people from a stigmatized group behaving in a manner inconsistent with the stereotype, can also be a potent tool for reducing bias (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004). By having more women in traditionally masculine roles and vice versa, it is possible to disrupt and challenge long-held stereotypes about gender. Encouragingly, experiments have demonstrated that exposure to counter-stereotypic individuals can change implicit biases (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004). In the case of femininity, it is important that men are encouraged to display and adopt feminine traits in order for stereo disconfirmation to occur.

In conclusion, while the bias against femininity is deeply entrenched in society, research points to several strategies that can be employed to counteract this bias. These include raising awareness of

unconscious biases, promoting gender diversity, stereotype-disconfirmation, and a more nuanced understanding of gender. By implementing these strategies in different contexts, such as the workplace, education, and media, it is possible to create a more inclusive and equal society.

Implication for Collective Action

Feminism's broad scope has often led to inadvertent exclusions within the movement. One such exclusion is that of feminine women, particularly white feminine women. These exclusions pose significant implications for collective action as they may be inadvertently omitting a significant portion of the movement's potential constituents from its crucial narratives. This exclusion can be detrimental to collective action because it negates the lived experiences and perspectives of these women, who could offer unique insights and contributions to the feminist discourse (Stryker, 2000).

The exclusion may engender feelings of alienation and disidentification among feminine women, deterring their engagement in collective action and diluting the overall strength of the movement. This dynamic is especially troubling given the potential empowering effects of feminism, such as fostering a sense of competence. Twenge and Zucker's (1999) research found that women who identify as feminists are often perceived as more competent than their non-feminist counterparts. This perception of competence is a key motivator that drives engagement in feminist collective action. Therefore, by excluding feminine women from feminist narratives, the movement may be inadvertently stifling the potential competence and empowerment that could be cultivated among these individuals.

The dynamic between femininity, feminism, and perceived competence is complex and deserves further scrutiny. The study of who gets perceived as a feminist is a critical inquiry because it sheds light on the intersection of gender identity and political engagement. As Twenge and Zucker (1999) have found, the label 'feminist' often serves as a proxy for competence, providing women associated with the term a distinctive advantage in various social, academic, and professional contexts. This perceived

competence could potentially amplify the voices of these women, enhancing their ability to effect change through collective action.

However, the exclusion of feminine women from feminist narratives could undermine this advantage. If feminine women are not typically perceived as feminists or are actively excluded from the feminist narrative, they might be denied the associated perception of competence, thereby impacting their overall engagement with feminist collective action. This dynamic underscores the importance of inclusivity in feminist narratives and collective action, pointing to the need for continued research and advocacy in this area.

Limitations

This work has limitations as described under each chapter. Particularly, one methodology was used on almost all studies (surveys). It is possible that behavioral studies would show a more nuanced understanding of the conclusions made by each chapter. Moreso, the studies were conducted over a span of 5 years, and it is possible that social norms have somewhat changed thus far. Richer replications could address these concerns.

Future Directions

Moving forward, research in the field of femininity bias and feminist identification would greatly benefit from adopting an intersectional perspective. Specifically, studies should aim to explore how women from various racial and ethnic backgrounds define and understand feminism, and how these definitions influence their personal expression and identification with feminism. Given the rich cultural diversity in feminist narratives globally, it is plausible that racial and ethnic backgrounds significantly shape women's perceptions of feminism and subsequently, their choice of gender expression.

For example, Western notions of feminism that have been extensively studied may not apply identically to other cultures and societies. The experiences of women of color, indigenous women, and

women from various socio-cultural contexts could offer insights into diverse forms of feminism, each unique and shaped by their distinct socio-cultural and historical realities. These varied narratives could, in turn, reshape our understanding of femininity, expanding it beyond the constraints of Western, white-centric perspectives.

Additionally, research should strive to investigate how these unique feminist narratives interact with existing societal and institutional structures. This might shed light on how gender norms and femininity biases vary across different racial and cultural contexts. For instance, investigating how organizational structures in different societies accommodate or resist these diverse feminist identities could provide critical insights into ways to cultivate more inclusive environments. This approach could also further our understanding of the intersectionality of biases, revealing the multiplicity of experiences for women who navigate not just femininity bias, but also biases related to their race, ethnicity, and other socio-cultural identities.

