

“Sexiest When I’m Confident”?: Postfeminist Empowerment in the Music of Little Mix and Cardi B.

Scarlett N. Lee (U1655378)

University of Huddersfield

BA (Hons) Media and Popular Culture

Dr. Rebecca Saunders

April 26, 2021

Abstract

This article investigates the complexity in audience reaction to the hypersexuality of contemporary female music artists. Seeking to understand how the response of young female consumers of the music created by these celebrities differs from that of patriarchal society. Considering in particular *Strip* by Little Mix and *WAP* by Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, this analysis and research investigates how subversive and challenging representations of female sexuality are important for a renewed focus on feminism and empowerment in a modern context.

By combining research methods with a close understanding of feminist and postfeminist theory this article forms detailed conclusions of how young female consumers are affected by representations of hypersexuality in popular culture. The argument that develops throughout looks to show that challenging acceptable presentations of sexuality is important for women's understanding of their own sexuality. The research also identifies the need for more representation in celebrity feminism so that all young female consumers feel empowered without the need for them to adhere to societal beauty standards.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Rebecca Saunders for her advice and guidance over the past academic year. Without her knowledge and expertise this project would not have been possible.

Throughout the writing of this project, I have received support from my workplace AmeriCamp. By offering me flexibility in my working hours and allowing me to work from home, they have enabled me to keep up with the amount of academic work required. In particular, thanks go to Lauren O'Donnell, my wonderful manager who has been consistently invested in making sure that I reach my potential with my studies.

I would like to thank my mum (Jo), and my dad (Jonny) for having me at home over the pandemic, making sure that I ate more than just peanut butter, and constantly pushing me to challenge myself. I would like to thank my sisters (Rachel and Taryn) for their consistent interest in my work, and my brothers (Josh and Sean) for their competitiveness, making sure that I remained driven. I would like to thank my grandmother (Sue) for agreeing to read my work despite the controversial content.

Finally I would like to thank my friends. In particular, Mike Williams for his willingness to go for walks with no notice, Adam Cornish for the endless cups of coffee, and Gareth Brittain for his belief in me. Without them, I may not have reached this point with the same level of sanity.

Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Contents	4
Introduction	5
Literature Review	8
The evolution of female representation, porno-chic and the internalisation of the male gaze.	8
Media representation of sexuality	12
Celebrity and sexuality	14
Methodology	17
Feminist Theory	17
Content analysis	18
Online Survey	20
Discussion	22
Chapter 1 - The reaction of men in the media to WAP and Strip	22
Chapter 2 - Women’s reaction to the songs and why this is important for challenging patriarchal norms	26
Chapter 3 - The challenges with understanding this kind of hypersexuality as progressive for female empowerment	30
Conclusion	34
Bibliography	36
Journals & Essays	36
Books	38
Newspaper Articles	39
Songs and Videos	40
Social Media	41
Appendices	42
Appendix 1 - Ethics form	42
Appendix 2 - Participant information sheet	45
Appendix 3 - Copy of the participant consent form	47
Appendix 4 - Survey questions	48
Appendix 5 - Survey results	59

Introduction

Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion broke records with their 2020 hit *WAP*. With 93 million streams in the first week of release and topping 10 different charts, the song reached huge audiences all around the world (McIntyre, 2020; Wood 2020). Cardi B sings “[p]ut this pussy right in your face, swipe your nose like a credit card. Hop on top, I wanna ride. I do a kegal, while it’s inside. Spit in my mouth, look in my eyes. This pussy is wet, come take a dive” (2020). The uncensored description of sexual desire in the lyrics and the hypersexual content of the music video continues to be evident throughout *WAP*. By creating content where they openly talk about their sexual pleasure, contemporary female artists such as Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion aim to challenge patriarchal norms that women should be seen as ‘nice’ (Fox, 1977). These songs are often vilified by the media, described as harmful for young female consumers. Remarkably, despite the amount of discourse about female agency, there is little research into the feelings of empowerment of the young female audiences who are being discussed. The lack of critical investigation into the opinion of women (especially young female consumers of the media that I am considering) is problematic, because it deemphasises counterdiscourses regarding the potential empowerment of cultural texts like *WAP*. This allows hegemonic ideas regarding acceptable representations of female sexuality, that are reductive and highly feminised, to dominate. In order to fill this gap in knowledge, my research aims to discover whether postfeminist representations of female hypersexuality in contemporary music cause young female consumers to feel empowered and confident in their own expressions of sexuality, in contrast to a predominantly male coverage in the media that is critical of musicians such as Cardi B. My research will be democratising by giving a voice to women who don’t have a huge platform to share their opinion. This will allow other women to gain a deeper authentication of their own feelings in response to the contemporary female music artists who are choosing to hypersexualise their image.

For my research project, I chose to study two songs by contemporary female music artists. The first is *WAP*. The second is *Strip* by Little Mix, featuring Sharaya J, which was released in 2018.

The music video for *Strip* has close to 50 million views on YouTube. There are 1 million likes for the video, 31 thousand dislikes, and over 35 thousand comments (YouTube, 2021), showing the huge amount of discourse around the song. I chose *WAP* and *Strip* in particular, because of the very public backlash that the artists received for the hypersexual content of the lyrics and the music videos. I am keen to explore whether young women are made to feel empowered by these songs and their music videos as postfeminist theory would suggest, or whether they think that explicit expressions of female sexuality are detrimental to the progression of feminism.

Women are increasingly fed different instructions for appropriate explorations of their sexuality through media they consume. On the one hand, to be too hypersexual is to risk being labelled a 'slut', whereas covering up or rejecting derogatory banter can lead to the same thing. Academics investigating issues of female agency in postfeminist times have contrasting ideas about female sexuality. Rosalind Gill and Breanne Fahs consider societal pressures and the internalisation of the male gaze essential for understanding why seemingly empowering public displays of sexuality are not in fact a women's choice (Gill, 2007; Fahs, 2017). Brian McNair, Linda Duits and Liesbet Van Doonen however, emphasise the importance of differentiating between hypersexuality that is forced onto women, and sexualities that they choose to pursue (MacNair, 2002; Duits & Van Zoonen, 2006). There have been vast amounts of research about female sexual agency, whether it is positive, or is simply reinforcing ingrained ideals, however, the research that has been conducted previously to now is lacking when it comes to considering the opinions of young women.

To achieve my aim, my research grapples with three objectives. The first is to understand why prominent men in the media react so negatively to contemporary female music artists who explore female sexuality openly in their music, and then to discuss why this reaction is helpful in clarifying the urgency of a renewed focus on female empowerment. The second is to understand the reaction of young women, to explore how they feel about the hypersexuality of the artists, and to investigate how this affects their feelings about their own expressions of sexuality. My final objective

will be to explore the limitations in understanding hypersexuality of contemporary female music artists as progressive for female empowerment.

Literature Review

The evolution of female representation, porno-chic and the internalisation of the male gaze.

The first topic that I am going to consider is female representation, and how it has developed in post-feminist times. Whilst previously, hypersexualisation of women was something external that was put upon them, it has now evolved to be an internalised ideal in heteronormative society. Greer Litton Fox, in her 1977 article "Nice girl": Societal control of women through a value construct", explores the idea of normative restriction; this being how women are indoctrinated by the societal idea that they should behave like and embody a 'nice girl' (Fox, 1977, p.805). Fox goes on throughout her article to explain why normative restriction is an effective way for hegemony in society to continue. Women are taught throughout their lives that the main goal for them is to be seen as nice. To embody the traits that will make them 'acceptable', they restrict their own behaviour, thus removing the need for physical restrictions to be in place. A big part of adhering to hegemonic normativity is to appear sexually chaste. The very fact that it wouldn't be ladylike to be seen doing certain things that society would deem manly has long been a pressure for women to stick to normative behaviour (Fox, 1977, p.805). Duits when considering nice girl theory explains that there are no specific guidelines around what constitutes 'nice girl status', making navigating how to show appropriate sexuality challenging for women (Duits, 2008, p.19).

Scholars explore how this internalisation has fashioned into an idea coined 'porno-chic'. Porno chic is described by McNair in his 2002 book, *Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratisation of Desire*, as the integration of pornography into our culture and things that are not associated with porn by design (McNair, 2002, p.62). McNair explains how the pop star Madonna was one of the first popular artists to use porno-chic in her image and suggests that utilising the appeal of porn helped her mass-market success (2002, p.66). He describes how Madonna's hypersexualisation was different from women who had been sexually suggestive in music videos and other popular culture in the past. He explains that previously to this era, sexualisation of women in

mainstream culture seemed exploitative, whereas Madonna chose this as a way to market herself in a postfeminist culture (2002, p.67). Duits and Van Zoonen further evaluate Madonna's presentation of herself in their 2006 article, "Headscarves and Porno-Chic: Disciplining Girls' Bodies in the European Multicultural Society". They describe how with Madonna's young female audience, her hypersexual self-image is seen as freedom from an oppressive past where female agency was thought of negatively and porno-chic would have been against the norm. Duits and Van Zoonen talk about how young women who consume this media feel empowered to express their own sexuality (Duits & Van Zoonen, 2006, p.10). This evaluation of Madonna choosing to brand herself hypersexually is important for me to consider in my research, as the pop star is seen, by McNair, Duits and Van Zoonen, as an early example of a woman using her hypersexuality to empower consumers to feel in control of their own bodies.

