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A Paternalistic Duty to Protect? Predicting Men's Decisions to Confront Sexism

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Research suggests that women weigh the perceived costs and benefits when deciding whether to confront sexism on behalf of themselves or other women. Novel to the present research, we tested whether *men* similarly weigh the anticipated costs and benefits when deciding whether to confront sexism on behalf of women. Using path analysis across 2 correlational studies, we also investigated how endorsement of a masculine protection ideology predicted frequency of confronting sexism on behalf of socially close (e.g., girlfriend, sister) versus distant (e.g., acquaintance, stranger) women. Results from Study 1 ($N = 148$ undergraduate men) revealed that men were motivated by the perceived benefit, but not the perceived cost, when deciding whether to confront sexism. In both studies (Study 2 $N = 205$ male MTurk workers), the extent to which men endorsed a masculine ideology of protection positively predicted their frequency of confronting for socially close, but not distant women. We conclude that in some cases paternalistic masculinity may promote antisexist behavior (confronting on behalf of socially close women), although the impact of those confrontations for sexism reduction remains to be tested.

Keywords: sexism, confrontation, masculinity, male ally, paternalism

Sexism targeting women remains prevalent in the United States and across the globe, from a U.S. presidential candidate insinuating that a prominent female journalist's cutting remarks were because of her menstruation (Yan, 2015), a Nobel laureate arguing that women were too emotional to be allowed in scientific laboratories (*Nature*, 2015), to a member of British Parliament claiming a pregnant MP candidate would not be able to give her full attention to the job because of her impending labor and delivery (Mitchell, 2015). In contrast, prominent male allies have fought to combat sexism, from President Obama urging congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act (Alter, 2014), to Hollywood actors speaking out against sexism in the film industry (Silman, 2015). What leads these men to step into the role of ally? Psychological research on male allies has grown rapidly over the past decade, yet little is known about men's *motivation* for confronting sexism on behalf of women. In the present studies, we investigate the extent to which men weigh the perceived costs and benefits of confront-

ation when deciding whether to confront observed sexism as well as the impact of masculinity beliefs regarding men's duty to protect women. Finally, we consider whether the same motivational processes (masculinity beliefs) predict confronting on behalf of women with whom men hold close relationships as opposed to more socially distant women.

The Importance of Confronting Sexism

Although women and men may hesitate to confront sexism (see Ayres et al., 2009; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001), research suggests that it can be effective at reducing future instances of sexism. For example, Mallett and Wagner (2011) found that men who were confronted about making a sexist comment engaged in compensatory efforts and later reduced their use of sexist language. Confrontation of discrimination by nontargets may be especially effective; perpetrators of sexism and racism who were confronted by a nontarget observer (male observer, White observer) viewed the confrontation as more legitimate and reported greater guilt and self-criticism, as compared with those who were confronted by a target group member (female observer, Black observer; Czopp & Monteith, 2003). With regard to confrontation of racism, nontarget confronters were less likely to be viewed as complaining, compared with target confronters (Mark, Monteith, & Oaks, 2007). Relatedly, participants reading sexist vignettes evaluated male (vs. female) public confronters of sexism more favorably, and indicated more surprise when men spoke out against sexism (Gervais & Hillard, 2014). Researchers argue that nontarget confronters are particularly persuasive because they appear to be arguing against their self-interest (see Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978). The surprising or counternormative nature of

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Study 1 data were presented as a poster presentation at the 2016 annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, in San Diego, California. The permanent record of the poster is available at <https://osf.io/jxb2n/>.

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men's confrontation may also draw greater attention to the sexist event, and a greater focus on the sexist action rather than characteristics of the confronter (e.g., female confronters being labeled as chronic complainers; Drury & Kaiser, 2014).

Thus, male allies may be particularly important in the fight against sexism. When men confront sexism, they may also influence other men's (and women's) behavior; witnessing confrontations leads people to confront similar future experiences (Swim & Thomas, 2006). Because antiprejudice attitudes can spread through social networks (Stangor, Sechrist, & Jost, 2001), when male allies speak out they may influence others in their network to modify their sexist attitudes and beliefs. In contrast, remaining silent in the face of discrimination can reinforce discriminatory social norms (Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, & Vaughn, 1994) and lead observers to downgrade the severity of a sexist event (Czopp, 2011). Male allies may also contribute direct benefits to victims of sexism. When a man (as compared with a woman) suggested that sexism had taken place, female targets reported more self-confidence and were more likely to file a complaint (Cihangir, Barreto, & Ellemers, 2014).

Men's Motivation for Confronting Sexism

Although scholars have called for greater research on male allies (Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Glick, 2014), relatively little is yet known about men's motivation to confront sexism. We know from the literature on women that the desire to confront may be impeded by the fear of social rejection or sanction (Kaiser & Miller, 2001, 2004; Shelton & Stewart, 2004; Swim & Hyers, 1999). Indeed, women have cause to be afraid, as research suggests that women who confront sexism are viewed as hypersensitive and complaining, and tend to be disliked (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dodd, Giuliano, Boutell, & Moran, 2001). Our own research demonstrates that women weigh the social costs of confronting when deciding whether to confront sexism both for themselves and on behalf of other women (Good et al., 2012). Although it is conceivable that men may worry about social rejection when deciding whether to confront sexism, research suggests that this social cost is less likely to be incurred by men (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). Given that men are not directly targeted by sexism¹ they may be less concerned about social or economic reprisal from the perpetrator of sexism. Additionally, research suggests that unequal power dynamics inhibit confronting from a lower-status observer (Ashburn-Nardo, Blanchard, Petersson, Morris, & Goodwin, 2014). Because men hold higher social power than women more broadly, they may be less concerned about confronting a male perpetrator of sexism (equal social status) or a female perpetrator (lower status). Thus, we hypothesize that a concern over social rejection will not strongly influence men's confronting behavior.

