

# Masculinity and Misogyny in the Digital Age

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What social data can tell us about the climate surrounding  
masculinity constructs and use of misogynistic language.

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# Introduction

## Background

In 2016, we published The Annual Bullying Survey 2016. The report was notable because it was the first piece of mainstream research to uncover the reasons why people bully others. The survey enabled us to build complex profiles of those who perpetrate bullying, which in turn has allowed us to increase the amount of support we provide to prevent bullying from happening in the first place.

Interestingly, in this research we found that those who identify as being male or having grown up in a male-dominated household were more likely to bully than those who identify as female or who have greater female influences at home. We know that males are the least likely to report bullying and to talk about issues affecting them as a direct result of social conditioning. Suicide is the biggest killer of young men, often that's because males are taught from an early age that it isn't okay to talk about their emotions. Young men are told to, "man up" and to, "stop being a girl" whenever they show vulnerability, and some learn to respond with aggressive behaviours such as violence, crime and bullying.

It is through this learning that we have become increasingly interested in understanding men and the constructs of masculinity; as the relationship between bullying is now clear and evident. Directly related to the issue of toxic masculinity is the issue of femininity and addressing the ways in which women are viewed societally. In addition to exploring the unbiased climate of masculinity, this report also identifies the current rates and perpetration of language that actively discriminates against women and femininity.

Traditional surveys can be limiting because of social bias affecting the results. The best way to measure something is often to observe behaviours and so, we worked with Brandwatch to analyse almost 19 million public Tweets to explore the current climate of misogyny and constructs of masculinity as expressed across social media.

## Key Findings

Masculinity as a construct can be divided into four main components: how an individual behaves, how they look, their personality and their lifestyle preferences.

In summary, somebody is perceived to be masculine if they are tough and emotionally strong. Appearance wise, facial hair and a muscular physique are regarded as masculine traits. Preferences to eat meat and to drink beer were also seen as masculine ideals. Drinking cocktails or listening to pop music are examples of things that aren't seen as being masculine.

Many of the behavioural aspects of the construct are negative and include violence, aggression and a lack of emotional openness. We recognise these as being key societal issues affecting things such as bullying, mental health and crime rates. This creates negative consequences for those feeling pressured to conform to masculine ideals. Some females suggested that traits, such as leadership and dominance, are seen as positives in males but are still being viewed negatively in females.

The research finds that generally, reactions to those who do not conform are often supportive. People on Twitter were six times as likely to respond positively than negatively to their connections when they posted content that didn't conform. This suggests that generally, Twitter could be considered a safer place for expression of diversity. Sports fans were found to be most likely to comply with the masculinity construct, whereas students were the most likely to deviate. Further research in this area could explore the integration between both groups as a tool to promote diversity within sporting contexts.

The research shows that masculinity continues to be heteronormative; actively discriminating against young men who don't identify as being straight. Positively, debate and awareness around masculinity constructs is growing and includes transgender voices using Twitter to generate discussion and offer a fresh perspective.

The data shows that discussion of misogyny has consistently grown since June 2014 and has far overtaken the use of misogynistic language across the Twitter platform. Females were found to be the largest perpetrators of misogynistic language, which warrants further exploration into the ways in which women engage with each other in both online and offline environments.



**Liam Hackett,**  
CEO, Ditch the Label  
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# Preface

This project represents the combined efforts of the Brandwatch Research Services team in conjunction with Ditch the Label. The research aims to provide supportive data and practical advice for campaigns hoping to address key issues surrounding gender constructs.

More specifically, we aim for this research to encourage more open debate on gender stereotyping and help inform campaigns to challenge its negative consequences. While focusing here on gender constructs, this forms part of a broader project between Brandwatch and Ditch the Label which explores discourse relating to racial intolerance, homophobia, transphobia and online bullying.

The research shows some offensive language to be concentrated in select geographic regions and demographics. The purpose of the project is not to vilify these groups (generalisations of this kind go against the core aims of the study), but rather to show the biggest opportunities for social progress.

The masculine prototype has been defined using the data in order to minimise research bias. Importantly, we make no claim that any aspect of masculinity is inherently positive or negative. Rather, our analysis measures common attitudes within online discussion. This section of the report acknowledges that 'hyper-', or 'toxic' masculinity, as well as all prejudice-based stereotypes, can have a negative impact on both those who may feel pressured to conform as well as those who deviate from recognised norms. Many aspects of the masculinity construct also hold relevance for discussion around misogyny and gender discrimination more broadly.

This project sheds light on discriminatory language, but should not be viewed as an argument for online censorship. Rather, the data points to the need for a nuanced approach, further open debate and awareness, and positive role models. While there are many signs of positive progress throughout, there are also key challenges to address for those hoping to facilitate social change.



**Edward Crook,**  
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# Methodology

## Masculinity Constructs

A data-led approach was used to identify aspects online authors considered masculine (including appearance, behaviour, personality traits and preferences). These aspects were combined to form a defined, prototypical masculinity construct.

We then searched for authors who did or did not conform to this construct. Finally, data was collected from communities discussing issues relating to masculinity.

## Misogyny

Two Queries were written to capture firstly, misogynistic language used on Twitter, and secondly, neutral or constructive debate surrounding issues relating to misogyny. Comparing ratios of these Query volumes gives a detailed picture of how discourse varies between demographics and regions.

This data was analysed for key trends, Author Demographics and regional variation within the UK and the US.

## Key Facts

**Data Parameters:** Public, online discussion limited to Twitter only.

**Territories:** UK and US, English language only

**Date Range:** August 2012 – July 2016

**Total Corpus:** 18,971,972 tweets (inclusive of five discrimination areas)

**Data:** Collected from Twitter via Brandwatch Analytics ([www.brandwatch.com](http://www.brandwatch.com))

**Demographics:** Twitter Demographics (gender, profession, interests) segmented by Brandwatch

**Sampling:** Where applicable, random samples of 400 mentions were used.

**Maps:** Visualised using OpenHeatMaps ([github.com/petewarden/openheatmap/wiki/FAQ](https://github.com/petewarden/openheatmap/wiki/FAQ))

# 1.0

## What is masculinity?

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# 1.0

# What is Masculinity?

## 1.1 Masculinity as a Construct

A random sample of mentions were manually categorised to help define the masculinity construct according to online opinion. These are grouped into four facets of masculinity: preferences, personality, behaviour and appearance.

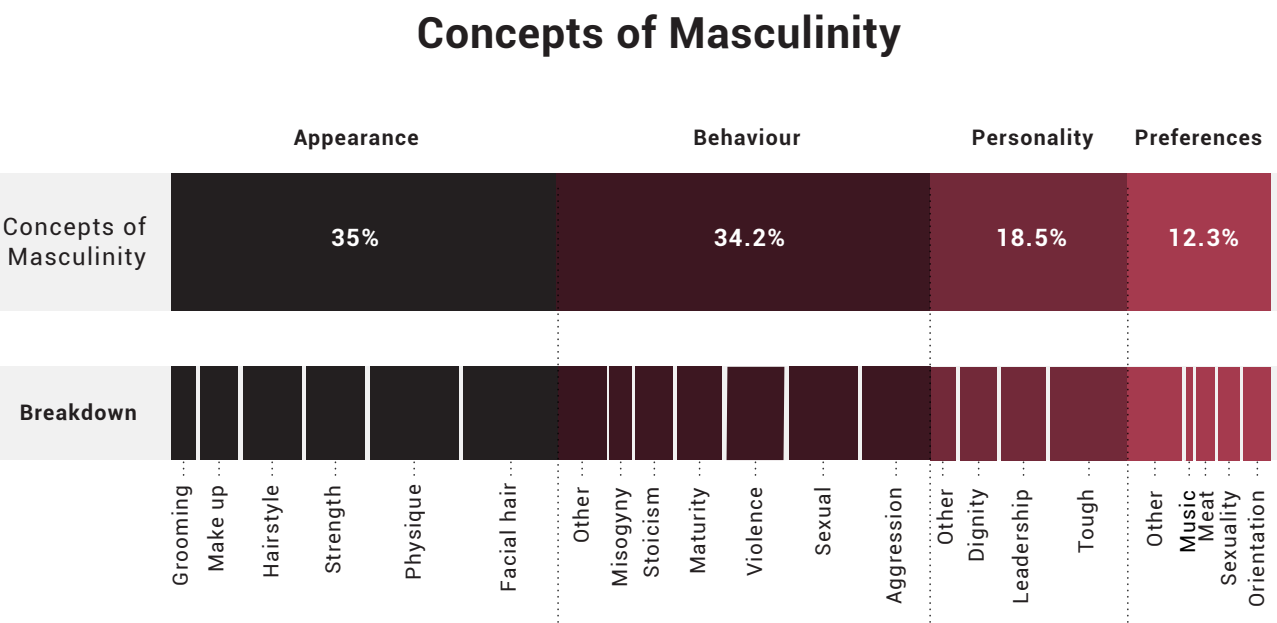


Fig 1. Random sample methodology used with manual categorisation (n = 400).

Identity preferences span sexuality as well as tastes for food groups, products and music. Appearance, the largest of the four groups, contains visible, physical attributes such as facial hair, grooming and physique.

Personality and behaviour have been segmented with the former containing internal qualities and the latter comprising demonstrable actions. These are explored in greater depth on the following pages.

## 1.2 Key Features of the Masculinity Construct

### Behaviours

#### Violent

Violence was the most discussed behaviour associated with masculinity. 32% of behaviour-related discussion related to violence.

Discussion covered many types of violence; physical aggression, gun violence, domestic violence and war were some recurring themes

This behaviour was discussed with respect to toxic masculinity in 24% of the total violence-related discussion.

#### Stoic

Crying was seen as a non-masculine behaviour. 30% of those talking about behaviours related to masculinity discussed crying.

Lack of emotional response and stoicism are also seen as masculine behaviours but mentioned much less frequently than crying specifically. "Manly tears" were, however, cited in 20% of crying-related conversation.

#### Heteronormative

Heterosexuality is the third most mentioned behaviour associated with masculinity (18% of all behaviour discussion).

Homosexuality was a key theme (76%) within this discussion with authors using 'gay' and related terms. Homosexuality was often used in a negative, non-literal sense to criticise behaviour seen as non-conformist.

### Appearance

#### Facial Hair

Facial hair is the most frequently mentioned physical attribute associated with masculinity, driving nearly half of all appearance-related discussion.

Facial hair is seen as a larger determinant of masculinity than muscular physique; facial hair was nearly two times more likely to be mentioned in context of masculinity than physique.

#### Muscular

Muscular and other related words such as jacked, brawny, sturdy, and rugged are used to describe masculine appearance.

"Built like a man" is frequently used (nearly 40% of the discussion) to describe female athletes and celebrities who are muscular, showing the prevalence of the concept that muscles are seen as an inherently masculine feature.

#### Hair Style

Hair styles are the third most mentioned physical feature attributed to masculinity (22% of total appearance discussion).