Although they disagree on the value of female hypersexuality, Fox and McNair agree that in postfeminist times, women have internalised societal pressure. McNair however, considers certain types of sexuality from women to be powerful in challenging patriarchy (McNair, 2002, p.67). Fox, in contrast, does not consider any female hypersexuality beneficial to feminism. She talks of how women who don't fit the appropriate sexuality of a 'nice girl' will be considered abnormal and shunned by society, thus unable to help further a movement (Fox, 1977).

Similarly to Fox, Gill believes that societal pressure is instrumental in a woman's apparent free choice. She rejects the theories of McNair, Duits and Van Zoonen that women choosing to hypersexualise themselves is positive, instead suggesting that this apparent 'choice' is in fact, a result of internalisation of the male gaze. In her 2007 article, "Critical Respect: The Difficulties and Dilemmas of Agency and 'Choice' for Feminism", Gill responds to and critiques Duits and van Zoonen's ideas of female agency. She criticises their lack of consideration of external influences within female agency, raising the issue that consumers who feel empowered when 'choosing' to hypersexualise themselves neglect to consider internalisation of the male gaze. Gill suggests that it is inconclusive to theorise that women choose to hypersexualise themselves as an autonomous act

rather than a product of societal influence (Gill, 2007, p.5). She talks of the false ideology of women as neoliberal subjects and rejects ideas of female individualism and empowerment claiming they have control over whether or not they decide to use sexuality in their self-presentation.

Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu, Sue Sharpe and Rachel Thomson expand on the idea of internalisation of the male gaze in their 1998 book, *The male in the head*. They explain that heterosexuality comes from within masculinity and that female sexuality comes from this adoption of patriarchal ideals into their own 'free will' (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1998, p.14). In the heteronormative society that we live in, they theorise that these ideals and this way of thinking have become so ingrained that it is no longer noticed, so female sexuality is not explored on women's terms. This theory is relevant to my research into the way that contemporary female music artists hypersexualise themselves. According to this theory, Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe and Thomson, like Gill, would argue that self sexualisation is not a choice, but instead a result of internalising the male gaze, or 'the-man-in-the-head'.

In her article "Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility", Gill explores the idea of how the perception of women in the media has moved from a "sex object to desiring sexual subject" (Gill, 2007, p.152). She again argues with the idea of female autonomy, criticising the assumption that women are empowered to choose whether they sexualise their image. Gill explains that they have been conditioned by the media to think that they have agency, whereby they have become exactly the sexual objects that had previously been seen as degrading.

Gill further expands on her work around neoliberalism in her 2008 article "Empowerment/Sexism: Figuring Female Sexual Agency in Contemporary Advertising". She talks about the rise of the 'Midriffs', which was a movement in the advertising sphere that moved away from the idea of women being powerless objects of male desire, to a focus on empowerment and choice, "a shift from objectification to sexual subjectification" (Gill, 2008, p.7.). Gill explains that the way that the media presented women at the time put a huge emphasis on their own agency. The idea was that they were choosing to be sexually explicit in their presentation, and it just happened to

be in a way that men would also find attractive (2008, p.8.). Gill discusses how the postfeminist idea of midriffs was even more damaging to women than the previous marginalisation of women pre-second wave feminism. She argues that previous to this, sexism was external, seen as something 'done to women' but with this movement, it became something that women internalised. That now they are expected to be hypersexualised, to be happy about it, feel empowered and to come to this choice themselves (2008, p.11.). Gill's argument that women are influenced by the internalisation of the male gaze and past patriarchal ideals rather than true empowerment is important to my research on how the hypersexualisation of women in contemporary music influences a modern audience. It will be important to consider the internalisation of the male gaze as a possible cause of why women subscribe to a culture of hypersexualisation. Influenced by the pornographication of culture rather than natural feelings of empowerment.

In my research into women's perception of themselves in a neoliberal context, I considered academic work on aesthetic labour. In their collection of works about aesthetic labour, Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill and Christiana Scharff include Breanne Fahs article entitled "Mapping 'Gross Bodies': The Regulatory Politics of Disgust", where Fahs studies women's reaction to body hair, fatness, and menstruating. Her research showed that women have been conditioned to be subjects to society, disgusted by natural bodily functions due to women who they see in advertising. In popular culture, female bodies are generally pruned to be free of all of these natural things, and these same bodies are imagined as perfect. Therein, leading to the internalisation of societal pressure, which imagines natural functions of human bodies as unnatural. This disgust leads women to buy into a consumerist economy, working hard to ensure that they rid their bodies of any hair, stay thin and hide signs of menstruation to adhere to what they consider their own standards. Fahs - in agreement with Gill before her - argues that these standards are in fact those imposed upon them by patriarchal society (Fahs, 2017).

Media representation of sexuality

Many contemporary academics understand the internalisation of the male gaze as a direct product of how female sexuality is represented in the media. Understanding why it is that women unconsciously tend towards patriarchal embodiments will be important to the conclusions that I draw about audience response to the hypersexuality of women in contemporary music. In a 2005 article written for *The Guardian* interviewing the editors of top lads' mags in the UK, Janice Turner includes this quote from Phil Hilton, editor of *Nuts*,

“You are imposing outmoded sexual politics on a world that doesn't fit anymore. Women are gagging to appear in *Nuts*: hundreds send in their pictures, seeing it as empowering, sexy, a celebration of their youthful good looks” (Turner, 2005).

Turner discusses how the line between pornography and reality has blurred because of how women are presented in the media as perpetually up for it. She explains that feminist opinions that criticise this, are seen as outdated and no longer necessary. Turner goes on to critique the media pornographication of popular culture. Her understanding aligns with Gill - that it is damaging to women to think of themselves as empowered, neoliberal subjects who are making their own decision to portray themselves hypersexually. Turner's research links to ideas of the 'male-in-the-head', as she agrees that there is now an internalised expectation for women to keep up a sexualised image of themselves, whereas before it was understood to be external (Turner, 2005).

Dee Amy Chinn's research aligns with the widespread opinion of cultural academics that women acting hypersexuality is a result of environmental pressures rather than female agency. In her 2006 article, “This is just for me(n): How the regulation of post-feminist lingerie advertising perpetuates woman as object”, Amy-Chinn considers how the advertising of female underwear using hypersexualised images and an emphasis on porno-chic is considered empowering, despite

conforming to heteronormative ideals of prioritising the male gaze (2006). Through her research into this particular type of advertising, she explains that women's representation in the media has conditioned them to think that they are choosing to be hypersexual in their self-presentation. She discusses, that women have used their apparent newfound agency to become replicas of women who are written into pornography, written by men for men. This normalisation and expectation of hypersexuality is a result of women internalising societal pressure encouraged by the media, rather than their own choice. Amy-Chinn's research is especially useful for me in considering if feelings of empowerment from consumers of hypersexual content is a result of the internalisation of media portrayals of what women should aspire to be.

In his 1992 book, *Reading Ads Socially*, Robert Goldman talks about the idea of power femininity created by the media. He criticises the idea that women have complete agency, have reached equality and are empowered to make their own choices and explains how the media portray that women want "the sexual power to bring men to their knees" (Goldman, 1992; Gill, 2008, p. 43). He argues that historically this is what men have always desired, to be brought to their knees. In the past, this was something that could only be realised through pornography as hypersexuality of normal women was not acceptable to society. However, with the rise of neoliberalism, the myth of empowerment and the pornographication of mainstream culture, it has become an expectation that all women will choose to conform to this ideology of sexy and empowered women. Goldman makes the point that the idea of empowerment, though thought to be a woman's choice, has ensured that women choose to become the exact things that men desire. Similarly to Amy-Chinn and Turner's work, Goldman's argument, that the power femininity ingrained in popular culture causes women to internalise patriarchal embodiments, will be useful to my research as I consider why women feel empowered by hypersexuality of women in contemporary music.

Celebrity and sexuality

My research focuses on the influence that female hypersexuality in contemporary music has on modern audiences, so the final theme for my literature review is celebrity and sexuality. In my research, I want to understand whether celebrities' display of their sexuality affects the feelings of empowerment in their audience. Sharon Lamb, Kelly Grayling and Emily E. Wheeler in their 2013 article, "Pole-arized' discourse: An analysis of responses to Miley Cyrus's Teen Choice Awards pole dance", discuss the discursive reaction to Miley Cyrus's *Party in the USA* music video and Cyrus's controversial pole dancing. Lamb et al. explain that many consumers reacted to the singer's hypersexuality by suggesting that she is a bad role model for her young female audience, saying that she should have a responsibility to them to be a good influence (Lamb, Grayling & Wheeler, 2013, p.13). From this research, the scholars conclude that everyone is invited to have an opinion about women, in particular female celebrities who choose to portray themselves hypersexuality, but none of the criticism considers the celebrities' choice to be a result of the internalisation of the male gaze (2013, p.17). This study is relevant to my research into audience opinion of the hypersexuality of female artists in contemporary music, as I will be able to consider the past vilification of celebrities who adopt post-feminist tendencies and compare my findings to that of the artists whom I am researching.