When deciding to confront, individuals not only weigh the potential cost, but also the potential benefit of confronting (citation masked). Women who believe their confrontation will make a difference are more likely to take action. For example, targets with a more malleable (as opposed to fixed) view of attitudes were more likely to confront discrimination (Pearson, 2007; Rattan & Dweck, 2010) as they likely believed it was possible to change the perpetrator's sexist attitudes. Women who had a more optimistic outlook (Kaiser & Miller, 2004) or who expected positive outcomes of the

confrontation (Sechrist, 2010) were more likely to confront. We have shown that women who believe that their confrontation will change the perpetrator's beliefs or reduce future instances of sexism are more likely to report confronting for themselves and on behalf of other women (Good, Moss-Racusin, & Sanchez, 2012). As reviewed earlier, men's confrontations have the potential to be particularly efficacious because nontarget confronters are seen as more legitimate and persuasive (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Drury & Kaiser, 2014). If men are aware of this potential for positive effect, then a consideration of the likelihood of a positive outcome may impact their decision of whether or not to confront. Indeed, we propose that men's perceived benefit of confronting will positively predict their likelihood of confronting.

Masculinity Beliefs

Just as our social identities guide our perceptions and actions, men's masculine identity and beliefs about masculinity may serve as a lens through which to determine appropriate action in response to sexism. Researchers have noted that manhood is "precarious:" rather than being a stable identity, it is a state that must be continually proven through comment and action (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). What does it mean to be a man? Saucier and McManus (2014) argue that a culture of honor is central to men's conceptions of masculinity. This belief in masculine honor leads men to engage in heroic or dangerous acts because it is their duty "as men" (Saucier & McManus, 2014). In particular, researchers argue that a masculine culture of honor includes men's "responsibility . . . to protect themselves, their reputations, their property, their families, and their communities from insults and threats" (Saucier & McManus, 2014, p. 87). With regard to the present studies, we were particularly interested in men's belief in a duty to protect women. This belief in a masculine protector role is reminiscent of male chivalry, yet is more specific than broad rules of courtship and dating, focusing instead on men's responsibility and ability to protect women. An inability or failure to protect women may be viewed as cowardice. Indeed, research shows that slurs suggesting a lack of bravery (e.g., being called a coward) were just as offensive to men and as likely to provoke an aggressive response as slurs suggesting femininity (e.g., being called a bitch; Saucier, Till, Miller, O'Dea, & Andres, 2015). An emphasis on men's role as protectors is common to several major religions, including Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, and research shows that individual men vary in the extent to which they endorse masculine honor beliefs (Saucier & McManus, 2014), which include a belief that men should protect women. In the present studies, we predicted that men who more strongly endorsed a masculine responsibility to protect women would be more likely to confront sexism directed at women.

Notably, this masculine duty to protect seems to be particularly focused on women with whom men hold close relationships (e.g., wives, family members). Men who more strongly endorsed mas-

¹ We acknowledge that men can indeed be targets of sexism. Research suggests however that men are viewed as prototypical perpetrators of sexism rather than victims (Baron, Burgess, & Kao, 1991). Given the severity of sexism directed against women around the world, for the purposes of the present article we define sexism as sexism directed toward women.

culine honor beliefs reported that men should respond more aggressively to insults, particularly insults to their family or romantic partners (Saucier & McManus, 2014). This is similar to the way in which benevolent sexism rewards close women (e.g., wives, mothers) with protection and prosocial behaviors, yet is positively correlated with hostile sexism, or a general antipathy toward women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Therefore, we reasoned that men who endorse masculinity beliefs about men's responsibility to protect women would be most angered by sexism directed at socially close women (e.g., female family members, female friends) and be more likely to confront on their behalf, whereas masculinity beliefs would play a lesser role in the decision to confront sexism more generally (e.g., sexism directed at women not personally known). Note that we do not suggest that confrontations motivated by paternalistic masculine ideologies are necessarily positive, simply that men who strongly believe in a masculine responsibility to protect women should be more likely to confront sexism, specifically on behalf of socially close women.

The Present Research

Across two correlational studies, we tested the extent to which men's confrontation of sexism was motivated by perceived cost (Study 1), perceived benefit (Studies 1 and 2), and endorsement of men's responsibility to protect women (Studies 1 and 2). As has been found with women, we predicted that men's confronting behavior would be motivated by an appraisal of the benefits of confrontation; in contrast to women, we predicted that men would be less motivated by the perceived cost. New to the literature on male allies, we investigated whether men were similarly motivated to confront sexism for women with whom they hold close relationships as compared to women unknown to them. To our knowledge, the ally literature has not investigated confrontation as a function of relationship status with the victim. We predicted that men's endorsement of a masculine protector role would positively predict confronting on behalf of socially close women, but not on behalf of socially distant (i.e., unknown) women.

Study 1

See Figure 1 for the hypothesized relationships in Study 1. We specifically predicted that the extent to which men endorsed a masculine protector role would differentially predict confronting for close women versus socially distant women. We predicted that men's appraisal of the benefits of confronting would positively predict confronting for socially close and distant women, although we did not make a prediction about whether these predictive relationships would differ by type of woman. Finally, we did not expect an appraisal of the costs of confronting to predict men's confronting for either socially close or distant women.

Method

Participants. The initial sample consisted of 157 male undergraduates ($M_{age} = 19.32$, $SD = 2.01$). We excluded nine participants who reported an average annual observation of sexism less than two, corresponding with an average response of "never" having observed sexism. The final sample included 148 male undergraduates, ages ranging from 18 to 36 years old ($M = 19.30$,

$SD = 1.98$). Participants' self-reported race and ethnicities were as follows: 59.5% White, 16.2% East Asian, 8.8% Hispanic/Latino, 7.4% South Asian, 6.1% Black, 4.1% Middle Eastern/North African, 4.1% Multiracial, 2.7% Southeast Asian, 2.7% Other, 2.0% American Indian or Alaska Native.² Participants were recruited through an introductory psychology Research Participation Pool and received research credit for their participation.

