Apr 12th, 1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Masculine Threat, Self-Esteem, and Homophobic Behaviors in College Men

Julie Longo
Illinois Wesleyan University

John Ernst, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc

Longo, Julie and Ernst, Faculty Advisor, John, "Masculine Threat, Self-Esteem, and Homophobic Behaviors in College Men" (2003). John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference. 13.
http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2003/posters2/13

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.
©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.
MASCULINE THREAT, SELF-ESTEEM, AND HOMOPHOBIC BEHAVIORS IN COLLEGE MEN

Julie Longo and John Emst*
Department of Psychology, Illinois Wesleyan University

Threatened masculinity may play a role in homophobic responses in college men. This idea is supported conceptually by Claude Steele’s work on self-affirmational processes (1975, 1988, & 1993) and Roy Baumeister’s work on self-esteem (1992; Baumeister & Tice, 1985; Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). Empirically, this is consistent with studies showing that masculinity and homophobia are positively correlated. In this study, homophobic or non-homophobic responses to a gay confederate were measured after a masculine threat or no threat manipulation. In the masculine threat condition, participants were given a test that was said to measure masculine knowledge and then received false feedback. The feedback that they received told them that their score was one standard deviation below the mean for college men. The no threat condition involved a general knowledge test in which no feedback of any kind was given. After the manipulation, the gay confederate would come in wearing a gay pride tee shirt and carrying a backpack with gay pride paraphernalia on it. We postulated that the masculine threat participants would have a homophobic response as a way of affirming their masculinity and their self-esteem. This response was measured by a professionalism questionnaire given to all participants. In this questionnaire, the participant was asked to rate the gay confederate (‘experimenter’) on a number of dimensions. We hypothesized that those who had been in the masculine threat condition would rate the experimenter poorly, thus exhibiting a homophobic response, when compared to the no threat condition. Results will be discussed.