Miley Cyrus draws a lot of attention from her hypersexualised image. Amelia Butterly in 2013 explained how, in a BBC Newsbeat interview with Chi Chi Izundu, Cyrus described herself as a huge feminist. She thinks that the way that she acts on stage, choosing to portray herself sexuality, is empowering to her audience as it allows them to be anything that they want to be (Butterly, 2013). In her 2016 article, "Taking time between g-string changes to educate ourselves: Sinéad O'Connor, Miley Cyrus, and celebrity feminism", Anita Brady considers the argument between Sinéad O'Connor and Miley Cyrus and their clashing ideas of feminism. O'Connor agrees with the argument that women shouldn't celebrate the pornographication of female artists as an act of empowerment and

rejects Cyrus's idea that women should be free to hypersexualise themselves if that is what they want to do. Cyrus however, criticises the idea of the internalisation of the male gaze and celebrates the neoliberal theory of choice (Brady, 2015, p.5). Brady talks of how the idea of competing feminisms rose from the aftermath of the public feud between Cyrus and O'Connor. There was obvious confusion between the two celebrities, both with juxtaposing ideas of what constitutes empowerment. Other theorists' critique post-feminist celebrity hypersexuality, as encouraging audience conformation to a heteronormative contemporary culture where women now internalise the male gaze under the guise of empowerment. Brady however, argues that the very value of celebrity feminism is the inconclusive nature of what feminism should be (Brady, 2015, p.12). Brady challenges the idea suggested by Gill, Turner, Dee-Chinn and Goldman who condemn hypersexualisation as a means to empowerment, and she suggests that women should be invited to be empowered in any way that they choose. Brady talks of celebrity feminism through hypersexuality as a positive thing, encouraging large audiences of young female consumers to feel empowered and confident with their own feelings of sexuality.

In contrast to Brady's celebration of celebrity feminism, Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg, in their 2020 article "Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism?" argue that celebrities using feminism publicly as a part of their image has caused commodification of the movement (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg, 2020, p.10). They consider how feminism has morphed into a way for celebrities to make money whilst posing as neoliberal and empowered women, taking popular ideas of feminism to aid their image whilst ignoring key feminist themes of racism, marginalisation and patriarchal ideas of pornographication. These scholars discuss how celebrities brand themselves as feminists seeking to empower their audience but are in reality choosing feminist themes that will help their image and celebrity status (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg, 2020, p.9). Red Chigley agrees with Banet-Weiser, Gill and Rottenberg. In her 2020 article, "Postfeminism™: celebrity feminism, branding and the performance of activist capital", Chigley criticises celebrity feminism as flawed by the capitalist appeal that branding themselves as a

feminist brings the individuals. Rigley however, does see some value in celebrity feminism with the existence of “movement feminism” (Chigley, 2020, p.13), arguing that although celebrities are often motivated by monetary factors to invoke feminism into their branding, they have activist capital which is useful for the feminist movement as a whole. Celebrities have a platform from which to influence, so when they brand themselves as feminists this permeates into their audience (Chigley, 2020, p.14). Despite realising that celebrities gain from the popular feminism they promote, Chigley understands that they have a huge audience, so by openly describing themselves as feminists, the movement will permeate to their consumers which can be positive for societal change.

Diane Railton draws conclusions similar to Banet-Weiser, Gill and Rottenberg's idea that celebrity feminism serves to benefit the individual in terms of the progression of status and wealth. In her 2011 book, *Music video and the politics of representation*, Railton explains that music video is a means of advertisement for artists and their management (Railton, 2011, p.11). She describes how many music video creators also design advertisements for commercial products and are experts in knowing which content is most marketable. Railton links celebrity to commercial products that need to be sold for profits to be made. She talks about how, in postfeminist times, people's construction of self is influenced by society, and that factors of their environment cause them to act a certain way. Thus, she argues, music videos are important to study in relation to how consumers view themselves. Are celebrities marketing themselves with music videos for capital gain but influencing consumers by the way they are acting in line with the theory of internalisation of societal norms? Railton makes the case that music videos must be considered as influential factors in consumer's construction of the self (Railton, 2011, p29). Her work on the music video will help me form my argument about the effects on the consumer and whether it aids or inhibits their young female audience's feelings of empowerment.

Methodology

Feminist Theory

Throughout the research that I conduct in this project, I link my findings back to feminist theory. My study aims to show whether influential contemporary female music artists taking agency and choosing to be hypersexual is empowering to young women, or if it is going against feminism and showing the postfeminist development of internalisation of the male gaze. Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba in their 1985 book *Naturalistic Inquiry* theorise that successful research must adhere to ideals of “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” (1985, p246). Using both surveys and content analysis, rather than a singular research method, ensures that my resulting conclusions are credible. After extracting the data, I form conclusions based on previous research and critical theory from feminist and post-feminist academia to ensure my research is dependable and confirmable.

Content analysis

In the first part of my study, I use content analysis to research how the artists use hypersexuality in their music so that I can understand the relationship this self-presentation has to empowerment for consumers of their work. In their 2011 article “Towards a Linguistics of News Production”, Paola Catenaccio et al. discuss how news has to be considered within its context (2011, p.22). The context that I am considering is the post-feminist era. Post-feminist theory suggests that women are already equal, however, the content analysis that I conduct seeks to show that women - in the case of this research prominent female music artists - who are open about their sexuality and position themselves as sexually empowered are attacked by the media. From this, I explore the idea that women are seen as sexual subjects, as theorised by Rosalind Gill (2007, p152), and, that when they are seen to show signs of embracing their own sexual power, society - or more specifically, hegemonic society - deems them inappropriate. I conduct a qualitative content analysis of the music videos and the lyrics for both *WAP* by Cardi B featuring Megan Thee Stallion and *Strip* by Little Mix featuring Sharaya J. To do this, I study both the music videos and the lyrics of the songs themselves.

It is important to use analytical constructs to move from findings of the text to conclusions that help me to answer my research question (White, & Marsh, 2006, p.27). In order to do this, as described by Klaus Krippendorff in his 2004 work *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology*, I link the data that I find to existing theories, previous work and the experience of experts (Krippendorff, 2004, p.173). I investigate how often words that have hypersexual connotation come up in the two songs, and then seek to analyse the context in which the words are used by comparing this with how the artists view their work and whether they see themselves as empowering women. By linking my research to academic theories of post-feminism, I ensure that I am accurately moving from my findings to conclusions. Throughout this research, I particularly consider Brian McNair’s 2002 book *Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratisation of Desire*,

and I engage with his work about the evolution of female empowerment and the idea of hypersexuality challenging patriarchal values (McNair, 2002).

After researching how the artists understand themselves to be empowering, I look at the engagement of young women to see how it compares to the reaction of prominent men in the media. I use this data to conclude whether media reaction to hypersexuality is swayed by the opinion of men and if young females feel empowered by the hypersexuality of contemporary female music artists, contrary to what the media portrays. To do this, I first look at the reactions of prominent men to the hypersexuality of my chosen artists to compare this to the research that I acquire from women.

An issue with using content analysis as a research method is that it can easily be biased. There is a process of selecting which content to analyse, as it would be an impossible task to consider all that has been published. By considering particular articles and areas to look at on social media it is difficult to select a representative sample of publications and social media posts. To combat this possible bias, I consider social media posts of contrasting opinions and include them in my survey - my second research method - so that my respondents can agree or disagree with the sentiments shown. This takes away the bias of the selection process, allowing me to collect data that is representative of the opinion of many different people rather than a select sample.

Online Survey

As briefly discussed previously, the second part of my research is an online survey of 18-25-year-old women. In the survey, they are asked questions seeking to understand their feelings of empowerment concerning the two songs I have chosen. I investigate whether they think that contemporary female music artists using hypersexuality is a good thing for women and the progression of female sexual agency. I first ask the women what they understand by the word empowerment, then ask them to watch the music video for each song, and to pick the top 5 feelings that they felt in regards to the media, along with an explanation of why they felt that way. I finally ask them if they agree or disagree with 4 tweets of various opinions for each of the songs.

Conducting a survey is an essential part of my investigation, as it allows me to consider the opinions of women who are not necessarily part of the demographic who would publicly discuss their views of the artists I am choosing to study. This helps to ensure that my conclusions about the feelings of women concerning the subject are inclusive of all young women rather than just those who have very strong opinions on the artists themselves. I chose to aim my survey solely at women as too often in modern society, discourse about women's feelings of sexuality comes from a male point of view. My research focuses on the feelings evoked in women by the hypersexuality of contemporary female music artists, so for this reason they are the only respondents in my survey.

A benefit of using an online survey is that it allows me to easily target large numbers of my chosen demographic in a way that wouldn't necessarily be possible in face-to-face interviews. The answers collected should be truthful as the anonymity of the research method ensures that the respondents don't feel as though their answers will reflect onto them, thus ensuring that they don't seek to please me as the organiser of the investigation (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002, p.358). The anonymity of the survey means that none of the participants should feel a responsibility to me, thus mitigating against the potential issue of bias depending on how the respondents view the individual leading the survey (Ernest & Edwards, 2015, p.72).