Procedure and materials. Participants arrived at the laboratory in groups ranging from 1 to 6 people, and were seated in individual cubicles. After completing informed consent, all materials were presented on desktop computers via SurveyMonkey. After, participants were debriefed and thanked. We provide summaries of the materials below; full materials can be accessed at <https://osf.io/jtnx4/>.³

Frequency of observation. Participants read the following definition of sexism:

Sexism is a belief or attitude that one gender or sex is inferior to or less valuable than the other gender and can also refer to a hatred or distrust towards either sex as a whole, or creating stereotypes of masculinity for men or femininity for women.

Next they completed nine questions assessing the frequency with which participants had observed sexism directed at women. Two items were general in scope ("In the past year, how often have you observed sexism directed toward a woman?") and seven named specific types of sexism ("How often have you observed a woman being treated as if she were 'stupid' or being 'talked down to' because of her gender?"). Participants indicated their response on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 7 (*every day*). Questions were taken from Good et al. (2012) and demonstrated good scale reliability, $\alpha = .81$. We computed mean scores for use in analysis.

Perceived benefit of confrontation. Consistent with past research (Good et al., 2012), we operationalized perceived benefit of confronting sexism as the extent to which participants felt their confrontation would have a positive effect. Participants were directed to "Think about a specific time when you confronted sexism directed toward a woman or stood up for a woman when she was the recipient of sexist comments or actions." They then completed four items assessing the perceived benefit of that confrontation. We included three items used in prior research (Good et al., 2012: "Did you think you would stop the person from acting sexist in the future?") and one additional item created for the present study ("Did you worry about what would happen to the victim if you didn't stand up for her?"). Participants indicated their response on

² Participants were able to select as many racial or ethnic categories as applied, resulting in a sum of percentages greater than 100.

³ The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) was also included in the survey for the purpose of establishing the independence of the Masculine Protector Role scale. Factor analysis revealed that the Masculine Protector Role items loaded on a separate factor from the benevolent and hostile sexist items in both studies. Moreover, replacing Masculine Protector Role with Benevolent Sexism did not improve the fit of the model (Study 1: $\chi^2 = 14.34$, $df = 7$, $p = .05$, CFI = .94, NFI = .90, AIC = .34; Study 2: $\chi^2 = 4.11$, $df = 4$, $p = .42$, CFI = 1.0, NFI = .96, AIC = -3.89). In both studies, Benevolent Sexism did not significantly predict confronting on behalf of socially close women; in Study 1, benevolent sexism negatively predicted confronting for socially distant women ($\beta = -.18$) and in Study 2, benevolent sexism did not predict confronting for socially distant women.

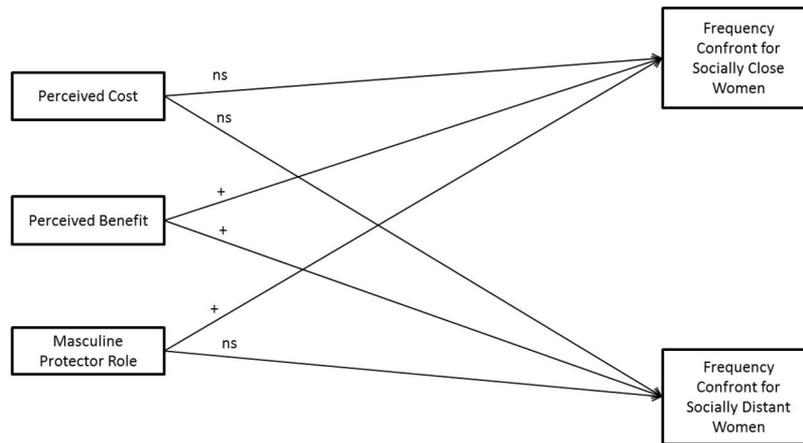


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model. Masculine protector role was hypothesized to predict confronting for socially close but not distant women. Perceived benefit was hypothesized to predict confronting for both types of women, although no specific prediction was made regarding the equality of those paths. Perceived cost was not hypothesized to predict confronting for either type of woman.

a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Scale reliability was adequate, $\alpha = .75$, and mean scores were computed.

Perceived cost of confrontation. Consistent with past research (Good et al., 2012), we operationalized the perceived cost of confronting as a concern over social rejection. We used two items from past research (Good et al., 2012; “Did you worry that other people would make fun of you or dislike you if you stood up to the sexist person?”) and created an additional 10 items to tap specific types of social rejection experienced by men (“Did you think you would feel embarrassed?” “Did you worry that someone of your gender should not be confronting sexism?”). Participants indicated their response on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Scale reliability was excellent, $\alpha = .96$, and mean scores were computed.

Masculine protector role. To assess the extent to which participants believed it was men’s responsibility to protect women, we created five items (“In American society, do you think it is men’s responsibility to protect women from danger?”) completed on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Scale reliability was excellent, $\alpha = .91$, and mean scores were computed.

Frequency of confrontation for socially close and distant women. Participants were given the following prompt: “In general when you have confronted sexism on behalf of the women in your life, how frequently have you confronted for . . .” and asked to indicate their frequency of confrontation for five types of women: (a) your Girlfriend, (b) your mother, sister, or other family member, (c) your friend, (d) an acquaintance, and (e) a stranger. Responses were given on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 7 (*very often*). We grouped the types of women into *socially close* women (girlfriend, family member, friend: $\alpha = .90$) and *socially distant* women (acquaintance, stranger: $r = .69, p < .01$), calculating mean scores for each of the two resulting categories.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive analyses. Means and *SDs* as well as bivariate correlations among all study variables are presented in Table 1.