Short hair on women is seen as masculine while long hair on men is typically seen as opposing masculinity.

Many hairstyles traditionally seen as feminine are mentioned in 31% of the discussion with a prefix such as 'manly' or man (e.g.: 'man bun', 'manly ponytail').

## 1.3 Key Preferences of the Masculinity Construct

### Perceived as more masculine

#### Meat

Eating and cooking meat was seen as a masculine activity and mentioned in nearly 50% of all food and beverage related discussion. Prominent products were steak, beef jerky, and bacon.

#### Coffee

Espresso and Americano fit more commonly within the construct (6%) than lattes, frappuccinos and flavoured coffees.

#### Beer

Beer is most likely to be seen as a masculine drink, mentioned in 60% of beverage conversation.

#### Whiskey

Whiskey was the second most mentioned beverage. Whiskey was seen as a manly drink and something a 'real man' should drink by 29% of authors within the beverage discussion.

#### Rock and metal

Heteronormative lyrics were seen as 'masculine', as were rock and metal genres. Some authors challenged hip-hop's reputation for 'hypermasculinity'.

#### Trucks and motorbikes

Motorbikes and large vehicles were perceived as 'manly', especially among drivers completing repairs themselves. Some 'masculine' vehicles gained criticism for not being environmentally friendly.

### Perceived as less masculine

#### Food variety

While meat products were commonly considered 'masculine', there was no clear consensus surrounding perceived 'feminine' food groups.

#### Tea

While black coffee was perceived as masculine, tea was the most commonly cited 'feminine' beverage in the data.

#### Wine

The mention volume for wine was 30% that of beer; however, the discussion portrayed it as a drink that was not masculine.

#### Cocktails

While some defended the Old Fashioned as an exception, the majority of authors considered cocktails feminine (especially those with straws and/or colourful decorations).

#### Musical variety

Music identified as feminine spanned a range of genres including pop, rap and spiritual. However, female vocalists were a prominent feature.

#### Vehicle accessories

While authors tended not to describe vehicles as feminine, there was evidence of accessories including, seat and wheel covers, explicitly marketed as female-targeted products.

## 2.0

How do people  
feel about masculinity?

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## 2.0

# How People Feel about Masculinity

## 2.1 'Masculine' Preferences are Being Challenged

The chart below shows common attitudes to each facet of the masculinity construct. 54% of authors either defined masculinity in neutral or in humorous terms, with the majority of authors being accepting of the masculinity construct in some contexts.

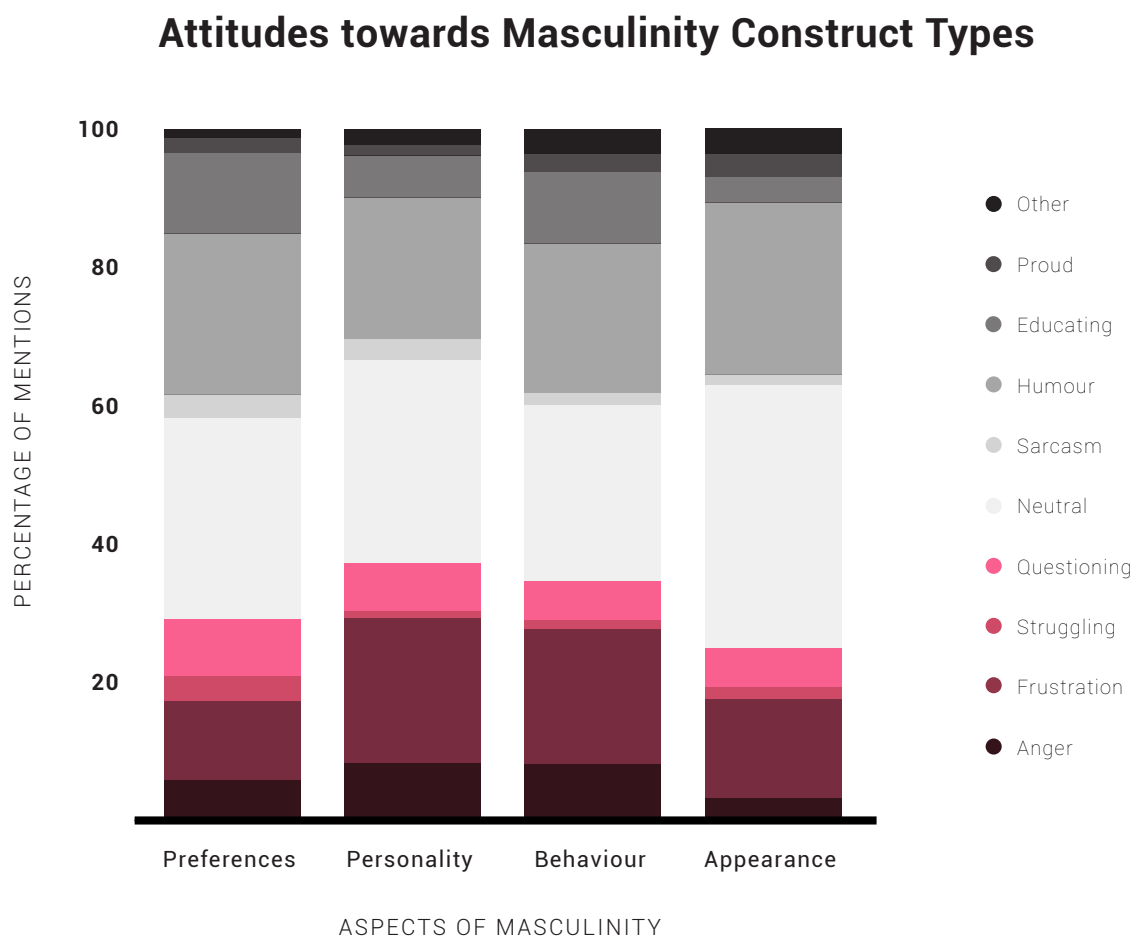


Fig 2. Random sample methodology used with manual categorisation (n = 400).



"Can watercolour tattoos be masculine?"



"I never take those [critics] seriously because in MY book masculinity is relative"



"Imagine a masculinity so fragile that an all female cast in Ghostbusters has you refusing to watch the movie..."

However, there was evidence of authors questioning the construct, particularly for 'masculine' preferences. This questioning came from male authors explicitly defying what they perceived to be 'masculine' traits, as well as female commentary on masculine constructs as 'fragile'.

Frustration was most prominent for personality and some authors were irked by the stereotype of 'tough' role models. Female authors shared concerns that leadership was still considered by some a positive masculine trait but in women a 'massive red flag'.

## 2.2 Who Conforms to the Masculinity Narrative?

Males posting content that does not fit into the constructed idea of masculinity are 7% more likely to be artists, than those complying with these constructs. They are also more likely to be students. Over 50% of the authors are likely to either be an artist or a student. Both these professions are more likely to talk outside of the constructs of masculinity than journalists or sportspersons.

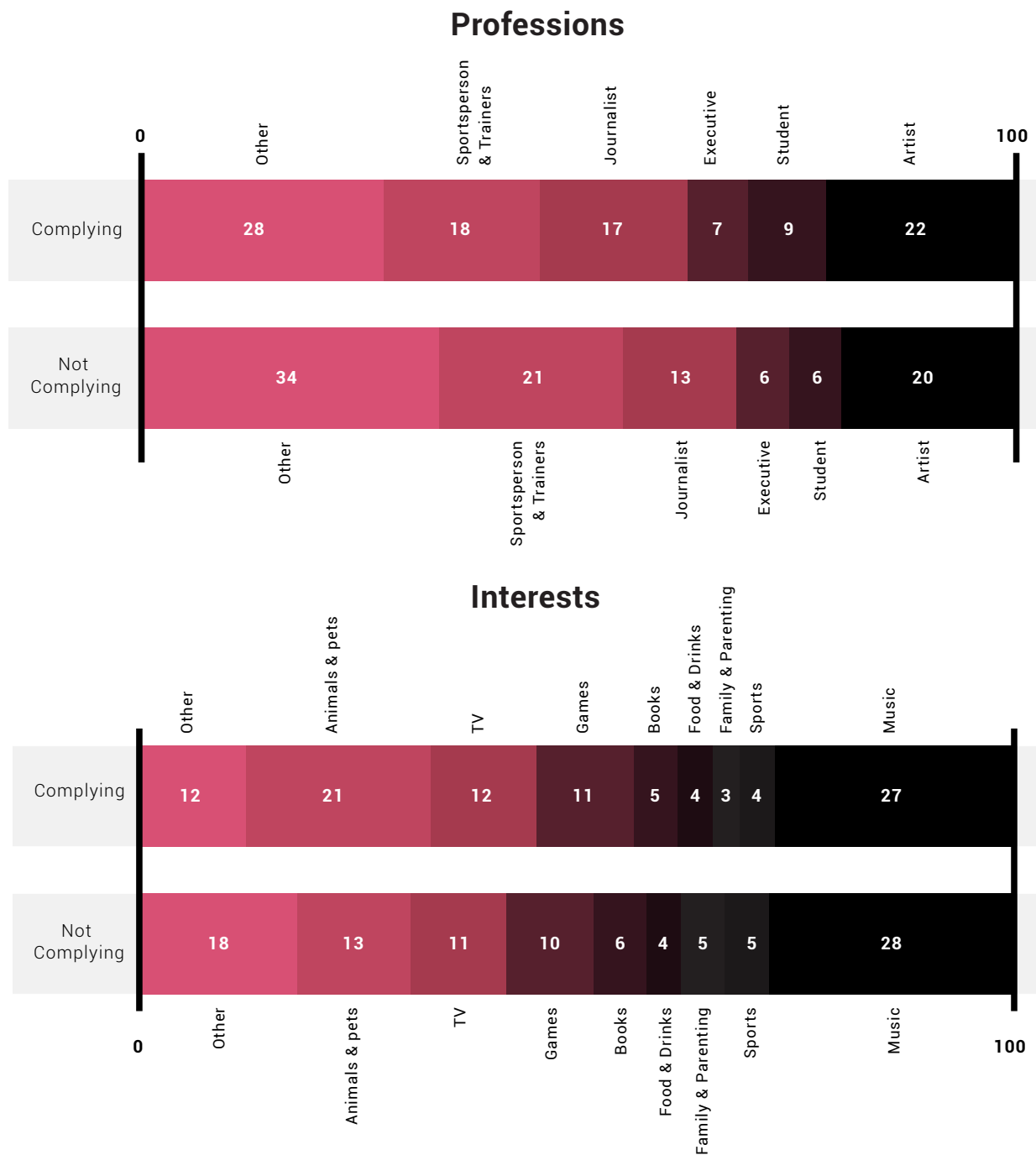


Fig. 3 + 4 Professions and interests in category 'other' listed in appendix.

When it comes to interests, authors not complying with masculinity constructs are more likely to be interested in music than those complying with these constructs. On the other hand, sports and parenting are bigger interest drivers within those posting content that fits into the constructed idea of masculinity. In summary, authors not complying with masculinity constructs are more likely to be artists or students and also more likely to be interested in music.



