



TESIS DOCTORAL

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**Cosificación de las mujeres:**  
Análisis de las consecuencias  
psicosociales de los piropos

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Editor: Universidad de Granada. Tesis Doctorales  
Autora: Alba Moya Garófano  
ISBN: 978-84-9125-840-7  
URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/10481/43577>



Tesis Doctoral

**COSIFICACIÓN DE LAS MUJERES:  
ANÁLISIS DE LAS CONSECUENCIAS PSICOSOCIALES  
DE LOS PIROPOS**

**Women's Objectification:  
Analyzing the psychosocial consequences of piropos**

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**Universidad de Granada**

Granada, Febrero 2016

La portada de la tesis ha sido realizada por Javier Morales

El presente trabajo de investigación ha sido financiado a través del programa de Formación de Profesorado Universitario (FPU; Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Gobierno de España), al que ha estado vinculada la doctoranda desde Diciembre de 2011 hasta Noviembre de 2015 (Ref. AP2010-3622)



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Granada, 11 de Enero de 2016

Directores de la Tesis

Doctoranda

Fdo.: Jesús López Megías

Fdo.: Rosa Rodríguez Bailón

Fdo.: Alba Moya Garófano





# **Agradecimientos**

## **Acknowledgments**

No sucede nada, no temas.  
Sólo es el tiempo.  
Nos ha pasado  
como una exhalación  
y hemos tenido que arrimarnos un  
poco  
al arcén. Pero  
ya contábamos con eso.  
Mira, la noche (allí enfrente,  
esperando) aun está lejos.  
Ven,  
Salgamos fuera.  
Todavía  
nos queda mucho  
atardecer.

(Karmelo C. Iribarren)

Es así. Parpadeas y el tiempo ha pasado. Casi sin darte cuenta, ya van cuatro años.

Tic-tac.

Nacen estas líneas de noche y con cierto cansancio, pero con la inmensa alegría de saber que de todas las palabras escritas a lo largo de esta tesis, las últimas son para daros las gracias.

En primer lugar, a mis tutores, Jesús y Rosa. Gracias por vuestros años de dedicación, por vuestra paciencia y por regalarme vuestro tiempo y calidad humana. Jesús, son ya más de diez años *emocionándome*. Gracias Rosa, porque no han dejado de sorprenderme tu vitalidad y tu fuerza constantes pese a tus numerosas responsabilidades.

Para mí constituís ambos indudables ejemplos de lo que debería ser la academia. Es mucho lo aprendido de vosotros en todo este tiempo, gracias sinceras por haber querido enseñarme.

No puedo dejar de agradecer a mi grupo de investigación, por todo lo que me ha aportado a lo largo de los años, por el interés de cada una de las personas que lo componen en tan apasionantes y distintas temáticas, y fundamentalmente, por lo que nos une, la inquietud por lo social.

Gracias a todas las personas que prestaron su tiempo a colaborar en nuestras investigaciones, a cambio de nada o de muy poco. Sin vosotros/as sí que hubiera sido imposible. Puede que algún día Lucía pueda caminar tranquila por la calle. Ojalá que lo aprendido en este tiempo pueda ayudar, aunque sea un poquito, a que así sea.

También me siento agradecida por lo arropada que he estado en cada una de mis estancias de investigación. Ámsterdam, Exeter y Canterbury tendrán para siempre un lugar importante en mi memoria.

*I also feel grateful for all the wonderful people who made me feel at home during my research stays. Amsterdam, Exeter and Canterbury will always have a special place in my heart and memory.*

Thanks to all the members of the committee too, as well as the two external evaluators, who kindly accepted to revise my work.

Ha sido mucho lo aprendido y lo vivido a lo largo de mis años de doctorado. En ellos, he tenido la suerte de contar en lo personal con el gran apoyo de tantas personas que, probablemente, todo lo que pueda decir se quede corto. Lo intentaré.

Gracias a Katerina, porque me maravillan sus grandes ojos con los que mira el mundo y se cuestiona las cosas que no pueden estar bien. Y a Ana-U, por tantos años levantando la vista y encontrándome con su sonrisa.

¡Qué privilegio haber podido llegar hasta aquí en vuestra compañía!

Mis agradecimientos se quedan pequeños si de ti se trata, mi querida Mónica. Gracias por encontrarme, *chica de la gasolinera*. Eres sin duda la casualidad más bonita que me trajo esta tesis doctoral.

A Hugo, simplemente gracias por ser un tipo hermosamente difícil.

Gracias a Rocío y a Lili, *inadaptadas* como yo. Y a Gloria, porque aunque se encuentre lejos, cada puesta de sol sigue llevando su nombre. También gracias a ti Antonella, que llegaste para darle un nuevo significado a las galletas de limón.

Unas gracias muy especiales son para ti, Natalia. Por acompañarme siempre y funcionar cuando todo me sabe a error. Por tu sensibilidad y por recordarme cuál es nuestra coartada. Por vestirte de verde tantas veces. Por dejarme ser luz y, sobre todo, por no fingir la vida.

También tengo que agradecer haberte conocido, Ana Efe. Simulabas ser tortuga pero en realidad resulta que eres una increíble suricata cuidadora.

Jaime, amigo mío, gracias por ser un idealista (sin ínfulas), y, por encima de todo, por tu gran *coração*.

A Esperanza, porque desde que la conocí no he dejado de pensar en que sus padres no pudieron elegir un mejor nombre para ella.

Y gracias a ti, Javi (Lente), por dedicarme tu tiempo y tu talento. Nadie mejor que tú para ilustrar todo lo que yo quería decir.

Gracias Rafa, por llenarme la vida de metáforas.

A todas mis amigas y amigos, los de siempre y los que llegaron hace menos y lo hicieron para quedarse. Personas que me llenan y aportan mucho a mi vida, estando unas más cerca y otras repartidas por lo ancho y largo de este mundo. Gente de buena calidad.

Gracias por todo el amor que tuve siempre en casa. A mi madre, por su ternura infinita. A mi padre, por su nobleza con la que me deslumbra a diario. A ambos, por regalarme buenos valores, y a mi hermano, porque, *for you, there's nothing in this world I wouldn't do*. Gracias por no dudar nunca de que yo podía hacer esto bien. Por recordármelo.

Me gusta mi vida y que vosotros estéis en ella.

En definitiva, gracias a todos los gajos de la naranja.  
A mi suerte, que es mucha, de contar con cada uno de ellos.



*A mi padre,  
mi mejor compañero en este viaje a Ítaca.*





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# **RESUMEN**





La cosificación sexual ocurre cuando una persona es tratada como un simple cuerpo que existe para el uso y el placer de los demás (Bartky 1990; Nussbaum, 1999). Según la teoría de la cosificación (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997), esta experiencia de ser tratada como un cuerpo ocurre a las niñas y las mujeres con más frecuencia que a los hombres, y puede resultar en lo que se ha llamado auto-cosificación, (self-objectification). La auto-cosificación se da cuando la persona internaliza una visión de sí misma como un objeto o conjunto de partes del cuerpo. La investigación realizada desde la formulación de la teoría ha demostrado que ser cosificadas tiene importantes consecuencias negativas para las mujeres (para una revisión, véase por ejemplo Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn y Thompson, 2011).

La cosificación sexual comprende una amplia gama de comportamientos, como "mirar fijamente o con lascivia a los cuerpos de las mujeres, hacer comentarios sexuales sobre ellas, silbar o pitarles con el coche, hacer fotografías no solicitadas de sus cuerpos, presentar imágenes sexualizadas de ellas en los medios de comunicación o pornografía, acosarlas sexualmente y actuar violentamente hacia las mujeres (Calogero, 2011, p. 34).

En la presente tesis doctoral se ha estudiado un tipo de conductas cosificadoras: los piropos – esto es, los comentarios y observaciones realizados por hombres sobre los atributos físicos de

mujeres desconocidas, y que tienen lugar en contextos públicos. Los piropos puede considerarse un ejemplo claro de cosificación sexual muy presentes en la sociedad española. Los piropos procedentes de desconocidos también se pueden considerar como "acoso callejero", es decir, el "acoso sexual de las mujeres en lugares públicos por parte de hombres desconocidos" (Bowman, 1993, p. 519). Según esta autora, el acoso callejero o procedente de extraños "incluye comportamientos verbales y no verbales, como aullidos, miradas lascivas, guiños, tocamientos, pellizcos, silbidos y otros comentarios; siendo estos últimos con frecuencia de naturaleza sexual o comentarios evaluativos sobre la apariencia física de una mujer o sobre su aspecto público" (Bowman, 1993, p. 523).

Nuestro objetivo principal fue examinar los efectos psicosociales en las mujeres de esta habitual forma de cosificación dado que, aunque los piropos son un tema muy polémico en nuestro país, hasta hoy no se sabe casi nada sobre sus consecuencias.

Esta tesis consta de seis capítulos. El primero aborda la teoría de la cosificación y ofrece una visión sintética de la literatura existente que explora las consecuencias que tiene ser objetivado. Se dedica una parte importante de este capítulo a explicar qué son los piropos y su idiosincrasia. La mayoría de la investigación que se ha realizado sobre piropos proviene de la lingüística y de la literatura y nos puede ayudar a entender el trasfondo cultural en el que se enmarcan este tipo de

comportamientos. Los capítulos 2, 3, 4 y 5 contienen nuestros estudios empíricos. En el segundo capítulo, presentamos la versión en español de la Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) (McKinley y Hyde, 1998), escala que hemos adaptado para tener una medida válida de auto-cosificación que poder utilizar en nuestros estudios. El capítulo 3 está dedicado a explorar diversas dimensiones de los numerosos piropos utilizados hoy en día en España. Básicamente, se analizan los piropos a lo largo de dos dimensiones: cómo se evalúan, y si se perciben como conductas cosificadoras o no. A continuación, utilizando una metodología de escenarios hipotéticos, probamos los efectos que dos tipos diferentes de piropos, uno "soez" y otro "galante", tienen en las mujeres jóvenes. Específicamente, medimos cómo los piropos afectan a las experiencias de alegría, ira, ansiedad y tristeza de las mujeres, así como también a sus sentimientos de poder y de indefensión. Para asegurarnos de que los resultados se replicaban y no eran debido a diferencias individuales de los participantes, llevamos a cabo un estudio adicional con un diseño intra-participantes, en el que ambos tipos de piropos fueron evaluados por las mismas mujeres. En el capítulo 4 presentamos a mujeres jóvenes un piropo "soez", utilizando uno de los escenarios de los estudios anteriores, y comprobamos cómo el piropo afectaba a sus emociones y sentimientos, a la vez que considerábamos también los niveles de auto-cosificación de las mujeres, con el fin de analizar si estos niveles moderaban los efectos emocionales. En el

capítulo 5 se exploraron otro tipo de consecuencias que los piropos pueden tener sobre las mujeres, concretamente, si la forma de reaccionar de las mujeres hacia un piropo “galante” influye en la forma en que son percibidas por otras personas. Por último, a lo largo del capítulo 6 discutimos brevemente los principales hallazgos que encontramos a lo largo de los diferentes estudios realizados y sus consecuencias, así como algunas ideas para la investigación futura.

# **OVERVIEW**



Sexual objectification occurs when a person is treated as a mere body that exists for the sexual use and pleasure of others (Bartky 1990; Nussbaum 1999). According to objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), this experience of being treated as a body occurs to girls and women more frequently than men, and can result in what has been called self-objectification, which happens when people internalize a view of themselves as an object or collection of body parts. As the research published since the formulation of the theory has shown, being objectified has important negative consequences for women (for a review, see for example Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011).

Sexual objectification includes a wide range of behaviours, like “gazing or leering at women’s bodies, making sexual comments about women, whistling or honking at women, taking unsolicited photographs of women’s bodies, presenting sexualized images of women in media or pornography, sexually harassing women, and engaging in sexual violence against women” (Calogero, 2011, p. 34).

The present dissertation studied one kind of these objectifying behaviours: *piropos* –i.e. men’s remarks about physical attributes directed toward unknown women in public contexts. *Piropos* can be considered a clear example of sexual objectification within Spanish society. *Piropos* that come from strangers can also be considered “stranger harassment,” that is, the “[sexual] harassment of women in public places by men who are strangers” (Bowman, 1993, p. 519).



According to this author, stranger harassment “includes both verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls, and stranger remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman’s physical appearance or on her presence in public” (Bowman, 1993, p. 523).

Our main objective was to examine the psychosocial effects on women of this common form of objectification, given *piropos* are a very controversial issue in our country but until today we didn’t know much about their consequences.

This thesis includes six chapters. The first one, approaches objectification theory and offers a synthetic view of the existing literature that explores the consequences of being objectified. We then dedicate an important section to explain *piropos* and their idiosyncrasy. Most of the research that has been conducted about *piropos* comes from the linguistic and literature area, and it can help us to understand the cultural background that *piropos* have. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 contain our empirical studies. In the second chapter, we present the Spanish version of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) (McKinley & Hyde, 1998) that we adapted in order to have a self-objectification valid measure to use in our studies. Chapter 3 is dedicated to explore different dimensions of numerous *piropos* used in Spain nowadays. Basically, we analyze the *piropos* along two dimensions: how they are evaluated, and whether they are perceived as

objectifying behaviours or not. Then, using hypothetical scenarios methodology, we test the effects that two different types of *piropos* --a "lewd" and a "gallant" one-- have on young women. Specifically, we measure how *piropos* affect the experience of women's joy, anger, anxiety and sadness, and also their sense of power and helplessness. To ensure that the results replicate and are not due to participant's individual differences, we conduct an additional study with a within subject design. It includes both kinds of *piropos* to be evaluated by the same participants. In Chapter 4 we present to young women a "lewd" *piropo*. Using a vignette as in former studies, we test how the *piropo* affects women's emotions and feelings, analyzing also their self-objectification levels in order to analyse if they moderate these emotional effects. Chapter 5 explores another kind of consequences that *piropos* may have on women, specifically, whether how women's react toward *piropos* influences the way they are perceived by other people. Finally, along Chapter 6 we briefly discuss the main findings we find throughout the different studies conducted and their implications, as well as some ideas we have for future research.

We understand that the reader may find repetitive the outlined ideas that appear more than once across this dissertation. The explanation for this lies in the fact that empirical chapters were written as individual papers to be submitted for publication. We also wish to apologize due to the combination of Spanish and English along this

doctoral dissertation. It is a requirement to use two different languages in order to obtain the international PhD at the University of Granada

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# **Chapter 1:**

## **Introduction/Introducción**



## 1. Cosificación

### 1.1. Definición/Teoría

La sociedad de consumo instaurada en los países occidentales da muestras continuas de cómo los individuos son percibidos frecuentemente en función de la utilidad que puedan tener para el resto. Esto es, mayor será tu valor cuanto mayor sea la utilidad con que te perciben. Ya en su día Marx (1897/1959) destacó la valía que otorga el capitalismo a las personas en función de su productividad. Por lo tanto es fácil entrever que cosificar a las personas no es un fenómeno nuevo. Centrándonos en el caso concreto de la población femenina, la utilidad con la que se percibe a las mujeres está muchas veces relacionada con su sexualidad, esto es, con ser consideradas objetos sexuales (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, y Galinsky, 2008). Y es que las mujeres son “definidas, evaluadas y tratadas como objetos sexuales más frecuentemente de lo que lo son los hombres” (Calogero, 2011, p. 4).

Las referencias a la cosificación de la mujer son recurrentes a lo largo de la historia. Por mencionar algunas, ya en 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft, en su *Vindicación de los Derechos de la Mujer* (reedición 1995), afirmaba que la instrucción que las mujeres habían recibido hasta ese momento, había sido la de limitarse a ser insignificantes objetos de deseo. Años más tarde, Simone de Beauvoir reflexionaría sobre los peligros de ser vista como un cuerpo o una cosa. Por ejemplo, en este



extracto del *Segundo Sexo* (1952/2000), de Beauvoir ejemplifica la transición de una niña en la pubertad que empieza a desarrollarse como mujer: *“...Brazos, piernas, músculos, incluso las redondas nalgas sobre las cuales se sienta, todo tenía hasta entonces un uso claro...; Debajo del jersey o de la blusa, los senos se manifiestan, y aquel cuerpo que la pequeña confundía consigo misma aparece como carne; es un objeto que los demás miran y ven.”* (p. 133). Para Beauvoir, ser visto como cosa es algo que impide al individuo ser reconocido como libre, y tal consideración de las mujeres como mero objeto sexual, se torna así en un gran problema para ellas.

Centrando la atención en pensadoras contemporáneas, encontramos la definición de la filósofa Martha Nussbaum, según la cual la cosificación implica *“tratar como cosa algo que realmente no es un objeto, sino que es, en realidad, un ser humano”* (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 218). Esta autora propone hasta siete nociones diferentes que subyacen a la idea de cosificación: 1) instrumentalidad; 2) negación de autonomía; 3) falta de agencia y actividad; 4) fungibilidad; 5) violabilidad; 6) propiedad; y 7) negación de la subjetividad. Subraya además que la cosificación sexual es un concepto que ya empieza a resultarnos familiar y que las personas empleamos con asiduidad en nuestra vida diaria.

También desde la filosofía, Sandra Bartky (1990) formula una de las ya más citadas definiciones de cosificación sexual femenina, definiéndola como *“considerar a la mujer como un cuerpo, partes del*

*cuerpo o funciones sexuales capaces de representarla, obviando sus características como persona” (p. 26).*

Si bien las diferentes concepciones del fenómeno de la cosificación sexual arriba mencionadas ilustran que ésta ha sido abordada desde diferentes disciplinas y por autoras de distinto bagaje, lo cierto es que no es hasta 1997 cuando se dispone de un marco conceptual integrador de todas ellas, al menos desde la Psicología. Es entonces cuando Fredrickson y Roberts enuncian la teoría de la cosificación, buscando ofrecer un punto de partida que permitiera la investigación empírica de las consecuencias psicológicas que pudiera tener este fenómeno (Calogero, 2011). Según las autoras, *“el factor común a todas las formas de cosificación sexual es la experiencia de ser tratada como un cuerpo (o una colección de partes del cuerpo), valorado predominantemente para su uso (o consumo) por parte de otros”* (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997, p. 174). Aunque reconocen que no todas las mujeres experimentan la cosificación de la misma manera, parten de la base de que su cuerpo de mujer las convierte en vulnerables a sufrir cosificación sexual y a padecer por ende experiencias psicológicas similares. En su teoría consideran investigaciones realizadas con mujeres negras, lo que resulta relevante pues el resto de trabajos anteriores se habían centrado fundamental y casi exclusivamente en mujeres blancas de clase media. Además, un detalle interesante que plantean es que pese a que las consecuencias psicológicas de la violencia sexual han captado la atención de numerosos investigadores,

formas más sutiles y cotidianas de cosificación, como es el mirar fijamente el cuerpo (mirada cosificadora), han pasado desapercibidas. Fredrickson y Roberts (1997) especifican que la mirada cosificadora se da fundamentalmente en tres escenarios: a) en encuentros interpersonales y sociales, donde las mujeres son miradas de este modo con más frecuencia que los hombres (Hall, 1984); b) cuando se recrean encuentros centrados en miradas cosificadoras en los medios de comunicación, (por ejemplo a través de anuncios donde los hombres aparecen mirando directamente a la mujer); y c) en la exposición constante a imágenes de cuerpos o partes del cuerpo de mujeres también en los medios de comunicación, (lo cual no se limita solo a la pornografía, sino también a películas, anuncios, revistas femeninas, artes visuales, fotografía deportiva...). Con respecto a esta última, Fredrickson y Roberts resaltan la sobreexposición actual de imágenes sexualizadas del cuerpo femenino, que aseguran hace casi imposible para las mujeres evitar su exposición a las mismas.

Una repercusión crítica de ser vistos por los demás de forma sexualmente cosificadora, es que con el tiempo los individuos pueden llegar a internalizar una visión de sí mismos como observadores, un efecto que se denomina auto-cosificación (self-objetification) (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). La supervisión consciente del cuerpo que resulta de la auto-cosificación puede concebirse como una estrategia que desarrollan las mujeres para predecir cómo serán tratadas por los demás, lo que obviamente tiene importantes repercusiones en su

calidad de vida. Este hábito, además, está lejos de ser trivial, y puede ser muy disruptivo para el flujo de la consciencia de las mujeres (haciendo por ejemplo que sus acciones y pensamientos queden interrumpidos por imágenes de qué aspecto tiene su cuerpo, consecuencia de la constante supervisión del mismo por parte de los demás). Cabe aclarar que, en nuestra opinión, en la literatura dedicada al tema, es prácticamente imposible distinguir entre cosificación y auto-cosificación en lo que se refiere a sus consecuencias. Dependiendo del trabajo, se habla bien de efectos de la cosificación, bien de efectos de la auto-cosificación, o incluso se intercambian las palabras como sinónimas.