Another possible limitation of using surveys as a research method is the systematic bias that is common with this approach. In his 2012 book *Collecting, Managing, and Assessing Data Using Sample Surveys*, Peter Stopher explains how there are several biases to pay attention to when conducting research surveys (Stopher, 2012, p73). The biggest one in relation to my study is that my sample would be automatically exclusive of women who do not have access to the internet as these women would not be able to access the Facebook groups where I will be posting the link to my survey. My research aim, however, is to investigate feelings of empowerment felt by women about the lyrics and music videos of contemporary female music artists. Responses from women who don't have access to the internet would not be valid in my study, as they would most likely not have experienced the songs or videos.

Stopher goes on to explain that no surveys can be completely free from bias, but biases can be mitigated by taking the following steps; ensuring random sampling, avoiding judgements of the participants, ensuring anonymity, ensuring that the survey questions are written clearly so that there could be no room for misinterpretation and making sure that all of the women can understand what the questions are asking (Stopher, 2012, p78). Throughout my considered creation and distribution of my survey, I adhere to these rules so that I avoid bias as far as possible in my conclusions.

The final limitation that I address about using a survey as a research method is that there is a limit on how many people would conduct the survey. Using surveys, however, alongside my qualitative research, ensures that I have a lot of responses to consider from a wide range of sources thus ensuring more complete knowledge (Harraway, 1988). Over 600 respondents to my survey with varying opinions ensure that my research pulls from a large data set, offering quantifiable conclusions to my study.

Discussion

Chapter 1 - The reaction of men in the media to WAP and Strip

Brian McNair in 2002 posed the question “Does proactive, even promiscuous female sexuality reinforce the patriarchy or undermine it?” (2002, p. 119). Rosalind Gill would argue the former, she describes how displaying sexuality has become essential for women due to societal pressure and explains that, by adhering to this, women are reinforcing the patriarchy (Gill, 2007, p.72). An application of this postfeminist theory to Cardi B’s music would suggest that the more aggressively women sexualise themselves in popular culture, the more positive a response they receive. Throughout my research, however, I found that men did not seem to like music where women hypersexualised themselves and appeared in control of their own bodies. Both *WAP* and *Strip* received strong negative responses from men, especially prominent public figures, a number of whom expressed their opinion very loudly to their respective audiences. The highly negative response to this music demonstrates that the specific ways in which female sexuality is displayed by these artists proffers something subversive and therefore potentially productive.

The controversial TV personality, Ben Shapiro, created a reaction video to *WAP* in which he reads out the lyrics to the song, providing a sarcastic and disdainful commentary. When talking about the line “Get a bucket and a mop for some wet ass pussy” (B, C. & Thee Stallion, M., 2020) he draws connotations to something abnormal, his exact words being

“I mean, a bucket and a mop, this sounds like there’s something going on here that is not biologically normal, and, by the way, this song is so unsexy that it frankly sounds like somebody describing what amounts to a serious condition that requires the care of a doctor” (Knowenth, 2020).

In this statement, Shapiro seeks to influence his audience to think about the words literally, rather than in the metaphorical way that they were intended - as a way to describe female pleasure. Shapiro suggests that women should not be so blatantly open about their own sexual pleasure. In *WAP*, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion are discussing female sexual pleasure in a manner that subverts patriarchal society's expectation of them. Their lyrics come from the point of view of them telling a man how to pleasure them. *WAP* includes lines such as "hop on top, I wanna ride", "put this pussy right in your face" and "quick jump out 'fore you let it get inside of me" (B, C. & Thee Stallion, M., 2020), all of which show the women are talking with power and control over the sexual acts that they desire. This is an inversion of patriarchal norms; the words are said as commands and don't take into account the wants of the man, which are traditionally the main focus when sex is displayed in popular culture. Shapiro uses the explicit language in the song as fuel for his opinion and invites his audience to feel the same disgust as he ridicules the video. His description of the song as "unsexy" evidences the expectation of women to create content that is appealing to the male gaze.

Throughout the commentary video rather than saying 'pussy', Shapiro instead uses the phrase "p-word". This aversion to saying 'pussy' shows how offended he is by female contemporary artists exploring their sexuality in a manner geared towards female empowerment. This echoes the view that women should curtail their desires, and display a 'nice girl' sexuality that is modest and appropriated to archetypal stereotypes.

Piers Morgan, former co-presenter of *Good Morning Britain*, was quick to offer his opinion on national television in reaction to Little Mix's song, *Strip*. He started the news segment with the line "Former X-Factor winners Little Mix have become the latest stars to make a statement, a feminist statement of empowerment by taking all their clothes off" (Good Morning Britain, 2018). His sarcastic tone in this declaration is not dissimilar to the way Ben Shapiro talks about Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion. Morgan advised the audience of women watching the program, saying "[h]ere's a really great idea girls, if you want to empower yourselves get naked and put the word slut all over your body." In the music video for *Strip*, the women end the video sitting undressed with derogatory

words written all over their bodies in black paint, to display the negative words that have been used over the years towards each of them. Throughout the video, Little Mix show women of different sizes and ethnicities in order to challenge the patriarchal view of what is beautiful. In challenging hegemonic values, they threaten Morgan's view of how women should express themselves. Similarly to Shapiro's reaction to WAP, Morgan evidences that he is distressed by the girl's choice to be naked in a way not intended to appeal to men but to challenge societal norms. The girls sing "rub off all your words, don't give an uh, I'm over it" (Little Mix, 2018). With these lyrics, Little Mix are demonstrating their rejection of media opinion and are refusing to adhere to what is expected of them. This subversion of heteronormative values is key to what caused such an emotive reaction from mainstream media as demonstrated by Piers Morgan's reaction. Little Mix sing "you say I ain't pretty, well I say I'm beautiful, it's my committee" (Little Mix, 2018). This lyric demonstrates their refusal of the opinion of society, instead suggesting that they will themselves decide what they think is beautiful in regards to their own body. It is evident that through displaying their sexual freedom and refusing expectations of appropriate sexuality, Little Mix are provoking anger from those who benefit from the patriarchy.

If Shapiro and Morgan's opinions are reflective of wider societal views, then to answer McNair's question, yes; promiscuous female sexuality can be seen to undermine patriarchy. These untraditional expressions of sexuality from women in the public eye are offending men and evoking negative reactions, therefore posing a challenge to what society views as an acceptable type of female sexuality. In Amy Chinn's work around porno-chic, she theorises that women performing hypersexually is internalising the male gaze and thus concludes it to be negative (Amy-Chinn, 2006). It is evident, however, from the reaction of men to these songs, how much power there is in contemporary female music artists using hypersexuality that is not appealing to men in their work and how progressive it is to feminist empowerment in a modern context. McNair talks in his chapter "Bad girls: sexual transgression as feminist strategy" of how, in order to change the narrative of patriarchal society, women must go against the norm in ways that will evoke strong emotions;

particularly from men. By showing such aggressive and powerful sexuality, these contemporary female music artists are challenging patriarchal views rather than pandering to the traditional sexuality that is placed upon them.

Chapter 2 - Women's reaction to the songs and why this is important for challenging patriarchal norms

It is necessary for women to challenge gender norms imposed by society in order for them to progress towards equality and ownership of their sexual identity. Moving from the outdated idea of a 'nice girl' image to that of a 'bad girl' empowers women to express their sexuality freely. Women's expectation to be a nice girl has been internalised making them subjects to society (Fox, 1977). It is difficult to achieve 'nice girl' status, as it is born of constant management, not to seem too sexual while at the same time maintaining a feminine appeal by adhering to societal expectations of aesthetic labour. Linda Duits explores the challenge that women face to employ a 'nice girl' construct by saying,

“The dilemma of too much too little has been argued particularly about girls' sexuality... As with the nice girl, what constitutes a 'slag' is not defined or operationalised in discourse, and this lack of definition makes the construct all the more productive” (Duits, 2008, p.19).

In this statement, Duits shows frustration at the fact that women can be insulted both for being too promiscuous and, in the same breath, for being too chaste or boring. Women struggle to find this balance so internalise the male gaze in order to be deemed valuable to society. In doing so they become subjects to societal expectations. The counter to the 'nice girl' ideal is that of the 'bad girl', Brian McNair explains how

“[f]or self-proclaimed 'bad girls' their use of the label was an intentional subversion of its original patriarchal connotations; a rejection of the notion that women had to be good (where goodness is defined by the moral and gender codes of patriarchy), and a

countervailing assertion of their 'badness' as a statement of intellectual, political and sexual empowerment (McNair, 2002, p195).

With this statement, McNair suggests that instead of conforming to the hegemonic normative idea of what female sexuality should involve, using the 'bad girl' model and challenging the patriarchy is essential for the progression of female empowerment. Hypersexuality from contemporary female music artists demystifies female sexual pleasure as the artists have a huge reach and can communicate to a large proportion of society. As Anita Brady theorises, celebrity feminism is important because of the large audiences that these women are able to reach (2015, p.12). The very fact that men such as Piers Morgan and Ben Shapiro are condemning these actions is irrelevant to the real goal of empowering women. These women are challenging patriarchal ideas in a way that is deemed unbecoming by men. This was to be expected by such a subversion of traditional hegemonic values.