## 2.3 Reactions to Non-Conformity

The chart breaks down the tone of replies to mentions by male authors expressing non-conformity to the masculinity construct explored in section 2.2. The majority of responses either expressed indifference or varying degrees of support and humour, suggesting that authors not conforming to the constructed idea of masculinity were not typically the targets of online bullying.

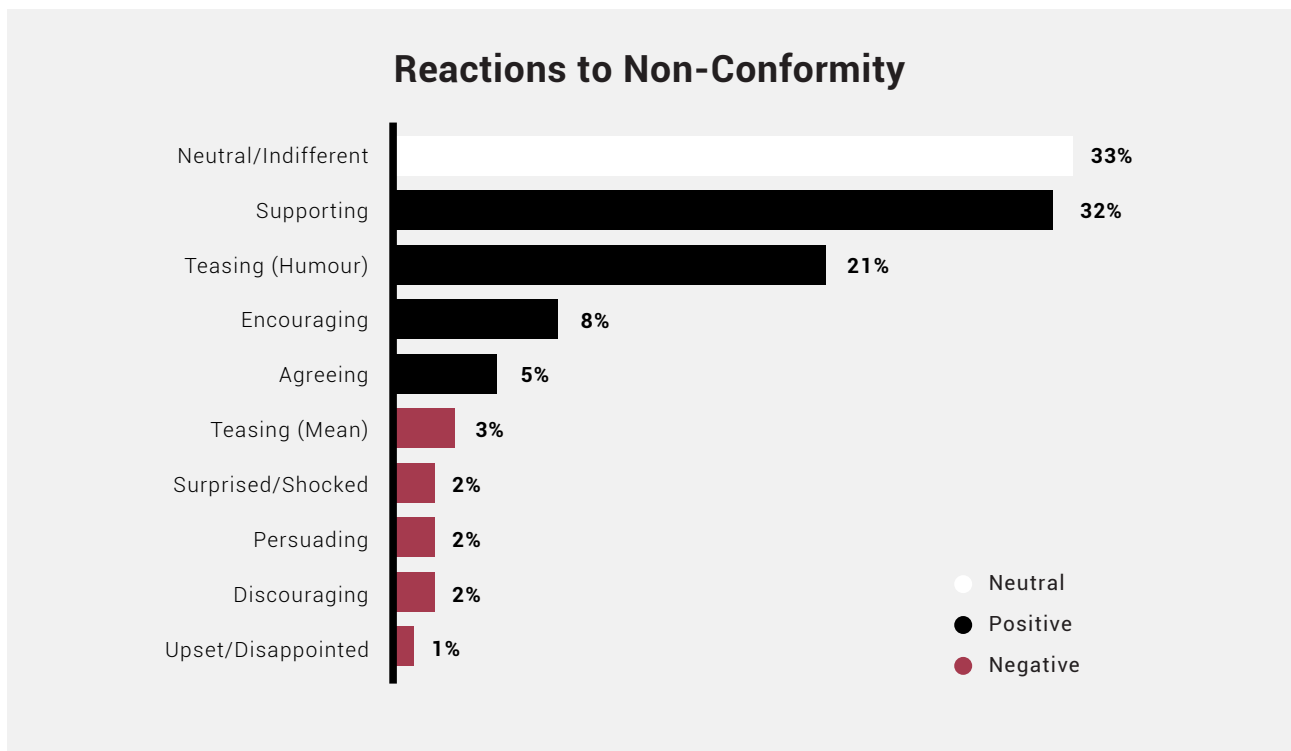


Fig 5. This chart shows the relative breakdown of online reactions to authors who explicitly deviate from the masculinity construct. Reactions have been colour-coded by sentiment.

Indifference was mostly expressed around authors stating they wanted to cry about relatively minor things, such as seeing spoilers or online services not working. While there was a trend of authors being teased when they posted such content, this teasing was six times more likely to be in jest than out of spite. Unpleasant comments stemmed from posts around a variety of topics; lack of facial hair and having long hair were two topics that attracted some unpleasant comments. However, lack of facial hair was more likely to attract humorous comments than unpleasant ones.

### NEUTRAL/INDIFFERENT

omg just seen game of thrones  
spoilers about my fave character  
dying and now I wanna cry

#### REPLIES

omg who?!?!

### TEASING (HUMOR)



All my friends getting home to  
California and eatin In-N-Out without  
me I wanna cry

#### REPLIES

I'll eat in with you homie

### ENCOURAGEMENT



My issue is that I'm not strong enough  
for the gym anymore so I'm going put  
off going hmmm

#### REPLIES

Try joining a boxing club, different  
type of fitness but builds a good core  
which will see you right

### TEASING (MEAN)



WHY CAN I NOT GROW FACIAL HAIR  
FUCK

#### REPLIES

most women don't grow facial hair  
bud

# 3.0

Key issues surrounding  
masculinity constructs

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# Key Issues Surrounding Masculinity Constructs

The word cloud below shows us key topics within the discussion of fragile masculinity. Retweets have been removed to give us a clearer view of the variety of themes emerging from this discussion.



There was also discussion around usage of the word 'gay'; authors mentioned how men avoid behaviours that are traditionally seen as feminine to not seem 'gay' and also directly call such behaviours gay. Inversely, fragile masculinity is also increasingly seen as a problem within gay communities.

## Masculinity and Misogyny in the Digital Age



"Hey imagine having such fragile masculinity that whenever your male friend tried to be caring you have to remind them that you're not gay.."



"honestly when ppl are homophobic I'm like...STILL?? shouldn't u have gotten over ur fragile masculinity problems after 8th grade???"



23 things that prove just how tragically fragile masculinity is **#MasculinitySoFragile**  
<http://bzfd.it/1JpEGa5>



### 3.2 Violence

The word cloud shows key topics within the discussion of toxic masculinity. Retweets have been removed to give a clearer view of the variety of themes emerging from this discussion.

Orlando was a key topic around toxic masculinity due to the mass shooting at a gay nightclub in the city. News around a Dartmouth study attributing the attack in Orlando to toxic masculinity was shared and gained some agreement, though others angrily contested that a 'Muslim terror attack' was being blamed on toxic masculinity. The Orlando attacks drove 4% of all toxic masculinity conversation.



Violence was seen as a product of toxic masculinity, and was mentioned in approximately 7% of this discussion. Discussion was around gun violence, domestic violence, sexual violence as well as broader mentions of violence.

Rape specifically was also discussed. Similar to the other topics, rape and rape culture were discussed concurrently with toxic masculinity in many cases, but was also seen to be fuelled by linked with toxic masculinity.

"To be clear, gun control laws are just one crucial part. We have to heal a toxic masculinity that makes this kind of violence so widespread"

"Wrong, **#Orlando** was the cause of toxic masculinity, not radical Islam. It's time to **#banallmen**..."



"Honour' killings are a perversion. There's nothing honourable about rape & murder in the name of an ugly, toxic masculinity. **#QandeelBaloch**"



"Toxic masculinity does not mean "men are toxic." It means that societal expectations of men (i.e. encouraging violence) are often toxic."

### 3.3 Gun Violence

Discussion was dominated by authors emphasising a connection between gun violence and masculinity. However, there were also authors contesting that gun violence and mass shootings were not a result of toxic/unhealthy masculinity. Authors frequently stated that 'toxic masculinity' needed to be addressed/discussed to combat the issue of mass shootings and gun violence, however there was little conversation around tactical steps.

#### AGREEMENT



"Too many rapid firing GUNS + TOXIC MASCULINITY + systematic HATE = SHOOTINGS both mass and by police. Guns make deadline anger easier. #Enough"

#### DISAGREEMENT



"muh gun culture!" "toxic masculinity!" what about islam? aka the reason the shooter himself said was why he did it? "RELIGION OF PEACE!"

#### AGREEMENT



"Over 95% of terrorist attacks/mass shootings is by men. Lets talk about masculinity instead of focusing solely on Isam, ISIS, and politics"

#### DISAGREEMENT



"Mass shooting is NOT "toxic and violent masculinity". Mass shooting is the top of COWARDICE."

The largest theme within the discussion was encouraging others to join conversation around how toxic masculinity may play a role in gun violence. Most articles followed this theme, either recommending the need for such discussion or delving deeper into the connection. Some articles briefly mentioned how the issue may be resolved, however the majority of content did not land on tangible solutions.



"We need to have a national discussion about masculinity."



"Society has got to start treating boys better if it wants to avoid more of this in the future"



"Intermale aggression must be turned into guardian instincts, if primate societies (such as ours) are to attain stability. Males must transform from little tyrants, competing for females, to selfless bodyguards and potential providers."



# 4.0

Forming the  
future of masculinity

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## 4.0

# Forming the Future of Masculinity

## 4.1 The Current Climate of Masculinity

The past six months have seen a rise in conversation about masculinity. Thus, the data shows the daily volumes for such conversation from February 1 through July 30 2016, offering a view of the key peaks in the discussion.

The largest peak in conversation occurred on April 21 and had 15,385 mentions. 82% of the day's mentions were discussing the musician Prince, who passed away the same day. Authors discussed how Prince's masculinity wasn't fragile, and how he was able to show the world how "diverse and complex" masculinity could be. This discussion insinuated that masculinity is usually seen as a static construct; Prince's fluid masculinity was more a defiance than the norm.

### Masculinity Volume Trend

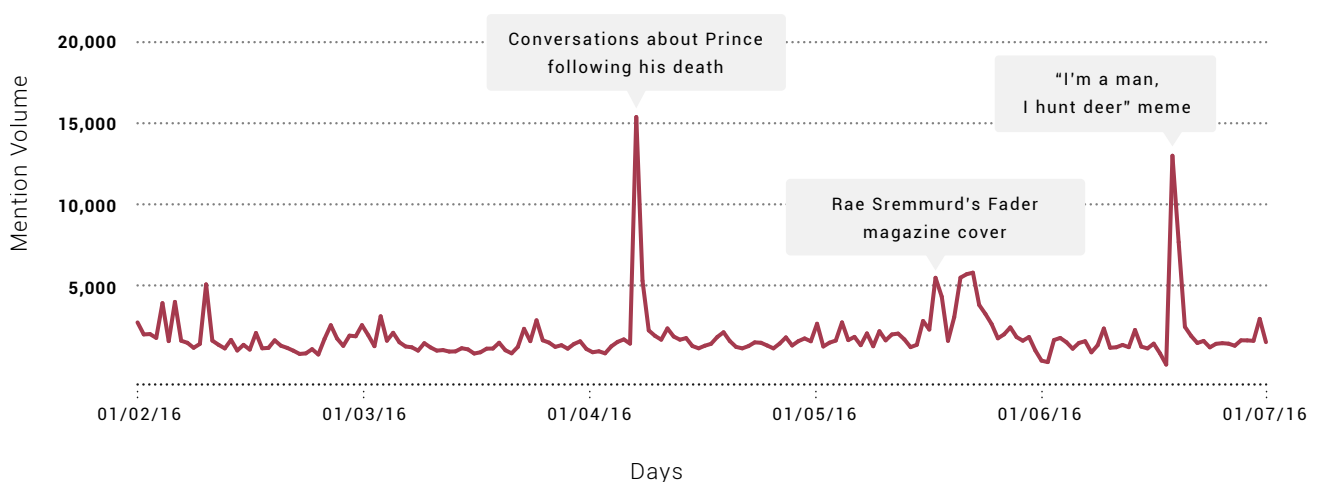


Fig. 6: This chart shows daily levels of conversation and debate about masculinity over the past six months.