Aunque Fredrickson y Roberts reconocen que no todas las mujeres experimentan la cosificación de la misma manera y que existen diferencias individuales que influyen en el modo en que se vive la cosificación sexual, fruto de sus investigaciones y de las de otros determinan que existen una serie de consecuencias psicológicas y experienciales muy frecuentes en muchas de ellas. En primer lugar, a nivel emocional, la cosificación o auto-cosificación podría afectar a las emociones de vergüenza y ansiedad. La primera es una emoción que como sabemos surge habitualmente cuando las personas se comparan con un ideal interiorizado o cultural que no cumplen (Darwin, 1872/1965; M. Lewis, 1992); en este caso aparecería en relación con el aspecto físico, algo que parece ocurrir con más frecuencia en mujeres que en hombres (H. Lewis, 1971; Silberstein, Striegel-Moore, y Rodin, 1987; Stapley y Haviland, 1989). En el caso de la ansiedad,

emoción que se vincula a la anticipación de un daño o amenaza (Lazarus, 1991; Ohman, 1993), vendría dada en el caso que nos ocupa tanto por la preocupación por no ajustarse a los cánones de belleza, como por la amenaza que puede suponer para la propia integridad física de las mujeres ser agredidas por su apariencia física. Además de sobre estas dos emociones, Fredrickson y Roberts reflexionan acerca de otros efectos de la auto-cosificación sobre lo que denominan “los estados motivacionales más elevados”. Csikszentmihalyi (1982, 1990) denomina *‘flow’* a la situación de estar absorbido por una actividad física o mental que supone un reto y que nos es inmensamente reconfortante porque creemos contar con la capacidad suficiente para hacer frente a ella. Una cultura como la nuestra, que cosifica el cuerpo femenino, puede impedir o dificultar a la mujer alcanzar este estado motivacional, bien porque con frecuencia es interrumpida por otros para hacer referencia a su cuerpo, bien porque para alcanzar el *flow* hay que dejan de atender a sus propias sensaciones físicas. Por último, las autoras hablan de las consecuencias de la auto-cosificación en los estados corporales internos de las mujeres. Numerosos estudios han sugerido que las mujeres son menos precisas que los hombres a la hora de detectar sensaciones fisiológicas internas en ausencia de claves contextuales (e.g., Blascovich y cols., 1992), lo que las autoras relacionan con la auto-cosificación, pues todo lo que implica esta experiencia, podría llevar a las mujeres a dejar de atender a sus propias sensaciones físicas.

La teoría de la cosificación defiende que todas las potenciales consecuencias de la auto-cosificación anteriormente comentadas pueden afectar a la salud mental de las mujeres. Concretamente a la depresión, las disfunciones sexuales y los desórdenes de alimentación, entre otros.

A continuación, haremos un breve repaso por la literatura que desde la aparición de la teoría de la cosificación en 1997, ha analizado algunas de las consecuencias negativas que tiene para las mujeres ser tratadas como objetos sexuales.

### **1. 2. Consecuencias de la Auto-cosificación**

Si bien las enumeradas hasta ahora son las potenciales consecuencias psicológicas propuestas por Fredrickson y Roberts en la teoría de la cosificación, las numerosas investigaciones dedicadas a este tema a raíz de su publicación en 1997, han permitido identificar empíricamente un amplio abanico de efectos perniciosos que la auto-cosificación tiene en las mujeres. Así, sabemos que afecta negativamente a su bienestar subjetivo (e.g., Breines, Crocker, y Garcia, 2008; Mercurio y Landry, 2008), y que produce un impacto negativo en la autoestima corporal (e.g., McKinley, 1998, 1999; McKinley y Hyde, 1996; Noll y Fredrickson, 1998). La auto-cosificación también ha mostrado tener efectos en los patrones de dieta de chicas adolescentes (Grabe y Hyde, 2009), relacionándose con trastornos de la alimentación (e.g., Calogero, Herbozo y Thompson, 2009; Calogero, Davis, y

Thompson, 2005; Daubenmier, 2005; Moradi, Dirks, y Matteson, 2005; Tyka y Hill, 2004). En cuanto a la salud mental, se ha encontrado que contribuye a padecer síntomas depresivos y depresión unipolar (e.g., Grabe, Hyde, y Lindberg, 2007; Miner-Rubino, Twenge, y Fredrickson, 2002; Muehlenkamp y Saris-Baglama, 2002; Tiggemann y Kuring, 2004), se relaciona con un aumento de la probabilidad de auto-lesionarse (Muehlenkamp, Swanson, y Brausch, 2005) y de abusar de sustancias (Carr y Szymanski, 2010). También hay hallazgos que señalan que afecta a la salud sexual de las mujeres (e.g., Calogero y cols. 2009; Cash, Maikkula, y Yamamiya, 2004; Claudat y Warren, 2014; Steer y Tiggemann, 2008) y se ha encontrado una influencia de la auto-cosificación en el empeoramiento del rendimiento cognitivo (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, y Twenge, 1998; Gay y Castano, 2010; Gervais, Vescio y Allen, 2011; Quinn, Kallen, Twenge, y Fredrickson, 2006). Igualmente graves son los efectos de la auto-cosificación sobre el miedo y la percepción de riesgo de violación hallados por Fairchild y Rudman (2008), o la mayor culpabilización de víctimas de violación que previamente habían sido cosificadas (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez y Puvia, 2013).

Estos son sólo algunos de los hallazgos que a lo largo de casi 20 años han venido a servir de evidencia a lo que Fredrickson y Roberts postularon en 1997. En definitiva, vemos que la cosificación sexual, una experiencia recurrente que sufren las mujeres a lo largo de sus vidas, y

la auto-cosificación que se deriva de ella, tienen efectos negativos de muy diversa índole en su bienestar.

Después de ver algunos de los resultados de numerosos estudios dedicados al tema, pasaremos ahora a considerar cómo la forma de abordar empíricamente el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual varía según las investigaciones.

### **1.3. Aproximaciones al Estudio de la Cosificación y la Auto-cosificación**

Desde su formulación, la teoría de la cosificación ha generado numerosos estudios, algunos de ellos considerando la cosificación como una experiencia relativamente repetida a lo largo del tiempo mientras que otros la han abordado como una situación puntual. Así, dentro de la primera concepción, muchas investigaciones se han centrado en hacer recordar a las mujeres experiencias cosificadoras vividas, bien pidiéndoles que las escriban, bien mediante el uso de escalas que indagan sobre la prevalencia y frecuencia de dichas experiencias, como es el caso de la Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS) (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath y Denchik, 2007). Por otro lado, dentro de la segunda perspectiva, que aborda la cosificación de forma más puntual, existe una línea de trabajos que se ha focalizado en generar una situación cosificadora y analizar las consecuencias que tiene en las mujeres. Estas situaciones pueden variar desde aquéllas en las que la cosificación es bastante explícita hasta otras de tipo más implícito o



sutil. Entre las primeras estarían, por ejemplo, la empleada por Fredrickson y cols. (1998), donde se pedía a las mujeres que se pusieran un traje de baño (“Swimsuit-Sweater Paradigm”) y se observaran frente al espejo, o la del estudio de Gervais y cols. (2011) en el que las mujeres recibieron miradas cosificadoras por parte de un chico. Investigaciones en las que la manipulación de la situación cosificadora es más sutil serían aquellas donde se prima a las participantes con palabras vinculadas a la cosificación (Calogero y Pina, 2011; Roberts y Gettman, 2004), o estudios en los que las participantes anticipan la interacción con un hombre (Calogero, 2004).

Tras esta breve aproximación a las diferentes formas de estudio de la cosificación sexual, veremos seguidamente una distinción importante entre lo que se ha denominado auto-cosificación rasgo y auto-cosificación estado, pues se trata de una conceptualización que hemos contemplado en nuestras investigaciones.

#### **1. 4. Auto-cosificación Rasgo y Estado**

Dentro de la teoría de la cosificación, suele ser habitual diferenciar entre auto-cosificación rasgo (trait self-objectification) y auto-cosificación estado (state self-objectification) (Calogero y Pina, 2011; Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). La primera es la tendencia crónica a ver el propio cuerpo a través de la lente de la cosificación, tanto en contextos públicos como privados. La auto-cosificación estado se refiere a la situación temporal en la que las personas se ven a sí mismas como

objetos en respuesta a estímulos ambientales. Las investigaciones que han incluido los dos tipos de auto-cosificación muestran que la auto-cosificación estado es especialmente dañina para las mujeres altas en auto-cosificación rasgo (e.g., Fredrickson y cols. 1998; Gapinski, Brownell y LaFrance, 2003).

A pesar de este importante posible papel moderador de la auto-cosificación rasgo en las situaciones cosificadoras, no hay mucha investigación previa que haya tratado sobre ello. Gay y Castano (2010) encontraron que era necesaria la combinación de la auto-cosificación rasgo y un contexto cosificador (que generara auto-cosificación estado) para que aparecieran consecuencias negativas, como el incremento de la carga cognitiva y, como resultado de ésta, el empeoramiento en el rendimiento de las mujeres. Por su parte Calogero y colaboradores (2009) encontraron que ante críticas relacionadas con la apariencia, las mujeres altas en auto-cosificación rasgo informaban de mayor vergüenza e insatisfacción corporales que las bajas en auto-cosificación. De manera similar, con el ya clásico “Swimsuit-Sweater Paradigm”, Fredrickson y colaboradoras (1998) encontraron que la condición del bañador elicita mayores niveles de vergüenza corporal, pero sólo en aquellas participantes altas en auto-cosificación rasgo.

Sin embargo, según la teoría de la cosificación, cabría esperar que las mujeres altas en auto-cosificación rasgo reaccionasen de manera menos negativa ante conductas cosificadoras (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). De acuerdo a esta teoría, estas mujeres habrían

desarrollado una tendencia a verse a sí mismas enfatizando sus cualidades corporales (en detrimento de otros esquemas que también podrían usar para auto-percibirse), lo que minimizaría el impacto negativo de una situación cosificadora.

Como veremos más adelante, para nosotros era de especial interés investigar el posible papel moderador de la auto-cosificación rasgo en nuestro objeto de estudio, los piropos por parte de extraños, pues esperábamos que los niveles de auto-cosificación de las mujeres afectaran al modo en el que éstas experimentaban dichas situaciones cosificadoras.

Antes de pasar a considerar las situaciones de cosificación objeto de estudio en esta tesis, los piropos, comentaremos un tipo de situación cosificadora que ha recibido cierta atención en las investigaciones sobre auto-cosificación: el *street harassment*, dado que guarda bastante relación con los piropos.

### **1. 5. Ejemplos Cotidianos de Cosificación de la Mujer: *Street***

#### ***Harassment***

Tras una aproximación general al concepto de cosificación sexual generado desde diferentes ámbitos de conocimiento y especialmente desde la Psicología con la teoría de la cosificación sexual, queda patente que las mujeres sufren de esta tiranía con mucha frecuencia a lo largo de sus vidas. Como hemos visto, Fredrickson y Roberts (1997) mencionaban tres tipos de situaciones en las que las mujeres suelen ser

cosificadas. En esta misma línea, Calogero señala que algunas de las situaciones o conductas que se han definido como cosificación sexual incluyen “la mirada al cuerpo de las mujeres, los comentarios sexuales sobre sus cuerpos, los silbidos o pitidos con el coche, ser fotografiadas con un teléfono móvil, ser expuestas a imágenes sexuales en los medios o pornografía, el acoso, la violencia sexual y la violación” (Calogero, 2011, p. 34). Esta definición da pie a considerar las numerosas oportunidades de ser cosificadas que acontecen en el día a día de una mujer. Resulta bastante probable pensar que prácticamente cualquier persona estaría de acuerdo en reconocer que las tres últimas situaciones constituyen con seguridad comportamientos nocivos y de gran peligro para la integridad física y mental de las mujeres. Sin embargo, es reseñable el hecho de que el resto de conductas enumeradas en dicha definición y consideradas como ejemplos de cosificación sexual, son algo tan habitual en la cotidianidad de la población femenina, que pudieran pasar por poco importantes. Es más, de la misma manera que sería muy difícil encontrar personas que no se posicionasen públicamente en contra del acoso sexual, la violencia sexual o la violación, es posible que las miradas que las mujeres reciben dirigidas a sus cuerpos, los comentarios de extraños por la calle, los silbidos o pitidos, no sean considerados como algo reprobable con la misma rotundidad. No obstante, hemos de señalar que sí hay países y culturas en las que existen cierta unanimidad en rechazar las miradas, comentarios y pitadas hacia las mujeres (como el caso de Bélgica, donde

este tipo de comportamientos se han llegado a prohibir; Cruz, 2015), mientras que en otros muchos lugares resulta un tema en el que existe alta diversidad de opiniones, llegándose incluso a criticar a aquellas voces que se alzan condenando dichos comportamientos (e.g., Ferreras, 2015; Posadas, n.d.; Sust, 2015).

En el caso concreto de España, donde se han desarrollado los diferentes estudios que componen esta Tesis Doctoral, existe cierto revuelo en torno a los mencionados comentarios sexuales sobre el cuerpo de la mujer, que hace ya años que ocupa los medios y conversaciones de muchos de sus ciudadanos y ciudadanas (e.g., “La Presidenta,” 2015; “¿Son estos piropos?”, 2015). Y es que, recibir un comentario en la calle por parte de un extraño haciendo alusión a alguna característica física, sigue siendo a día de hoy una escena habitual en la vida de las mujeres españolas. Es lo que conocemos como piropo, una práctica que se remonta a siglos atrás y que puede ser etiquetada como cosificadora, ya que consiste en comentarios que se centran fundamentalmente en el físico de la mujer y la relegan a un mero objeto, lo que coincide por ejemplo con la definición de Bartky (1990), según la cual al ser cosificada, “la mujer es vista como un cuerpo, partes del cuerpo o funciones sexuales capaces de representarla, obviando sus características como persona” (p. 26).

A continuación pasaremos a hacer un análisis más detallado de lo que son los piropos, remontándonos a su origen y tradición histórica y considerando algunas de sus peculiaridades e idiosincrasia.

## 2. El Piropo

### 2. 1. Definición

Hasta hace apenas dos años, el Diccionario de la Real Academia Española se refería a los piropos como “lisonjas, requiebros”. Resultaba pues llamativo el empleo de un lenguaje que parecía más propio de épocas pasadas para denominar a un fenómeno aun vigente en España. La última actualización de dicho diccionario el pasado año, pasó a definir el piropo como un “dicho breve con que se pondera alguna cualidad de alguien, especialmente la belleza de la mujer” (Real Academia Española, 2014). Esta definición no menciona en su contenido alusión alguna hacia la persona emisora del piropo. Y es que si bien hablando en términos coloquiales, una mujer pudiera recibir el piropo de alguien con quien mantiene una relación cercana, o de otra mujer, el piropo en su tradición histórica es realizado por personas extrañas a quien los recibe. En nuestro caso, preferimos el uso de la palabra cumplido o halago para referirnos a los comentarios por parte de conocidos. Como ejemplo de esto último, Carvajal (2014) señala que cuando se utiliza piropo como sinónimo de cumplido, lo que se está haciendo es aludir a la cotidianidad, y equiparar ambas cosas como si se tratara de una misma, cuando no lo son. Justifica esta afirmación la autora remitiéndose a Schreier (2005), que defiende que el piropo no puede entenderse como una expresión perteneciente a la cortesía. Esto se debe a que la cortesía requiere de dos condiciones fundamentales para darse: que las dos

personas se conozcan –o al menos tengan la intención de hacerlo- y que vaya a existir una respuesta en el caso de la persona receptora del comentario. En el caso del piropo, tal como nosotros lo entendemos, no se cumplen dichas reglas, pues a diferencia del halago, “se da en la calle, bajo condiciones de anonimato y casi siempre con el silencio como respuesta” (Schreier, 2005, p. 33). Así pues, cuando a lo largo de este trabajo utilicemos el término piropo, nos estaremos refiriendo siempre a “la frase o expresión espontánea que un hombre dirige a una mujer desconocida en plena calle o en otro espacio abierto y público” (Preisig, 1998). Tal y como afirma Fridlitzius (2009), el piropo entre desconocidos hace referencia casi siempre (de manera directa o indirecta) al cuerpo femenino y no a otras cualidades diferentes del físico de las mujeres. Se confirma, de nuevo, la naturaleza cosificadora que venimos defendiendo.

## **2. 2. Orígenes de los Piropos**

En relación con los orígenes del piropo, existe diversidad de opiniones. En uno de los primeros trabajos dedicados a los piropos desde el campo de la lingüística, Beinhauer (1973) tilda al piropo de un fenómeno típicamente español. Preisig (1998) a su vez, considera que es una costumbre genuinamente española que en sus inicios practicaban poetas y dramaturgos, y que llegado el siglo XVIII se extendió, en una versión más desenfadada, al ámbito de la calle a través del teatro popular. Soukkio (1998) por su parte, apunta al amor cortés y la cultura

trovadoresca europea de los siglos XI y XII, como las raíces más antiguas del piropo. Para Venclovská (2006), el piropo surgiría con posterioridad al romance medieval. Y es que tras la desaparición de los romances medievales, surgirían coplas cantadas por grupos de jóvenes a las mujeres para demostrar su interés hacia ellas.

Si bien pues no podemos estar seguros de cual sea el origen real de los piropos, lo que sí que parece claro es que han constituido un elemento importante en la cultura española, dentro de la que cuentan con una gran tradición (Preisig, 1998). Además, independientemente de su procedencia, existe bastante consenso al entender que el piropo sin embargo no es un fenómeno exclusivamente español, sino que se da en muchos países de cultura mediterránea (Carvajal, 2014; Suárez-Orozco y Dundes, 1984), y en países de habla hispana en América y otras partes del mundo (Diosdado, 1996; Fridlitzius, 2009). Aunque Carvajal (2014) explica que el arraigo hispánico del piropo en Latinoamérica podría asociarse con la colonización, se trata sólo de una especulación.

### **2. 3. El Piropo en la Actualidad**

Ya en 1973, en su investigación sobre el piropo español, Beinhauer apuntaba a que el piropo “no se estilaba”. Según Preisig (1998), son muchos los españoles que aun hoy recuerdan con nostalgia esta costumbre, que según ella se ha ido perdiendo ante los nuevos estilos de vida de la población. Otras autoras hablan también de la decadencia paulatina de los piropos en España (Fridlitzius, 2009),



consecuencia de los diversos cambios sociales que ha ido experimentando el país y de la emancipación de la mujer (Astakhova, 2014; Venclovská, 2006).

Por otra parte, respecto a la idea de que los piropos de antaño eran galantes y bonitos, pero que en los actuales predominan los de tipo grosero, encontramos en la literatura referencias que indican que ya en el pasado se daban los piropos soeces, y que ya entonces eran rechazados por las mujeres (Carvajal, 2014; Suárez-Orozco y Dundes, 1990). A medio camino, hay quienes defienden que el piropo de antaño ya no existe, y que lo que nos queda es una versión digamos deteriorada de lo que un día fue, como recoge Carvajal (2014). Estas opiniones no parecen sostenerse con los datos de que se dispone, pues en la literatura encontramos referencias que indican que ya en el pasado se consideraban algunos piropos como una práctica ofensiva para las mujeres y ya entonces eran rechazados (Carvajal, 2014; Suárez-Orozco y Dundes, 1990). Un hecho bastante desconocido, es que en la España de 1928, los piropos llegaron a parecerle tan vulgares al dictador Primo de Rivera, que durante dos años se llegó a prohibir su uso en la calle, aunque esta ley desaparecería con el tiempo (Suárez-Orozco y Dundes, 1990).

Independientemente de las opiniones, nos encontramos sin embargo con una realidad: las mujeres españolas siguen recibiendo con frecuencia piropos por la calle, como cualquiera de las mujeres que lea nuestro trabajo podría refrendar (Jiménez, 2015; "Sobre el viejo", 2015).

Un problema que existe es la falta de datos que nos informen de la incidencia del piropo. Pese a ello, en trabajos informales como el estudio “Ausonia” (“Eres maravillosa”, 2009), seis de cada diez mujeres afirmaban recibir piropos con frecuencia, y en otros como el de Presig (1998), la autora documenta el fenómeno a través de dos medios: una entrevista grupal con chicas y chicos jóvenes que dan cuenta de que les ocurren, y mediante la observación participativa. Como meramente anecdótico, paseando durante una hora por el metro de Madrid, la autora recibió un total de cinco piropos distintos. De manera similar, Jiménez (2015), una periodista española, realizaba este mismo año su propio experimento paseando por las calles de Madrid y Sevilla, en las cuales recibió muchas insinuaciones por parte de hombres que registró a través de una cámara oculta. Parece pues que, sin poder asegurar si la prevalencia se ha visto disminuida como muchos defienden o no, lo que sí sabemos es que los piropos callejeros no han dejado de existir.