Lastly, future research should look into how these diverse feminist narratives can be integrated into the broader discourse on feminism. This includes studying how these narratives can be given a platform in feminist movements, media representation, policy-making, and education. Understanding the ways in which these narratives can be heard and validated could pave the way for a more inclusive, diverse, and representative feminist movement.

Conclusion

The exploration of femininity bias, a construct deeply rooted within societal norms, invites an in-depth examination of its implications, from personal experiences to broader social impacts. At the intersection of gender identity and feminism, understanding the dynamics of femininity bias enables us to conceptualize gender equality and inclusivity in a broader context (Wood & Eagly, 2009). As a pervasive element in societies, femininity bias subtly influences social interactions, political structures, and

institutional practices. Consequently, efforts to unpack and understand this bias are imperative in promoting gender equality and confronting deeply ingrained stereotypes.

Through in-depth analysis, the nuanced experiences of individuals across the gender spectrum come to light, revealing the complex impacts of femininity bias. These experiences highlight the intricacy of gender identity, moving beyond binary categorization to reflect the diversity inherent in the human condition (Wood & Eagly, 2009). These nuanced perspectives underline the necessity of addressing femininity bias within broader gender equality initiatives. Recognizing the intersections of gender identity, sexuality, and social categorization can ultimately empower us to challenge existing narratives and create more inclusive dialogues.

In a twist of irony, the feminist movement, designed to promote gender equality, has been critiqued for its inadvertent exclusion of certain women. Particularly, feminine women, and more specifically, white feminine women, have found themselves at the periphery of the movement, thereby undermining its potency (Stryker, 2000; Twenge & Zucker, 1999). This paradox highlights the often overlooked complexity of gender equality, illustrating the need for a more inclusive feminist narrative that values and celebrates all expressions of femininity.

The benefits of undertaking such a transformation are significant, extending beyond gender equality to encompass broader societal wellbeing. By mitigating the damaging effects of femininity bias, we can foster an environment that enhances individual wellbeing and promotes a more equitable society (Cheryan & Markus, 2020, Stephens et al., 2014; Verkuyten, 2005; Plaut et al., 2009). This transformative change, although daunting, is a crucial step towards a future where femininity is not a source of bias, but rather a valued aspect of human diversity.

This examination is critical because societal stereotypes also often associate feminism with competence. According to Twenge and Zucker (1999), feminist women are typically perceived as more

competent than non-feminist women, creating a "feminist equals competence" stereotype. This could be due to the historical and socio-cultural context in which feminism has evolved, where challenging traditional gender norms and advocating for equal rights often required immense resilience, intelligence, and competence.

The complex terrain of femininity bias and feminist identification is rife with contradictions and nuances. Yet, it is within these intricacies that we find the most valuable insights into the multifaceted experiences of women across the gender spectrum. While the bias against femininity is deeply ingrained in our societal structures, there is a pressing need to challenge and redefine our understanding of both femininity and feminism. By embracing intersectionality, recognizing the diversity of feminist narratives, and unlearning prejudiced biases, we can hope to build a more inclusive society where femininity is not merely tolerated but appreciated and valued in all its diverse forms. This dissertation serves as a testament to the necessity of such endeavors, and a call to action for continued research and advocacy in this field.

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Appendix A:

Martin and Phillips (2017) Priming Articles

Part 1:

Instructions: Please read the following excerpt from a recent academic publication:

Sociologists, psychologists, economists, and political scientists all agree that gender issues are a #1 concern for the U.S. Social scientists note that it is extremely important to heed our creed in the Declaration of Independence that ‘‘all men and women are created equal.” According to this perspective, we will be in a better position to advance as a society if we remember that we are all, first and foremost human beings, and second, we are all American citizens. According to this perspective, we will be in a better position to advance as a society if we stop thinking of men and women as different from each other, and instead see each person as an individual. Dr. Katherine Richardson, author of The Gender Paradox, suggests that modern American society would be better off if people would recognize that women and men are much more similar than they are different. Acknowledging this similarity would help build a sense of harmony and unity amongst men and women. ‘‘That is really the story here – The most striking thing about men and women is how much they have in common. There is simply so much overlap between the two groups. The most important thing is to pay attention to the characteristics that make a person a unique individual rather than focusing on his or her gender.” ‘‘The notion of ‘the opposite sex’ is really just a historical artifact,” says Michael Klein, a Sociology Professor at Columbia University who agrees with Richardson’s point of view. ‘‘The genders are much more alike than they are different.” Klein points out that these similarities may be due to the largely identical biological make-up that all humans share, or they may be shaped and molded through our culture. According to Klein, where the similarities come from is unimportant. ‘‘Pretending men and women approach life tasks in fundamentally different ways is counterproductive to society,” says Klein. Klein believes that men and

women would be more successful, more satisfied with their lives, and interact more cooperatively if people embraced the idea that the genders typically approach situations and problems in much the same way. According to Klein, understanding and focusing upon individual differences, not group differences, would not only contribute to a more cooperative and creative workplace, but could also help people in interpersonal relationships between men and women. Thus, social scientists encourage us to see the larger picture, and to appreciate that at our core, we really are all the same.

Instructions: In the exercise below, **please list examples of similarities between men and women mentioned in the article or others that you can think of.** These could be similarities in personalities, experiences, hobbies, opportunities, etc.

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Part 1:

Instructions: Please read the following excerpt from a recent academic publication:

Sociologists, psychologists, economists, and political scientists all agree that gender issues are a #1 concern for the U.S. Social scientists note that it is extremely important to embrace our differences, rather than denying them. According to this perspective, we will be in a better position to advance as a society if we embrace that the two genders bring different perspectives to life, providing a richness in viewpoints, styles of interaction, and problem-solving strategies. Each gender can contribute in its own unique way. Recognizing this diversity would help build a sense of harmony and complementarity amongst men and women. Men and women have their own talents, as well as their own problems, and by acknowledging

both these strengths and weaknesses, we validate the identity of each gender. Dr. Katherine Richardson, author of The Gender Paradox, suggests that modern American society would be better off if people would recognize that women and men have their own strengths, weaknesses, experiences, and issues. Acknowledging this diversity would help build a sense of harmony and unity amongst men and women. ‘‘That is really the story here – the most striking thing about men and women is how different they are. There is great variety between the two groups. The most important thing is to pay attention to these differences - recognizing these differences builds a sense of harmony and complementarity to each group”. ‘‘The notion of ‘the opposite sex’ has some truth,” says Michael Klein, a Sociology Professor at Columbia University, who agrees with Richardson’s point of view. ‘‘The genders are more different than they are alike.” Klein points out that these differences could be due to biological make-up or they may simply be learned and socialized through our culture. According to Klein, where the differences come from is unimportant. ‘‘Understanding men and women approach life tasks in different ways is productive to society,” says Klein. Klein believes that men and women would be more successful, more satisfied with their lives, and interact more cooperatively if people embraced the idea that the genders often approach situations and problems differently. According to Klein, understanding and utilizing women and men’s unique strongpoints would not only contribute to a more cooperative and efficient workplace, but could help people in interpersonal relationships between men and women. Thus, social scientists encourage us to see the larger picture, and to appreciate that at our core, we really are all different.

Instructions: In the exercise below, **please list some differences between men and women that you learned from the text.** These could be differences in personalities, experiences, hobbies, opportunities, etc.

Company Description

Part 2:

Please read the description of the following company:

Green & Smith is a successful *tech startup with a culture that values:*

- *Promoting oneself*
- *Aggressiveness*
- *Assertiveness*
- *Highly critical and competitive mindset*

Part 2:

Please read the description of the following company:

Green & Smith is a successful tech startup with a culture that values:

- *Promoting oneself*
- *Aggressiveness*
- *Assertiveness*
- *Highly critical and competitive mindset*