My research has shown that displays of controversial sexuality from these artists are successful in empowering much of their young female audience. In my survey of 665 women aged 18-25, when asked what empowerment meant to them, the most common word listed was confidence, mentioned in 242 of the responses. When shown the music video for *Strip*, 74% of the women described feeling confident and after watching *WAP* 54%. It is clear to see that contemporary female music artists who use their platform to openly show their hypersexuality and to challenge the patriarchal idea of the 'nice girl', are able to evoke feelings of confidence in their young female audience. Through their strong and unconventional sexual openness, the singers leave many of their viewers feeling empowered, showing that such displays of overt sexuality by women in the public eye are necessary to allow for their female audience to feel sexual agency.

Many of the responses in my survey showed that women felt empowered by the song *Strip* and they described how Little Mix's confidence in the video made them feel the same way. One of the respondents to my survey explained how "[s]eeing women hype each other up and being

confident and bold in their own skin makes me feel like I can be confident in mine”, another saying that the song “[f]elt like women talking to women FOR women”. It is clear from these responses that many of the women taking part in my survey felt themselves empowered when they saw Little Mix’s confidence in the song and how the artists challenged the patriarchal idea of beauty including wearing makeup and covering up.

Response to WAP was even more emphatic than to Strip owing to the more intense exploration of female sexual pleasure in the lyrics and the video. One woman reacted by saying “[t]he WHOLE VIDEO makes me feel so empowered and happy that women can be singing about their own sexual desire in a confident, autonomous way”. Another respondent described that she “love[d] how disruptive it is to the purity culture”. A third described how empowering it was to be “taking back derogatory terms like 'whore’”. Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion throughout *WAP* use words that are often enlisted as derogatory slang used by men towards women. The way they are used in *WAP*, however, works to take back control of female sexuality. The word ‘pussy’ appears 18 times in the song, pussy is historically a word appropriated by men talking about women. It brings connotations of the ‘nice girl’ aesthetic by taking the vagina away from its reality and instead, linking it to a young cat. Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion take this word back and use it repeatedly throughout the song. They show aggressive sexuality and wear sexualised animal costumes throughout the video which shows the power brought by regaining control of what has long been seen as things that men put upon women. In the survey responses, the women describe how the hypersexuality of the artists is directly related to their own feelings of self-empowerment. That by consuming this media and seeing representations in popular culture of women subverting heterosexual expectations, they feel more confident about their own sexuality. Empowered to explore their bodies in a way that is not centred around the enjoyment of men.

In my survey one of the tweets that I sought opinions about read;

“WAP is actually a feminist anthem because lyrics such as “Put him on his knees, give him somethin’ to believe in” alludes to Meg[h]an Thee Stallion as [the] deity in which the man on his knees “believes in”, thus asserting her power over the man...”

457 of the 665 respondents agreed with this statement. When asked why they felt this way, 165 of the responses used the word “power” in their answer. It is clear from this research, that many women who see female music artists portrayed in popular culture as empowered to control their sexual desires, feel powerful themselves to challenge an idea ingrained in society that women are sexual objects. Scholars who criticise postfeminist ideas of female agency challenge the idea that women are empowered unless they create a new sexuality that is dissimilar to the archetypal male. McNair however - and Tickner before him - disagrees, describing how

“[b]ad girls reject the once orthodox feminist notion that there is such thing as an ‘authentic’ female art defined by its rejection of and distance from male images and symbols. They take the [patriarchal] heritage and work with it - attack it, reverse it, expose it and use it for their own purpose” (Tickner, 1987, p.239; McNair, 2002, 201).

Tickner and McNair conclude that women taking back control of showing off their body is a positive step for women in owning their sexuality. Through finding sexuality that is empowering, and showing women in control of their desires, contemporary female music artists using hypersexuality in their lyrics and videos are appropriately challenging the patriarchal view that women should be sexual correctly and appropriately. At the same time, this content is showing women that they are allowed to dress in a way that is sexual and talk about their desires without feeling as though they are pandering to the male gaze.

Chapter 3 - The challenges with understanding this kind of hypersexuality as progressive for female empowerment

Despite my findings that the hypersexuality of contemporary female music artists is useful for many women's understanding of their own sexuality, it is important to understand that this is not a conclusion for all women. Banet-Weiser, Gill and Rottenberg talk of how celebrities only use feminist themes that are self beneficial whilst ignore deeper issues that are instrumental in feminist ideology, such as representation (Banet-Weiser, Gill and Rottenburg, 2020, p.9). In my final chapter, I will be exploring the idea that the type of sexuality and empowerment encouraged by popular media texts created by contemporary female music artists is not universally accessible.

Out of the 665 participants in my survey, 15% of the women upon watching the video for *WAP* described feeling marginalised, and a smaller, but not insignificant, 7% felt marginalised after watching *Strip*. Whilst this isn't indicative of a huge proportion of the respondents, it does raise the issue of representation in these videos. Hypersexuality of women in contemporary music is only seen in women who are stereotypically good looking, thus creating the rhetoric that sexual freedom is only afforded to certain types of people. When asked what they understood by the term empowerment in my survey, the second most common word (appearing in 196 out of the 665 answers) was 'self', so it is clear to see that women's understanding of empowerment is closely intertwined with how they perceive themselves. If women with huge audiences owning their hypersexuality are vastly different to their audience, be that in looks, ethnicity, physical ability or class, then it will be hard for their audience to identify with the artists' expressions of sexual freedom.

McNair describes how "[i]n the vast majority of advertising and fashion images, an unhealthy, unnaturally narrow range of body types is on view. These representations are deeply unrepresentative of 'real' women - that is, the average woman in statistical terms" (2001, p.119). In their music video for *Strip*, Little Mix involved a variety of women including their own mothers,

women with different sexual orientations and women of different ethnicities. This went some way to encouraging inclusivity. One woman who took part in my survey said “It was lovely to see women of all ages and sizes participating! It makes me think that regardless of my size, I can look/be sexy, confident, powerful and empowered too!”. Responses like this make it clear to see that for some women, just seeing people who look like them in the video was enough to encourage feelings of empowerment. Others, however, were quick to pick up on the fact that simply including different women in the music video wasn’t enough to challenge the expected aesthetic. A common criticism from respondents to the music video is that by using women who are conforming to society's aesthetic standards they aren’t empowering all women to be attractive. One respondent described the video for *Strip* as “hypocritical” as Little Mix are “trying to convey this message of empowerment and body confidence when in reality they have been heavily photoshopped and made over”. Another of the participants said

“The message of body positivity is kind of lost when everyone in Little Mix is so conventionally attractive and thin. They have to invite other women with different body shapes in the second half of the video for their message to work so it kind of seems patronising in that way? Like they’re telling you to be confident and it’s like ok but easy for you to say you all 100% adhere to traditional beauty standards.”

This response to the music video criticises Little Mix for trying to advocate confidence and empowerment for all, whilst having looks and bodies that would require intense management to replicate for the average woman. Responses to *WAP* also criticised the lack of representation, one woman mentioned how, rather than offering hopes of sexuality to all women, the song and music video only serve to celebrate “the pleasure of objectively attractive women”, describing how the video “doesn’t represent the body of a normal woman”. In this understanding, the artists using their

platform to show off their own empowerment could be seen as harmful for those who do not look like them, as this aesthetic perpetuates the idea that there are certain acceptable body types.

Breanne Fars in her 2017 article about the politics of disgust, suggests that famous women who have these huge audiences encourage their consumers to internalise a desire to become the image of the women that society parades as correct. She says

“[l]inks between neoliberalism and disgust also move beyond ‘choice’ and ‘agency’ by showing us that good neoliberal subjects must demonstrate their ability to practice (seemingly effortless and pleasurable) self-care; those who resist such self-care practices, or who do not display significant disgust at the ‘unkempt’ body (e.g. hairy, fat, wild, and so on) lose their moral autonomy as neoliberal subjects” (Fahs, 2017, p.95).

Fahs identifies the struggle that women internalise to replicate patriarchal characteristics of beauty. By buying into consumerism and sharing their image of success and empowerment from the privileged space of fitting the archetypal body type, contemporary female music artists are helping to perpetuate the internalised pressures for women to adhere to a consumerist image of beauty. Little Mix, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, although promoting empowerment through their lyrics, are benefitting from their music both in terms of monetary gain and enhancement of their celebrity status. In order to do this, they have to make content that will be popular (Railton, 2011), and to do so, they conform to a certain aesthetic that will appeal to their audience. This serves to reiterate the patriarchal rhetoric that to be liberated, explore their sexuality, and feel empowered women must first conform to a body type that is recognised by society as beautiful.

When I asked the respondents of my survey if they agreed with the sentiment of a tweet reading;

“[r]emember that time Little Mix released Strip, it was a self-empowering anthem for basically anyone, talking about loving whoever you want to love and being confident in yourself, the video featured women of all shapes and colours and sizes..”

46 of the 665 women disagreed. 21 of these women stated the reason for their disagreement to be the lack of inclusivity meaning that the video was not empowering for “anyone” but is specifically empowering for women who see themselves represented in the video. One woman said that it is “[h]ard to find parallels between yourself and these women”, showing feelings of disconnect when she does not see an achievable image in the celebrities who are encouraging their audience to feel empowered. This isolation of certain women from gaining feelings of sexual freedom from the music shows that there is still a way to go in creating mainstream content that will empower women as a collective, rather than solely those who fit an archetypally beautiful body image.