#### **2. 4. El Piropo desde la Lingüística**

Hasta el momento, casi todos los trabajos mencionados en relación con el piropo pertenecen al ámbito de la lingüística. Aun así, resulta muy interesante conocer ciertas peculiaridades del fenómeno desde esta perspectiva, pues pueden ayudar a entender su aceptación tanto en nuestro país como en otros de cultura similar. Así, al ser entrevistada como experta en lengua española, Esther Forgas (Seco, 2011) señala una serie de características típicas del lenguaje español,

que han podido contribuir a que el piropo se encuentre enraizado en nuestra cultura. La primera, hace referencia al “carácter expansivo o extravertido de la sociedad, compartido con los pueblos del Mediterráneo, que lleva a un uso generalizado de la exclamación y el apóstrofe”. En segundo lugar, Forgas señala “la tendencia a la exageración y a la hipérbole (“Me hielo de frío”, “me muero de sed”), propia de la lengua española”. Un tercer elemento que destaca la autora, sería “la tendencia a la retórica y los juegos de palabras. En español se juega con el lenguaje (comparaciones inéditas, chistes, invención de nuevas palabras), se toma libertades con él”. Por último, dice Forgas que “el español es una lengua con tendencia metafórica. Junto con la mayoría de lenguas semíticas y mediterráneas, en España metaforizamos, utilizamos parábolas, refranes...”. Como ejemplo de metáfora con la que aludir a algo que literalmente significa otra cosa, Forgas cita esta: “Nena, con estas pestañas no vayas por El Retiro, que están de poda”.

A su vez, el modelo de la cortesía de Brown y Levinson (1987), una teoría pragmalingüística que aborda la manera en la que el contexto influye en la interpretación del significado, podría ayudar a entender esta relativa aceptación del piropo en el contexto hispano. Dicha teoría se basa en la noción de *face* (imagen) de Goffman (1967), que se refiere al valor social positivo que los individuos esperan obtener en sus interacciones sociales con los demás. Brown y Levinson incorporan nuevos elementos a las ideas de Goffman, y al concepto de imagen

positiva, añaden otra faceta diferencial: la negativa. Así, la imagen positiva se refiere al deseo de ser aceptado, respetado o valorado por los otros miembros de la sociedad de la que se forma parte; y la imagen negativa, al deseo de cada individuo de que sus actos no se vean impedidos por otros, esto es, de no querer ser molestado o presionado por otros, de poder llegar a realizar comportamientos por su propia decisión, o de que no invadan su territorio personal. Por lo tanto, desde el modelo de Brown y Levinson, la cortesía verbal se consideraría como una serie de estrategias orientadas al control de la propia imagen de los hablantes (Martínez-Cabeza, 1997).

Según investigaciones como las de Haverkate (2000), la mayoría de las culturas pueden dividirse en función de que los miembros que la componen muestren preferencia por la expresión de cortesía positiva (a la que él prefiere denominar “de solidaridad”), o en cambio prefieran la expresión de cortesía negativa (a la que él llama “de distanciamiento”). Haverkate (2000) en su investigación sobre el habla holandesa y española encontró resultados similares a los que encontró Sifianou (1992) con el habla inglesa y griega: la cultura española (y griega) están orientadas hacia la solidaridad (positivas), mientras que la holandesa (e inglesa) lo están hacia el distanciamiento (negativa).

Un elogio se define como “una alabanza de las cualidades y méritos de alguien o de algo” (Real Academia Española, 2014b). Según Jang (2011), como el elogio es un acto que busca expresar solidaridad y aprecio por la persona que lo recibe, elogiar podría considerarse una

estrategia prototípica de la cortesía positiva. En este marco, las investigaciones demuestran que los españoles dan las gracias por recibir un cumplido, no así los estadounidenses (De Pablos, 2006), y de forma similar el holandés medio no acostumbra a hacer ni recibir cumplidos, ni los sabe responder (Haverkate, 2003), habiéndose observado reacciones similares en las culturas inglesa o escandinava (Albelda y Briz, 2010).

Estos enfoques lingüístico-culturales pueden ayudar a comprender las reacciones que pueden darse ante los piropos en las culturas hispanas. En las culturas anglosajonas los cumplidos sobre la apariencia no son tan comunes, y sería lógico esperar que algo mucho más extremo como son los piropos callejeros, comentarios acerca de la apariencia física dichos por extraños en la calle, se vean claramente como una invasión de la intimidad o del espacio personal de la mujer, reflejando que las mujeres están siendo molestadas o presionadas por otros (algo esencial en la cortesía negativa o de distanciamiento). En cambio, en las culturas hispanas el piropo entraría de lleno dentro de la cortesía positiva o de solidaridad, pues en cierto sentido fortalece el deseo de ser aceptado, respetado o valorado. La globalización y la progresiva extensión en el mundo occidental de las mismas ideologías y patrones culturales, procedentes en su mayor parte del mundo anglosajón, pueden estar haciendo que las culturas de cortesía positiva como la hispana estén cambiando en la dirección de la cortesía negativa, pero aún pueden tener en estas culturas mucha importancia su tradición de cortesía positiva. El piropo, incluso en su forma más

soez, podría así ser interpretado por su receptor/a como un cierto elogio por parte de la otra persona, y como hemos señalado, para los miembros de estas culturas suele ser más difícil rechazar los elogios que para los miembros de culturas de cortesía negativa.

## **2. 5. Reacciones ante Distintos Tipos de Piropos**

Podemos encontrar piropos callejeros de diferente naturaleza, que aunque difieran entre sí, comparten sin embargo centrarse fundamentalmente en el físico y en tratar a la mujer como un objeto, generalmente de índole sexual. Aunque se podrían hacer agrupaciones de diferentes tipos de piropos, de manera global podríamos distinguir entre dos categorías fundamentales: unos de carácter más soez, y otros de corte más “galante”. Esto, al menos, es lo que de forma repetida aparece en las discusiones y debates sobre los piropos habidos en España en los últimos años. Así, aunque la mayoría de mujeres afirma rechazar los piropos de tipo más vulgar, los de naturaleza más suave parecen generar reacciones algo más ambiguas o ambivalentes, pues hay mujeres que afirman disfrutarlos, mientras que otras los consideran una muestra de sexismo o incluso de agresión de género (Fridlitzius, 2009; Gaytan-Sánchez, 2009; Venclovská, 2006). Recientemente en España surgía cierta polémica sobre el piropo, pues algunas mujeres con puestos de responsabilidad pública y política expresaban su rechazo a cualquier tipo de piropo, reacción ante la cual otras manifestaban oponerse a los piropos groseros pero defendían los que consideran más

suaves (“Eres maravillosa”, 2009; Jiménez, 2015; ¿Piropos o acoso?, 2005).

### **3. Nuestro Trabajo: Piropos y Cosificación**

Cuando decidimos estudiar los piropos españoles como forma de cosificación sexual, nos encontramos en primer lugar con la necesidad de contar con un instrumento adecuado al contexto español para medir auto-cosificación. Por ello, nuestro primer paso al comienzo de esta Tesis Doctoral fue crear la versión española de la denominada Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) (McKinley y Hyde, 1996). Esta es la razón por la que nuestra primera serie de estudios está dedicada al proceso que seguimos hasta llegar a tener el instrumento que hemos utilizado a lo largo de nuestras investigaciones.

La segunda cuestión que abordamos fue cómo aproximarnos al estudio de los piropos. No queríamos obviar la naturaleza espontánea y el contexto público en el que ocurre, así como el carácter situacional del piropo. Como hemos indicado en esta introducción, ha habido dos formas claramente diferenciadas de aproximarse a la auto-cosificación: la primera ha consistido en pedirles a las mujeres que recuerden sus experiencias de cosificación o estimar la frecuencia o intensidad con las que se han sentido cosificadas en un periodo de tiempo reciente (e.g. en el último año); la segunda –mucho menos explorada- ha consistido en exponer a las mujeres a situaciones cosificadoras. Dada la naturaleza del piropo, hemos optado en nuestra investigación por esa segunda

perspectiva, y desechamos la idea de hacer a las mujeres recordar sus propias experiencias recibiendo piropos de extraños.

Como hemos visto, algunas de las situaciones o conductas que se han definido como cosificación sexual incluyen “la mirada al cuerpo de las mujeres, los comentarios sexuales sobre sus cuerpos, los silbidos o pitidos con el coche, ser fotografiadas con un teléfono móvil, ser expuestas a imágenes sexuales en los medios o pornografía, el acoso y la violencia sexual y la violación” (Calogero, 2011, p. 34). Sin embargo, son pocas las investigaciones en las que se realice una exposición directa a dichas situaciones. Una excepción podría considerarse el trabajo reciente de Wiener, Gervais, Allen y Marquez (2013), quienes realizaron un experimento de laboratorio en el que un cómplice del investigador, en el contexto de una supuesta entrevista de trabajo, observaba hasta en cuatro ocasiones los pechos de las participantes, y al finalizar la entrevista emitía un comentario relacionado con la apariencia de los mismos. Dada la naturaleza del piropo callejero (por extraños, en la calle) y su dificultad para recrear experimentalmente una situación similar con cierto grado de credibilidad, en nuestros estudios no se expone directamente a las mujeres a una situación cosificadora de piropo, sino que se utiliza metodología de escenario para recrear un piropo emitido por un extraño en un espacio público. Concretamente, a lo largo de nuestros estudios indagamos sobre los efectos psicosociales que pueden tener los piropos tanto de tipo soez, como los de tipo galante o halagador. Como ya vimos, son estos últimos los que suscitan



más polémica en nuestra sociedad, y nos parecen de interés especialmente por el cierto paralelismo que guardan con el sexismo benévolo (Glick y Fiske, 1996), pues reflejan una visión supuestamente positiva de la mujer, pero tendenciosa, en el caso del sexismo benévolo limitándola a los roles de género tradicionales y en el caso del piropo, cosificándola.

De forma paralela, los piropos también se relacionan con el ya comentado o *street harassment* o *stranger harassment*, que se define como “el acoso (sexual) hacia las mujeres, en lugares públicos, perpetrado por hombres desconocidos” e “incluye tanto comportamientos verbales como no verbales, tales como los silbidos, las miradas lascivas, los guiños, el ser agarrada o pellizcada, y los comentarios dirigidos a las mujeres o hechos en su presencia, que son normalmente de índole sexual y focalizados en su apariencia” (Bowman, 1993, p. 523). Esto es, el *street harassment*, es cometido por hombres que no son conocidos de la víctima (i.e., no un compañero de trabajo, amigo, familiar o conocido), y ocurre en lugares públicos (Fairchild y Rudman, 2008). Aunque la cosificación sexual por parte de extraños en espacios públicos es más habitual que la cosificación ejercida por parte de personas conocidas (Gardner, 1995; Macmillan, Nierobisz, y Welsh, 2000), a día de hoy sigue siendo escaso el número de investigaciones dedicadas a indagar sobre este tema (Calogero, 2011, p. 222). Este viene a ser otro motivo importante para haber dedicado nuestros estudios a indagar sobre los piropos, que son conductas cosificadoras, realizadas

por hombres a mujeres en lugares públicos, pero sobre las que a día de hoy no teníamos apenas información desde una perspectiva psicológica o psicosocial.

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# **EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

**Estudios empíricos**





## **Chapter 2:**

**Spanish version of the OBCS:  
A self-objectification measure**



**Spanish Version of the “Objectified Body Consciousness  
Scale” (OBCS): Results from Two Samples of Female  
University Students<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This article has been accepted for publication in: Moya-Garófano, A., Megías, J.L., Rodríguez-Bailón, R. y Moya, M. (in press). Spanish Version of the “Objectified Body Consciousness Scale” (OBCS): Results from Two Samples of Female University Students. *Revista de Psicología Social*.

## **Abstract**

Self-objectification happens when people internalize a view of themselves as an object or collection of body parts. Two studies were conducted to validate the Spanish version of the “Objectified Body Consciousness Scale” (OBCS) (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). This scale assesses self-objectification through three components: body surveillance, body shame, and appearance control beliefs in women. In Study 1 and Study 2, 218 and 201 female undergraduate students respectively, answered the Spanish version of this scale and other related measures. In Study 2, they also reported their emotions after being exposed to an objectifying scenario. The three subscales of the Spanish version of the OBCS showed acceptable indices of internal consistency (ranging between  $\alpha = .68$  to  $.84$ ), and confirmatory factor analysis showed a three-factor solution as the most appropriate. Adequate convergent validity was found with respect to the Self-Objectification Questionnaire (SOQ) and other variables such as self-esteem, other-directedness, hostile sexism, and enjoyment of sexualization. These findings suggest that the Spanish version of the OBCS scale is a satisfactory measure of college women’s self-objectification.

**Keywords:** women, self-objectification, OBCS, psychometric properties, Spain

## Resumen

La auto-cosificación ocurre cuando las personas internalizan una perspectiva de sí mismas como objetos o colecciones de partes del cuerpo. Realizamos dos estudios para validar la versión española de la “Objectified Body Consciousness Scale” (OBCS) (McKinley y Hyde, 1996). Esta escala evalúa la auto-cosificación a través de tres componentes: la Vigilancia Corporal, la Vergüenza por el cuerpo y las Creencias sobre el Control de la Apariencia en mujeres. En el Estudio 1, y el Estudio 2, 218 y 201 estudiantes universitarias respectivamente, contestaron a la versión española de la escala y a otras medidas relacionadas. Además, en el Estudio 2, informaron de sus emociones tras ser expuestas a un escenario cosificador. Las tres subescalas de la OBCS mostraron índices de consistencia interna adecuados (oscilando entre  $\alpha = .68$  y  $.84$ ). El análisis factorial confirmatorio mostró a su vez que la solución de tres factores era la más apropiada. También se encontró una adecuada validez convergente en relación al Self Objectification Questionnaire (SOQ). A su vez, se hallaron evidencias de validez basada en las relaciones entre las puntuaciones de la OBCS y variables como la auto-estima, la auto-monitorización, el sexismo hostil y el disfrute de la sexualización. Estos hallazgos sugieren que la OBCS es una medida adecuada para evaluar la auto-cosificación femenina en mujeres españolas.

**Palabras clave:** women, self-objectification, OBCS, psychometric properties, Spain

La sociedad de consumo nos muestra continuamente ejemplos de cómo el valor de las personas a menudo se estima en función de lo útiles que podemos llegar a ser. En el caso de las mujeres, un aspecto de la utilidad con la que son vistas está relacionado con su sexualidad, es decir, con ser consideradas objetos sexuales (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, y Galinsky, 2008; Luengas y Velandia-Morales, 2012).

Pese a que la cosificación sexual de la mujer no es una práctica novedosa, el estudio empírico de este fenómeno es relativamente reciente. En 1997 Fredrickson y Roberts enunciaron la teoría de la cosificación sexual (sexual objectification theory). Según las autoras, el “factor común a todas las formas de cosificación sexual es la experiencia de ser tratada como un cuerpo (o una colección de partes del cuerpo), valorado predominantemente para su uso (o consumo) por parte de otros” (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997, p. 174). Esta experiencia ocurriría tanto en encuentros interpersonales y sociales, como en los medios audiovisuales, algo que se da con asiduidad y que viene a mostrar que la mujer es cosificada sexualmente con más frecuencia que el hombre.

Entre las principales consecuencias psicológicas que se derivan de la cosificación sexual está la auto-cosificación (self-objectification) (para revisión, ver Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn y Thompson, 2011). Y es que ante la continua exposición a la mirada cosificadora de los otros, las mujeres acaban por adoptar la perspectiva de los observadores externos, considerándose a sí mismas como un cuerpo al que mirar y ser evaluado. Muchas investigaciones han indagado en los efectos

perniciosos que la experiencia de auto-cosificación genera: interrupciones en el flujo de conciencia de las mujeres, así como emociones de vergüenza y ansiedad, depresión, disfunciones sexuales y trastornos alimentarios (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997); disminución del rendimiento cognitivo (e.g. Quinn, Kallen, Twenge, y Fredrickson, 2006); o deseos de someterse a cirugía estética (Calogero, Pina, Park, y Rahemtulla, 2010). El interés por la auto-cosificación sexual ha promovido la búsqueda de medidas que permitan explorar el fenómeno de la manera más rigurosa posible. Uno de los instrumentos más utilizados es la “Objectified Body Consciousness Scale” (OBCS) (McKinley y Hyde, 1996).

McKinley y Hyde (1996) elaboraron y validaron la OBCS para medir la consciencia del cuerpo cosificado de mujeres jóvenes y de mediana edad. Para ello partieron de las teorías feministas, que afirman que las mujeres crecen aprendiendo que su cuerpo es un objeto para ser mirado, y que desde la infancia la cultura se encarga de promover unos estándares de belleza para la población femenina que las mujeres acaban interiorizando como propios, creyendo que son posibles de alcanzar. Es a la experiencia del cuerpo como objeto y a los pensamientos que la acompañan a lo que se denomina “consciencia del cuerpo cosificado” (objectified body consciousness). Según las creadoras de la OBCS son tres los componentes de dicha consciencia, que son los que dan lugar a las tres subescalas que conforman la OBCS: Vigilancia Corporal (Body Surveillance), Vergüenza Corporal (Body Shame) y Creencias de Control de la Apariencia (Appearance Control Beliefs). La



subescala de Vigilancia recoge la idea de que dado que las mujeres son objeto de atención sexual constante, esto las lleva a una auto-vigilancia permanente de su cuerpo para asegurar que se ajustan a los ya comentados cánones de belleza. La internalización de los estándares corporales que marca la cultura está en la base de la segunda subescala, a la que denominan Vergüenza Corporal, porque las autoras asumen que resulta bastante difícil alcanzar ese ideal de belleza impuesto desde el exterior. En tercer lugar, la subescala de Creencias de Control de la Apariencia evalúa el grado en que las mujeres creen que pueden controlar el aspecto de su cuerpo para que éste se ajuste a los modelos de belleza.

En el desarrollo de la versión original de la OBCS, McKinley y Hyde (1996) realizaron 3 estudios con mayoría de mujeres blancas, dos de ellos (Estudios 1 y 3) con universitarias y otro (Estudio 2) que incluía universitarias y también mujeres de mediana edad. La consistencia interna de las puntuaciones de las diferentes escalas fue adecuada en los Estudios 1 y 2: subescala de Vigilancia  $\alpha =$  de .76 a .89; subescala de Vergüenza  $\alpha =$  de .75 a .79 y subescala Control  $\alpha =$  de .68 a .76. Además, sus puntuaciones mostraron adecuadas fiabilidades test-retest (Estudio 3):  $r_s =$  .79, .79 y .73 para Vigilancia, Vergüenza Corporal y Control respectivamente. Un análisis factorial exploratorio en el Estudio 1 sirvió para seleccionar los 24 ítems que componen finalmente la OBCS, y un análisis factorial confirmatorio en el Estudio 2 avaló el modelo

tridimensional de la medida propuesto frente a dos modelos alternativos: unifactorial y bi-factorial.

Para validar las subescalas las autoras también incluyeron otras medidas en los tres estudios, algunas de tipo conductual (e.g. si las mujeres incurrían en algún tipo de restricción en su alimentación o en conductas relacionadas con el control de la apariencia), y otras actitudinales (diferentes escalas diseñadas para medir tópicos relacionados). En general, McKinley y Hyde (1996) encontraron apoyo a las hipótesis de partida para cada uno de los diferentes subcomponentes. Las puntuaciones en Vigilancia y Vergüenza corporal predijeron la presencia de trastornos alimentarios o el miedo a engordar, a la vez que una menor autoestima corporal. Por su parte, la mayor presencia de Creencias de Control se relacionó con una mayor práctica de ejercicio físico con el objetivo de controlar el peso, y con más comportamientos dirigidos al control de la apariencia (como el uso de maquillaje o de ropa para parecer delgada).

Desde su creación en 1996, la OBCS ha sido usada en multitud de estudios y con muestras muy variadas y diferentes, mostrándose como una medida de referencia para evaluar la auto-cosificación sexual (Calogero, 2011). La escala puede ser utilizada tanto con su puntuación global, como con las distintas subescalas por separado, siendo esto último lo habitual. Resultados de algunos estudios que hacen uso de la OBCS, muestran relaciones de la auto-cosificación con un descenso en el bienestar de mujeres jóvenes (Breines, Crocker, y Garcia, 2008),

síntomas depresivos (Miner-Rubino, Twenge, y Fredrickson, 2002), baja autoestima corporal (McKinley y Hyde, 1996; Noll y Fredrickson, 1998), vergüenza corporal o deseos de someterse a cirugía estética (Calogero y cols., 2010).