Observation of sexism was positively correlated with both perceived cost and benefit of confronting, as well as with frequency of confronting for socially close women. Both perceived benefit and masculine protector role were associated with greater frequency of confronting. Participants were more likely to report confronting for socially close women as compared to socially distant women, $t(147) = 11.60, p < .01$.

Predictors of confronting. Our goal was to test whether endorsement of a masculine protector role as well as the perceived cost and benefit of confronting sexism differentially predicted confronting on behalf of socially close and distant women. To do so, we elected to use path analysis to test the relationships outlined in Figure 1 for two key reasons. First, path modeling allowed us to compute the unique relationship between each predictor and criterion, accounting for overlapping variance between the two criterion variables. Second, by constraining and releasing the relationships between the predictors and frequency of confronting for

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for All Study 1 Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Bivariate correlations						
1. Frequency observation	—					
2. Perceived benefit	.19*	—				
3. Perceived cost	.19*	.12	—			
4. Masculine protector role	.16	.39**	.04	—		
5. Confront for close women	.20*	.49**	-.02	.37**	—	
6. Confront for distant women	.08	.56**	.02	.19*	.59**	—
Means and <i>SDs</i>						
<i>M</i>	3.69	3.52	2.20	4.60	3.99	2.49
<i>SD</i>	.85	1.38	1.17	1.43	1.91	1.30

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

the two types of women, path analysis allowed us to test whether men's confronting process is similar or different across the two types of women subjected to sexism.

We first tested a constrained model, in which certain paths were forced to be statistically equivalent. If the constrained model does not fit well, it suggests that the constrained paths actually differ. In our constrained model, we included four equality constraints: (a) the path between frequency of observation and confronting for socially close women was constrained to equal the path between frequency of observation and confronting for socially distant women, (b) the path between perceived cost and confronting for socially close women was constrained to equal the path between perceived cost and confronting for socially distant women, (c) the path between perceived benefit and confronting for socially close women was constrained to equal the path between perceived benefit and confronting for socially distant women, and (d) the path between masculine protector role and confronting for socially close women was constrained to equal the path between masculine protector role and confronting for socially distant women.

We conducted all path analyses using EQS 6.1 software, specifying maximum likelihood estimation. We used listwise deletion, resulting in one case being removed because of partial missing data. Frequency of observing sexism and perceived cost were allowed to covary, as well as perceived benefit and masculine protector role, as suggested by Lagrange modification indices. The error terms for frequency of confronting for socially close and socially distant women were also allowed to covary. According to past research, good practice is to include at least five cases per parameter estimate (Bentler & Chou, 1987). The models tested in the present study included 17 total parameter estimates (8 paths, 6 error variances, and 3 covariances), necessitating a sample of at least 85 participants. Good fitting models have comparative fit index (CFI) and normed fit index (NFI) values that exceed .95 (see Hu & Bentler, 1999).

In keeping with our predictions, the constrained model demonstrated less than adequate fit (see Table 2 for all fit statistics), suggesting that the predictors of confronting differed across the two types of victims. Examination of the Lagrange fit indices suggested that we release two of the equality constraints (constraints 3 and 4 as outlined above). As we hypothesized, the partially constrained model fit the data well, and significantly better than the constrained model, $\chi^2\Delta = 9.13$, $df = 2$, $p = .01$. This suggests that there were indeed differences in the way that each predictor variable was related to confronting, depending on whether the confronting was on behalf of socially close or distant women. Finally, for comparison we tested a fully unconstrained model, releasing all equality constraints; this model also fit the

data well, however not significantly differently than the hypothesized (partially constrained) model, $\chi^2\Delta = 2.47$, $df = 2$, $p = .29$. The lower Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) value associated with the more parsimonious hypothesized (partially constrained) model (-2.08) suggested that it was a better fit to the data than the fully unconstrained model ($-.55$; Kline, 2010). Thus, the predictors of confronting sexism partially differ depending on whether the confrontation is on behalf of a socially close or distant woman.⁴

As can be seen in Figure 2 (hypothesized partially constrained model), the data were largely consistent with our predictions. Neither the frequency of observed sexism nor the perceived cost of confrontation predicted confronting for close or distant women. Whereas in past research women have reported that a fear of social rejection impedes their confronting behavior (Good et al., 2012; Kaiser & Miller, 2001, 2004), in the present study men did not report considering the potential cost of being socially sanctioned when deciding whether to confront. This may be because men have an accurate sense of the potential cost, which is lower than the cost for women (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). Perceived benefit of confronting positively predicted confronting for both socially close and socially distant women, although the path coefficient was somewhat larger for socially distant women. Thus, men were more likely to confront overall if they believed their action would have a positive outcome such as reducing the perpetrator's future sexist behaviors. As predicted, masculine protector role positively predicted confronting on behalf of socially close, but not socially distant women. The internalization of a masculine duty to protect women seems to primarily apply to women within a man's inner circle, not to all women.