Conversation around the fragility of masculinity continued throughout the six month period causing the second peak in conversation. On July 16, an author shared a meme that said, "I'm a man, I hunt deer" along with his own response, "Imagine having masculinity this fragile." The response was retweeted over 10,000 times.

Mentions of fragile masculinity also drove smaller peaks in mentions. For example on June 8th the term was used to call out criticism of the Fader Magazine cover which featured Rae Sremmurd, a hip hop brother duo, leaning on each other.

## 4.2 Humor Used to Challenge Masculinity

The table below shows the top stories within the discussion of masculinity. Fragility of masculinity was mentioned/insinuated in four of the five top stories, indicating that this issue attracts the most attention and is frequently seen as a key source of the negativity that stems from constructs of masculinity.

While the top story brought attention to a joke that portrayed a stereotypical definition of masculinity, the other two humour-related stories (a tweet directed at musician Kanye West and comedian Rich Chigga's tweet) aimed to make a joke out of those who have fragile masculinity.

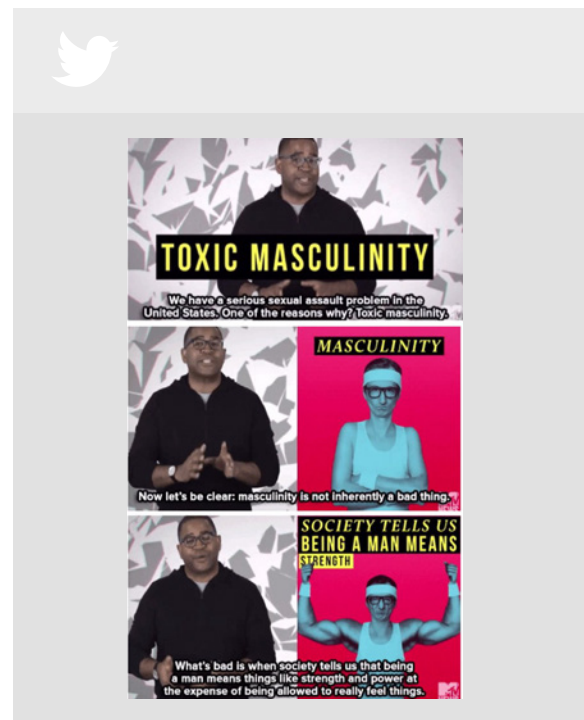
### Main Stories on Twitter

Story	Description	Tweets	Retweets	All Tweets
Fragile masculinity	An author pointed out how a joke resating hunting to masculinity portrayed how fragile masculinity can be	2	15528	15530
"Black Masculinity so fragile that two brother cant even lean on each other"	An article by Affinity Magazine on why hypermasculinity is toxic for black men	2	2896	2898
Comedian Rich Chigga's post	Indonesian comedian Rich Chigga, posted a photo with pink eyelashes to show that he is 'secure' in his masculinity	1	2693	2694
Post about connection between toxic masculinity and sexual assault	Author shared quotes around toxic masculinity with a tweet that said toxic masculinity fuels sexual assault	1	2286	2287
Comment on Kanye West's post	Author shared Kanye's post pointing out how fragile his masculinity is	1	1951	1952

Only one story around toxic masculinity made it to the top five list. This story talked about the connection between toxic masculinity and sexual assault, indicating that sexual assault is seen as a product of toxic masculinity. In the overall toxic masculinity discussion, rape and sexual violence drove 10% of the discussion.



"Imagine having masculinity this fragile."




"Toxic masculinity is one of the many factors that fuel sexual assault. It's time to talk about it."

## 4.3 Brands Redefine the Constructs

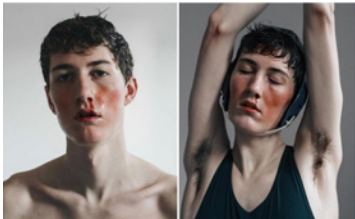
There was also evidence in the data of authors challenging and redefining masculinity constructs.

These were commonly shared via individual artistic expression and brand movements away from gender norms (see Axe and Anastasia, below). Authors also shared journalist content pointing to aspects of traditional masculinity and 'hypermasculinity' as damaging to health. Hypermasculinity was also identified by some as 'toxic for black men' specifically.


anastasia beverly hills is proving men can still be manly even if they wear makeup



Meet the photographer subverting traditional roles of masculinity <http://ebx.sh/29zbaW0>




Should we rethink 'men in skirts'?




.@Globelideas: We need to talk about the toxic stereotypes of both femininity and masculinity <http://bos.gl/0213d0F>

ICYMI: @katehollowood speaks to @72andsunny about how Axe is redefining masculinity




shoutout to Ronaldo for defying hyper masculine societal norms and crying very hard in public every chance he gets

Related: [messi laughing at ronaldo](#)




Unmasking masculinity - helping boys become connected men @RyanMcKelley <https://youtu.be/LBdnjqEoiXA> @richardbranson

Great Leaders Balance Masculine Traits With Feminine Wisdom - <http://hubs.ly/H03CDFY0> by @HuffPostCaLiv



The conversation about modern masculinity is worth having—even urgent <http://econ.st/29nBAKM> ...



The need for healthier masculine stereotypes has gained ground among media sources. One 2016 article in The Economist named the search for healthier masculinities 'urgent' and even some brands traditionally associated with masculinity are making efforts to redefine. However, authors were also eager to highlight that masculinity is not inherently violent or toxic, often used in conjunction with the controversial hashtag **#NotAllMen**.

# 5.0

## Misogyny



# 5.0

## Misogyny

### 5.1 The Climate of Misogyny

Neutral misogynistic discussion was around two times more visible than misogynistic insults. Seen across time, negative conversation followed a steady trend across the four years while neutral discussion of the topic grew considerably, surpassing average weekly volumes in negative conversation in September 2014.

Neutral conversation spiked around August 3rd 2015, during the run-up to the US election, due to the GOP Debate and Donald Trump controversy, with 'Megan Kelly' and 'sexist comments' emerging as sub-topics. The politician's elevated 'sexist attacks' towards the Fox TV news moderator were noted by Mashable, demonstrating broader interest in political standpoints with regards to discrimination.

#### Mention Volumes Over Time

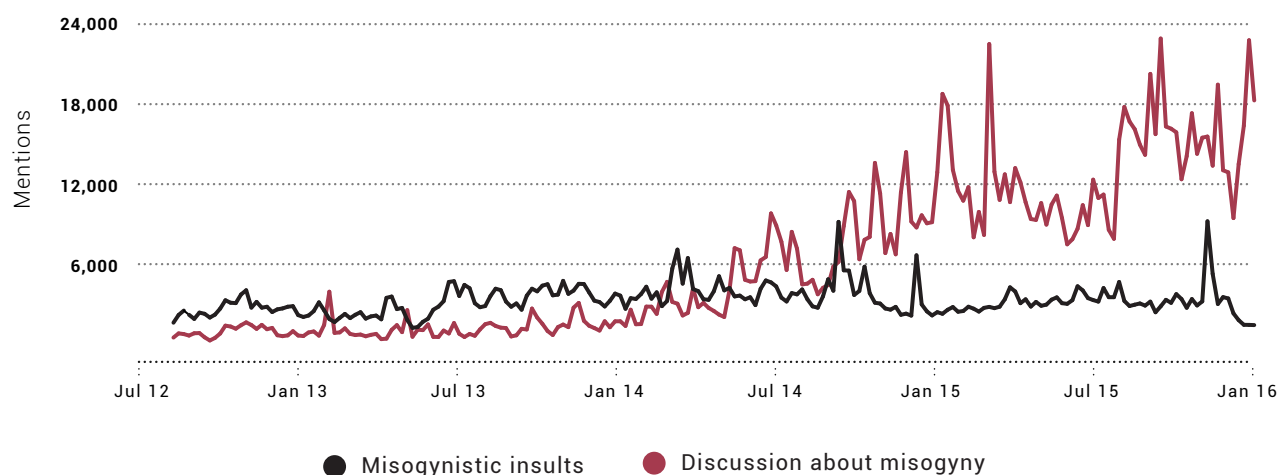


Fig 7. This chart shows volumes of online misogynistic insults and of discussion about misogyny over time. The trends lines here reflect 25% samples of total conversation.

The issue also raised awareness of other issues beyond misogyny, with influential authors noting conflicting Republican opinion towards Trump's comments on Obama and Mexicans. This highlights the extent to which highly visible issues bring to the fore other concerns around discrimination, suggesting a sense of community and alignment among active individuals seeking to raise awareness following high-profile cases.

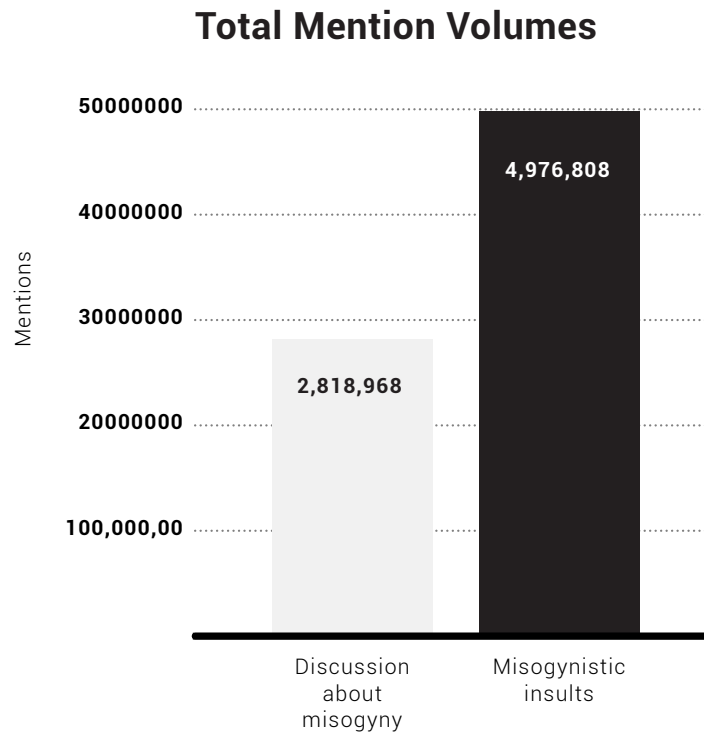


Fig 8. Due to large volumes a 25% representative sample was taken for both Queries. The trend chart shows 25% sample volumes while the bar chart shows actual volumes per query. The trend chart has further been normalised around w/c May 23rd, 2016 to account for coverage driven shifts in volume.