Key Terms and Definitions

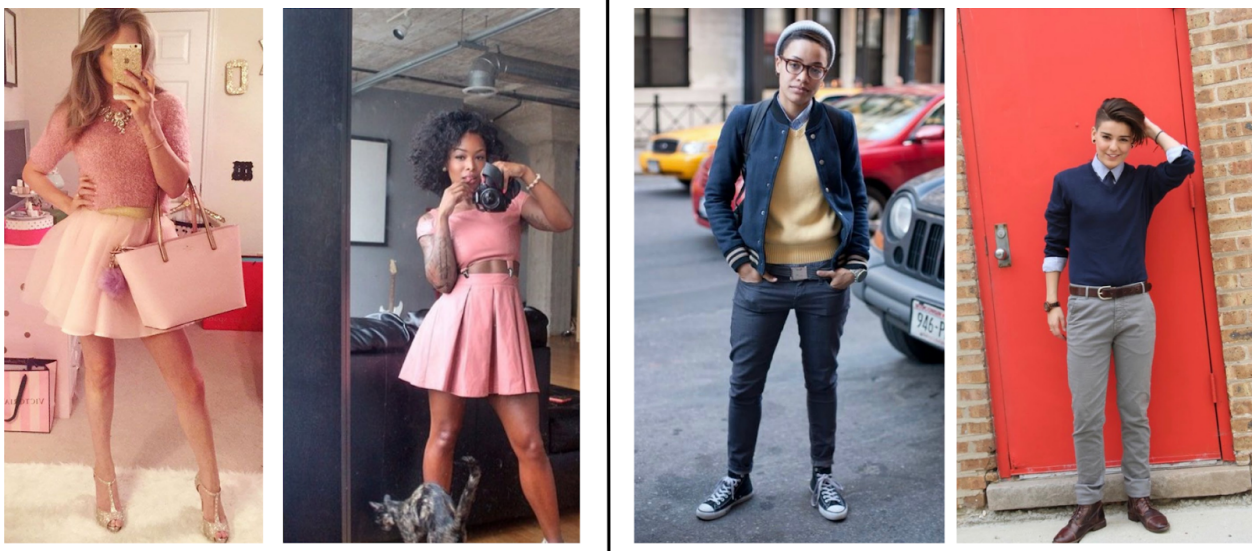
- Femininity Bias: It refers to where men's workplaces reject feminine features, behaviors, and interests. It stigmatizes men who break from masculine norms.
- Masculine Workplaces: These are the workplace cultures with stereotypical masculine values. Male-dominated workplaces may value assertiveness, competitiveness, and emotional reserve.
- Gender bias: Societal gender expectations, prejudices, and norms. It involves gender-based discrimination, which typically leads to unequal consequences.
- Intersectionality: The idea that people are discriminated against in numerous ways based on their race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Intersectionality acknowledges that these identities shape people's experiences and vulnerability.
- Authenticity: Being true to oneself and expressing one's true beliefs, values, and identity without extraneous pressures.

- Social exclusion: Marginalizing people or groups to exclude them from social interactions, networks, or opportunities. Biases and prejudices can lead to social marginalization.
- Hypermasculinity: Cultural focus on strong or exaggerated masculine qualities and behaviors frequently associated with dominance, violence, and rejection of perceived femininity. It reinforces gender stereotypes and marginalizes nonconformists.
- Gender equality: Treating all genders equally and without bias. It involves confronting preconceptions, stereotypes, and structural impediments that perpetuate injustice.
- Inclusivity: Promoting diversity and equal access to opportunities, resources, and participation. Inclusive spaces foster a sense of belonging for all.

Appendix Chapter 3:

These are the images used in the Study discussed in Chapter 3:

Figure 1.



Feminine

Masculine

Figure 2.

METHODS

Instructions: In this study you will see a profile of a person and give your opinions about them. Please take some time to study the person's profile and imagine this person in real life before answering the questions.

FEMININE TEXT

➔ Meet Sophia.

Sophia is a young woman. She is described by her friends as caring, bubbly, and fashionable. On weekends she enjoys shopping and getting her nails done. Sophia was a cheerleader in college and now works full-time.

MASCULINE TEXT

➔ Meet Sophia.

Sophia is a young woman. She is described by her friends as assertive, tough and responsible. On weekends she enjoys working out and driving. Sophia played volleyball in college and now works full-time.