Study 2

The data collected in Study 1 largely supported our hypotheses. However, we sought to address several limitations within those data in a replication and extension study (Study 2). First, Study 1 relied on male undergraduate students. While those students did report observing sexism at levels close to the midpoint of the scale, in Study 2 we sought to obtain an older, more representative sample of men who had more lived experience with sexism. We therefore chose to recruit participants using Mechanical Turk, an online crowd-sourcing platform operated by Amazon.com. Research suggests that Mechanical Turk samples are significantly more demographically diverse than typical American college samples, yet just as reliable (Burhmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Additionally, in Study 2 we decided to collect data regarding the overall frequency of men's confronting, so that we could narrow our sample to just those men who had a history of ever confronting sexism (rather than just having observed sexism, as in Study 1). We also improved upon our measurement of men's endorsement of a masculine protector role by using an established scale of masculine honor beliefs. We improved upon our measure of confronting by including both past frequency and future likelihood of confronting for socially close and distant women. Finally, in Study 2 we excluded the measure of perceived cost of confronting since it did not significantly predict confronting in Study 1. We revised

Table 2
Study 1 Fit Statistics for All Models Tested

Model	χ^2	df	p	CFI	NFI	AIC
Constrained model	19.05	8	.01	.93	.88	3.05
Hypothesized (Partially Constrained) model	9.92	6	.13	.97	.94	-2.08
Unconstrained model	7.45	4	.11	.98	.95	-.55

Note. Robust fit statistics are presented. CFI = comparative fit index; NFI = normed fit index; AIC = Akaike's Information Criterion.

⁴ Analyses conducted with OLS regression rather than path analysis confirmed the same pattern of results.

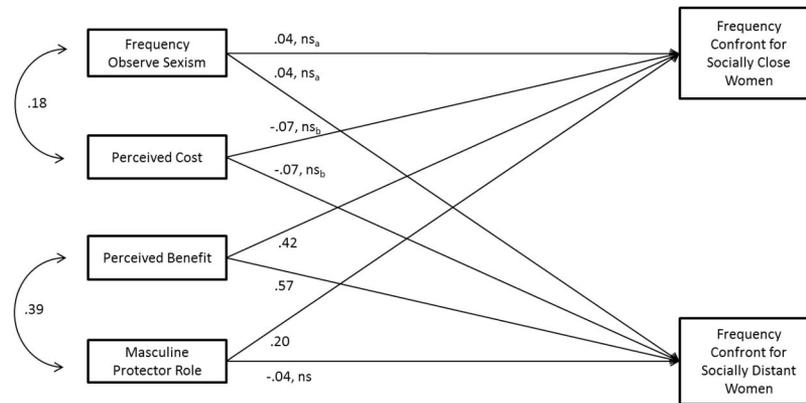


Figure 2. Hypothesized (Partially Constrained) model tested in Study 1. Paths sharing the same subscript were constrained to be equal. Standardized path coefficients are presented. All coefficients are significant ($p < .05$) unless otherwise indicated.

the measure of perceived benefit to measure men's assessment of the actual benefit of their past confrontations. We have argued earlier that men's appraisal of the perceived benefit of their confronting may stem from the efficacy of their past confrontations. In Study 2, we explicitly test whether past efficacy predicts confronting.

Method

Participants. The initial sample consisted of 256 participants recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk for a study about men's past experiences. Although we specifically recruited men, two participants indicated at the end of the survey that they were women, and we therefore excluded them from analyses. We also excluded four participants whose total duration spent completing the study exceeded 3 *SDs* above the mean duration ($M = 8.8$ min, $3 SD = 21.87$ min), as well as one participant who completed the entire survey in less than 2 min. As is typical in studies conducted via MTurk, we included 10 attention check questions throughout the survey ("select the number 7"; see Berinsky, Margolis, & Sances, 2014; Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009). We excluded five participants who did not pass 90% of the attention check questions. Finally, because we included participants' reports of the past benefit of confronting as a predictor in the hypothesized model, we excluded participants who reported never having confronted. This resulted in us removing 39 participants who reported a mean confrontation of sexism score of one, corresponding with an average response of "never" having confronted sexism. The remaining sample included 205 men currently living in the United States, ages ranging from 19 to 68 years ($M = 32.09$, $SD = 8.88$). Participants' self-reported race and ethnicities were as follows: 79.5% White, 8.8% Hispanic/Latino, 8.8% East Asian, 6.8% Black, 2.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.5% Middle Eastern, 1.0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.² Participants received \$1 for completing the approximately 10-min survey.

Procedure and materials. Participants were recruited online through MTurk, with all study materials presented via Qualtrics. After indicating their consent, participants completed the measures in the order presented below. Following completion, participants were thanked, debriefed, and compensated. We provide summaries

of the materials below; full materials can be accessed at <https://osf.io/f7nww/>.³

Frequency of observation. The same nine items used in Study 1 were used in the present study to assess the frequency with which participants had observed instances of sexism directed at women. Scale reliability was adequate ($\alpha = .93$) and mean scores were calculated, with higher scores corresponding to greater frequency of observation.

Frequency of confrontation. To assess how frequently participants confronted sexism when they observed it, we created two items ("When you have observed sexism directed toward a woman, how often have you confronted the sexist person?" and "When you have observed sexism directed toward a woman, how often have you stood up for the victim?"). Participants indicated their response on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). The two items were highly correlated, $r = .72$, $p < .01$ and mean scores were calculated, with higher scores corresponding to greater frequency of confrontation.

Past benefit of confrontation. As in Study 1, we operationalized the benefit of confronting as the efficacy of the confrontation. In the present study, we created four items assessing the efficacy of men's prior confrontations of sexism, rather than their anticipated efficacy as in Study 1 ("In the past when you have indicated your displeasure about a sexist joke, did you think it would stop the person from telling sexist jokes in the future?"). Participants responded on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Scale reliability was high, $\alpha = .90$. We calculated mean scores, with higher scores indicating greater benefit of past confronting.

Masculine protector role. To assess men's endorsement of a masculine duty to protect women, we used the 5-item Protection subscale from the Masculine Honor Beliefs Scale (Saucier & McManus, 2014; "A man should do whatever it takes to protect his wife because it is the right thing to do," "It is a male's responsibility to protect his family"). Participants indicated their response on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Scale reliability was high ($\alpha = .90$) and mean scores were computed.