## 5.2 Who is the Most Likely to be Misogynistic?

Females were slightly more engaged than males across both constructive and pejorative conversation (53:47 and 52:48 respectively). This broke the trend seen across other constructs, wherein male authors were more highly engaged in insulting discussion.

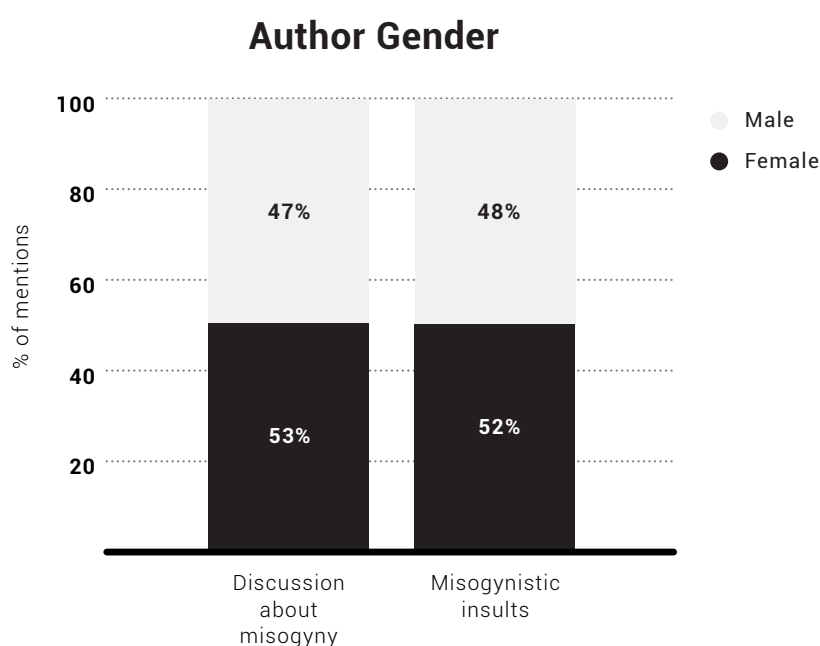


Fig 9. This chart shows the breakdown of misogynistic insults and discussion about misogyny by male and female authors on Twitter.

This might suggest that misogynistic language has transcended into the vocabulary of both men and women within their social engagements. The finding may seem to reflect a more ingrained, and at times implicit, discrimination present regardless of gender.

It may also reflect a normalising of misogynistic language and that authors (including female authors) no longer consciously consider the terms offensive. Such a finding is supported by the casual and common usage of insults such as 'lil bitch' by female authors, with self-reference also common. However, a common theme of derision, references to promiscuity and the body, as well as lack of male/'masculine' equivalent terms supports a view of the language as nevertheless misogynistic.

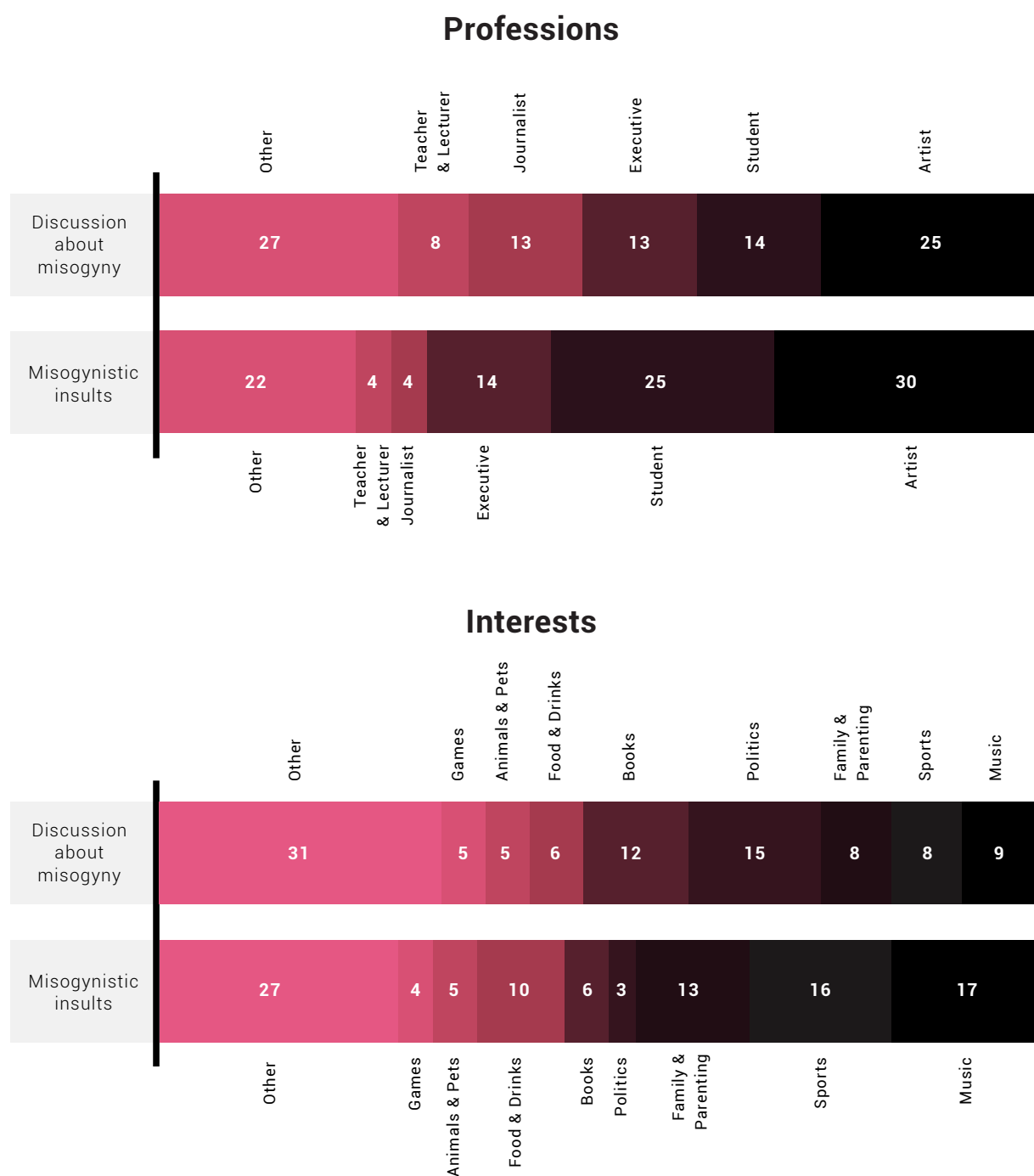


Fig 10 Professions and interests in category 'other' listed in appendix.

Authors engaging in insulting discussion were twice as likely to be students compared with authors driving neutral conversation (25% and 14% respectively), and also twice as likely to be interested in sports and music (16% and 17% respectively compared with 8% and 9%).

## 5.3 Women as Perpetrators of Misogyny

The following charts break down misogynistic language into Categories: 'animal' (e.g.: bitch, cow, mare), attributes ('appearance' and 'intelligence') and sexual aspects ('anatomy', 'orientation' and 'promiscuity'). Many of these terms have expanded beyond their original meanings, but etymologies can provide a useful framework for understanding implicit attitudes. Overall, animal-derived terms and those relating to sexual promiscuity were the most common (84% combined).

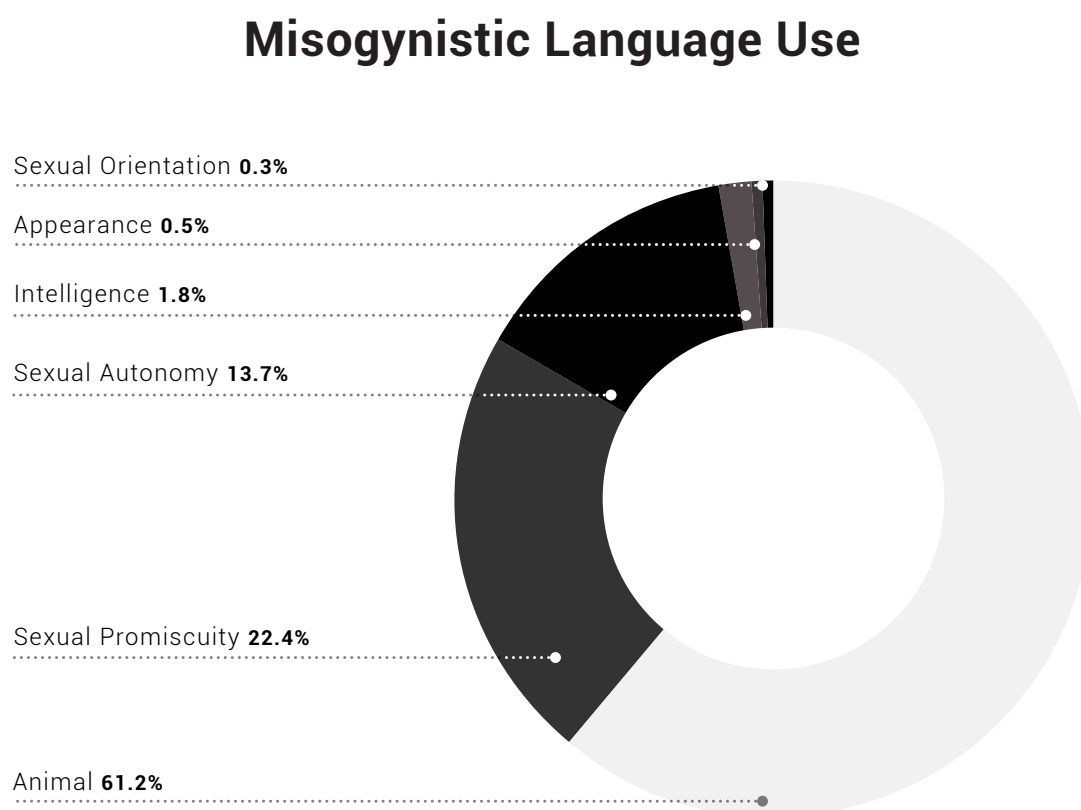


Fig 11 Due to large volumes a 25% representative sample was taken for the misogynistic language query. See appendices 2 and 3 for further granularity.

Misogyny was the only area in the study for which females were more likely than males to use pejorative language. Females were most likely to use language relating to animals, promiscuity and appearance. Male authors, by contrast, contributed the majority of language relating to orientation, intelligence and anatomy. Insults relating to female anatomy were also significantly more likely to come from the UK.