El objetivo de nuestro trabajo ha sido desarrollar la versión española de la OBCS. Para ello, dos traductores independientes tradujeron los ítems de la escala original al español. Posteriormente, otros dos traductores tradujeron estos ítems de nuevo al inglés. Finalmente, y a través de una puesta en común entre los traductores que participaron en este proceso y los responsables de la presente investigación, se llegó a una propuesta de versión española de la OBCS. La puesta en común estuvo guiada en todo momento por la definición teórica original dada a cada una de las dimensiones de la escala, de tal manera que los matices diferenciales encontrados en la traducción fueron consensuados bajo los principios de la validez de contenido, y por lo tanto de salvaguardar la representatividad y pertenencia teórica de los ítems de la escala (Delgado-Rico, Carretero-Dios, y Ruch, 2012).

### **Estudio 1**

En este estudio se realizó el primer análisis estadístico de los ítems de la versión española de la OBCS, y se exploró la estructura interna de la escala y la relación entre sus componentes. Para obtener evidencias de validez de las puntuaciones de la OBCS, se analizaron las relaciones esperadas entre las puntuaciones en sus dimensiones con

otras variables relevantes teórica y empíricamente. Concretamente, se han incluido las siguientes tres medidas:

1) *La Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS)* (Liss, Erchull, y Ramsey, 2011), que mide el disfrute de la mujer al ser sexualizada por los hombres. Esperamos que las puntuaciones en esta medida estén relacionadas, tal y como han mostrado otros estudios (e.g., Erchull y Liss, 2013; Liss y cols., 2011; Visser, Sultani, Choma, y Pozzebon, 2014), con la auto-cosificación sexual, sobre todo con la Vigilancia Corporal, que refleja si una persona vigila su apariencia y piensa con frecuencia en el aspecto que tiene su cuerpo.

2) *La subescala "Others-directedness" de la Self-Monitoring Scale de Snyder* (1974) que permite evaluar en qué medida una persona está orientada hacia los otros, o bien hacia sus valores. Esperamos que las puntuaciones en esta escala estén positivamente relacionadas con las de la OBCS, especialmente también con la subescala de Vigilancia, dado que ambas medidas intentan recoger la preocupación de la persona por ajustarse a lo que cree que los demás esperan de ella.

3) *El Inventario de Sexismo Ambivalente (ASI)* (Glick y Fiske, 1996). Puesto que la auto-cosificación implica que la mujer asume las normas tradicionales sobre ella misma relativas a la importancia del cuerpo, sería de esperar que cuanto más tradicional fuera la mujer en términos de sexismo, más alto puntuaría en auto-cosificación, tal y como han mostrado algunos estudios correlacionales (e.g., Erchull y Liss, 2013; Liss y cols., 2011).

4). *La Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg* (1965), que refleja el grado de satisfacción que tiene una persona consigo misma. Investigaciones previas han encontrado que las puntuaciones en esta escala correlacionan negativamente con las de la OBCS (Visser y cols., 2014), siendo mayor la relación de la autoestima con la Vergüenza que con la Vigilancia.

## Método

### Participantes

Participaron 218 mujeres, todas estudiantes de una universidad pública española. Su media de edad fue de 20.04 años ( $SD = 2.17$ ) y el rango entre 17 y 31 años.

### Instrumentos

Las participantes respondieron a las siguientes escalas:

1) *La Objectified Body Consciousness Scale* (McKinley y Hyde, 1996). La versión española (ver ANEXO) consta de 24 ítems, en la que las participantes muestran su grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con cada una de las afirmaciones en una escala tipo Likert de 7 puntos desde 1 (*totalmente en desacuerdo*) hasta 7 (*totalmente de acuerdo*) (siendo el valor 4 *ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo*). En cada ítem también aparece la alternativa de respuesta NA (no aplicable). La escala consta de tres subescalas, de 8 ítems cada una: Vigilancia Corporal (e.g. “A menudo me preocupo por si la ropa que llevo me sienta bien” o “Me preocupo más por lo que puedo hacer por mi cuerpo que del aspecto que tiene”),

Vergüenza Corporal (e.g. “Me siento mal cuando mi apariencia no es tan buena como podría ser” o “Me siento avergonzada de mí misma cuando no me esfuerzo por tener el mejor aspecto posible”), y Creencias de Control de la Apariencia (e.g. “Pienso que una persona puede tener la apariencia que ella quiera si está dispuesta a trabajar en ello” o “Realmente no pienso que tenga mucho control sobre mi apariencia corporal”).

2) *Subescala “Others-directedness” de la Self-Monitoring Scale de Snyder (1974)* (versión española de Echebarría y Páez, 1989). Consta de 11 ítems, (e.g., “Mi comportamiento normalmente expresa mis verdaderos sentimientos interiores, actitudes y creencias”) que originalmente se contestan en formato V/F, pero que nosotros presentamos en formato de respuesta tipo Likert (desde 1 = *totalmente en desacuerdo*, hasta 7 = *totalmente de acuerdo*), con el objetivo de que siguieran la misma pauta de respuesta que el resto de medidas. Su consistencia interna en nuestro estudio fue adecuada ( $\alpha = .79$ ), tras eliminar dos ítems que correlacionaron pobremente con la puntuación total. Mayores puntuaciones indican mayor orientación hacia los demás.

3) *Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS)* (Liss et al, 2011). Se utilizó una versión en español realizada para esta investigación también mediante el procedimiento de traducción inversa. Está compuesta por 9 ítems referidos al disfrute de la mujer al ser sexualizada por los hombres. Los ítems (e.g., “Para mí es importante que los hombres se sientan atraídos por mí”) se contestan en un formato de respuesta tipo

Likert de 6 puntos (1, “*totalmente en desacuerdo*” y 6 “*totalmente de acuerdo*”). Su consistencia interna en este estudio fue alta ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Mayores puntuaciones indican mayor disfrute al ser sexualizada por los demás.

4) *Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg* (1965) (versión en castellano de Echeburúa, 1995). Medida de autoinforme de 10 ítems respondidos con un formato de respuesta tipo Likert de 4 puntos (1 significa “*totalmente en desacuerdo*” y 4 “*totalmente de acuerdo*”). El alpha de Cronbach fue .88. Mayores puntuaciones indican mayor autoestima.

5) *Inventario de Sexismo Ambivalente (ASI)* (Glick y Fiske, 1996; versión española de Expósito, Moya, y Glick, 1998). Compuesto por 22 ítems que conforman dos subescalas de 11 ítems cada una: Sexismo Hostil (SH) ( $\alpha = .90$ ) (e.g., “La mayoría de las mujeres no aprecian completamente todo lo que los hombres hacen por ellas”) y Sexismo Benévolo (SB) ( $\alpha = .88$ ) (e.g., “Muchas mujeres se caracterizan por una pureza que pocos hombres poseen”). El formato de respuesta a sus ítems fue tipo Likert: de 0 -*totalmente en desacuerdo*- a 5-*totalmente de acuerdo*). SH y SB correlacionaron positivamente,  $r = .62$ ;  $p < .001$ .

Finalmente las participantes indicaban su edad, sexo y titulación que cursaban.

### **Procedimiento**

Las estudiantes completaron el cuestionario individualmente en aulas de la universidad. Asimismo, fueron informadas sobre la

confidencialidad de sus respuestas tanto de manera oral, como escrita.

El orden de presentación de las escalas fue contrabalanceado.

### **Análisis estadísticos**

Se trabajó con el paquete estadístico SPSS (versión 17.0). Para el análisis de ítems se calcularon los estadísticos descriptivos de cada uno de los elementos de la escala, además de sus índices de discriminación por medio de la correlación ítem-total corregida. La fiabilidad de las puntuaciones para cada una de las dimensiones supuestas del instrumento, se calculó a través del coeficiente de consistencia interna alfa de Cronbach. El estudio exploratorio de la estructura interna del instrumento se realizó mediante análisis factorial exploratorio de ejes principales con posterior rotación varimax. La decisión sobre el número de factores a retener se basó en dos aproximaciones de análisis diferenciales con el objetivo de poder emitir un mejor juicio sobre la estructura subyacente de las puntuaciones del instrumento. De esta forma, se consideraron los resultados generados por el Análisis Paralelo a través del programa Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis (Watkins, 2000), a la vez que los índices de ajuste RMSEA y SRMR asociados a las diferentes soluciones factoriales exploratorias diferenciadas por el número de factores a retener. Estos últimos índices se obtuvieron por un procedimiento de estimación de máxima verosimilitud (ML) tal cual se implementa en programa Mplus (Muthén y Muthén, 2004-2008).



## Resultados

### *Análisis de ítems y Estudio exploratorio de la estructura interna de la OBCS*

En la tabla 1 se presentan los estadísticos descriptivos de los ítems de la OBCS junto a los valores de correlación ítem-total corregida (índice de discriminación) separando los cálculos por dimensión teórica esperada de la OBCS.

Los índices de discriminación de los ítems (correlación ítem-total corregida) para la dimensión Vigilancia Corporal y Vergüenza Corporal fueron adecuados (véase Tabla 1), oscilando entre .30 y .56 para el primer caso, y entre .51 y .71 para el segundo. Para la dimensión Creencias de Control de la Apariencia, no obstante, se observó un valor bajo para el ítem 4 (.16). Para el resto de ítems de esta dimensión los valores oscilaron entre .25 y .55.

Los estadísticos descriptivos fueron indicativos de una adecuada variabilidad de las respuestas de los participantes, con desviaciones típicas en todos los casos superiores a 1.

Para el análisis de la consistencia interna, y siguiendo las instrucciones de McKinley y Hyde, se procedió a invalidar las puntuaciones en aquellas subescalas en las que una participante hubiera respondido con NA o espacios en blanco en más de dos ítems. Los coeficientes de consistencia interna de las diferentes subescalas de la OBCS fueron los siguientes: Vigilancia Corporal  $\alpha = .73$ ; Vergüenza

Corporal  $\alpha = .84$ ; Creencias de Control de la Apariencia  $\alpha = .66$ , similares a los informados en los estudios de McKinley y Hyde (1996), con muestras de mujeres universitarias y de mediana edad.

**Tabla 1.** Estadísticos descriptivos y correlación ítem-total corregida para los ítems de la OBCS.

<i>Items</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>ctic</i>
Vigilancia corporal			
OBCS_1	5.64	1.69	.30
OBCS_3	4.23	1.65	.44
OBCS_7	3.46	1.58	.34
OBCS_9	5.27	1.58	.48
OBCS_14	3.99	1.90	.56
OBCS_16	5.41	1.41	.53
OBCS_18	5.25	1.46	.39
OBCS_20	4.38	1.45	.33
Vergüenza corporal			
OBCS_2	4.03	2.01	.55
OBCS_5	2.88	1.73	.60
OBCS_8	4.61	1.78	.60
OBCS_11	2.64	2.06	.58
OBCS_13	2.74	1.67	.51
OBCS_15	4.39	1.82	.49
OBCS_17	2.52	1.66	.61
OBCS_22	3.24	2.07	.71
Creencias de Control de la Apariencia			
OBCS_4	4.52	1.73	.16
OBCS_6	4.09	1.78	.38
OBCS_10	5.28	1.44	.25
OBCS_12	5.19	1.53	.35
OBCS_19	4.58	1.53	.51
OBCS_21	5.32	1.82	.45
OBCS_23	5.11	1.60	.25
OBCS_24	4.62	1.56	.55

*Nota:*  $N = 218$ . *ctic* = correlación ítem-total corregida.

Las medias globales en las dimensiones de la OBCS ( $M = 4.84$  para Vigilancia,  $M = 3.34$  en Vergüenza y  $M = 3.24$  en Control) se encuentran en el rango de las obtenidas por McKinley y Hyde (1996) en la escala original (4.22, 3.34 y 3.25 respectivamente). De igual forma, y en la línea de lo encontrado en las investigaciones previas, la única relación estadísticamente significativa encontrada entre las dimensiones de la OBCS fue la aparecida para el caso de la Vigilancia y Vergüenza ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ).

#### *Análisis exploratorio de la estructura interna de la OBCS*

Previamente a la aplicación del análisis propiamente dicho, se calculó la medida de adecuación muestral de Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) y la prueba de esfericidad de Barlett. KMO fue igual a 0.88 y el índice de Barlett, con un valor de ji-cuadrado aproximado de 1187,04, fue significativo a  $p < 0.001$ . Los resultados de ambos cálculos indicarían la adecuación de la matriz de datos para ser sometidos al correspondiente análisis factorial.

La aplicación del análisis factorial exploratorio con rotación Varimax (Tabla 2) arrojó una solución donde sólo tres factores presentaron valores propios mayores a 1. Tanto los resultados del Análisis Paralelo, como los índices de ajuste RMSEA (0.06) y SRMR (0.05), apuntaron a una solución de tres factores. La solución unifactorial (RMSEA= 0.12; SRMR= 0.12), y la de dos factores (RMSEA=

0.09; SRMR= 0.09) obtuvieron unos índices de ajuste insuficientes, no encontrándose convergencia para soluciones de más de tres factores.

Estos tres factores (véase Tabla 2), en función del contenido semántico de los ítems que los integran, pueden ser claramente identificados con los factores de la propuesta teórica original: Vergüenza corporal (pesos factoriales entre .52 y .79), Creencias de Control (pesos factoriales entre .18 y .88) y Vigilancia Corporal (pesos factoriales entre .25 y .51).

Algunos de los ítems que integran su factor teóricamente esperado presentan pesos factoriales secundarios en factores que no son el propio. No obstante, nótese que en todos los casos dichos pesos son inferiores a los observados para el factor de pertenencia.

Por último, subrayar cómo de nuevo el ítem 4 obtiene una carga factorial baja en su factor de pertenencia (aunque su saturación en el resto de factores está entorno a cero).

**Tabla 2.** Solución factorial rotada (varimax) de los ítems de la OBCS.

Items	FI: Vergüenza	F II: Control	F III: Vigilancia	$h^2$
OBCS_22	.79			.63
OBCS_17	.69			.47
OBCS_11	.64			.51
OBCS_8	.61		.30	.53
OBCS_5	.57			.46
OBCS_2	.57	.32		.44
OBCS_13	.54			.31
OBCS_15	.52		.30	.43
OBCS_24		.88		.69
OBCS_19		.79		.66
OBCS_21		.50		.35
OBCS_6		.48		.30
OBCS_12		.36		.22
OBCS_10		.25		.23
OBCS_23		.22		.26
OBCS_4		.18		.20
OBCS_3			.51	.32
OBCS_16	.40		.46	.45
OBCS_9	.41		.43	.45
OBCS_18	.33		.42	.44
OBCS_14			.40	.62
OBCS_1			.30	.20
OBCS_7			.27	.31
OBCS_20			.25	.28
Autovalores	4.24	2.32	1.67	
%varianza explicada	17.67	9.68	6.97	

*Nota: N = 218. En cursiva los pesos factoriales de los ítems listados en el factor al que teóricamente pertenecen.  $h^2$  = comunalidades. Pesos factoriales  $\geq .30$  en factores de no pertenencia son listados.*

*Relaciones entre la OBCS y otras variables*

Se calcularon las correlaciones bivariadas entre las puntuaciones de la OBCS y las diferentes medidas consideradas para este estudio: los resultados van en la dirección esperada (véase Tabla 3).

**Tabla 3.** *Correlaciones entre medidas incluidas en el estudio 1*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Vigilancia							
2. Vergüenza	.56**						
3. Creencias Control de la Apariencia	-.11	.03					
4. Orientación a los demás	.24**	.31**	.06				
5. Disfrute de la Sexualización	.40**	.11	-.06	.23**			
6. Autoestima	-.17*	-.42**	-.13	-.36**	.02		
7. Sexismo Hostil	.18**	.23**	.13	.14*	.14*	-.07	
8. Sexismo Benévolo	.10	.08	.05	.10	.26**	-.04	.62**

*Nota: N = 218. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01*

Así, las puntuaciones en Vigilancia y Vergüenza Corporal (pero no Creencias de Control) correlacionaron positivamente con la orientación hacia los demás (Subescala “Others-directedness” de la Self-Monitoring Scale), indicando que dichas subescalas captan aspectos relacionados con la preocupación de la persona por ajustarse a lo que cree que los demás esperan de ella. Las puntuaciones en Vigilancia y Vergüenza ( $r = -.17, p < .05$  y  $r = -.42, p < .01$ , respectivamente) también aparecieron, tal

como predijimos, negativamente relacionadas con la autoestima -en magnitud similar a las encontradas por Visser y cols. (2014). La puntuación en la subescala de Vigilancia se relacionó positivamente con el Disfrute de la Sexualización, de forma similar a como se ha encontrado en estudios realizados en Estados Unidos (Erchull y Liss, 2013; Liss et al, 2011; Visser et al, 2014). A diferencia de lo encontrado en estos estudios, en nuestro caso la correlación entre las puntuaciones de EES y Vergüenza no llegó a ser significativa.

En el caso del sexismo, ninguna de las tres subescalas del OBCS apareció relacionada con el SB. En cambio, las puntuaciones en Vigilancia y Vergüenza corporal correlacionaron positivamente con el SH, igual que se encontró en algunos estudios previos (e.g. Erchull y Liss, 2013; Liss y cols., 2011).

### **Discusión**

Según los resultados obtenidos, la versión española de la escala OBCS de 24 ítems presenta unas propiedades psicométricas iniciales adecuadas, mostrando los ítems una adecuada variabilidad y discriminación. El ítem 4 de la escala presenta ciertos valores inadecuados, tanto de discriminación como de saturación factorial y algunas cargas factoriales de otros ítems están por debajo de .30 en su factor de pertenencia. A pesar de ello, decidimos retener la estructura factorial de tres factores, tal y como establece la propuesta teórica original. Teniendo en cuenta todos los ítems de cada una de las

dimensiones, los coeficientes de consistencia interna se han mostrado adecuados. Las puntuaciones de la OBCS han correlacionado en el sentido predicho con otros constructos, lo que aporta evidencias sobre su validez externa.

## Estudio 2

El objetivo fundamental de este estudio fue realizar un análisis confirmatorio de la estructura interna de la escala OBCS y explorar nuevas asociaciones con otras medidas relacionadas con la auto-cosificación: el Self-Objectification Questionnaire (Noll y Fredrickson, 1998) y la Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS) (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, y Denchik, 2007). Además, se incorporó un escenario ficticio en el que pedíamos a cada participante que imaginara que era cosificada por un grupo de chicos desconocidos, para darle un contexto cosificador al estudio. En el caso del SOQ, diversas investigaciones han mostrado que las puntuaciones en esta medida correlacionaban positivamente con las obtenidas en la subescala de Vigilancia ( $r =$  de .18 a .45, según el estudio) y con las puntuaciones en Vergüenza ( $r =$  de .19 a .36) (Calogero y Jost, 2011; Liss y cols., 2011). Por su parte, la ISOS permite indagar sobre la frecuencia con la que las mujeres experimentan eventos de naturaleza cosificadora en su vida diaria, concretamente en relación a la Evaluación de su Cuerpo -Body Evaluation- y los Avances Sexuales Explícitos No Deseados -Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances. Investigaciones previas, mayoritariamente con



muestras de universitarias estadounidenses, han mostrado relaciones bajas, aunque significativas en algunos casos, entre las puntuaciones de la subescala de Body Evaluation de la ISOS y las subescalas de Vigilancia ( $r =$  de  $-.09$  a  $.27$ ), y Vergüenza ( $r =$  de  $.08$  a  $.29$ ), y entre la subescala de Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances de la ISOS y la de Vigilancia ( $r =$  de  $-.25$  a  $.16$ ), y Vergüenza ( $r =$  de  $.15$  a  $.28$ ) (e.g., Erchull y Liss, 2013; Kozee y cols., 2007; Liss y cols., 2011).

## Método

### Participantes

Participaron 201 mujeres de una universidad pública española, con una media de edad de 19.45 años ( $DT = 2.16$ ) (rango entre 18 y 30 años).

### Instrumentos

Las participantes contestaron a un cuestionario que incluía las siguientes medidas:

1) *Escenario*. Contení la descripción de una escena hipotética en la que se pedía a la participante que se imaginase caminando sola por la calle y recibiendo atención sexual por parte de un grupo de jóvenes, que la mira y le sonrío, dos de ellos le silban, y uno le hace un comentario acerca de “lo buena que está”.