Confrontation for socially close and distant women. As in Study 1, participants were asked to indicate their frequency of confrontation for five types of women: (a) your girlfriend or wife,

(b) your mother, sister, other family member, (c) your friend, (d) an acquaintance, and (e) a stranger. Responses were given on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). Additionally, we asked participants to indicate their future likelihood of confronting for each of the five types of women (“If you saw your GIRLFRIEND/WIFE being treated in a sexist way, how likely would you be to confront the person?”) on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very likely*). Past history of confrontation and future likelihood of confrontation were highly correlated for each type of woman (.34 < *r*s < .70). As in Study 1, we grouped the types of women into *socially close* women (girlfriend/wife, family member, friend: $\alpha = .84$) and *socially distant* women (acquaintance, stranger: $\alpha = .88$), calculating mean scores of the past frequency and future likelihood of confronting for each of the two resulting categories.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive analyses. Bivariate correlations, along with means and SDs for all study variables are presented in Table 3. Frequency of observation of sexism was positively correlated with frequency of confronting for both socially close and distant women. Consistent with Study 1, both past benefit and masculine protector role were associated with greater frequency of confronting for socially close and distant women. Also consistent with Study 1, participants were more likely to report confronting for socially close women as compared to socially distant women, $t(173) = 14.48, p < .01$.

Predictors of confronting. We tested whether past benefit of confronting and endorsement of a masculine protector role predicted confronting for socially close and distant women using the same analytic strategy as in Study 1. Again, we used path analyses, comparing the fit of constrained and unconstrained models.

We first tested a constrained model that included three equality constraints: (a) the path between frequency of observation and confronting for socially close women was constrained to equal the path between frequency of observation and confronting for socially distant women, (b) the path between past benefit and confronting for socially close women was constrained to equal the path between past benefit and confronting for socially distant

women, and (c) the path between masculine protector role and confronting for socially close women was constrained to equal the path between masculine protector role and confronting for socially distant women. We used the frequency of confrontation variable simply as a means for excluding men who had never confronted sexism; because it was highly collinear with the confronting for socially close and distant women variables, we did not include it in the path models.

As in Study 1, we conducted all path analyses using EQS 6.1 software, specifying maximum likelihood estimation. There were no missing data. Past benefit and masculine protector role were allowed to covary, as well as the error terms for frequency of confronting for socially close and socially distant women. The models tested in the present study included 13 total parameter estimates (6 paths, 5 error variances, and 2 covariances), necessitating a sample of 65 to 130 participants. Thus, our models were adequately powered.

The constrained model demonstrated less than adequate fit (see Table 4 for all fit statistics), suggesting that predictors of confronting differed across the two types of women. Consistent with hypotheses, examination of the Lagrange fit indices suggested that we release two of the equality constraints (constraints 2 and 3 as outlined above). The hypothesized (partially constrained) model fit the data well, and significantly better than the constrained model, $\chi^2\Delta = 8.92, df = 2, p = .01$. Finally, for comparison we computed a fully unconstrained model, which also fit the data well, but not significantly better than the hypothesized model, $\chi^2\Delta = .05, df = 1, p = .82$. The lower AIC value associated with the hypothesized (partially constrained) model (-5.51) also suggested that it was a better fit to the data than the unconstrained model (-3.46; Kline, 2010). Thus, the model fit results suggest that predictors of confronting sexism partially differ depending on whether the confrontation is on behalf of a socially close or distant woman.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the results of Study 2 largely mirror those of Study 1. Men’s endorsement of a masculinity ideology that includes men’s duty to protect women predicted greater past and future confronting for socially close women, but not socially distant women. It appears that men’s responsibility to protect women is actually limited to protecting “their women” and not all women. Men’s assessment of the past benefit of their confrontations positively predicted confronting for both types of women, although more strongly for socially distant women than for socially close women. This pattern mirrors the finding from Study 1 that perceived benefit of confronting more strongly predicted confronting on behalf of socially distant rather than close women. This suggests that men’s evaluation of the future or past efficacy of their confronting plays a larger role in deciding whether to

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for All Study 2 Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Bivariate correlations						
1. Frequency observation	—					
2. Frequency confrontation	.16*	—				
3. Past benefit	.05	.48**	—			
4. Masculine protector role	-.02	.16*	.08	—		
5. Confront for close women	.20**	.60**	.27**	.35**	—	
6. Confront for distant women	.23**	.66**	.40**	.11	.51**	—
Means and SDs						
<i>M</i>	3.62	3.66	3.32	5.61	4.94	3.46
<i>SD</i>	1.14	1.36	1.42	1.11	1.27	1.38

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

Table 4
Study 2 Fit Statistics for All Models Tested

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	CFI	NFI	AIC
Constrained model	9.41	5	.01	.96	.93	-.59
Hypothesized (Partially Constrained) model	.49	3	.92	1.0	1.0	-5.51
Unconstrained model	.54	2	.76	1.0	1.0	-3.46

Note. Robust fit statistics are presented. CFI = comparative fit index; NFI = normed fit index; AIC = Akaike’s Information Criterion.

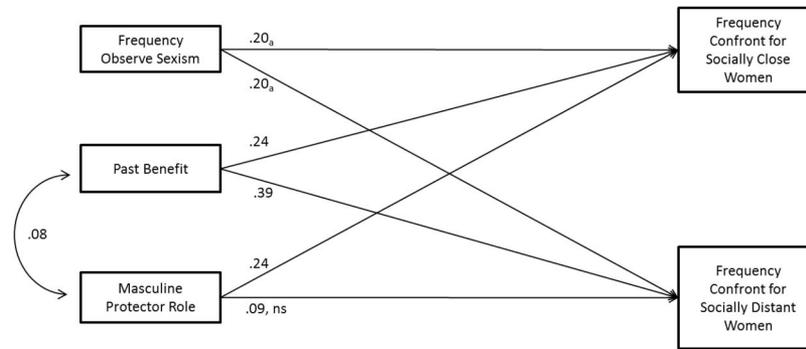


Figure 3. Hypothesized (Partially Constrained) model tested in Study 2. Paths sharing the same subscript were constrained to be equal. Standardized path coefficients are presented. All coefficients are significant ($p < .05$) unless otherwise indicated.

confront on behalf of acquaintances or strangers, rather than girlfriends, wives, and female family members. In contrast with Study 1, in the present study men's observation of sexism was positively associated with their confrontation on behalf of socially close and distant women. We think this is likely an artifact of our sampling strategy; with an older sample in Study 2, men may have had greater opportunities to both observe sexism and confront sexism. Notably, across both studies, the frequency with which men observed sexism did not differentially predict confronting for socially close versus distant women.