Little Mix sing “say we too provocative, still, look at me, look at me, look at me, yeah” (2018), their intention being to encourage women to demand attention and challenge patriarchy by choosing to be hypersexual. The result, however, of them talking from their privileged position of conventional beauty, rather than being representative of all women, is to pave the way for certain women to feel empowered. Other women, who don’t conform to archetypal beauty, are left uninspired.

Conclusion

It's important for the furthering of female sexuality that women create content that defies patriarchal ideals. If female sexuality is only explored in polite ways, without evoking negative responses from those who benefit from the current societal structure, then this content doesn't serve to challenge the gender norms and stereotypes that exist. Ben Shapiro and Piers Morgan's responses to the displays of female agency in *WAP* and *Strip* respectively show that Little Mix, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion are successfully using their platforms to challenge the 'nice girl' expectation. Through this, they are enabling young women to see people whom they look up to to choose how to explore their sexuality, encouraging these consumers to feel empowered themselves.

The results from my survey showed that a huge amount of the young female respondents felt confident after watching *WAP* and *Strip*. Confidence was overwhelmingly listed as the marker for how the women understood empowerment. These media texts allow women to see honest representations of female pleasure not designed for men, showing them that they don't have to show polite sexuality and encouraging them to explore their own pleasure.

The limitation of understanding hypersexuality of contemporary female music artists as positive for female empowerment is the lack of representation. If women only see an exploration of sexual pleasure from women who are stereotypically beautiful and not what the majority of women look like, this creates the rhetoric that, in order to make choices about their sexuality and choose to be hypersexual, women have to look a certain way. Women who don't see celebrities with the same body type, the same race, or the same ability as themselves can be excluded from the feelings of empowerment that this music is intended to evoke.

The scope of knowledge into this area is one that needs to be further explored. Research into ways in which contemporary female music artists could empower all women who consume their music will allow for these findings to help further female empowerment and women's confidence in exploring their sexuality. To further solidify my conclusions, research would be useful in other

industries. What makes my study unique is that it is concentrated on female hypersexuality in contemporary music, so there is more scope for research across other areas to compare findings and create more complete theories.

Megan Thee Stallion when talking about *WAP* said “there’s still a shift [that needs to happen] around the perception of a woman owning her sexuality. Powerful women who have agency over their bodies aren’t something to look down on” (Penrose, 2020). By challenging accepted expressions of sexuality, contemporary female music artists like Megan Thee Stallion, Cardi B and Little Mix are carving paths for new artists to continue helping young women to feel empowered and confident about their own expressions of sexuality. It is a step towards challenging the ‘nice girl’ construct, and, with greater representation in the celebrity sphere, more women will feel empowered in postfeminist society. “Sexiest when I’m Confident” is a lyric that every woman should relate to, no matter what they look like. All women should feel able to challenge the patriarchy with expressions of honest, rather than appropriate, sexuality.

Bibliography

Journals & Essays

- Baer, H. (2016). Redoing feminism: digital activism, body politics, and neoliberalism. *Feminist media studies*, 16(1), 17-34. <https://doi.org/doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1080/14680777.2015.1093070>
- Banet-Weiser, S., Gill, R., & Rottenberg, C. (2020). Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation. *Feminist Theory*, 21(1), 3-24. <https://doi.org/doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1177/1464700119842555>
- Brady, A. (2015). Taking time between g-string changes to educate ourselves: Sinéad O'Connor, Miley Cyrus, and celebrity feminism. *Feminist Media Studies*, 5(3), 429-444. <https://doi.org/doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1080/14680777.2015.1137960>
- Catenaccio, P., Cotter, C., De Smedt, M., Garzone, G., Jacobs, G., Macgilchrist, F., Lams, L., Perrin, D., Richardson, J. E., Van Hout, T., & Van Praet, E. (2011). Towards a linguistics of news production. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(7), 1843-1852. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.09.022>
- Chidgey, R. (2020). Postfeminism™: celebrity feminism, branding and the performance of activist capital. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/https://doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1080/14680777.2020.1804431>
- Amy-Chinn, D. (2006). Journal of Consumer Culture. *This is just for me(n): How the regulation of post-feminist lingerie advertising perpetuates woman as object*, 6(2), 155-175. <https://doi.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1177/1469540506064742>
- Duits, L., & Van Zoonen, L. (2006). Headscarves and Porno-Chic: Disciplining Girls' Bodies in the European Multicultural Society. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(2), 103-117. <https://doi.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1177/1350506806062750>
- Fahs, B. (2017). Mapping 'Gross' Bodies: The Regulatory Politics of Disgust. In A. S. Elias, R. Gill, & C. Scharff (Eds.), *Aesthetic Labour* (pp. 83-99). Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hud/reader.action?docID=4790329>
- Fox, G. L. (1977). "Nice girl": Social control of women through a value construct. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2(4), 805-817. <https://doi.org/10.1086/493411>
- Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 147-166. <https://doi.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1177/1367549407075898>
- Gill, R. (2007). Critical Respect: The Difficulties and Dilemmas of Agency and 'Choice' for Feminism: A Reply to Duits and van Zoonen. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14(1), 69-80. <https://doi.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1177/1350506807072318>

Gill, R. (2008). Empowerment/Sexism: Figuring Female Sexual Agency in Contemporary Advertising. *Feminism & Psychology*, 18(1), 35-60.

<https://doi.org/doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1177/0959353507084950>

Gill, R. (2016). Post-postfeminism?: new feminist visibilities in postfeminist times. *Feminist media studies*, 16(4), 610-630.

<https://doi.org/doi-org.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1080/14680777.2016.1193293>

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.

<https://doi.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.2307/3178066>

Lamb, S., Grayling, K., & Wheeler, E. E. (2013). 'Pole-arized' discourse: An analysis of responses to Miley Cyrus's Teen Choice Awards pole dance. *Feminism & Psychology*, 23(2), 163-183.

<https://doi.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1177/0959353512472482>

McKnight, L. (2016). A bit of a dirty word: 'feminism' and female teachers identifying as feminist. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 27(2), 220-230.

<https://doi.org/libaccess.hud.ac.uk/10.1080/09589236.2016.1202816>

McRobbie, A. (2007). Post-feminism and popular culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 4(3), 255-264.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1468077042000309937>

Tickner, L. (1978). THE BODY POLITIC: Female Sexuality and Women Artists since 1970. *Art History*, 1(2), 236-251. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8365.1978.tb000015.x>

White, M. D., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology. *Library Trends*, 55(1), 22-45. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2006.0053>

Books

Attwood, F. (2017). *Sex Media*. Polity Press.

Duits, L. (2008). *Multi - Girl - Culture: An Ethnography of Doing Identity*. Amsterdam University Press.
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/HUD/detail.action?docID=456866>

Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Sharpe, S., & Thomson, R. (1998). *The Male in the Head young people, heterosexuality and power*. The Tufnell Press.

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: SAGE.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, Calif.; London: Sage.

McNair, B. (2002). *Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratisation of Desire*. Taylor & Francis Group.

McRobbie, A. (2008). *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. SAGE Publications.

Railton, D., & Watson, P. (2011). *Music Video and the Politics of Representation*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Stopher, P. (2012). *Collecting, Managing, and Assessing Data Using Sample Surveys*. Cambridge University Press. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Tasker, Y., & Negra, D. (2007). *Interrogating postfeminism: gender and the politics of popular culture*. Duke University Press.

Williams, J. (2017). *Women vs Feminism: Why We All Need Liberating from the Gender Wars*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Newspaper Articles

Butterly, A. (2013, November 12). Miley Cyrus says she's 'one of the biggest feminists'. *BBC Newsbeat*.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/24911610/miley-cyrus-says-shes-one-of-the-biggest-feminists>

McIntyre, H. (2020, August 21). Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's 'WAP' debuts at No.1 on 10 Different Billboard charts simultaneously. *Forbes*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hughmcintyre/2020/08/21/cardi-b-and-megan-thee-stallions-wap-debuts-at-no-1-on-10-different-billboard-charts-simultaneously/?sh=75c7cfec25c5>

Penrose, N. (2020, September 1). Megan Thee Stallion On Policing Women's Bodies And Why WAP Is So Important. *Elle*.

<https://www.elle.com/culture/music/a33863991/megan-thee-stallion-wap-interview/>

Turner, J. (2005, October 22). Weekend: DIRTY YOUNG MEN: Pornographic poses, the going rate for sex, jokes about 'stupid tarts': the misogyny of the new breed of lads' mags is breathtaking. So why do the editors swear to Janice Turner that it's all just harmless fun? And is this the kind of life they lead themselves?. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2005/oct/22/weekend7.weekend3>

Wood, M. (2020, August 17). 'WAP' makes it rain, breaks streaming record en route to No.1 on Billboard Hot 100. *Los Angeles Times*.