2) *Escala OBCS* (McKinley y Hyde, 1996), que en este caso mostró las siguientes fiabilidades: Vigilancia  $\alpha = .68$ ; Vergüenza  $\alpha = .82$  y Control  $\alpha = .75$ .

3) *Self-Objectification Questionnaire (SOQ)* (Noll y Fredrickson, 1998), versión en castellano que realizamos mediante traducción inversa. Este instrumento evalúa la importancia que tienen los atributos físicos observables (subescala Apariencia) frente a atributos no observables del cuerpo (subescala Competencia) en el autoconcepto físico de la persona. La escala se contesta en formato de ranking, de 9 a 0 en cada atributo según la importancia que se le dé. Se suman todos los rankings otorgados a los cinco atributos de Apariencia, así como los dados a los cinco atributos de Competencia. A los primeros valores se les restan los segundos y así se obtiene la puntuación total en el SOQ. Cuanto más alta y positiva más importancia da la persona a la apariencia física frente a la competencia. Debido al formato de respuesta de ranking, no es posible estimar la consistencia interna de esta escala de manera estándar. Para suplir esta carencia Hill y Fischer (2008) recomiendan informar de la correlación entre ambas subescalas, que en nuestro caso fue de  $r = -.83$ , cuya dirección negativa nos informa al menos de la relación inversa entre los dos tipos de atributos.

4) *Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS)* (Kozee y cols., 2007; versión española de Lozano, Valor-Segura, Sáez, y Expósito, 2015). Mide la frecuencia de eventos con los que una mujer ha sido cosificada sexualmente durante el último año. El formato de respuesta es tipo Likert de 1 (*nunca*) a 5 (*casi siempre*) y se compone de dos factores, Evaluación del Cuerpo (*Body Evaluation*) (e.g., “¿Con qué frecuencia te han silbado mientras caminas por la calle?”;  $\alpha = .86$ ) y Avances Explícitos

Sexuales No Deseados (*Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances*) ( $\alpha = .76$ ) (e.g., “¿Con qué frecuencia te han manoseado contra tu voluntad?”).

### **Procedimiento**

Se siguió un procedimiento similar al del estudio 1. En este caso las participantes leyeron en primer lugar el escenario, y posteriormente respondieron las tres medidas de auto-cosificación.

### **Resultados**

Se realizó un análisis factorial confirmatorio (CFA) sobre las puntuaciones en la OBCS. Para reducir la varianza error que aporta el elevado número de ítems al aplicar CFA, y siguiendo las aproximaciones usadas por varios autores (Carretero-Dios, Eid, y Ruch, 2011), se procedió a generar nuevos indicadores para cada factor basados en el agrupamiento de ítems (*items parcels*). Se obtuvieron concretamente cuatro indicadores para cada una de las subescalas (cada uno formado por el agrupamiento de dos ítems). El agrupamiento de ítems se basó en la estrategia de Kishton y Widaman (1994), basada en las saturaciones factoriales asociadas a cada ítem. Dado que la estructura de puntuaciones de la OBCS no se ajustó a una distribución normal multivariante, se usó como estimador MLR (Mplus 5.0; Muthén y Muthén, 2004-2008). Se sometieron a prueba tres modelos de medida alternativos: el modelo trifactorial tal cual es definido por las autoras originales de la escala (Modelo 1) y dos modelos alternativos: uno de dos factores (Modelo 2) compuesto por Vergüenza y Vigilancia por un

lado (dada la relación positiva encontrada entre ambas), y Control por otro; y un modelo unifactorial (Modelo 3).

La toma de decisión sobre el ajuste de los modelos se basó en la inspección de varios índices de referencia. Se consideró RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) con sus correspondientes intervalos de confianza al 90%, SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual), CFI (Comparative Fit Index) y TLI (Tucker Lewis Index). Se consideraron como indicadores de buen ajuste aquellos valores por debajo de .08 para RMSEA y SRMR, y por encima de .90 para CFI y TLI. En la tabla 4 se muestran los resultados asociados a los índices de ajuste estimados y que apoyan el modelo de tres factores propuesto para la OBCS.

*Estimación de la Fiabilidad y Relaciones entre la OBCS y otras variables*

Los diferentes subcomponentes de la escala OBCS mostraron la siguiente consistencia interna: Vigilancia  $\alpha = .68$ , Vergüenza  $\alpha = .82$  y Creencias de Control  $\alpha = .75$ .

Las puntuaciones medias fueron: en Vergüenza  $M = 3.48$  ( $SD = 1.25$ ), en Vigilancia  $M = 4.57$  ( $SD = .98$ ) y en Control  $M = 4.68$  ( $SD = .99$ ),

similares a las del Estudio 1 y a las encontradas en la versión original (McKinley y Hyde, 1996). Las puntuaciones en Vigilancia y Vergüenza correlacionaron de nuevo significativamente (Tabla 5), pero

las puntuaciones en la subescala de Control no correlacionaron con ninguna de las otras dos subescalas, tal y como se esperaba.

**Tabla 4.** Evaluación del ajuste de la OBCS

	Chi-square	df	90 % C.I.	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
<b>Modelo 1</b>	61.441	51	0.000 0.059	0.033	0.052	0.98	0.974
<b>Modelo 2</b>	127.072	53	0.066 0.104	0.085	0.08	0.86	0.82
<b>Modelo 3</b>	279.609	54	0.131 0.165	0.148	0.132	0.57	0.475

*Nota: N = 201. Modelo 1 = modelo trifactorial compuesto por las dimensiones Vigilancia Corporal, Vergüenza Corporal y Creencias de Control de la Apariencia. Modelo 2 = modelo bifactorial con Vergüenza y Vigilancia como un factor y Control como otro. Modelo 3 = unifactorial.*

Como puede apreciarse en la Tabla 5, las relaciones van en la dirección esperada. Las puntuaciones en la subescala de Vigilancia de la OBCS correlacionaron positiva y significativamente con la Vergüenza y con el SOQ, así como con el componente de Evaluación del Cuerpo de la ISOS. La magnitud de la relación entre Vigilancia y SOQ (en nuestro caso,  $r = .36$ ) y entre Vigilancia y la subescala de Evaluación del Cuerpo de la ISOS ( $r = .17$ ) fueron similares a las encontradas en otros estudios (Calogero y Jost, 2011; Erchull y Liss, 2013; Kozee et al., 2007; Liss et al., 2011). Sin embargo, aunque en estos estudios las puntuaciones en Vigilancia del OBCS correlacionaron con las puntuaciones en la subescala de Intentos Sexuales Explícitos de la ISOS ( $r =$  entre  $-.25$  y  $.22$ ), en

nuestro caso esta correlación fue cercana a cero. En el caso de las puntuaciones en la subescala de Vergüenza, tal como predijimos, los resultados son similares a los de Vigilancia, pues además de correlacionar positivamente con ésta, lo hizo con el SOQ. En este último caso, la correlación fue de  $r = .27$  y las encontradas en otros estudios oscilaban entre  $r = .19$  y  $.36$ ) (Erchull y Liss, 2013; Kozee et al., 2007; Liss et al., 2011). Sin embargo, aunque en otros estudios se han encontrado relaciones positivas significativas entre Vergüenza y las dos subescalas de la ISOS (Erchull y Liss, 2013; Kozee et al., 2007; Liss et al., 2011), en nuestro caso ambas correlaciones no fueron significativas. La subescala de Control, al igual que ocurriera en el Estudio 1, no correlacionó significativamente con las otras dos subescalas.

**Tabla 5.** *Correlaciones entre las diferentes subescalas de la OBCS, SOQ e ISOS.*

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>1. Vigilancia Corporal</b>					
<b>2. Vergüenza Corporal</b>	.43**				
<b>3. Creencias de Control Apariencia</b>	.09	-.05			
<b>4. Auto-Cosificación (SOQ)</b>	.36**	.27**	.14		
<b>5. Evaluación del Cuerpo</b>	.17*	.02	.08	.18*	
<b>6. Avances Sexuales No Deseados</b>	.10	.07	-.02	.09	.44**

*Nota: N = 201. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01*

### **Discusión**

Estos resultados corroboran la estructura de tres factores de la escala OBCS en español, después de utilizar una estrategia de análisis más rigurosa como es el análisis factorial confirmatorio. Como en el estudio 1, las subescalas de Vigilancia y Vergüenza aparecieron relacionadas entre sí y reflejaron ser relativamente independientes de las puntuaciones en la subescala de Control.

Además, utilizando procedimientos diferentes, hemos encontrado indicios de la validez convergente de la OBCS, obteniendo correlaciones entre las subescalas de Vigilancia y Vergüenza de la OBCS y otras dos medidas de auto-cosificación.

### **Discusión General**

El objetivo de este trabajo fue realizar un estudio psicométrico de la versión española de la OBCS, con la finalidad de ofrecer un instrumento en castellano para evaluar la auto-cosificación sexual en mujeres jóvenes españolas. Con los resultados obtenidos podemos decir que la versión en español de la escala tiene unas propiedades psicométricas similares a las de la versión original en inglés.

Igual que en su versión inglesa, el estudio de la estructura interna de la escala a través de procedimientos exploratorios y confirmatorios respaldarían la estructura trifactorial: Vigilancia del Cuerpo, Vergüenza Corporal y Creencias de Control de la Apariencia. A pesar de que las puntuaciones en las subescalas de Vigilancia y de

Vergüenza suelen estar relacionadas entre sí -y poco relacionadas con la tercera subescala: Creencias de Control de la Apariencia-, el análisis factorial confirmatorio indica que la solución tridimensional es mejor que una bidimensional (en la que la Vergüenza y Vigilancia se incluyesen dentro de un mismo factor y el Control como otro).

Los análisis para estudiar la fiabilidad de las puntuaciones de las tres subescalas también nos confirmaron una aceptable consistencia interna de cada una de ellas, similar a las encontradas en otros estudios (McKinley y Hyde, 1996).

Respecto a la validez externa de la medida, reflejada en su relación con constructos similares o relacionados, los resultados fueron, en líneas generales, acordes con lo previsto: las puntuaciones en Vigilancia y Vergüenza Corporal (pero no en Creencias de Control de la Apariencia) aparecieron positivamente relacionadas con los obtenidos en la escala de "Orientación Hacia los Demás". Además, corroborando las numerosas aportaciones que han mostrado las consecuencias negativas que la auto-cosificación tiene para las mujeres, los resultados de nuestro primer estudio también indican que cuanto mayores son las puntuaciones de las participantes en Vigilancia y Vergüenza, menor es su autoestima.

La validez de las puntuaciones de la subescala de Vigilancia de la OBCS, queda refrendada por su relación con el SOQ (refleja la importancia otorgada a la apariencia física) y con la subescala de Evaluación del Cuerpo de la ISOS (mayores puntuaciones revelan



haberse sentido con frecuencia evaluadas por el aspecto físico; Estudio 2), así como con la medida que refleja el disfrute al ser sexualizada por otros (Enjoyment of Sexualization; Estudio 1).

Por su parte, las evidencias de validez para las puntuaciones de la subescala de Vergüenza Corporal quedan respaldadas, además de por lo que ya hemos indicado, por su relación con las puntuaciones en el SOQ (que mide la importancia otorgada a la apariencia física en comparación con la importancia dada a la salud).

Los estudios incluidos en este trabajo adolecen no obstante de algunas limitaciones. Primero, las muestras de ambos estuvieron compuestas exclusivamente por estudiantes universitarias. La aplicación y validación de la escala en muestras diferentes, preferentemente integradas por población general, sería deseable. En segundo lugar, la relación esperada entre las puntuaciones en las subescalas de la OBCS y ciertas medidas, como la de Sexismo Benévolo, no ha aparecido, aunque las puntuaciones en Vigilancia y Vergüenza Corporal correlacionaron positivamente con el Sexismo Hostil. Parece necesario pues, que investigaciones futuras indaguen en esta relación, complementando los estudios correlacionales con otros de naturaleza experimental.

En resumen, podemos concluir que la versión en español de la OBCS es un instrumento adecuado para la evaluación de la auto-cosificación femenina en muestras de población universitaria española.

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## APÉNDICE

### Ítems de la versión española de la “Objectified Body Consciousness Scale”

Instrucciones: A continuación, te pedimos que marques con una “X” el número que se corresponda con el grado en que estás de acuerdo con cada una de las afirmaciones de las siguientes páginas. Marca NA solamente en el caso de que la afirmación no sea aplicable a ti. Si no estás de acuerdo con la afirmación, entonces marca en desacuerdo, pero no NA. Por ejemplo, si la afirmación dice “Cuando estoy contenta, me dan ganas de cantar”, y a ti no te dan ganas de cantar cuando estás contenta, entonces deberías marcar una de las opciones de desacuerdo. Sólo marcarías NA si nunca hubieras estado contenta.

1. Raramente pienso en mi aspecto\*
2. Cuando no puedo controlar mi peso, siento que algo va mal en mí
3. Pienso que es más importante que mi ropa sea cómoda, que el hecho de que me quede bien\*
4. Creo que una persona debería conformarse con el físico que tiene de nacimiento\*
5. Me siento avergonzada de mí misma cuando no me esfuerzo por tener el mejor aspecto posible
6. Mantenerse en forma depende en gran medida de la constitución física que se tenga\*
7. Me preocupa más cómo me siento físicamente que el aspecto que tengo\*
8. Me siento mal cuando mi apariencia no es tan buena como podría ser
9. Raramente comparo mi aspecto con el de otras personas\*
10. Pienso que una persona puede tener la apariencia que ella quiera si está dispuesta a trabajar en ello
11. Me daría vergüenza que la gente supiera cuánto peso

12. Realmente no pienso que tenga mucho control sobre mi apariencia corporal\*
13. Incluso cuando no puedo controlar mi peso, pienso que soy una persona valiosa\*
14. Pienso en mi aspecto muchas veces a lo largo del día
15. Nunca pienso que estoy haciéndolo mal aunque no haga todo el ejercicio que debiera\*
16. A menudo me preocupo por si la ropa que llevo me sienta bien
17. Cuando no hago suficiente ejercicio, me cuestiono si soy una persona suficientemente valiosa
18. Raramente me preocupo de cómo me ven otras personas\*
19. Pienso que lo que determina fundamentalmente el peso de una persona son sus genes\*
20. Me preocupo más de lo que puedo hacer con mi cuerpo que del aspecto que tiene\*
21. No importa lo mucho que me esfuerce por cambiar mi peso, probablemente siempre va a seguir igual\*
22. Me siento avergonzada cuando no tengo la talla de ropa que debería
23. Cuando me lo propongo firmemente, puedo conseguir el peso que debería tener.
24. Tu forma física depende principalmente de los genes que tengas\*

\*Ítems marcados con asterisco necesitan ser recodificados.

**VIGILANCIA CORPORAL** (Ítems 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 16, 18 y 20).

**VERGÜENZA CORPORAL** (Ítems 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17 y 22).

**CREENCIAS DE CONTROL DE LA APARIENCIA** (Ítems 4, 6, 10, 12, 19, 21, 23 y 24).

(NOTA: la escala se ha de presentar con un formato de respuesta de 1- totalmente en desacuerdo- a 7-totalmente de acuerdo-, siendo 4 el punto medio-ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo- e incorporando también la opción NA).





## **Chapter 3:**

**Reactions to objectifying behaviors**

***('piropos')***



**Objectifying in Both Ways: The Effects of Lewd and Gallant**

***“Piropos”***

## Abstract

Women's objectification through appearance-related comments in the street (*piropos*) was studied. Some *piropos* are identified as lewd by most people, but others are considered nice. In Study 1 (n = 136), numerous *piropos* that are usual in Spain were collected. Their level of acceptance was analyzed and whether they were perceived as objectifying behavior. In Study 2 (n = 148), women indicated their reactions to two of these *piropos*, one clearly gallant and the other lewd. Compared to a control group, women exposed to the lewd *piropo* experienced less joy and power and greater anger, anxiety, and discomfort. In the case of the gallant *piropo*, the consequences were not as negative as they were for the group exposed to the hostile *piropo*, but the scores for the positive reactions (e.g., joy, power) were never higher than those of the control group. Study 3 replicated the main results of Study 2 and showed, using a within subject design, that the lewd and gallant *piropos* are not different in nature, as it is shown by the high correlation between the women reactions to both of them. The results of the three studies highlight the objectifying nature and consequences of *piropos*.

**Keywords:** sexual objectification, street harassment, *piropos*, consequences, Spain

A piropo is defined as “a short saying that praises some quality of someone, especially a woman’s beauty” (Royal Spanish Academy [Real Academia Española], 2014). Piropos vary in nature. Some are undoubtedly identified as rude and lewd by most people, but others are considered nice and even flattering.

It is frequently noted that *piropos* generate very diverse reactions among the Spanish population. For example, in January 2015, Ángeles Carmona, the president of the Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence of the Spanish Judiciary (CCPJ), made statements on national radio asking for the eradication of the *piropo* on the street, declaring it “an invasion of a woman’s privacy” (“La Presidenta”, 2015). Immediately thereafter, a controversy erupted on social media. No one, it seems, is indifferent to the use of the *piropo*. In the following days, movements appeared on Twitter, such as #EliminaUnPiropo (“Eliminate a *Piropo*”), that supported Carmona’s position, whereas others painted her statements as over the top. An intermediate position was expressed during the debate by people who felt that certain obscenities that are shouted at women on the street should not be tolerated but that kind and pleasant comments need not be viewed as bad or prohibited. Therefore, it seems that people who reject any type of *piropos* essentially consider that they reflect the same reality: the objectification of women; but those who refuse to accept lewd piropos but like gallant ones think, however, that one type of piropos has nothing to do with

the other: the lewd ones reflect hostility and objectification, and the gallant ones are a proof of admiration and positive feelings towards women. The conclusion following these discussions in the media was that the *piropo* is a controversial topic about which there does not seem to be agreement (Agudo, 2015).

### **The *Piropo* in Spain and other Latino Countries**

In the first study we know of dedicated to the *piropo*, Beinhauer (1973) describes the phenomenon as typically Spanish, although it also exists in other Spanish-speaking Latino countries (Diosdado, 1996; Fridlitzius, 2009), in addition to other countries in the Mediterranean Basin (Carvajal, 2014; Suárez-Orozco and Dundes, 1984). The origins of the *piropo* appear to be very difficult to identify and are sometimes attributed to medieval troubadour poetry (Soukkio, 1998) or traditional Spanish theater (Preisig, 1998). Be that as it may, two arguments frequently appear in studies that examine the *piropo* from a linguistic perspective: the idea that it is a phenomenon in decline (Astakhova, 2014; Beinhauer, 1973; Preisig, 1998) and, over the years, has deteriorated, giving way to expressions that are far from the original poetic compositions of earlier times (Carvajal, 2014). However, these two assertions have also been questioned by other authors. Similarly, in relation to the first topic, statistics indicate that though the use of *piropos* has diminished, Spanish women continue to receive them relatively frequently in their everyday lives (“You’re Wonderful” [“Eres

Maravillosa”], 2009). Moreover, regarding the idea that *piropos* from earlier years were pleasant and gallant but that current *piropos* are predominantly lewd, we have found references in the literature that indicate that lewd *piropos* existed in the past and that during that time, they were also rejected by women (Carvajal, 2014; Suárez-Orozco and Dundes, 1990).

From the debate that emerged on social media comes the idea, defended by some women and men, that gentler and more flattering *piropos* are positive and, as a result, are received with pleasure. According to this idea, the use of the *piropo* is only repudiated when the comment is unpleasant or lewd (Carvajal, 2014; Gaytan-Sánchez, 2009). According to Fridlitzius (2009), street *piropos* in Spain tend to occur during interactions in which people do not know one another and almost always reference the physical attributes, and no other qualities, of the women who receive them. This tendency points to a clear form of sexual objectification. Therefore, *piropos* of any type can be viewed as objectifying behavior because they mostly focus on women’s physical appearance and, as such, can have negative consequences for women. In this paper, we intend to test this hypothesis and to study the reactions of women both to clearly unpleasant *piropos* and to those that are milder and more flattering.



### Objectification

Making comments about a woman's physical characteristics or about some part of her body or opining about her appearance, as is done when *piropos* are said on the street, parallels what Fredrickson and Roberts identify in their objectification theory (1997): "the common thread running through all forms of objectification: the experience of being treated as a body (or a collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption) by others" (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997, p. 174).

*Piropos* that come from strangers can also be considered "stranger harassment," that is, the "[sexual] harassment of women in public places by men who are strangers" (Bowman, 1993, p. 519). According to this author, stranger harassment "includes both verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls, and stranger remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman's physical appearance or on her presence in public" (Bowman, 1993, p. 523).