General Discussion

As predicted, in Study 1 we demonstrated that men's perception of the social cost of confronting sexism did not significantly predict their frequency of confronting for either socially close or distant women. This finding mirrors the research on perceptions of male confronters, suggesting that men have good reason to not be as concerned about social rejection. However, in both studies we found that men's perception of the benefit of confronting predicted greater frequency of confronting. In both studies, this relationship was somewhat stronger for socially distant women than socially close women. Although not predicted, this finding is intuitive when considered in light of the findings for masculine role beliefs. We argued earlier that a belief in a masculine duty to protect women is most applicable to socially close women (e.g., wives, mothers, and sisters). Indeed, we found in both studies that masculine protector role predicted greater confronting only for socially close women. To synthesize the findings, when deciding whether to confront for women who are socially close, the extent to which men endorse a responsibility to protect women will influence their decision; when deciding whether to confront for socially distant women, masculinity beliefs do not play a role, and instead it is men's beliefs in the benefit of confronting that predicts their behavior. One potential implication of this finding is that if we want to encourage men to confront on behalf of women *in general* and not just women with whom they are in a relationship, efforts might focus on emphasizing the efficacy or impact of men's confrontations.

Alternatively, interventions might focus on increasing men's identification with or empathy for women with whom they do not hold a close relationship, with the goal of expanding confronting

behaviors. For example, future research should study men who identify as "allies" to identify past experiences (e.g., their own past experience of discrimination) or situational factors (e.g., currently occupying a disadvantaged role) that led them to empathize with women who are targeted with sexism. Presumably, men who self-identify as allies or "feminists" have committed to fighting sexism directed at all women, regardless of their personal relationship. Future research should investigate whether self-identified male allies confront for socially close versus distant women at the same rates (controlling for opportunity to confront), or whether masculine honor beliefs might still differentially predict confronting for socially close versus distant women even among those men most committed to fighting sexism more broadly.

Note that in this article we have argued that men's confrontation of sexism is positive for social change, and thus, positive for targets of sexism. For example, confronting men's sexism led to reduced use of sexist language in the future (Mallett & Wagner, 2011), and nontarget confronters (i.e., men) were viewed as more legitimate and effective than target confronters (Czopp & Monteith, 2003). However, it is unclear whether confronting sexism for close women is as effective as confronting for strangers. Recall that previous research suggests that ally confronters are effective because they have less self-interest and thus, their confrontation is viewed as more persuasive (see Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978). This may not be true when men confront on behalf of close others. Indeed, although participants expressed greater surprise when men confronted sexism (Drury & Kaiser, 2014), men stepping in to take care of female family and friends may not be viewed as or surprising or counternormative. Because of this, it is possible that men's confrontation on behalf of socially close women may not have the same degree of benefit as their confrontation for socially distant women. This possibility mirrors the findings in Study 2, where men's appraisal of the past benefit of confronting was less predictive of confronting for socially close than distant women. The present research is the first to empirically investigate men's confronting on behalf of socially close versus distant women; the bulk of the research on confronting has used stranger/acquaintance targets of sexism. Future research should investigate the efficacy of nontarget confrontations on behalf of known or close victims.

Additionally, although ally confrontations have the potential to be successful, sexist motivations may undermine the positive nature of men's confronting. In the present studies, men who endorsed a masculine duty to protect women reported greater frequency of confronting for socially close women; while men's confronting may be effective at reducing sexism, it is also possible that confronting on behalf of women may undermine women's own feelings of efficacy and autonomy. This may be especially true when confrontation is motivated by a paternalistic view of gender relations. For example, Becker, Glick, Ilic, and Bohner (2011) showed that paternalistic helping from a colleague can reduce the competence of an employee in the eyes of observers. Paternalistically motivated confrontation of sexism may ironically reinforce sexist views of women if the victim is therefore viewed as unable to stand up for herself. It is also possible that paternalistically motivated confronting may have unintended consequences for the target of sexism, perhaps reducing her feelings of autonomy. Many women may not appreciate being "rescued" and instead prefer to handle the situation themselves. Indeed, scholars have emphasized that male allies must work *alongside* women rather than *on behalf of* women in the fight against sexism (Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Glick, 2014). In the present studies, we cannot conclude whether confronting motivated by a masculine responsibility to protect women has more or less positive consequences than confronting motivated by other factors. Future research should investigate how masculinity beliefs not only motivate the frequency of confronting, but also the impact of those confrontations on targets and observers.

This work also adds to a growing literature on the effects of masculinity, many of which have focused on the negative impact of masculinity on men's health and behavior, and specifically gender relations. For example, numerous studies have shown that masculinity is often associated with sexism, gender stereotyping, and intimate partner violence (Glick, Wilkerson, & Cuffe, 2015; Himmelstein & Sanchez, 2016; Leaper & Van, 2008; Vandello & Bosson, 2013; Vandello & Cohen, 2008) that often disservice and subordinate women. This study suggests that masculinity, when it is harnessed to protect women, may help to reduce sexist behavior through confrontation—a somewhat ironic benefit of masculinity endorsement. Note, however, that this potential positive implication of masculinity may be limited to confrontation of sexism specifically directed at women. Other research suggests that masculinity may reduce heterosexual men's confrontation of sexual prejudice aimed at gay men because men fear being inaccurately perceived as gay (Kroeper, Sanchez, & Himmelstein, 2014). Thus, confrontation may depend on whether the act of confronting raises men's status, reinforcing their masculinity, or risks stigmatization, reducing their masculinity.