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/music/story/2020-08-17/wap-cardi-b-megan-thee-stallion-number-one-billboard-hot-100>

Songs and Videos

B, C., & Thee Stallion, M. (2020). *WAP (feat. Megan Thee Stallion)* [Track]. Atlantic Records

B, C (2020, August 7). *Cardi B - WAP feat. Megan Thee Stallion [Official Music Video]* [Video].
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsm4poTWjMs>

Good Morning Britain. (2018, November 19). *Is Stripping Off Worth It? Good Morning Britain* [Video].
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OihmVPFzoGM>

Knowenth, U (2020, August 13). *Ben Shapiro "WAP" Official Lyrics & Meaning I Verified* [Video].
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3pjh4Xyl0s>

Little Mix. (2018). *Strip* [Track]. On *LM5*. MNEK

Little Mix. (2018, November 16). *Little Mix - Strip (Official Video) ft. Sharaya J* [Video].
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlsD_cifOsk

Social Media

Christine, [@bokkuatsu]. WAP is actually a feminist power anthem because lyrics such as "Put him on his knees give him somethin' to believe in" alludes to Megan Thee Stallion as the deity in which the man on his knees "believes in", thus asserting her power over the man... [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1yphXwQih7dYmUrWloWzDyH4QNYmgx3acayzswkTcCkU/edit>

Collective Shout [@CollectiveShout]. (2020, September 6). #WAP is not a feminist statement - it's patriarchy in action: 'The same old sexual objectification of women as objects of male gratification doesn't magically become progressive or feminist simply because some women participate in or profit from it.' [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/CollectiveShout/status/1302486690913644545>

Iblioye, O [@OJ_Iblioye]. (2021, February 15). "It gives so much honour and power than stripping naked." I haven't seen any successful woman that strips naked apart from musicians and porn stars - and you know the reason why they do that. Misguided feminists would shut you up with "I can do anything with my body." [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/OJ_Iblioye

Josh [@JadesysFolklore]. (2021, February 13). Remember the time Little Mix released Strip, it was a self-empowering anthem for basically anyone, talking about loving whoever you want to love and being confident in yourself, the video featured women of all shapes and colours and sizes... [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/JadesysFolklore/status/1360655202060230663>

Judit [@IdolsAriBells]. (2018, November 20). SEXIEST WHEN I'M CONFIDENT Crown thank you for making the best feminist song and music video ever @LittleMix Little Mix - Strip (Official Video) ft. Sharaya J https://youtu.be/DIsD_cifOsk [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/IdolsAriBells/status/1064966539974189056>

Pokkpak, [@lizpokpak]. (2016, October 16). 'They are getting more provocative': Spice Girl Mel C slams Little Mix as too sexualised <http://dlvr.it/MSnpMG> [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/lizpokpak/status/787672878380486659>

Rogers, C [@ChadwickRogers9]. (2020, August 19). Progressive degenerate feminist Cardi B sets women back years with garbage like WAP. No wonder men are confused. [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/search?q=chadwickrogers9&src=typed_query

Women's Voices [@WomenReadWomen]. (2020, August 16). The pornification of the music industry has not happened overnight. However, we used to be able to criticize it. #WAP promotes objectification as empowerment; objectification of women leads to increased violence against women. On this issue, @rustyrocks is spot on. [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/WomenReadWomen/status/1294803596505096199>

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Ethics form

University of Huddersfield School of Music Humanities and Media

UG / Taught PGR

Project & Dissertation Ethics Declaration

APPLICABLE TO ALL UNDERGRADUATE AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Please complete and return via email to your Project / Dissertation Supervisor along with the required documents (shown below)

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT

Before completing this section please refer to the School Research Ethics web pages which can be found at <https://www.hud.ac.uk/mhm/researchgovernanceandethics/>. Students should consult the appropriate ethical guidelines. The student's supervisor is responsible for advising the student on appropriate professional judgement in this review.

Please ensure that the statements in Section C are completed by the student and supervisor prior to submission.

Project Title:	What can contemporary female representations of sexuality in music tell us about our understanding of female sexuality?
Student:	Scarlett Lee
Student Number:	U1655378
Course:	Media and Popular Culture
Supervisor:	Dr Rebecca Saunders
Project Start Date:	September 2020

SECTION B: PROJECT OUTLINE (TO BE COMPLETED IN FULL BY THE STUDENT)

Issue	Please provide sufficient detail for your supervisor to assess strategies used to address ethical issues in the research proposal
Aim/objectives of the study These need to be clearly stated and in accord with the title of the study. (Sensitive subject areas which might involve distress to the participants will be referred to the Course Approval Panel).	The objective of my study is to investigate whether female sexuality in contemporary music creates feelings of empowerment for young women and to explore the gendered media reaction to 'hypersexuality' in music by female artists.
Brief overview of research methodology	I will distribute a survey made on survey monkey to

<p>The methodology only needs to be explained in sufficient detail to show the approach used (e.g. survey) and explain the research methods to be used during the study.</p>	<p>one hundred people through the social media platform Facebook asking a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions to investigate whether young women feel empowered by language and visual representations of hypersexuality in female contemporary music artists work, particularly in relation to the medium of the music video as well as the lyrics used the songs that I have chosen to study.</p>
<p>Does your study require any permissions for study? If so, please give details</p>	<p>It only requires permissions from the participants in my survey.</p>
<p>Participants Please outline who will participate in your research. If your research involves vulnerable groups (e.g. children, adults with learning disabilities), it must be referred to the Course Assessment Panel.</p>	<p>Adults, women aged 18-25</p>
<p>Access to participants Please give details about how participants will be identified and contacted.</p>	<p>I want to investigate whether young women in the UK feel empowered by the hypersexuality of contemporary female music artists so I will use Facebook groups that bring together groups of 18-25-year-old women in the UK to identify and contact participants.</p> <p>I will post my survey on the Facebook groups 'Gals who Graduate' and 'Grace Fit Guide' although not specifically groups aimed at discussions around music both of these groups contain a community of women aged 18-25 who come together to discuss issues similar to what I am trying to investigate so I hope that it will allow me to get a good variety of opinions which will allow me to draw conclusions. Interested people will follow a link that I will post where they will then be given the information sheet, consent form and survey</p>
<p>How will your data be recorded and stored?</p>	
<p>Confidentiality Please outline the level of confidentiality you will offer respondents and how this will be respected. You should also outline who will have access to the data and how it will be stored. (This should be included on the information sheet.)</p>	<p>I will store the results of the questionnaire on the Huddersfield university One Drive so that only I have access to the data.</p>
<p>Anonymity Do you intend to offer anonymity? If so, please indicate how this will be achieved.</p>	<p>The results of the survey will be anonymous.</p>
<p>To what extent could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or negative consequences</p>	<p>The research will be of minimal risk to participants as the survey concerns the sexuality of the females in the music videos that I am choosing to study and</p>

<p>for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in normal life). If more than minimal risk, you should outline what support there will be for participants.</p>	<p>whether it encourages feelings of empowerment. For example, I will be asking questions specifically about their reaction to specific lyrics in the songs that I am going to focus on as well as specific parts of the music videos. They will be focused on whether it makes them feel empowered or if they feel as though hypersexualisation the artists are helping society to objectify women. In the consent form for my survey, I will make sure that the participants are aware that they will be asked questions about hypersexuality and empowerment so they will have the option to opt-out of the survey if they feel as though they will be triggered by my investigation to feel stress or anxiety.</p>
<p>Does the project include any security-sensitive information? Please explain how processing of all security-sensitive information will be in full compliance with the "Oversight of security-sensitive research material in UK universities: guidance (October 2012)" (Universities UK, recommended by the Association of Chief Police Officers)</p>	<p>No. I am not recording the names, nationality, addresses or any other personal information of my participants apart from their gender and age.</p>

SECTION C – SUMMARY OF ETHICAL ISSUES (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT)

Please give a summary of the ethical issues and any action that will be taken to address the issue(s).

Informed consent, I will ensure that all of the participants in my study know how the research will be conducted and what information will be used so that they can give informed consent before taking part.

SECTION D – ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT)

Please supply to your supervisors, copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply a hard copy

I have included the following documents

Information sheet	Yes
Consent form	Yes
Questionnaire	Yes
Interview schedule	Not Applicable

Appendix 2 - Participant information sheet

University of Huddersfield
School of Music Humanities and Media

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Title: What can contemporary female representations of sexuality in music tell us about our understanding of female sexuality?

Name of Researcher: Scarlett Lee

Contact Details of Researcher: scarlett_n_lee@gmail.com

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. May I take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. What is the purpose of the project?

The research project is part of my undergraduate dissertation for my degree in Media and Popular Culture. My project is intended to provide the research focus for a module which forms part of my degree. The purpose of my research is to investigate whether female sexuality in contemporary music creates feelings of empowerment for young women and to explore the gendered media reaction to 'hypersexuality' in music by female artists.

2. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part in my survey as you are a part of the Facebook group Gals Who Graduate/Grace Fit Guide. I am specifically investigating the opinion of young women in my research which is why you have been chosen.

3. Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, so please do not feel obliged to take part. You may withdraw from the study by the 28th February if you decide that you would no longer like to be a part of the study. Contact me via email (scarlett.n.lee@gmail.com) to do this.

4. What do I have to do?

You will be invited to take part in a questionnaire. This should take no more than 10 minutes of your time.

5. Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

There should be no foreseeable disadvantages to your participation. If you are unhappy or have further questions at any stage in the process, please address your concerns initially to the researcher if this is appropriate. Alternatively, please contact Professor M. Adkins (m.adkins@hud.ac.uk) at the School of Music, Humanities and Media, University of Huddersfield.