Although street harassment is a very frequent form of sexual objectification (Fairchild, 2010; Fairchild and Rudman, 2008; Macmillan, Nierobisz, and Welsh, 2000), few studies have investigated its effects through the lens of objectification theory (Davidson, Gervais, and Sherd, 2013). For example, Davidson et al. (2013) find that experiences of harassment by strangers predicted greater self-objectification among

women and an increased tendency to objectify others, including both women and men. Similarly, Fairchild and Rudman (2008) find that stranger harassment positively correlated with self-objectification, although this correlation only occurred when women used passive (and not active) coping mechanisms in the face of harassment.

As occurs with the *piropo*, women can show different responses to male sexual attention and stranger harassment, ranging from very positive to very negative (Liss, Erchull, and Ramsey, 2011). For example, according to Moffit and Szymanski (2011), who examine the experiences of women working in sexually objectifying places, although many of the participants in their studies reported negative consequences from these types of jobs and work places, some women also reported increased self-confidence and self-esteem.

Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that the negative consequences of objectification reach beyond whether women perceive objectifying behavior directed towards them as positive or negative. For example, research has demonstrated that even women who have a positive view of appearance compliments still show increased levels of body surveillance, body shame, and body dissatisfaction when receiving these types of compliments (Calogero, Herbozo, and Thompson, 2009; Tiggemann and Boundy, 2008), which are clear cues of self-objectification. Similarly, it has been found that experiencing harassment has negative outcomes for women even if they do not identify the events as sexual harassment (Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, and

DeNardo, 1999). These results suggest that some women may come to expect to be sexually objectified because praise reminds them that their bodies are being evaluated by others (Calogero et al., 2009; Tiggemann and Boundy, 2008).

### **This Study**

Using the diverse opinions regarding *piropos* that exist in Spain as a starting point, we propose to empirically explore this phenomenon. We completed a first study with the goal of collecting a relatively broad and varied repertoire of *piropos*, simultaneously analyzing how these were perceived by women—especially whether they were perceived as objectifying behavior. In Study 2, we chose two *piropos* from among those previously collected, one “lewd” and one “gallant,” and presented them to two groups of women, asking them to imagine that they had received one or the other from an unknown man on the street (a control group did not imagine herself in the scenario of receiving a *piropo*). The goal was to analyze whether these two types of *piropos* produced similar or different effects in women. Basically, what was studied was whether the two *piropos* influenced positive emotions (joy) and negative emotions (anger, sadness-depression, and anxiety) experienced by women and whether they influenced their feelings of helplessness and power. In the same study, participants were also asked to evaluate various dimensions of the *piropo* to understand how they perceived it. These dimensions allowed us to diagnose whether each

*piropo* was perceived positively or negatively. Our objective in including this measurement was to analyze whether the effects of *piropos* (both lewd and gallant) depended on how they were perceived. In social psychology, it is a well-documented fact that one's attitude towards a given object—that is, one's evaluation—has numerous effects on information processing, social memory, and behavior (Bohner and Dickel, 2011). Thus, our general hypothesis is that a given attitude towards a *piropo* will influence the reactions that it provokes. What is more difficult to predict is the manner in which that influence occurs. Regarding women who have a positive attitude towards *piropos* (or, at least, who do not clearly reject them), one would expect that the *piropo* produces greater joy or feelings of power and less anger or helplessness, for example. However, in the case of women who reject *piropos*, we do not know whether hearing *piropos* causes women to feel better or worse. That is, the *piropo* might make them feel even greater anger and helplessness and less joy and power (after experiencing clear hostility, according to them); alternatively, if they reject the *piropo*, there is no effect, whether adverse or positive.

Given that the design of Study 2 compared two groups of participants, its results did not allow us to understand how women themselves evaluated both types of *piropos* at the same time, that is, how assessments of the two *piropos* correlated or were different in nature, as some people proposed. For this reason, in a third study, we once again used the “lewd” and “gallant” *piropos* from Study 2 and

presented both to only one group of women to test how they perceived them using the same evaluative dimensions employed in Study 2. So doing we aimed to replicate the previous results from Study 2, using a within subjects design, and additionally testing if perceptions of both types of piropos, “lewd” and “gallant”, were correlated or were independent.

### Study 1

The goal of this study was to analyze college students' assessments of different *piropos*. We completed the task in two phases. In the first, with the goal of collecting a relatively broad representation of *piropos*, students of both genders ( $n = 100$ ) in an introductory psychology course at a university in the south of Spain generated a list of *piropos* with which they were familiar. The 25 most frequently listed *piropos* were selected, and an effort was made to include different types of *piropos*. Table 1 (see appendix) shows the selected sample. In the second phase, other psychology students ( $n = 136$ ) assessed these *piropos*.

### Method

#### Participants

A total of 136 psychology students (73% women,  $n = 99$ ) with a mean age of 20.07 years ( $SD = 2.74$ ) completed the assessments.

### Procedure

The students were provided with a link to an online questionnaire that they answered at their convenience by using the Qualtrics platform. Upon entering the platform, the participants were divided randomly into two groups, each of which was presented with 12 or 13 *piropos*. The *piropos* were evaluated against seven dimensions, using a 7-point scale (1 meaning “not at all” and 7 “completely”). The dimensions were as follows: 1) treats the woman as an object, not a person; 2) treats the woman as existing simply for the man’s use and enjoyment; 3) has sexual connotations; 4) expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman; 5) expresses a positive image of the woman; 6) is unpleasant; and 7) portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body. Answers were given on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so). These scales were created with the goal of reflecting the following features, which are relevant for an analysis of the *piropo* from the perspective of sexual objectification theory: 1) the assessment of the *piropo* (positive or negative); 2) whether the *piropo* objectifies women; and 3) the sexual content of the *piropo*.

### Results

In general, there were barely any differences between men and women in their evaluation of the 25 *piropos* against each of the dimensions. On the limited occasions when there were differences, the scores indicated more positive or less negative judgments on the part of

men. Given that the *piropos* in Study 2 present an exclusively female population and that the number of male participants in this study was significantly lower than the number of women participants, the scores presented in Table 1 only reflect the answers of female participants.

Table 2 includes the mean scores for each dimension for all of the *piropos* considered together. Tables 1 and 2 show that in general, female participants felt that *piropos* did not reflect a positive view of women and perceived them as slightly unpleasant. Nevertheless, there are clear differences between the assessments of different *piropos*. Thus, for example, female participants considered that certain *piropos* were clearly unpleasant (e.g., “If your ass were a bank, I would stick it [penis] in a fixed-term deposit account!”), whereas others did not seem unpleasant to them (e.g., “Your smile would brighten anyone’s mood.”)

Additionally, Tables 1 and 2 show that female participants seemed to agree that *piropos* are generally objectifying. The mean scores for *piropos* for the dimensions that address this issue attest to this finding: “treats the women as an object, not a person”; “treats the woman as existing simply for the man’s enjoyment”; and “portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body.” Nevertheless, there were also clear differences between *piropos*. For example, under the dimension “treats the woman as an object, not a person,” there were *piropos* that scored very high (e.g., “I wish I were a pirate but not for gold or silver—for the treasure you have between your legs”), whereas others scored low (e.g., “Precious, did you hurt yourself when you fell

from heaven?”). A similar pattern could be observed using the other two dimensions related to objectification.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics for all of the “piropos” under the different items used to evaluate them ( $n = 99$ ) in Study 1.

	Mínimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
1. Treats the woman as an object, not a person	2.00	6.77	5.01	.95
2. Treats the woman as existing simply for the man’s use and enjoyment	2.69	6.85	4.95	.83
3. Has sexual connotations	2.92	6.69	4.91	.78
4. Expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman	1.08	6.46	3.3	1.29
5. Expresses a positive image of the woman	1.00	5.08	2.93	.96
6. This type of <i>piropo</i> strikes me as unpleasant	2.38	6.31	4.36	.96
7. Portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body	2.46	6.31	4.18	.89

When a *piropo* was viewed as reflecting a positive image of a woman, it tended to be considered non-objectifying (see Table 3). Thus, for example, the correlation of “reflects a positive image of the woman” with “treats the woman as an object, not a person” was  $r = -.43, p < .00$ ; with “portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body,”  $r = -.32, p < .00$ ; and with “treats the woman as existing simply for the man’s use and enjoyment,”  $r = -.43, p < .00$ .



**Table 3.** Correlations between items against which the *piropos* were evaluated ( $n = 99$ ) in Study 1.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Treats the woman as an object, not a person	1	.83**	.67**	.17	-.43**	.65**	.54**
2. Treats the woman as existing simply for the man's use and enjoyment		1	.73**	.24*	-.43**	.6**	.56**
3. Has sexual connotations			1	.18	-.33**	.56**	.52**
4. Expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman				1	.38**	.07	.12
5. Expresses a positive image of the woman					1	-.52**	-.32**
6. This type of <i>piropo</i> strikes me as unpleasant						1	.47**
7. Portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body							-

### Discussion

This exploratory study allowed us to collect a broad range of *piropos* that are used in contemporary Spain. Furthermore, the results allowed us to confirm our hypothesis that *piropos* can be considered objectifying, judging by the assessments of their recipients (male participants, although fewer in number, agreed with the women's assessments in this regard). Thus, participants felt fairly strongly that most *piropos* treat a woman as an object, not as a person; treat her as existing simply for the man's use and enjoyment; have sexual connotations; and portray the woman by focusing on a single part of her

body. Taking into account that objectification has been defined as “...the experience of being treated as a body (or a collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others” (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997, p. 174), the consideration of *piropos* as objectifying behaviors is clearly acceptable. Nevertheless, despite this general tendency to perceive *piropos* as objectifying, the results indicated a certain amount of variability in perceptions: some *piropos* were clearly perceived as objectifying, and others were not. Similarly, although the mean scores also indicated that *piropos* were perceived negatively, once again, one could observe that there are *piropos* on either extreme of the scale. Especially relevant is the finding that the more positively the *piropo* was rated, the less objectifying it was considered. Given the numerous negative consequences of objectification, failing to detect objectifying behaviors as such, when these behaviors are masked by a facade of praise or assignation of value, represents a clear risk.

## Study 2

Study 1 allowed us to identify *piropos* that are perceived positively by women and others that are perceived negatively. This identification connects with the debate already mentioned, in which some women have protested against all types of *piropos* (whether they are lewd and brusque or flattering and positive) whereas others reject the former but consider the latter acceptable. In Study 2, we selected

two *piropos* that reflected this polarity: “I better not find out that that ass goes hungry!” and “Giiiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun,” and analyzed some of their consequences for women when they received them. As observed in Study 1, regarding the first *piropo*, the female participants thought that women were clearly objectified (treated as an object, treated as existing simply for the man’s use and enjoyment, portraying the woman by focusing only on one part of her body, etc.) and viewed in a negative light (e.g., the *piropo* did not reflect a positive image of women). By contrast, with the *piropo* “Giiiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun,” although the women perceived it as objectifying—albeit to a lesser degree than the other *piropo*—it was viewed less negatively.

In this study, we used scenario methodology; that is, we asked the women to imagine that they were receiving the *piropos*. We also included a control group that answered the questionnaires but without being exposed to any type of *piropo*.

The main issue posed in this second study regarded learning about women’s reactions to being exposed to two very different types of *piropos*. Thus, we specifically explored the emotions of joy, anger, sadness-depression, and anxiety. This selection of emotional reactions was based on suggestions such as those of Watson and Clark (1997), who recommend an assessment of moods, including fear/anxiety, sadness/depression, frustration/hostility, together with some type of positive affect, when studying emotional states. Additionally, we

included items in our study to measure feelings of power and helplessness because some women claim to feel powerful when they receive *piropos* (e.g., Ferreras, 2015). In contrast, those who dislike *piropos* feel like the *piropos* invade their personal space, which makes them feel vulnerable (e.g., “La Presidenta,” 2015).

We expected to find that women’s reactions would be generally more positive (that is, that they would react with greater joy and feelings of power and with less anger, sadness-depression, anxiety, and helplessness) when the *piropo* in question was gallant compared to when it was lewd and that the reactions to lewd *piropos* would be clearly negative compared to the control. By contrast, we did not have clear expectations about whether being exposed to a gallant *piropo* would make women feel better or worse than those who were not exposed to any *piropo* at all. As we have indicated, some people have defended the rejection of all types of *piropos*, including those that are flattering (“La Presidenta”, 2015). If this vision were broadly accepted, then the implication would be that women who were exposed to gallant *piropos* ought to feel worse than members of the control group, who did not receive any *piropo*. However, other people have vindicated gallant *piropos*, claiming that all women like to hear *piropos* if they are kind and flattering (Venclovská, 2006). In the latter case, one would expect that women exposed to gallant *piropos* would feel better than those who were not exposed to any *piropos*. The data from Study 1

suggest that even when a gallant *piropo* is perceived as objectifying, it is not viewed either negatively or as objectifying as a lewd *piropo*.

Two measures that are common in self-objectification studies were also included: the Self-Surveillance and Body Shame subscales of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) (McKinley and Hyde, 1996). The goal was to analyze whether imagining themselves receiving a *piropo* increased women's levels of self-objectification within these two dimensions or whether the scores within these measures reflected a tempered reaction to *piropos*.

The final goal of this study was to analyze whether reactions to *piropos* depended on how they were assessed. Participants who imagined themselves receiving the lewd and gallant *piropos* (not those in the control group) were asked to assess the *piropo* against a series of dimensions (fun, chauvinism, flattery, etc.). These assessments were grouped into only one score, such that higher scores reflected more negative attitudes towards the *piropo* in question. We expected to find that the less negative the attitude towards a *piropo* was, the less negative the reactions to that *piropo* (that is, that greater feelings of joy and power, the fewer feelings of anger, sadness, anxiety, and helplessness would be induced in the participants). As we have indicated, we believe that these relationships would appear both when the *piropo* was lewd and when it was gallant.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 148 women under the age of 25 participated, all of whom were college students at the moment of the study or had been in the past. The mean age was 22.14 years ( $SD = 1.66$ ).

### Procedure

A message, supported by the School of Psychology at a university in the south of Spain, was sent using a social network to ask for volunteers to participate in an online study on interpersonal relations. Those who answered the questionnaire would be included in a raffle for three prizes of 20 Euros. For the study, we only used the answers of women under the age of 25 who had been, or currently were, university students.

We conducted an experimental study using hypothetical scenario methodology with a single independent variable (exposure to a lewd *piropo* vs. a gallant *piropo* vs. control). A total of 51 participants were assigned to the control group, 47 to the benevolent *piropo* group, and 50 to the hostile *piropo* group.

In the “*piropo*” groups, participants were asked to imagine that they were experiencing the following scenario.

*“Imagine that you are in the following situation:*

*You are walking along the street alone. You are walking briskly and thinking to yourself without paying too much attention to what is*

*going on around you. When you cross the road, you realize that you are about to pass by a square where a group of young lads are sitting on a bench and looking at you. You continue walking and pass by without looking at them or paying attention to what they are doing. Then, as you are passing, one raises his voice and says to you:*

***“(one of the two piropos appeared here)”***

The gallant *piropo* was: “Giiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun!” In the lewd *piropo* group, the *piropo* was: “I better not find out that that ass goes hungry!”

Subsequently, participants answered the dependent measures, which appeared in the order in which they are listed in the following section. In the case of the control group, participants answered the measures directly without being previously exposed to any scenario.

1) *Mood and emotions.* Participants in the experimental conditions were asked to answer the 16 items of the Scale for Mood Assessment (*Escala de Valoración del Estado de Ánimo - EVEA*) (Sanz, 2001) immediately after reading the scenario. We wanted to determine the mood that they thought they would experience if they found themselves in a situation like that described (participants from the control group were asked to indicate how they felt at that moment). The EVEA assesses four moods, each of which is measured by four items: *sadness-depression* (melancholy, depressed, downcast, and sad); *anxiety* (nervous, tense, anxious, and restless); *happiness* (happy, optimistic, joyful, and cheerful); and *anger-hostility* (irritated, angry,

annoyed, and displeased). The response format ranges from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very much*). The EVEA measure has shown a high internal consistency (with alphas between .86 and .92 for sadness-depression; between .92 and .94 for anxiety; between .93 and .95 for anger-hostility; and between .88 and .96 for happiness; Sanz, Gutiérrez, and García-Vera, 2014). It has also been demonstrated that the EVEA has appropriate test-retest reliability and discriminant validity (Sanz, 2001). In our case, the reliability coefficients obtained were .90 for sadness-depression, .86 for anxiety, .96 for anger-hostility and .91 for happiness.

2) *Sense of power and discomfort/helplessness*. Twelve items, used in previous studies (Moya-Garófano, Rodríguez-Bailón, Megías & Moya, 2015), were also included to measure the sense of power ( $\alpha = .81$ ) and discomfort/helplessness ( $\alpha = .90$ ) experienced by participants after facing the situation previously described. The response format was the same as that of the EVEA. Examples of the six items that compose the power dimension are as follows: “I would feel powerful” and “I would feel in control of the situation.” Examples of the six items that compose the discomfort/helplessness dimension are as follows: “I would feel weak” and “I would feel humiliated.” As with the EVEA scale, participants in the control group answered these same power and discomfort/helplessness items; however, they were asked to answer according to how they felt at that moment.

3) *Self-Objectification*. We used the Spanish version of the Body Surveillance Subscale of the OBCS (McKinley and Hyde, 1996; Spanish



version by Moya-Garófano, Megías, Rodríguez-Bailón, and Moya, in press). The surveillance subscale is based on the idea that women constantly monitor their bodies to ensure that they fit in the canons of beauty as a response of being continuously sexually objectified. Participants indicate their agreement or disagreement with each of the eight statements presented by the subscale using a 7-point Likert-type answer format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (totally agree) (4 being neither agree nor disagree); in each item, the alternative response NA (if they consider that the item is not applicable) also appears. A high score indicates that the person monitors his/her appearance and often thinks about how his/her body looks; a low score indicates that the individual rarely self-surveys his/her appearance and instead tends to focus on how s/he feels on a physical level. An example of an item is “I often worry about whether the clothes I’m wearing look good on me.” The Body Surveillance subscale scores have been found to be internally consistent and stable over a 2-week period and have demonstrated evidence of construct validity (McKinley and Hyde, 1996). In this study, the alpha coefficient of this subscale was .79.

4) *Body Shame*. The Spanish version of the *Body Shame Subscale of the OBCS* (McKinley and Hyde, 1996; Spanish version by Moya-Garófano et al., in press) was used. The Body Shame subscale aims to assess the internalization of cultural body standards, given that it is understood that shame arises from the impossibility of attaining this imposed ideal of beauty. It consists of eight items with the same

response format as the previous scale. A high score on this scale would indicate that the person feels that s/he is less valid if s/he does not fulfill cultural expectations of how the body must be. In contrast, people who have low scores do not observe that their personal value is reduced if they do not conform to such body expectations. An example of an item is "I feel bad when I don't look as good as I could." The Body Shame subscale scores have been found to be internally consistent and stable over a 2-week period and related to measures of negative body image (McKinley and Hyde, 1996). In the present study, the alpha coefficient for Body Surveillance was .83.

5) *Attitude regarding piropos.* At the end of the questionnaire, seven items were used to measure participants' perceptions of *piropos* ("flattering" or "lewd," depending on the condition). Only the women who were exposed to one of the two *piropos*, not the control group, answered this measure. The answer format was a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). These items were as follows: fun, pleasant, flattering, chauvinistic, offensive, unpleasant, and (induces) disgust. Once the scores were inverted for the first three items, the mean score was calculated for all of the items ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Higher scores indicate more negative attitudes to the *piropo*.

## Results

### *Effects of the piropos.*

All of the dependent variables were analyzed using one-way, three-level analysis of variance (ANOVA), with the “*piropo*” condition (lewd *piropo*, gallant *piropo*, and control) as the between-subjects factor (see Table 4). As expected, main effects of the “*piropo*” condition on happiness,  $F(2, 148) = 17.16, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$ , anger,  $F(2, 148) = 3.04, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$ , sadness-depression,  $F(2, 148) = 49.69, p < .001, \eta^2 = .34$ , anxiety,  $F(2, 148) = 8.96, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$ , feelings of helplessness,  $F(2, 148) = 7.12, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$ , and feelings of power,  $F(2, 148) = 12.82, p < .001, \eta^2 = .12$ , were observed. Post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that women in the lewd *piropo* condition reported significantly less happiness than women in the control condition ( $p < .001$ ) and in the gallant *piropo* condition, ( $p = .03$ ). The lewd *piropo* also increased anger in relation to the control condition, ( $p < .001$ ). The same pattern was found in the case of anxiety ( $p < .01$ ). Compared to the control condition, sadness-depression was significantly higher among women exposed to the lewd *piropo* ( $p < .001$ ) and women exposed to the gallant *piropo* ( $p < .001$ ). Women in the lewd *piropo* condition reported significantly more feelings of helplessness than women in the control condition ( $p = .017$ ), and the gallant *piropo* condition, ( $p = .047$ ) and women in the lewd *piropo* condition reported significantly less

perceptions of power than women in the control condition ( $p < .001$ ) and in the gallant *piropo* condition, ( $p = .04$ ) (see Table 4).