Across both studies reported here, we operationalized perceived benefits of confronting as men's perceived efficacy of the confrontation. Future research should explore alternative benefits as well, such as positive self-regard, or alignment of the actual and ideal self. Indeed, masculinity beliefs may reflect men's ideal selves, and thus motivate them to act in accordance with those beliefs as way to align with their actual selves (see Higgins, 1987). An additional self-benefit of confrontation may be that it allows men to maintain a self-image of being nonsexist. Men who are motivated by a paternalistic belief in a masculine protector role may strategically use their confrontations on behalf of socially

close women as evidence to support a view of themselves as nonsexist. This logic is similar to the role of benevolent sexism in promoting a nonsexist self-image; men and women who endorse benevolent sexism can maintain a view of themselves as nonsexist because they do in fact highly value women, while in reality they only value certain types of women and hold hostile sexist views of nontraditional women (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997). This "benefit" would be positive for men's self-views, but negative for their attitudes toward women. Future research should consider how confronting on behalf of socially close women may actually reinforce men's paternalistic views of women and make them less likely to confront sexism more generally.

Although beyond the scope of the present data, questions arise as to what factors lead men to confront more for socially close versus distant women. Socially close and distant relationships likely vary in multiple ways. For example, greater time spent with a woman may lead her to be considered a friend (socially close) rather than an acquaintance (socially distant). Being biologically related to a woman (e.g., mother, sister) may lead to greater feelings of closeness, although time spent with female relatives may differ across the life span; boys may spend great amounts of time with their mothers and sisters early in life, and less time as they develop independent adult lives. Research on online communications suggests that close relationships can be facilitated not just by time spent face-to-face, but also by the tendency to self-disclose one's authentic self via computer-mediated interactions (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002). An additional factor that may promote differences in likelihood of confrontation for socially close versus distant women may be public commitment. By publicly declaring a relationship (e.g., marriage ceremony, social media relationship status), men may feel more responsibility to confront for those women than others.

In the present studies, we show that factors shown to similarly predict confronting for the self and others among women (i.e., perceived benefit; Good et al., 2012) also similarly predict confronting for socially close and distant women among men. However, we show that a specific set of masculinity beliefs differently predicts confronting for socially close versus distant women. Although we did not control for the varying factors that lead a relationship to be close versus distant, future research should extend these findings to consider to what extent the differences in confronting for close and distant women may be explained by differences in time spent with each group of women, developmental or familial experiences with each group, public commitment to each group, and so forth. Additionally, rather than categorically designating socially close (e.g., girlfriends) and distant women (e.g., acquaintances) at the outset as we did in the present studies, future research should allow men to self-select women to whom they feel closest, or to indicate their subjective feelings of closeness with each category of women. Alternatively, researchers could manipulate the salience of men's close relationships with women, and then assess how perceived benefits or masculine honor beliefs predict confronting for women whose social closeness is highly salient versus less salient. The types of research outlined here would allow for a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms underpinning the effects observed in the present studies. Indeed, we view the present research as a first step in a long and potentially fruitful line of research.

The studies presented here are limited by their correlational nature. Future research should manipulate men's perceived efficacy of confronting, or men's masculinity beliefs to determine the

causal impact on confronting. Additionally, experimentally manipulating the status of the target of sexism would allow researchers to assess the extent to which perceived benefits of confronting explain greater confronting for socially close versus distant women. As described earlier, various factors may contribute to overall differences in the frequency of confronting sexism for close versus distant women. For example, accounting for differences in actual time spent with socially close and distant women may reduce the magnitude of the gap in confronting frequency. An experimental design would also allow researchers to isolate the moderators that might enhance or reduce the predictive impact of masculinity beliefs (e.g., manipulating whether men have made a romantic relationship public or not). Beyond their correlational nature, the data are also self-report; research suggests women underreport their experiences of sexism (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001) and overestimate their likelihood of confronting sexism (Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001). It is unclear whether men are similarly inaccurate about their observations and confrontation of sexism. We chose to use a self-report design to naturalistically study men's confronting behaviors. When individuals know they are being observed, they may act in a less discriminatory manner than when they are alone (see external motivation to control prejudice, Plant & Devine, 1998). As a result, men put in an experimental situation to observe sexism may be more likely to confront than they would in their everyday lives. We chose to use men's recall of their past confronting behavior to avoid this issue, although future research should also consider behavioral observations of confronting.

In both studies, our samples consisted of primarily White men (60% in Study 1, 80% in Study 2). A lack of racial diversity is a problem endemic to the literature on male allies, and most of the research on perceptions of male confronters has used White men as the confronters. Future research should endeavor to obtain a more racially diverse sample as well as consider how the motivations for or outcomes of confronting sexism might differ across men from different racial groups.

Conclusion

The present studies represent a necessary addition to the literature on male allies, by investigating the extent to which men weigh the costs and benefits of confronting in a similar manner as do women. To our knowledge, these studies represent the first to consider the role of masculinity beliefs in promoting confronting behavior, and to separately test confronting for socially close versus distant women. Overall, our research suggests that perceptions of the benefit of confronting are more influential than perceptions of cost when it comes to predicting men's confronting behavior. Masculinity beliefs play a larger role in confronting for close women as compared with unknown women. These findings reveal the potential ironic role of masculinity in sexism such that masculinity often lends itself to sexist behavior and beliefs yet also facilitates the confrontation of sexism on behalf of close women.

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