## Misogynistic Language Use by Author Gender and Location

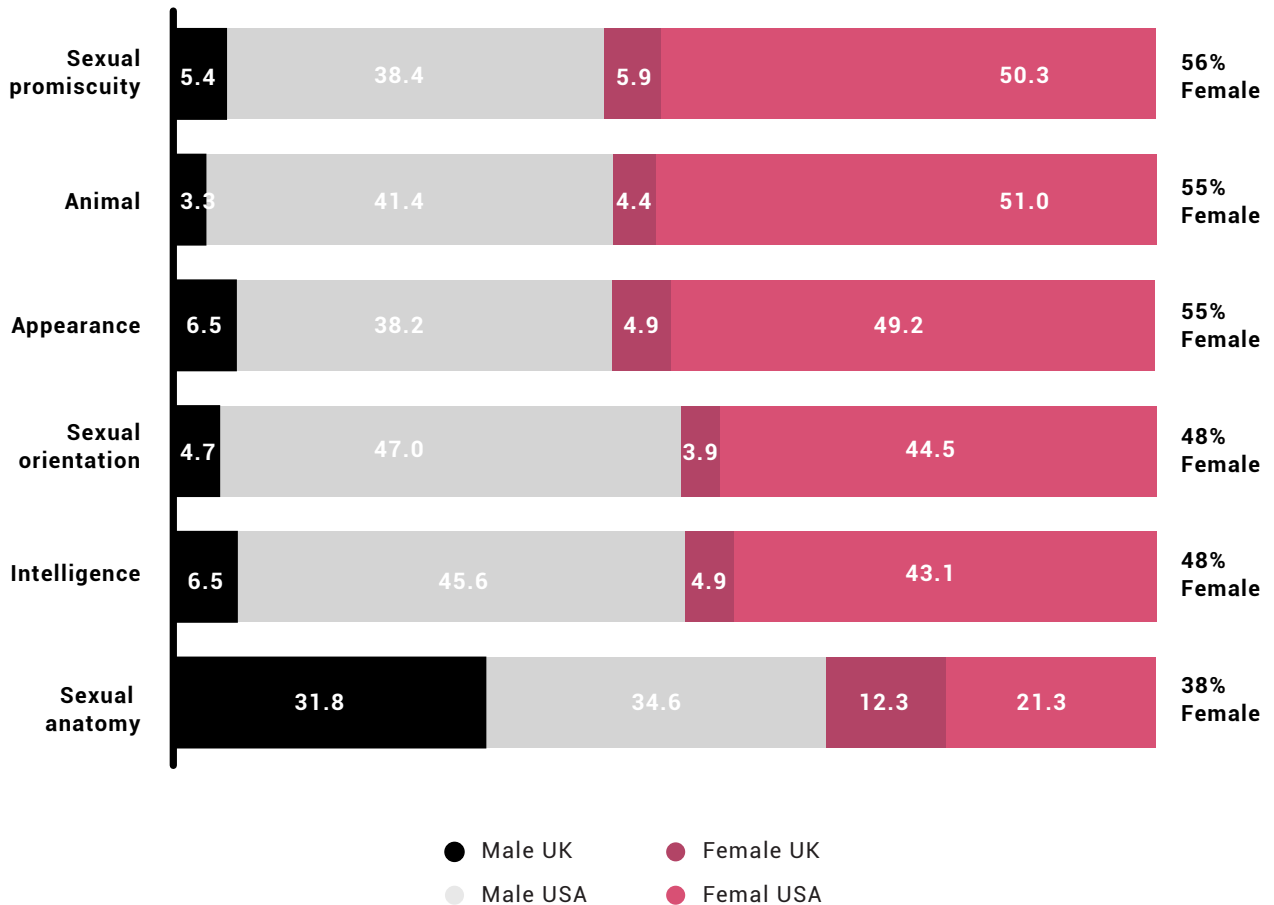


Fig 12: This chart shows the breakdown of each category of misogynistic language both by author gender (here, male and female) and by location (US and UK).




The data suggests that misogynistic language, including derogatory terms surrounding promiscuity and appearance, are used in mostly female-to-female exchanges and that efforts to challenge these norms should target both male and female authors.

## 5.4 Misogynistic Example Mentions

The examples here show a range of misogynistic language use, segmented by literal use (featuring standard term definitions), generic negativity (in which terms have broader negative connotations) and appropriated use, suggesting terms that have become normalised among some female authors.

Examples of conscious appropriation were relatively rare in the data, with the majority of authors using misogynistic terms either to intentionally offend individuals or make generalisations based on gender.

Another subset of authors appeared to not intend offence but did reinforce negative connotations for the terms, using them either to personify ("divorce is a bitch") or in self-deprecation ("I need to stop being such an emotional bitch").

LITERAL USE 	GENERIC NEGATIVITY 	APPROPRIATION 
"Not everyone wants to be a hoe like you and sleep around"	"Don't be such a lil bitch about it"	"He is just a misogynistic, narcissistic, whiney little bitch. How idiotic!"
"If I have a daughter I hope she's not a whore."	"Two rules for working here. 1. Don't be a cunt 2. if you're being a cunt... stop it"	"If a girl wants to sleep around I mean let her do her thing, be a slut do whatever you want!"
"You better not b pregnant lil slut..."	"I don't even know you, fucking bitch."	"All girls are bitches. We need to be, [...] so be a bitch and don't apologize for it."
"When sluts moan on Valentine's that annoys me, ask yourself why nobody loves you, hoe."	"Bud light is piss water for little hoes."	

# Conclusion

It is no secret that the constructs of masculinity are causing issues within modern society. Suicide continues to be the biggest killer of young men, and our research shows that males are more likely to bully and less likely to report bullying when they have been subjected to it. It is therefore evident that in its current format, masculinity is causing a lot of problems. This research highlights the pressures that men are under to conform to an ideal set of standards surrounding their appearance, personality, preferences and behaviours.

In order to reduce the rates of bullying and to increase reporting from males, it is therefore crucial that we challenge and redefine the constructs of masculinity. We are not all the same and any pressures to encourage conformity should be challenged.

The constructs of gender continues to create issues, not only for men but for women too. Women still do not have equal representation within traditionally male-dominated industries; such as within politics, corporations and sports. Women who are notable within such industries, are often reported to be subjected to misogynistic language online - often reducing them to sexual objects. This research shows that women are, contrary to popular belief, slightly more likely to use misogynistic language than men. We must not only challenge how men view and treat women, but also how women view and treat one another.

This research presents a unique observation to the digital constructs of masculinity and rates of misogynistic language used online. It warrants further research, but provides a comprehensive framework which will help organisations like ours to better support young people and to campaign for a world that is fair, equal and free from all types of bullying.

As an independent charity with no public funding, we are reliant upon the support of likeminded individuals and organisations. For ways to get involved, please visit **[www.DitchtheLabel.org/get-involved/](http://www.DitchtheLabel.org/get-involved/)**

# Appendices

## Trend Analysis/ Masculinity

Insults around masculinity were consistently more visible than neutral conversation. The most prominent talking point across the four years was a tweet telling men not to “be a pussy” in respect to their alcohol tolerance, suggesting that heavy drinking was considered by some a common attribute of masculinity.

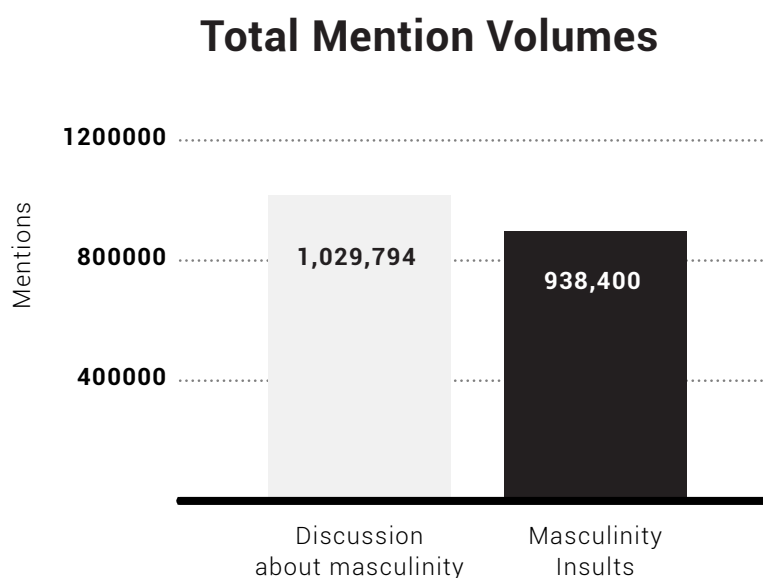


Fig 13. This chart shows the overall volume of masculinity-related insults during the time frame, compared with the overall volume of discussion about masculinity.

Within neutral conversation, a peak emerged around concerns about the masculine style in which celebrity daughters Blue Ivy and North were dressed. The data indicates that online audiences expected celebrities - viewed as role models - to adhere to societal gender norms. Commentators suggested that behaviour that strays from these norms may be damaging to one's “self-esteem”.

## Mention Volumes Over Time

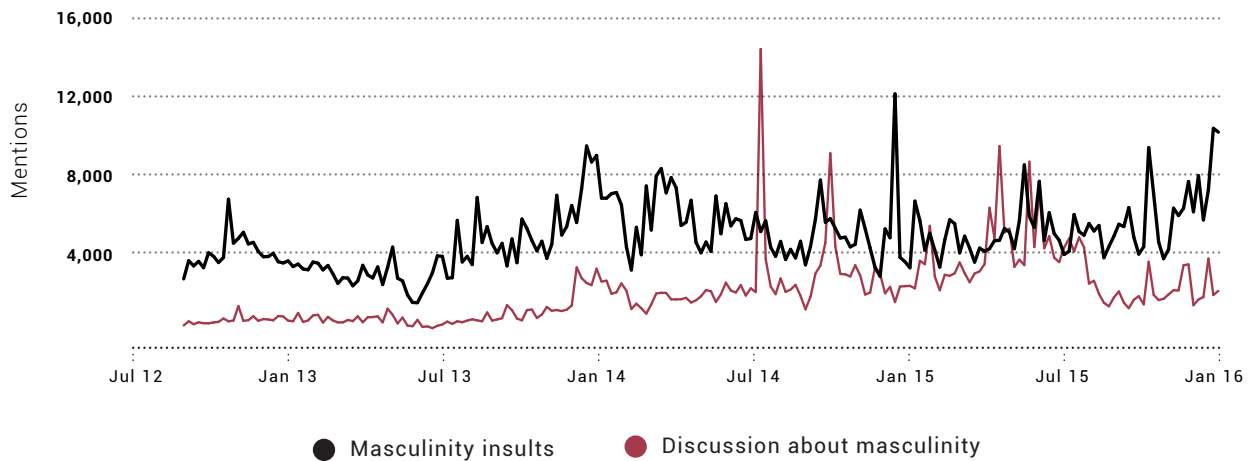


Fig 14 The chart above has been normalised as of w/c January 25th, 2016 to account for coverage driven shifts in volume.