**Table 4.** Means (and Standard Deviations) for Measures by Experimental Condition.

Measure	Lewd Piropo	Gallant piropo	Control
	N = 50	N = 47	N = 51
EVEA happiness	3.82 (2.32) <sup>a</sup>	5.11 (2.43) <sup>b</sup>	6.29 (2.2) <sup>b</sup>
EVEA anger-hostility	5.45 (3.03) <sup>a</sup>	3.99 (2.78)	2.91 (2.4) <sup>b</sup>
EVEA sadness-depression	1.77 (1.09) <sup>a</sup>	1.69 (1.09) <sup>a</sup>	4.38 (2.46) <sup>b</sup>
EVEA anxiety	5.97 (2.57) <sup>a</sup>	4.65 (2.27)	4.17 (2.4) <sup>b</sup>
Helplessness feelings	4.09 (2.57) <sup>a</sup>	2.96 (1.69) <sup>b</sup>	2.74 (1.9) <sup>b</sup>
Power feelings	3.71 (2.17) <sup>a</sup>	4.56 (2.15) <sup>b</sup>	5.59 (1.78) <sup>b</sup>
Body Surveillance	4.7 (1.04)	4.46 (1.16)	4.51 (1.00)
Body Shame	3.43 (1.39)	3.13 (1.33)	3.49 (1.30)

*Note:* Means with different subscripts across rows differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

The overall effects of the condition on Self-surveillance,  $F(2, 148) = 1.08$ ,  $p = .34$ ,  $\eta^2 = .015$  and Body Shame,  $F(2, 148) = .89$ ,  $p = .41$ ,  $\eta^2 = .012$ , were not significant.

In the case of items used to assess the *piropo*, as shown in Figure 1, there were significant differences in the evaluations of the gallant and lewd *piropos* on all of the scales (all scales were  $p < .001$ , except in the

case of unpleasant, where  $p < .01$ , and disgust, where  $p < .05$ ). The gallant *piropo* was perceived as more fun, pleasant, and flattering, and the lewd *piropo* was perceived as more chauvinistic, unpleasant, offensive, and disgust-inducing.

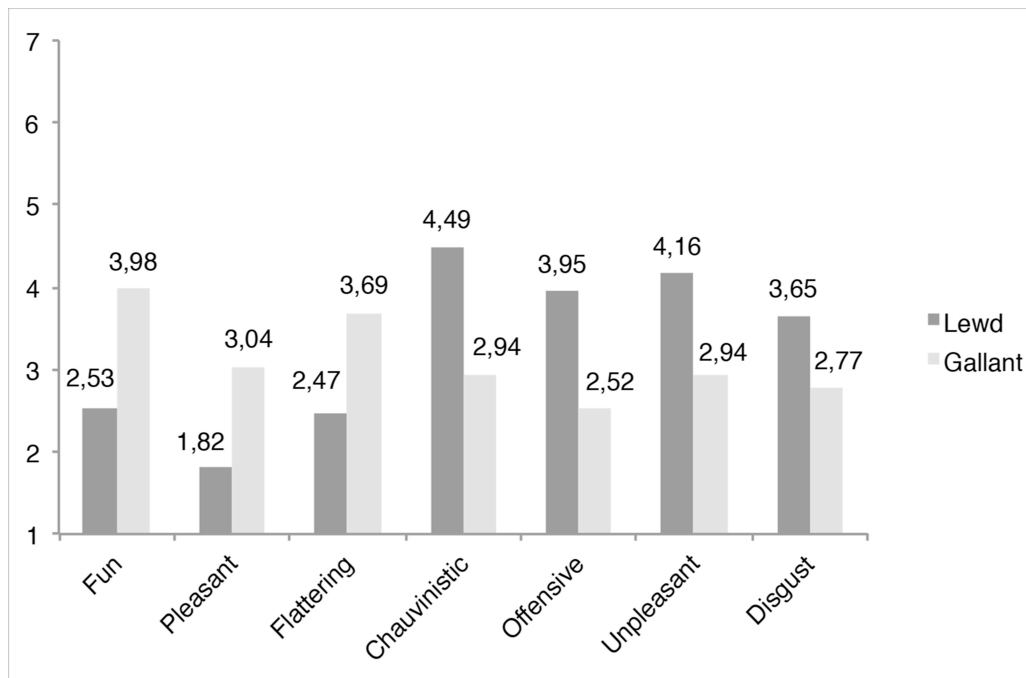


Figure 1. Assessments of lewd and gallant *piropos* (Study 2).

As we indicated, we expected to find that if a *piropo* was judged to be less negative, then the participants' reactions of joy and power would be greater and the participants' reactions of anger, sadness, anxiety, and helplessness would be less. We also thought that these relationships would be independent of the type of *piropo* (lewd or gallant). To test these ideas, we entered the type of *piropo* manipulation (coded 1 = lewd, 0 = gallant) and the scores in the negative *piropo*

evaluation items (centered), in addition to their product, into several multiple lineal regressions, one for each emotion considered (happiness, anger-hostility, sadness-depression, anxiety, and feelings of powerful and helplessness).

In most of the measures, we only found significant main effects of the *piropo*'s evaluation. Thus, the less negatively the women judged the *piropo* to be, the greater joy,  $b = -.88$ ,  $t = -4.93$ ,  $p < .000$ ,  $CI = [-1.24, -.53]$ , less anger,  $b = 1.48$ ,  $t = 8.71$ ,  $p < .000$ ,  $CI = [1.15, 1.83]$ , less discomfort/helplessness,  $b = .52$ ,  $t = 3.22$ ,  $p < .00$ ,  $CI = [.2, .84]$ , marginally less sadness,  $b = .19$ ,  $t = 1.95$ ,  $p = .054$ ,  $CI = [-.003, .4]$ ; and more power,  $b = -.62$ ,  $t = -3.67$ ,  $p < .000$ ,  $CI = [-.95, -.28]$ , they experienced. Only in the case of discomfort/helplessness emotions was the negative evaluation of the *piropo* x the type of *piropo* significant,  $b = .68$ ,  $t = 2.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CI = [.22, 1.14]$ . Simple slopes tests showed that the relationship between a negative evaluation of the *piropo* and discomfort/helplessness was stronger when the *piropo* was lewd,  $b = 1.2$ ,  $t = 67.53$ ,  $p < .000$ ,  $CI = [.83, 1.57]$ , than when it was gallant,  $b = .52$ ,  $t = 3.69$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $CI = [.24, .8]$ .

### Discussion

As we expected, women exposed to the lewd *piropo* experienced different feelings and emotions than those in the control group: less joy, sadness, and power and greater anxiety, discomfort and anger. Clearly, then, the aversive nature and the negative emotional consequences of

this type of *piropo* are confirmed. The consequences and reactions to the gallant *piropo* were less clear because there were only differences in sadness when compared to the control group. Those exposed to the lewd *piropo* experienced greater joy, less helplessness, and greater feelings of power. Therefore, although the gallant *piropo* does not provoke reactions as negative as the lewd *piropo*, it does not produce positive reactions when compared to situations in which participants are not exposed to *piropos* at all.

The results have also shown that women's reactions to both types of *piropos* depend on their perception of them (independent of the type of *piropo*): when *piropos* were evaluated less negatively, they produced greater joy and feelings of power and less anger, helplessness, and (marginally) sadness. This result suggests that the important finding from this study on the consequences of *piropos* concerns how women subjectively perceive the *piropos*, that is, their attitudes towards *piropos*.

Given that in this study some women assessed a lewd *piropo* and others a gallant *piropo*, we do not know how an individual woman perceives the two types of *piropos*. We know that women who assessed the lewd *piropo* scored it more negatively than did the women who evaluated the gallant *piropo*. However, how would an individual woman react to the two types of *piropos*? Would she react to each independently, or would her judgments be related? To attempt to respond to these questions, we designed Study 3.

### Study 3

#### Method

##### Participants

A total of 37 female college students participated. The mean age was = 23.92 years ( $SD = 2.93$ ).

##### Procedure

In this case, the participants were approached in two different university libraries and asked to voluntarily participate in the study. The students completed a questionnaire in which they were presented with 10 different *piropos*. Four different questionnaire models were used. With the goal of randomization, these differed only in the order in which the *piropos* were presented. Each *piropo* had to be evaluated against the same seven items used in Study 2 to measure the perception of a given expression on the part of the participants: fun, pleasant, flattering, chauvinistic, (it seems) offensive, unpleasant, and (inducing) disgust. Once the first three items were inverted, an overall mean score was calculated to assess each *piropo*. Given that our aim is to show how women themselves evaluate the two *piropos* used in Study 2, we will only comment on the results relating to those *piropos* ( $\alpha = .82$  for “I better not find out that that ass goes hungry!” and  $\alpha = .91$  for “Giiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun”).



### Results and discussion

As in Study 2, the participants perceived the gallant *piropo* more positively than the lewd *piropo* (see Figure 2).

With the goal of analyzing whether the scores for the two *piropos* covaried, we conducted a correlation analysis using the scores obtained for general attitudes towards the *piropo* “I better not find out that that ass goes hungry,” and towards the *piropo* “Giiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun.” The results showed that both assessments correlated to a significant and positive degree,  $r = .67$ ,  $p < .01$ .

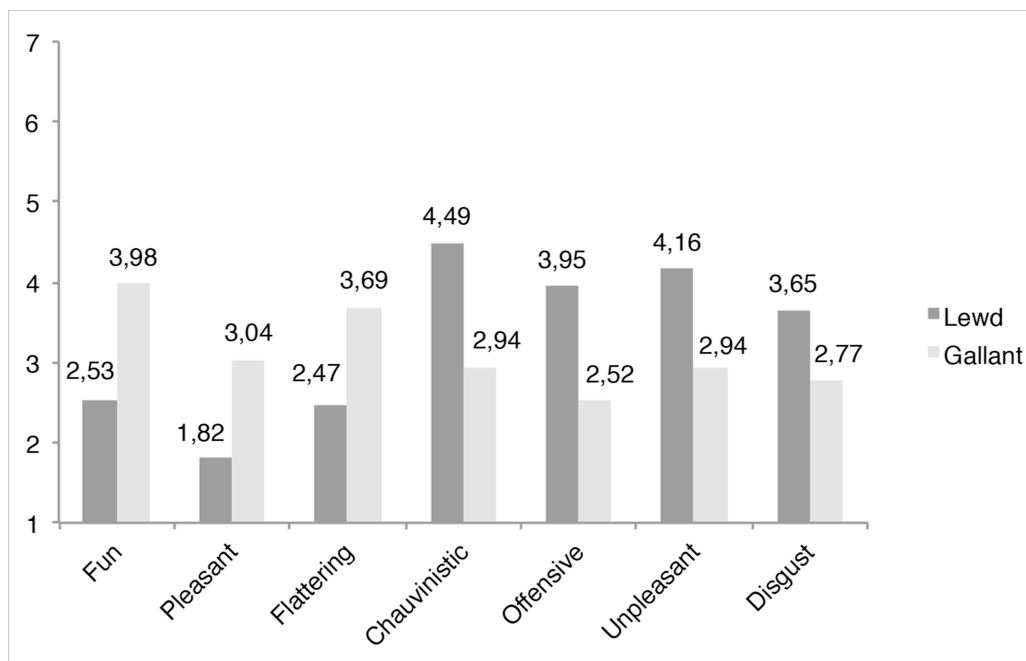


Figure 2. Assessments of lewd and gallant *piropos* by the participants in Study 3.

These results indicate that a woman’s assessment of a clearly lewd *piropo* is related to her assessment of a gallant and flattering

*piropo*. That is, the common opinion that women seem to like one type of *piropo* (gallant) but not others (hostile) must be qualified: to the degree that women like *piropos* (or not), they also tend to like (or not) others that seem very different, such that one can observe a relatively high correlation between the overall assessments of the two types of *piropos*.

### Overall discussion

Women continue to receive objectifying behavior from strangers on a daily basis. In our study, we have focused on *piropos* directed towards women (those directed towards men are clearly infrequent and a relatively recent phenomenon) by strangers. Despite their prevalence in Hispanic culture and despite the major debates surrounding *piropos*, psychosocial research concerning this form of objectification is practically nonexistent.

A primary goal of our study was to collect a broad number of *piropos* that are currently used in Spain and to analyze whether women perceived them as objectifying and whether they assessed them positively or negatively. With regard to whether *piropos* can be considered objectifying behavior, prior empirical evidence used to analyze this issue does not exist, although data on the convergence between *piropos*' characteristics and the concept of objectification can be characterized as such. Regarding whether women view *piropos* positively or negatively, there exists a certain level of debate in Spanish

society that reveals that although some women reject all types of *piropos*, others reject some (e.g., those that are clearly lewd and hostile) but accept those that have a kinder and more flattering tone.

The results of our first study confirm that *piropos* are a type of behavior that can be considered objectifying: the participants felt strongly that the majority of *piropos* treat the woman as an object, not a person, treat her as existing simply for a man's use and enjoyment, and focus only on one part of her body. However, it must also be noted that there was a certain level of variability among these perceptions, with some *piropos* that were clearly viewed as objectifying and others as less so. Regarding the second issue, the results showed that *piropos* are assessed negatively overall, although once again, one can observe that there are *piropos* that are clearly perceived as negative and others that are perceived as positive, reflecting the diversity of positions that exist within Spanish society.

An important result from the first study was the negative relationship found between the assessments of the *piropos* and whether these were considered objectifying behavior: the better a *piropo* was assessed to be, the less objectifying it was perceived to be. Given that studies have shown that objectification has numerous serious and negative consequences (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, and Thompson, 2011), not considering some *piropos* objectifying, especially when they are masked by a positive tone, could have serious consequences for gender equality.

This study's second objective was to deepen our understanding of reactions to two prototypical *piropos*, one more vulgar and the other "milder." First, we hoped to observe whether a clearly hostile *piropo* had negative consequences and, similarly, whether a clearly flattering *piropo* had the supposed positive consequences that some women claim. The findings of the second study confirmed the aversive nature and the negative consequences of the lewd *piropo*: Compared to the control group, women exposed to the lewd *piropo* experienced less joy and power and greater anger, anxiety, and discomfort. In the case of the gallant *piropo*, the consequences were not as negative as they were for the group exposed to the hostile *piropo*, but the scores for the supposedly positive reactions (e.g., joy, power) were never higher than those from the control group. Thus, the supposed goodness of some types of *piropos*, vindicated by some women (Ferrerias, 2015), cannot be observed in the results of our study. Furthermore, our results showed that the lewd and gallant *piropos* are not different in nature, because the reactions to the both of them are highly correlated.

The results have also shown that women's reactions to both types of *piropos* depended on the attitude that they had towards them, independent of the type of *piropo*. As such, a woman's assessment of a clearly lewd *piropo* correlated positively with her assessment of a gallant and flattering *piropo*. That is, the apparently common opinion that women seem to like one type of *piropo* (gallant) but not others (hostile), although confirmed by our studies, must be qualified: to the

degree that women assess lewd *piropos* as better (or worse), they also assess gallant *piropos* as better (or worse).

In a society in which all people's rights are respected, women do not need to accept or consent to behaviors that can be unpleasant for them or have any type of noxious effect on them. The reason is, first, regardless of whether they reject all *piropos* or accept them to a certain degree, their consequences continue to be negative. Similarly, for women who reject *piropos*, these negative consequences are even more pronounced. Even for women who positively assess *piropos*, considering them to be fun, pleasant, and not very chauvinistic or offensive, they can involve certain risks. Just as studies of ambivalent sexism have shown that women who feel good when they experience benevolent sexist behavior or when they accept benevolent sexist ideology are at risk of suffering gender discrimination in more subtle ways (given that these behaviors and ideologies are not perceived as sexist) (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; et al., 2007), women who positively assess *piropos* can also be at risk of not perceiving discriminatory situations.

This research has a number of limitations. First, the participants in our studies were or had been university women and may have been more sensitive to gender discrimination. We must broaden the study to include more diverse samples of women, especially if we hope to understand women's reactions to and assessments of *piropos*. Second, the use of scenario methodology cannot replace the real-world *piropo* situations that happen to women in the street every day. Despite the

sensitive nature of more realistic studies on this behavior, it is true that it would be interesting to explore new approximations and observe whether the results can be replicated. Finally, we must note the lack of impact that *piropos* have on women's self-objectification. We think that having used subscales without adapting the instructions to reflect self-objectification in a specific moment (rather than a permanent feature that is relatively insensitive to situational variations) may have affected the results.

Having said that, despite these limitations, we believe that this research adds new knowledge to the study of *piropos*, a common phenomenon, in certain countries, about which we still know very little. This study has enabled us to analyze, for the first time, how *piropos* are perceived and to explore some of their negative consequences.

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## APPENDIX

**Table 1.** Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) of each “Piropo” on the different items (Women participants, n = 99). Scales (1-7)

PIROPO	Treats the woman as an object, not a person	Treats the woman as existing simply for the man’s use and enjoyment	Has sexual connotations	Expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman	Expresses a positive image of the woman	This type of <i>piropo</i> strikes me as unpleasant	Portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body
1. “I better not find out that that ass goes hungry!” [“ <i>¡Qué no me entere yo que ese culo pasa hambre!</i> ”]	5.59 (1.72)	5.74 (1.52)	5.90 (1.36)	3.24 (1.99)	2.03 (1.28)	4.74 (1.93)	6.81 (0.51)
2. “Girl... I’d like to make you a saliva suit.” [“ <i>Niña...un traje de saliva te hacía yo</i> ”]	5.44 (1.59)	6 (1.38)	6.34 (1.00)	3.18 (1.81)	1.86 (0.97)	6.28 (1.07)	3.22 (1.87)
3. “Honey, you’re a small monument.” [“ <i>Menudo monumento colega...</i> ”]	5.42 (1.8)	4.12 (1.63)	3.42 (1.65)	2.55 (1.39)	3.65 (1.77)	2.90 (1.54)	2.52 (1.70)
4. “Giiiirl, I’m going to eat the part of you that you like the most.” [“ <i>Niñaaa. te voy a coméeeee lo que más gustito te déeeeeeeeeeeee</i> ”]	5.65 (1.57)	6.02 (1.26)	6.85 (0.5)	3.52 (2)	1.65 (0.99)	6.33 (1)	5.21 (1.93)
5. “Giiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun.” [“ <i>Niñaaa. cuidado con los bombones, que se derriten al sol</i> ”]	4.74 (1.69)	3.34 (1.57)	2.68 (1.48)	2.26 (1.32)	3.77 (1.65)	2.45 (1.45)	2.28 (1.51)
6. “I’d eat you with your clothes on, girl.” [“ <i>Te comía hasta con la ropa puesta, niña</i> ”]	5.68 (1.57)	6.38 (0.78)	6.60 (0.70)	3.40 (1.96)	2.14 (1.38)	5.16 (1.71)	3.20 (1.84)

PIROPO	Treats the woman as an object, not a person	Treats the woman as existing simply for the man's use and enjoyment	Has sexual connotations	Expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman	Expresses a positive image of the woman	This type of <i>piropo</i> strikes me as unpleasant	Portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body
7. "Honey, I'll fill you with everything but fear." [" <i>Morena...te metía de to' menos miedo</i> "]	5.73 (1.42)	6.56 (0.77)	6.79 (0.68)	3.81 (1.81)	1.79 (1.03)	6.23 (0.88)	3.92 (1.99)
8. "Oh, the lady in red, I'd fuck her!" [" <i>Ay la de rojo, ¡que se lo cojo!</i> "]	5.67 (1.39)	6.24 (0.97)	6.67 (0.75)	2.82 (1.84)	1.55 (0.87)	5.63 (1.39)	5.88 (1.38)
9. "Damn, you look good! I bet you piss cologne!" [" <i>¡Pero qué buena que estás! ¡Seguro que meas colonia!</i> "]	5.17 (1.75)	4.56 (1.58)	4.23 (1.73)	2.56 (1.49)	2.60 (1.46)	5.48 (1.70)	3.02 (1.65)
10. "I'd eat you whole and sew up my ass to keep from shitting you." [" <i>Te comía entera y me cosía el culo pa' no cagarte</i> "]	5.31 (1.74)	5.67 (1.52)	5.10 (1.77)	3.04 (1.88)	1.86 (1.26)	6.22 (1.1)	3 (1.9)
11. "Sweet mother of God! You with those curves and me with no brakes." [" <i>¡Madre Mía! Tú con esas curvas y yo sin frenos</i> "]	5.04 (1.43)	5.11 (1.4)	5.04 (1.44)	3.55 (1.7)	3.08 (1.44)	3.57 (1.7)	4.98 (1.82)
12. "Daaaaamn, what an ass, sweet mother of God!" [" <i>¡Aaaayy que culo tienes madre miaa!</i> "]	5.31 (1.81)	5.47 (1.46)	5.69 (1.45)	3.10 (2)	2.39 (1.45)	4.57 (1.61)	6.73 (1.04)