6. Will all my details be kept confidential?

All information which is collected will be strictly confidential and anonymised before the data is presented in any work, in compliance with the Data Protection Act and ethical research guidelines and principles.

7. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this research will be written up in a 9000-10,000 dissertation. If you would like a copy please contact the researcher.

8. What happens to the data collected?

The data will be stored on my University server. It will not be available to anyone except me. Once my dissertation is marked and complete, the data will be destroyed.

9. Where will the research be conducted?

The research will be undertaken in Huddersfield, and during the pandemic remotely in Northumberland.

10. Who has reviewed and approved the study, and who can be contacted for further information?

Dr Rebecca Saunders

R.I.Saunders2@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 3 - Copy of the participant consent form

University of Huddersfield
School of Music Humanities and Media

Participant Consent Form (E4)

Title of Research Study: What can contemporary female representations of sexuality in music tell us about our understanding of female sexuality?

Name of Researcher: Scarlett Lee

Participant Identifier Number:

- I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet related to this research, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before the 28th of February, without giving any reason.
- I understand that all my responses will be anonymised.
- I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.
- I agree to take part in the above study

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

Name of Researcher: Scarlett Lee


Signature of Researcher: 

Date: 15/01/2021

Appendix 4 - Survey questions

Questions Responses 665

Section 1 of 5



WAP, an empowering anthem or internalisation of the male gaze?

"A man can be as mediocre as he wants to be but still be praised. A man can talk about how he's about to do all of these drugs and then come and shoot your house up, but as soon as I say something about my vagina, it's the end of the world?" (Meghan Thee Stallion, 2020).

Hyper-sexuality is a trend in contemporary music for female music artists, which is arguably seeking to empower young female consumers. My research project looks to investigate whether this over-sexuality evokes feelings of empowerment in 18-25 year old women.

Do you identify as a woman? *

The reason for this question is that for this part of my research I am specifically investigating feelings of empowerment in women aged between 18-25.

Yes
 No

What age are you? *

18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25

What does empowerment mean to you? *

Long answer text

Section 2 of 5

Strip - Little Mix



Please watch the whole video before moving onto the questions.

Strip - Little Mix



:::

After watching this music video please select the top 5 emotions that you feel in relation to it *

- Powerful
- Excited
- Upset
- Sexy
- Important
- Annoyed
- Violated
- Empowered
- Hyped
- Marginalised
- Exposed
- Independent
- Hopeless
- Confident
- Other

Which part or parts of the video make you feel these feelings? *

Long answer text

Section 3 of 5

Strip - Media Reaction

Below are some screenshots showing some different reactions towards Strip from musicians, fans and music journalists. Please state below each image whether you agree or disagree with what they express. If you have further opinions on any of the statements, there is space provided for you to give your point of view.



▼Josh▼

@jadesysbreathe



Remember the time Little Mix released Strip, it was a self empowering anthem for basically anyone, talking about loving whoever you want to love and being confident in yourself, the video featured women of all shapes and colours and sizes. At the end , they did a campaign



Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

- Agree
- Disagree

Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text



Ojooluwa Ibiloye
@OJ_ibiloye



Replying to [@honilatte](#)

"It gives so much honour and power than stripping naked."

I haven't seen any successful woman that strips naked except female musicians and porn stars - and you know the reason why they do that.

Misguided Feminists would shut you up with "I can do anything with my body."

8:21 PM · Feb 15, 2021 · Twitter for Android

6 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 50 Likes

Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

- Agree
- Disagree

Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text

Image title



Judit
@IdolsAriBells



SEXIEST WHEN I'M CONFIDENT 👑 thank you for making the best feminist song and music video ever @LittleMix

Little Mix - Strip (Official Video) ft. Sharaya J
youtu.be/DIsD_cifOsk

7:39 PM · Nov 20, 2018 · Twitter for iPhone



Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

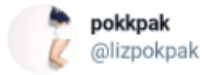
Agree

Disagree

Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text

Image title



pokpak
@lizpokpak



'They are getting more provocative': Spice Girl Mel C slams Little Mix as too sexualised dlvr.it/MSnpMG



Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

- Agree
- Disagree

Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text

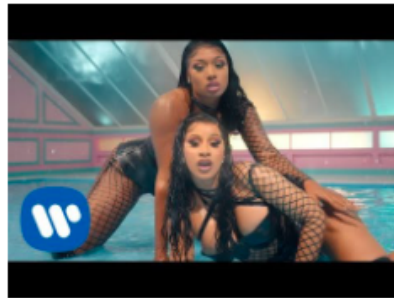
Section 4 of 5

WAP - Cardi B feat. Meghan Thee Stallion



Please watch the whole video before moving onto the questions.

Wap - Cardi B feat. Meghan Thee Stallion



After watching this music video please select the top 5 emotions that you feel in relation to it *

- Powerful
- Excited
- Upset
- Sexy
- Important
- Annoyed
- Violated
- Empowered
- Hyped
- Marginalised
- Exposed
- Independent
- Hopeless
- Confident
- Other

Which part or parts of the video make you feel these feelings? *

Long answer text

After section 4 Continue to next section

Section 5 of 5

WAP - Media Reaction

Below are some screenshots showing some different reactions towards Strip from musicians, fans and music journalists. Please state below each image whether you agree or disagree with what they express. If you have further opinions on any of the statements, there is space provided for you to give your point of view.



Women's Voices
@WomenReadWomen

The pornification of the music industry has not happened overnight. However, we used to be able to criticize it. #WAP promotes objectification as empowerment; objectification of women leads to increased violence against women. On this issue, @rustyrocks is spot on.



The Telegraph @Telegraph · Aug 15, 2020

"Russell Brand's 'feminist' video lecture scolds female musicians for being too sexy. Has he conveniently forgotten his shameful past?" | writes @katieglassST
telegraph.co.uk/music/artists/...

Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

- Agree
- Disagree

Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text

Image title



Chadwick Rogers
@ChadwickRogers9



Progressive degenerate feminist Cardi B sets women back decades with garbage like WAP. No wonder men are confused.

4:04 PM · Aug 19, 2020 · Twitter for Android



Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

Agree

Disagree

Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text

Image title



christine 🍷
@bokkuatsu

...

WAP is actually a feminist power anthem because lyrics such as "Put him on his knees, give him somethin' to believe in" alludes to Megan Thee Stallion as the deity in which the man on his knees "believes in", thus asserting her power over the man. In this essay I will-

6:55 PM · Aug 31, 2020 · Twitter Web App

...

Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

Agree

Disagree

Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text



Collective Shout
@CollectiveShout



#WAP not a feminist statement - it's patriarchy in action:

'The same old sexual objectification of women as objects of male gratification doesn't magically become progressive or feminist simply because some women participate in or profit from it.'

More>> collectiveshout.org/response_defen...



Do you agree or disagree with the sentiment expressed? *

- Agree
- Disagree



Please add any further comments or opinions on the statement? *

Long answer text

Appendix 5 - Survey results

Do you identify as a woman?	What does empowerment mean to you?	After watching this video, do you feel more empowered?	Team 1 - Do you identify as a woman?	Team 2 - Do you identify as a woman?	Team 3 - Do you identify as a woman?	Team 4 - Do you identify as a woman?	Team 5 - Do you identify as a woman?	Team 6 - Do you identify as a woman?	Team 7 - Do you identify as a woman?	Team 8 - Do you identify as a woman?
Yes	21	Choices and control over situations	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	20	Being accepted and embraced	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Being confident to live a life you believe in	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	21	Like you are capable of anything. Walking into a room and feeling confident no matter who is in it.	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Feeling confident to speak and carry out myself	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	22	Feeling emboldened and with the confidence required to take action you see and realize the choices that best reflect that inner self	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	20	Feeling strong in your beliefs, knowing your values and morals and not letting others bring you down if they don't agree with them	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	22	Feeling empowered. Feeling as if you can already be anything you want to be without external constraints	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Own your confidence and a sense of self-worth	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	22	Having the power/ability to make it and make your own decisions	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Having the power/ability to make it and make your own decisions and to make your own way in life	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	22	The ability for a woman to feel confident in herself and not feel afraid to whatever she sets her mind to	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Feeling strong	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	22	Being free to be as I like	Powell, Sany, Empowered, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Being able to be strong and independent	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Feeling confident, feeling equal	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	24	Being made to feel powerful by others actions	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	21	A strong sense of inspiration that leads to strong feelings of self-worth	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	20	Being confident enough to do what you want and not let anyone else tell you how to do it	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	24	Feeling inspired and motivated	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	20	Agency over actions and expression of self	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	20	Feeling in control	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	21	Feeling confident	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Feeling strong enough to stand up for yourself and be as the way you want to be	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	22	There is a spiritual relationship of empowerment between us. We're connected. On the surface we're not connected to anything, allowing people to gain power of fear wherever	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	24	Autonomy - strong	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	23	Being able to live your authentic and truthful version of yourself	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	19	Feeling strong in yourself and your abilities as a woman	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	21	Being confident to always choose through life, it's not being held back by others opinions	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Yes	22	Seeing to achieve the best and having the best version of yourself	Excited, Empowered, Hopeful, Confident, Other	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree

Due to the sheer volume of responses to my survey, I have not included them all in this appendix. The above photos are representative of the data but show only 30 of the participants. Full results from the 665 respondents can be found [here](#).