#MasculinitySoFragile drove a peak in neutral discussion as authors debated what it meant to be masculine with the aim of "deconstruct[ing] what we've been told about masculinity and see the flaws". The key talking point was a tweet pointing out the irony of male authors allegedly feeling under attack by the debate given that they were reacting with violent threats to women on Twitter.

International Men's Day drove a peak in both neutral and negative discussion. The overlap was driven by a tweet combining both neutral and negative language in raising awareness around harmful flaws of current masculinity constructs. There was evidence of males as young as nine years old being aware of and feeling restrained by masculinity constructs.



## Demographic analysis/ Masculinity

Females were slightly more engaged in neutral discussion of masculinity constructs while male authors were more likely to use pejorative language relating to masculinity. Topic analysis revealed minor nuances between male and female conversation topics, with a majority of topics emerging equally prominently across both genders but with females relatively more likely to urge males to 'grow a pair'. This highlights the ingrained nature of masculinity constructs, also apparent within female approaches to social, as the concept of 'being a man' and dealing with situations in a 'masculine' form is being condoned regardless of author gender.

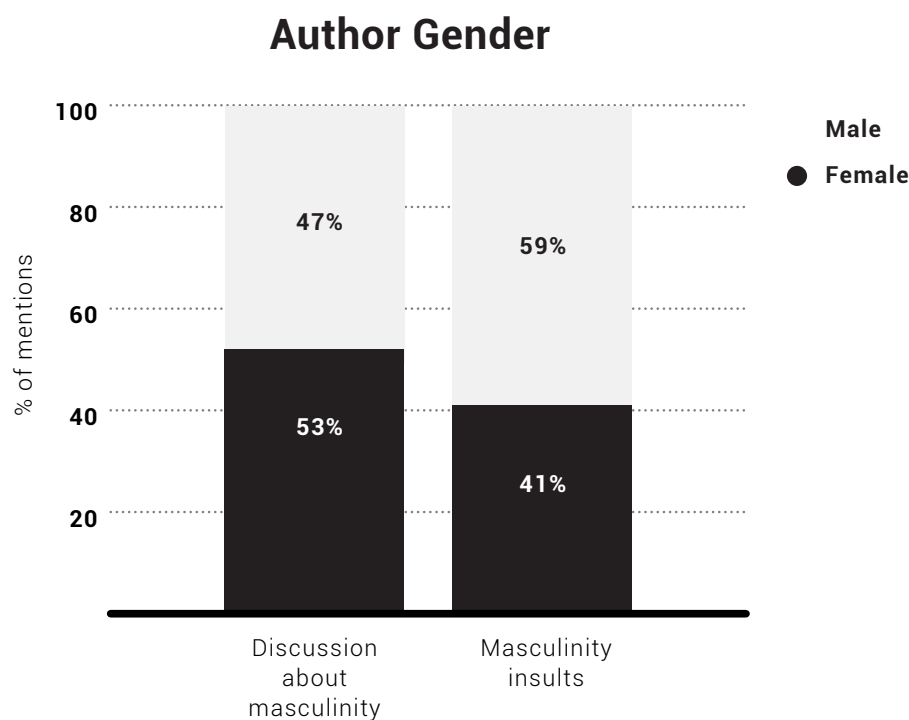


Fig 15. This chart breaks down masculinity-related insults and discussion around masculinity by author gender on Twitter.

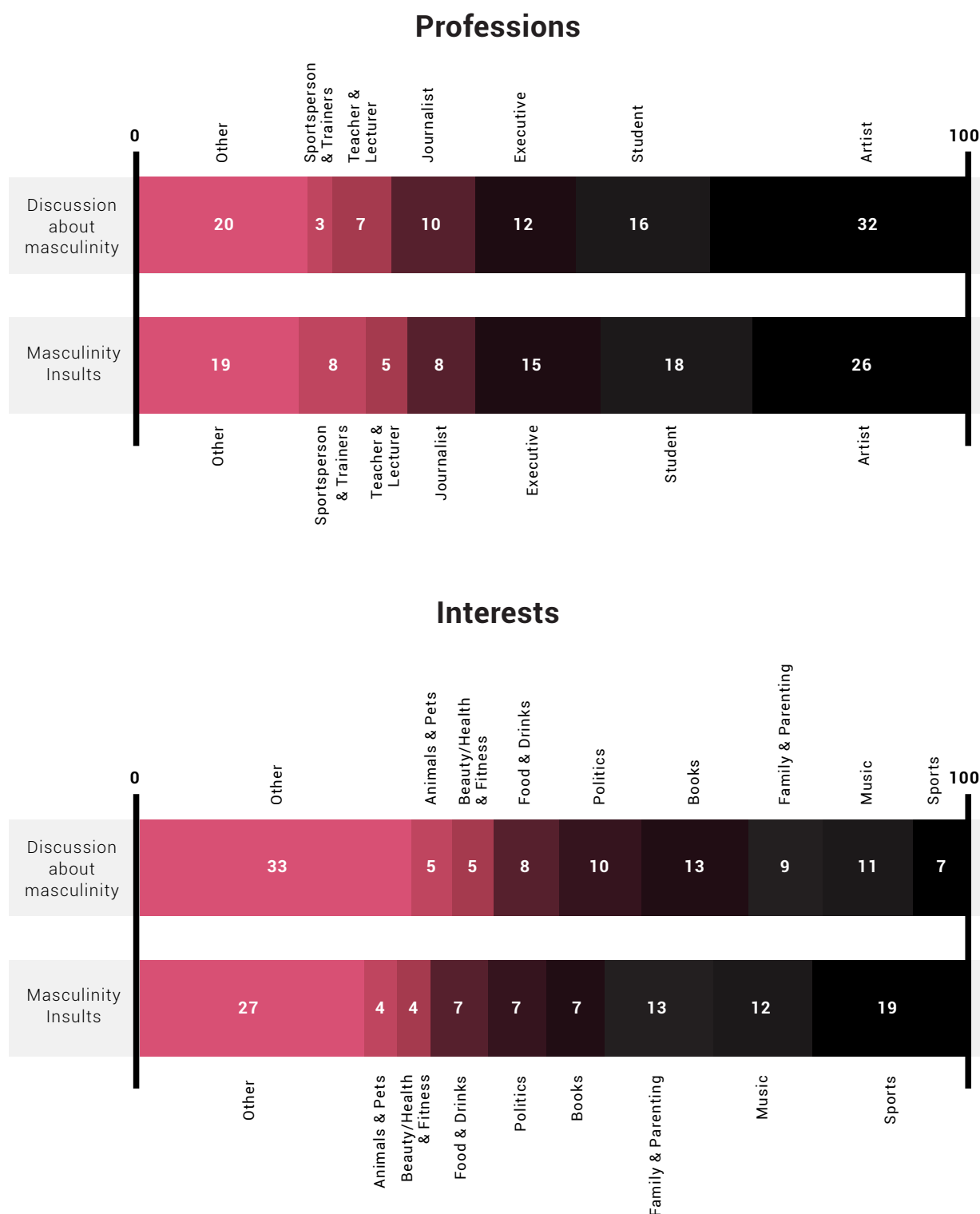


Fig 16 Professions and interests in category 'other' listed in appendix.

The distribution of author interests and professions were largely similar across general and negative conversation. A significant difference emerged in terms of the interest 'sport' which was over twice as likely to occur within authors using negative than neutral language, suggesting close affiliation of masculine insults with sports. This is further supported by sportspersons and trainers being almost three times as likely to use masculine insults than to discuss masculinity in neutral contexts.

## Correlation Overview (US)

The grid displays correlations between the five discrimination topics, as well as outside topics: Average Annual Income\*, those who self-identify as Republicans, no political affiliation, or Democrat\*\*, and wealth distribution (Gini Coefficient)\*\*\*. Correlations are based on a scale of -1 to 1, with zero representing no correlation, -1 representing a perfect negative and 1 representing a perfect positive correlation.

Correlation Overview (US)										
	RACISM	TRANSPHOBIA	HOMOPHOBIA	MASCULINITY	MISOGYNY	AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME	REPUBLICAN	NO POLITICAL AFFILIATION	DEMOCRAT	WEALTH DISTRIBUTION
RACISM		0.427	0.241	0.241	0.741	-0.219	0.150	-0.060	-0.120	0.116
TRANSPHOBIA	0.427		0.173	0.581	0.505	-0.379	0.622	0.276	-0.541	-0.038
HOMOPHOBIA	0.241	0.173		0.431	0.528	0.241	0.094	-0.154	-0.305	-0.066
MASCULINITY	0.241	0.581	0.431		0.560	-0.420	0.605	-0.018	0.340	-0.315
MISOGYNY	0.741	0.505	0.528	0.560		-0.290	0.311	0.328	-0.929	-0.171

Methodology: Ratios for the five topics were found by dividing the insulters within the category by those who found the category to be intolerant. These ratios were then correlated against each other, as well as outside topics.

The strongest negative correlation was found for Misogyny and self-identified Democrats (-0.929), meaning that states with lower levels of misogyny tend to be stronger bases of Democratic support. The same was true to a lesser extent for transphobia (-0.541), suggesting that Democrat-strong regions are less likely to tolerate misogyny or transphobia in online discussion.

Racism and Misogyny saw the strongest uphill correlation (0.741) meaning states with high levels of misogynistic language are also likely to exhibit less racial tolerance in the data. Homophobia and Transphobia had the weakest positive correlation (0.173), despite often sharing advocates within LGBT communities. This could potentially be a springboard to further investigate the relationship between these terms through the lense of social discussion.

\* Data is based off of the 2012 US Census results, released in 2013

\*\* Data is based off of the 2014 Pew Research study

\*\*\*Data is based off of the 2013 wealth coefficient research by Frank Gini

## Correlation Overview (UK)

The grid displays correlations between the five measured topics (Racism, Transphobia, Homophobia, Masculinity, and Misogyny), as well as outside topics: voted "yes" to leave the European Union, voted for the Conservative party in 2015, voted for UKIP in 2015, the share of voters who turned out for 2015 election, and long term unemployment in the UK. Correlations are based on a scale of -1 to 1, with zero representing no correlation, -1 representing a perfect downhill correlation and 1 representing a perfect uphill correlation.

Correlation Overview (UK)										
	RACISM	TRANSPHOBIA	HOMOPHOBIA	MASCULINITY	MISOGYNY	VOTED YES TO LEAVE EU	CON 2015	UKIP	TURNOUT 2015	LONG TERM UNEMPLOYMENT
RACISM		-0.295	0.478	0.279	0.632	0.0139	-0.0658	-0.047	0.086	0.145
TRANSPHOBIA	-0.295		-0.315	-0.443	-0.334	0.334	-0.0813	0.095	-0.197	0.152
HOMOPHOBIA	0.478	-0.315		0.157	0.752	0.138	-0.0691	0.200	-0.142	0.163
MASCULINITY	0.279	-0.443	0.157		0.376	-0.077	-0.251	-0.054	0.128	0.101
MISOGYNY	0.632	-0.334	0.752	0.376		0.114	-0.111	0.273	-0.307	0.405

Homophobia to Misogyny saw the strongest positive correlation (0.752) among the topics, whereas Masculinity to Homophobia saw the weakest uphill correlation (0.157). Homophobia only had one downhill correlation, which did not feature as particularly strong, with Transphobia (-0.315), indicating the topic's tendency to be mentioned in conjunction with the other categories.

Interestingly, "Voting 'Yes' to leaving the EU" at county level was not a reliable predictor of hate speech, including racial intolerance. This follows mainstream news reports of increases in hate crime following the referendum<sup>2</sup>, and suggests that varying attitudes within each county make for a more nuanced picture of attitudes to race and nationality across the UK.

\*Variable census data collected from the 2015 General Election Results, British Election Study, 2015 (sourced 29/08/2016).

2. Lusher, A. 2016. "Racism Unleashed", Independent, 07/28/2016.

## Deep Dive into Masculine Behaviour

The data shows a breakout of behaviour-related conversation around masculinity. As mentioned previously, violence and stoicism are the two top behaviours associated with masculinity. 30% of violence-related conversation was driven by humorous tweets. Many authors joked about having to “punch” something to feel manly after participating in activities not deemed masculine, implying that aggressive/violent behaviour was seen as a key characteristic of manhood.

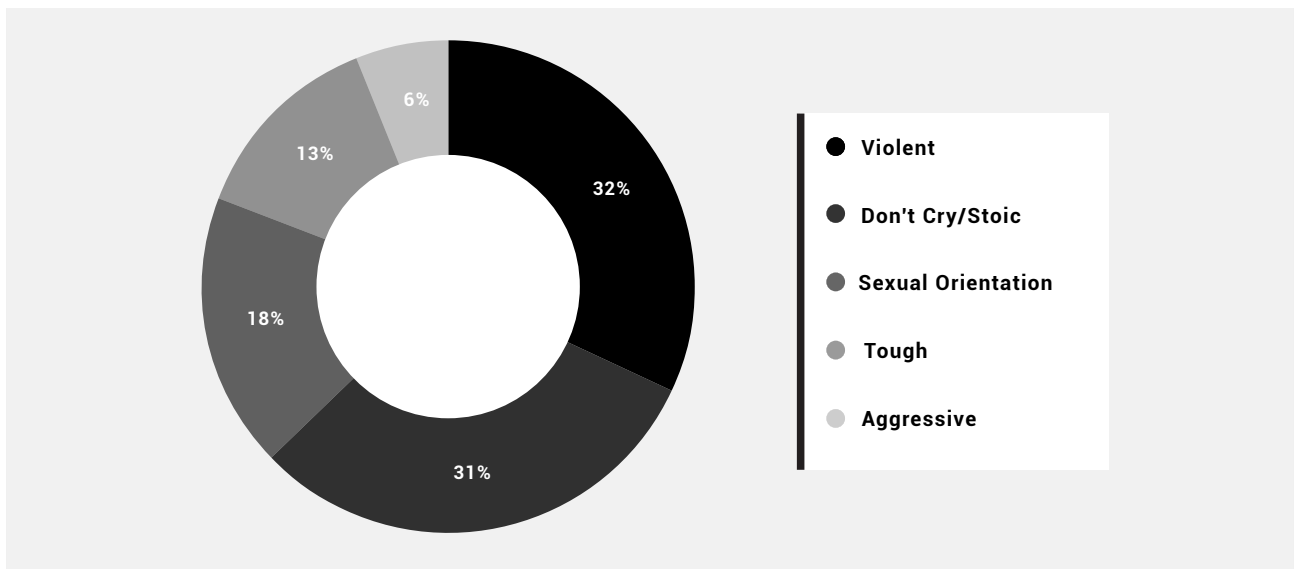




Fig 17 This pie chart shows a percentage breakdown of common themes categorised within perceived masculine behaviours.


Example mentions give an overview of the conversation around violence and crying in the context of masculinity. Within the conversation around violence there was a strong theme of authors pointing out how violence had to be disassociated from masculinity. However, crying-related conversation was more likely to be a mix of authors reiterating the belief that ‘men’ don’t cry, and others trying to break down that stereotype.




“But recognizing violence as predominantly a masculine ego gratification problem is important! And shouldn't be sidelined for “not all men””



“It is essential that we work to decouple violence and domination from concepts of masculinity”



“Say no to hyper masculinity men you are entitled to cry. Don't allow society to dedicate how you deal with emotions”



“@twitterhandle That's emasculating, not 'strong'. Crying literally lowers testosterone, and control over ones emotions is a masculine trait.”

## Deep Dive into Masculine Appearance

The data shows a break out of masculinity conversation related to physical appearance. Facial hair was mentioned in nearly half of this conversation. 'Beard' was specifically mentioned in 65% of this conversation as compared to moustache that was mentioned in 10% , indicating that beards have stronger connotations.

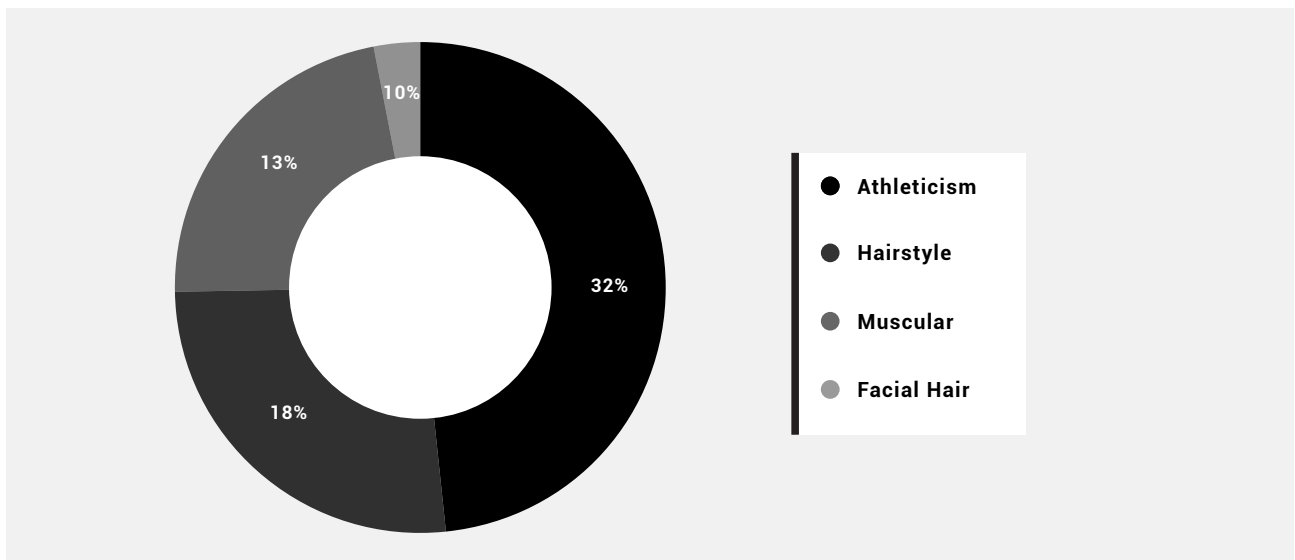




Fig 18: this pie chart shows a percentage breakdown of common themes relating to perceived masculine appearance.

The example mentions give an overview of the conversation around top masculine features, facial hair, and muscular physique. Having facial hair was associated with looking 'like a man'. Authors saw inability to grow facial hair as a non-masculine attribute.


Within the muscular physique conversation, authors were frequently (nearly 40% of total muscular discussion) seen as commenting on muscular women and calling them 'manly', indicating an association between muscular physique and masculinity. Additionally, authors also commented on how being muscular fell into the stereotypical definition of masculinity.




"Can we just talk about how **twitteruser** is starting to look like a man now that he's growing facial hair? **@twitterhandle** STOP YOU'RE 5"



"Easy steps to growing a beard: Step 1) be a real man. Sept 2) the end. **<http://buff.li/2aygDk8>**"



"Lotta guys have body image issues...the "real man" is supposedly 6'4 muscular, can fix cars, loves sports, and has a deep voice..."



"Oh my poor eyes.. Just saw a man with the thinnest legs ever.. Wearing shorts. Please don't.. Manly legs should be big and muscular !!"

## Common Misogynistic Terminology

Common misogynistic terminology				
Common Terms	Volume	% Total	%Female	%Male
<b>Cunt</b>	50,184	6.7	31.9	<b>68.1</b>
<b>Slut</b>	49,667	6.7	<b>59.2</b>	40.8
<b>Hoe</b>	49,648	6.7	<b>53.3</b>	46.7
<b>Bitch</b>	48,297	6.5	<b>56.6</b>	43.4
<b>Whore</b>	42,874	5.8	<b>58.2</b>	41.8
<b>Slag</b>	8,917	1.2	48.7	<b>51.3</b>
<b>Stupid</b>	8,695	1.2	46.1	<b>53.9</b>
<b>Dumb</b>	3,870	0.5	<b>51.2</b>	48.8
<b>Ugly</b>	3,446	0.5	<b>56.7</b>	43.3
<b>Dyke</b>	2,084	0.3	47.4	<b>52.6</b>
<b>Bimbo</b>	1,205	0.2	<b>54.6</b>	45.4

Select common terms featuring within misogynistic language are listed above (please note that this is not a definitive list)  
 Volumes are those collected from a 25% sample Query.

# About Brandwatch

Brandwatch is the world's leading social intelligence company. Brandwatch Analytics and Vizia products fuel smarter decision making around the world.

The Brandwatch Analytics platform gathers millions of online conversations every day and provides users with the tools to analyze them, empowering the world's most admired brands and agencies to make insightful, data-driven business decisions. Vizia distributes visually-engaging insights to the physical places where the action happens.

The Brandwatch platform is used by over 1,200 brands and agencies, including Unilever, Cisco, Whirlpool, British Airways, Heineken, Walmart and Dell. Brandwatch continues on its impressive business trajectory, recently named a global leader in enterprise social listening platforms by the latest reports from several independent research firms. Increasing its worldwide presence, the company has offices around the world including Brighton, New York, San Francisco, Berlin, Paris and Singapore.

**Brandwatch. Now You Know.**

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# About Ditch the Label

We are one of the largest and most ambitious anti-bullying charities in the world. We are defiant, innovative and most importantly, proud to be different. Our mission is to reduce the effect and prominence of bullying internationally.

**No more disempowerment. No more prejudice. No more bullying.**

Each week, we provide award-winning support to thousands of young people aged 12-25, primarily through our website and digital partnerships. We also work with schools, colleges, parents/guardians, young people and other youth organisations. Innovation is at the core of all that we do and we believe that we can, and will beat bullying.

We commission and utilise research reports, like this one, to better understand the changing nature and climate of bullying and discrimination. This continuous learning process feeds directly into the improvement and evolution of our support programs which helps not only those who are being bullied, but those who are doing the bullying too.

Find out more at **[www.DitchtheLabel.org](http://www.DitchtheLabel.org)**

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