PIROPO	Treats the woman as an object, not a person	Treats the woman as existing simply for the man's use and enjoyment	Has sexual connotations	Expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman	Expresses a positive image of the woman	This type of <i>piropo</i> strikes me as unpleasant	Portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body
13. "If you were a bollicao [sweet bun filled with cream], I would even eat the wrapper." [ <i>"Si fueras bollicao te comía hasta el cromo."</i> ]	6.09 (1.2)	6.09 (1.14)	6.31 (1.04)	3.39 (1.88)	1.91 (0.98)	5.57 (1.61)	4.07 (2.22)
14. "Your smile would brighten anyone's mood." [ <i>"Tienes una sonrisa que ilumina a cualquiera"</i> ]	1.67 (1.04)	1.63 (1.03)	1.42 (0.85)	2.92 (1.59)	6.15 (1.24)	1.15 (0.5)	4.48 (2.44)
15. "Quien fuera pirata, pero no por el oro ni por la plata, sino por ese tesoro que tienes entre las patas." [ <i>"I wish I were a pirate but not for gold or silver—for the treasure you have between your legs."</i> ]	6.58 (0.6)	6.77 (0.47)	6.90 (0.3)	3.73 (2)	1.62 (0.95)	6.27 (1.03)	6.62 (0.99)
16. "Are you Google? Because you have everything I'm searching for." [ <i>"¿Eres Google? Porque tienes todo lo que busco."</i> ]	4.05 (1.99)	3.43 (1.76)	2.52 (1.55)	5.28 (1.5)	4.67 (1.5)	2.21 (1.4)	1.54 (1.1)
17. "Precious, did you hurt yourself when you fell from heaven?" [ <i>"Preciosa, ¿te hiciste daño al caer del cielo?"</i> ]	2.56 (1.58)	1.81 (1.16)	1.81 (1.28)	2.74 (1.42)	5.35 (1.58)	1.72 (1.1)	1.70 (1.1)



PIROPO	Treats the woman as an object, not a person	Treats the woman as existing simply for the man's use and enjoyment	Has sexual connotations	Expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman	Expresses a positive image of the woman	This type of <i>piropo</i> strikes me as unpleasant	Portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body
18. "Your mom must be a pastry chef because not just anybody can make a sweet like you." [ <i>Tu madre tiene que ser pastelera, porque un bombón como tú no lo hace cualquiera.</i> "]	4.81 (1.6)	3.47 (1.66)	2.98 (1.63)	2.60 (1.36)	4.40 (1.72)	2.34 (1.43)	2.09 (1.33)
19. "If you were a candy, I'd eat you even with the wrapper on." [ <i>Si fueras un bombón, te comería hasta con el envoltorio puesto.</i> "]	5.84 (1.34)	6.04 (1.14)	5.63 (1.51)	3.33 (1.82)	2.49 (1.34)	4.18 (1.8)	2.76 (1.9)
20. "Eso sí es un culo, y no lo que le quita mi madre a los pepinos" [ <i>Now that's what I call an end [bum], not what my mum trims off the cucumbers!</i> "]	5.77 (1.4)	5.39 (1.46)	5.84 (1.72)	3.14 (1.85)	2.29 (1.4)	4.96 (1.73)	6.84 (0.5)
21. "I'd like to be ice cream to wet your lips and melt in your mouth." [ <i>Me gustaría ser helado para mojar tus labios y derretirme en tu boca.</i> "]	3.86 (1.96)	4.58 (1.77)	4.82 (1.51)	3.98 (1.76)	3.39 (1.63)	3.25 (1.67)	5.07 (1.71)
22. "I wish I were a tile so that I could see all of your stuff." [ <i>Quien fuera baldosa para verte toda la cosa.</i> "]	5.87 (1.4)	6.10 (1.45)	6.49 (1.25)	3.69 (2.15)	1.64 (1.1)	6.08 (1.48)	6.56 (0.97)

PIROPO	Treats the woman as an object, not a person	Treats the woman as existing simply for the man's use and enjoyment	Has sexual connotations	Expresses that the man depends on and needs the woman	Expresses a positive image of the woman	This type of <i>piropo</i> strikes me as unpleasant	Portrays the woman by focusing on a single part of her body
23. "If your ass was a bank, I would stick it [penis] in a fixed-term deposit account!" [ <i>Si tu culo fuera un banco te la metería a plazo fijo!</i> "]	6.62 (0.81)	6.72 (0.57)	6.85 (0.5)	3.68 (1.93)	1.49 (0.85)	6.47 (1.05)	6.28 (1.48)
24. "I wish I were cross-eyed so I could see you twice." [ <i>Quién fuese bizco para verte dos veces</i> "]	3.05 (1.7)	4.12 (1.68)	2.91 (1.6)	3.30 (1.58)	3.77 (1.86)	2.63 (1.53)	2.58 (1.65)
25. "You are like a star, so beautiful to admire and so far away to touch." [ <i>Eres como una estrella, tan bella para admirarla y tan lejana para tocarla</i> "]	3.29 (1.99)	2.47 (1.58)	2.22 (1.54)	4.39 (1.6)	5.61 (1.35)	1.69 (0.98)	1.61 (1.19)



## **Chapter 4:**

**The moderating role of self-objectification in women's reactions to objectifying behaviors ('piropos')**



**“Women’s reactions to objectifying behaviours (*piropos*):**

**The moderating role of self- objectification.**

## Abstract

'*Piropos*' are remarks about physical attributes mainly directed toward women, which can be considered a clear example of sexual objectification within Spanish society. Among the many negative consequences of sexual objectification is self-objectification, where women come to perceive themselves as objects. In this study, we analysed some of the emotional consequences of being exposed to a lewd *piropo* together with the moderating role of self-objectification in 352 Spanish women with differing socio-demographic characteristics. The results demonstrated that the exposure to the *piropo* provoked negative consequences for women (hardly any happiness or feelings of power, yet anger and feelings of helplessness). However, women with a high level of trait self-objectification did not react as negatively as women that show a lower level of self-objectification. Therefore, the harmful consequences for women of certain types of *piropos* are demonstrated together with the moderating role of self-objectification in their reactions to *piropos*.

**Keywords:** women, sexual objectification, self-objectification, street harassment, emotions

Imagine that you are walking along the street and you hear a man say to a woman: “Now that’s what I call an end [bum], not what my mum trims off the cucumbers!” [*“Eso es un culo y no lo que le quita mi madre a los pepinos”*] or “If your arse was a bank, I would stick it [penis] in a fixed term deposit account!” [*“Si tu culo fuera un banco, te la metía a plazo fijo”*] How do you think you would feel in this situation? Maybe you would feel bad (uncomfortable, denigrated...), especially if you are a woman. These types of comments are examples of what are known, in Spain (and other Spanish-speaking countries), as *piropos*. A *piropo* is defined as “a short saying which praises some quality of someone, especially the beauty of a woman” [*“dicho breve con que se pondera alguna cualidad de alguien, especialmente la belleza de la mujer”*] (Real Academia Española [Royal Spanish Academy], 2014a). There are many types of *piropos*. Some are clearly vulgar and hostile, such as those mentioned above. However, others have a ‘softer’ character and may even be considered by some people as acceptable and even ‘flattering’. Yet they are all comments that objectify women, as they focus fundamentally on a woman’s appearance and treat women as objects, being generally of a sexual nature. Female sexual objectification consists precisely of considering a woman as a body, body parts or sexual functions as if they were capable of representing her, obviating her characteristics as a person (Bartky, 1990).

To date, we are not aware of any studies that have addressed how women react to *piropos* from a psychosocial perspective, and the



factors that influence their reactions. As will be explained, *piropos*, particularly those similar to the ones already mentioned, provoke a clear rejection in the majority of the population, especially women. However, as has been shown by different studies, reactions towards objectifying behaviors depend on social or cultural, situational and individual factors (Gregus, Rummell, Rankin & Levant, 2014; Tylka & August-Horvarth, 2011). The present research addresses precisely one of those factors: how women's self-objectification can moderate their reactions to an objectifying behavior, such as a *piropo*.

### **Objectification**

Although the theorisation of female sexual objectification is not a new phenomenon, the development of a theoretical framework and empirical studies is more recent (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011). In 1997 objectification theory was formulated from psychology. It argues that "the common thread running through all forms of objectification is the experience of being treated as a body (or a collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). Objectification theory argues that girls and women are sexually objectified more frequently than men in different ways, such as interpersonal and social encounters or by means of audio-visual media that reproduce such encounters or expose women to films, adverts, magazines, pornography, etc. The theory has also indicated that there

are multiple negative psychological consequences that derive from being treated as an object.

Since its formulation, objectification theory has given rise to many studies, some of which consider objectification as a relatively recurrent experience over time, whilst others have approached it as an isolated event. Thus, within the first conception, much research has focused on making women remember objectifying experiences, either by writing them down or by using scales that study the prevalence and frequency of these experiences, such as the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS; Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath & Denchik, 2007). On the other hand, within the second perspective, there is a line of research that has focused on creating an objectifying experience and analysing the consequences on women. These situations can vary from those in which the objectification is quite explicit to others of a more implicit or subtle type. The former would include, for example, the situation used by Fredrickson, Noll, Roberts, Quinn & Twenge (1998) where women were asked to try on a swimsuit and look at themselves in front of a mirror; or that of the study by Gervais, Vescio & Allen (2010) in which women received objectifying gazes from a man. Research in which the manipulation of the objectifying situation is more subtle, would be that where the participants are primed with words associated with objectification (Calogero & Pina, 2011; Roberts & Gettman, 2004), or studies in which the participants anticipate an interaction with a man (Calogero, 2004).

Some of the situations or behaviors that have been defined as sexual objectification include “gazing or leering at women’s bodies, making sexual comments about women, whistling or honking at women, taking unsolicited photographs of women’s bodies, presenting sexualized images of women in media or pornography, sexually harassing women, and engaging in sexual violence against women” (Calogero, 2011, p. 34). However, there is little research in which a direct exposure to such situations is carried out. One exception would be the recent work by Wiener, Gervais, Allen & Marquez (2013). They conducted a laboratory experiment, in the context of a simulated job interview, in which the researcher’s accomplice gazed at the participants’ chest on up to four occasions. At the end of the interview the confederate made a comment related to the participant’s appearance. Given the nature of the street *piropo* (made by strangers, on the street) and the difficulty to experimentally recreate a similar situation, the women in our study will not be directly exposed to a *piropo* (objectifying situation), but rather a scenario methodology will be used to recreate a *piropo* made by a stranger in a public space.

### ***Piropos: Everyday Examples of the Objectification of Women***

A *piropo*, in general terms, is a compliment or praise given to a person, usually a woman, typical in Spain yet also present in many countries with a Mediterranean culture and other Spanish-speaking countries (Fridlitzius, 2009).

Although it varies in content and form, and has evolved over the years, according to the “Ausonia” study (“Eres Maravillosa” [“You’re Wonderful”], 2009), the *piropo* continues to be a common practice in Spanish daily life, as six out of ten women say they receive them often. Although *piropos* can be directed at someone with whom there is a close relationship, we will focus on the street *piropo*, that is to say, “the spontaneous phrase or expression that a man directs at an unknown woman in the middle of the street or in another open and public space” (Preisig, 1998).

We can find all kinds of street *piropos*. The common denominator to them all is that they consist of comments that objectify women by focusing fundamentally on their appearance and treating women as objects; being generally of a sexual nature. As stated by Fridlitzius (2009), when the *piropo* occurs between strangers, it nearly always refers to (either directly or indirectly) the female body and not to other female qualities. Even so, the nature of *piropos* varies. Some, like those mentioned at the beginning of this article, have a more vulgar character and tend to provoke greater rejection amongst women. Others, of a more ‘gallant’ type (e.g. “what a monument” [“vaya monumento”], “be careful, sweeties melt in the sun” [“ten cuidado que los bombones se derriten al sol”], “beautiful, did you hurt yourself when you fell from Heaven?” [“preciosa, ¿te hiciste daño al caer del cielo?”]), seem to provoke reactions that are slightly more ambiguous or ambivalent. There are women who state that they enjoy them, whilst

others consider them a demonstration of sexism or even of gender aggression (Fridlitzius, 2009; Gaytan-Sánchez, 2009; Venclovská, 2006). Recently in Spain a certain polemic on *piropos* arose, as some women who held positions of public and political responsibility expressed their rejection of any type of *piropo*. In the face of this reaction other women stated being against vulgar *piropos*, yet they defended the ones they consider softer (“Eres maravillosa” [“You’re Wonderful”], 2009; Jiménez, 2015; “¿Piropos o acoso?” [“Piropos or harassment?”], 2005).

In recent years there has been talked of a decline in the prevalence of *piropos* in Spain (Fridlitzius, 2009; Preisig, 1998), a consequence of the socio-cultural transformations the country has experienced since the 1960’s (Astakhova, 2014). However, their continued level of widespread acceptance (at least for some people, and/or for some types of *piropos*) may be related to some characteristics of the Spanish and Latin cultures, as has been shown by linguists and socio-linguists.

Thus, from a purely linguistic perspective, the Professor of Spanish language Esther Forgas (cited in Seco, 2011), points to some characteristics that have contributed to the *piropo* taking root in Spanish culture. One would be “the expansive or extrovert character of society, shared with the Mediterranean peoples, that entails a generalised use of the exclamation and apostrophe”. Other characteristics of Spanish society according to this author that could contribute to the use of *piropos* would be the tendency to exaggeration

and hyperbole, together with the use of metaphors. Therefore, the Spanish *piropo* appears characterised by an elaboration that plays with language and goes beyond the wolf whistle or the standard qualifying adjective about physical appearance.

On the other hand, Brown and Levinson's politeness model (1987), a pragmalinguistic theory that approaches the way in which context influences the interpretation of meaning, could help understand the relative acceptance of the *piropo* in the Hispanic context. This theory is based on Goffman's (1967) notion of face, which refers to the positive social value that individuals hope to obtain in their social interaction with others. Brown and Levinson introduce new elements into Goffman's ideas, and add a new differential facet to the concept of positive face: negative face. Thus, positive face refers to the desire to be accepted, respected or valued by other members of the society to which they belong; and negative face refers to the desire of each individual to have his/her actions unimpeded by others, that is, not wanting to be bothered or imposed upon by others, being able to do what they themselves decide, or that their personal space is not invaded. Therefore, from Brown and Levinson's model, verbal politeness would be considered as a series of strategies aimed at controlling the self-image of the speakers (Martínez-Cabeza, 1997).

According to studies such as those by Haverkate (2000), most cultures can be divided depending on whether the members that comprise it show preference for the expression of positive politeness

(which he prefers to call ‘solidarity politeness’), or, alternatively, if they prefer the expression of negative politeness (which he refers to as ‘distancing politeness’). Haverkate (2000), in his research on spoken Dutch and Spanish, found similar results to those found by Sifianou (1992) with spoken English and Greek: Spanish and Greek cultures are orientated towards solidarity (positive) politeness, whereas Dutch and English cultures are orientated towards distancing (negative) politeness.

A compliment is defined as “praise for the qualities and merits of someone or something” [“una alabanza de las cualidades y méritos de alguien o de algo”] (Real Academia Española [Royal Spanish Academy], 2014b). According to Jang (2011), because a compliment is an act that seeks to express solidarity and esteem for the person that receives it, complimenting could be considered a prototypical strategy of positive politeness. In this framework, research proves that Spaniards (from Spain) say thank you when they receive a compliment, yet Americans do not (De Pablos, 2006). Similarly, the average Dutch person does not tend to give or receive compliments, or know how to respond to them (Haverkate, 2003). Similar reactions have been observed in English and Scandinavian cultures (Albelda & Briz, 2010).

These linguistic-cultural approaches can help understand the reactions that can occur in response to *piropos* in Hispanic cultures. In Anglo-Saxon cultures compliments on appearance are not so common, and it would be logical to expect that something much more extreme, such as street *piropos* or comments about physical appearance made by

strangers in the street, is clearly seen as an invasion of a woman's intimacy or personal space, reflecting that women are being bothered or pressurised by others (essential in negative or distancing politeness). However, in Hispanic cultures the *piropo* would be included in its entirety in positive or solidarity politeness because, to a certain extent, it strengthens the desire to be accepted, respected and valued. Globalisation and the progressive expansion in the Western world of generalised ideologies and cultural patterns (most of them proceeding from the Anglo-Saxon world) can be creating a shift in positive politeness cultures, like the Hispanic culture, towards negative politeness. Despite the change of direction in these cultures, their tradition of positive politeness may still be of great importance. The *piropo*, even in its most vulgar form, could be interpreted by the receptor as a form of compliment by the other person, and, as we have pointed out, it tends to be harder for the members of positive politeness cultures to reject compliments than for the members of negative politeness cultures.

### **The *Piropo* and Stranger Harassment**

The *piropo* could also be related to what has been called 'stranger harassment'. Bowman (1993, p. 519) defined stranger harassment as the "[sexual] harassment of women in public places by men who are strangers", and it "includes both verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls,



and stranger remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman's physical appearance or on her presence in public" (Bowman, 1993, p. 523). Stranger harassment is perpetrated by men who are not known to the victim (i.e. not a co-worker, friend, family member or acquaintance), and occurs in public places (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008). Although sexual objectification by strangers in public spaces -sometimes also called street harassment- is more common than objectification by acquaintances (Gardner, 1995; Macmillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000), there is, to date, hardly any research dedicated to exploring this theme (Calogero, 2011, p. 222).

However, although the *piropo* can be considered a form of 'stranger harassment', we consider that it presents certain peculiarities. Firstly, it usually makes explicit reference to a woman's appearance, whilst some behaviors related to stranger harassment (whistling, blowing kisses), simply try to attract the woman's attention. Such behaviors are more general and not aimed specifically at her actual appearance. Secondly, *piropos* have a certain rhetoric elaboration that distinguishes them from other types of comments about appearance that are typical of street harassment (e.g. "Heyyy, good morning lady!" "What a beauty!"). Finally, *piropos* are highly accepted in Latin and Mediterranean cultures. This could be related to the fact that these cultures are considered to belong to the positive or solidarity politeness category (rather than to the negative or distancing politeness category). This is reflected not only by their relatively wide prevalence, but also by

the fact that whilst stranger harassment is clearly rejected in some Western cultures (Belgium, for example, recently introduced a new law that criminalises street harassment) (Cruz, 2015), in the case of *piropos* there is an ongoing debate (at least in Spanish society). Some *piropos* are accepted and valued (even by women with progressive ideologies).

### **Reactions to an Objectifying Behavior (the *piropo*) According to Trait Self-objectification**

One of the most important implications of experiencing objectification regularly, is that women may develop a third person view of themselves, perceiving themselves as objects in the same way that others do. This phenomenon is named self-objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Numerous studies have shown that self-objectification has negative consequences for women. Self-objectification has been found to be related to emotions of shame and anxiety (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), eating disorders (Calogero, Davis, & Thompson, 2005; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), the impairment of cognitive performance (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn & Twenge, 1998; Quinn, Kallen, Twenge, & Fredrickson, 2006), depression (Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004), substance abuse (Carr & Szymanski, 2010), sexual dysfunctions (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), or increased blaming of rape victims (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez & Puvia, 2013), to cite only some of these negative consequences.

Within objectification theory it is customary to differentiate

between trait self-objectification and state self-objectification (Calogero & Pina, 2011; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Trait self-objectification is the chronic tendency to see one's own body through the lens of objectification, both in public and private contexts. State self-objectification refers to a temporary situation in which people see themselves as objects in response to environmental stimuli.

Research on the relationship between trait self-objectification and state self-objectification has shown that state self-objectification is particularly harmful for women high in trait self-objectification (e.g., Fredrickson et al. 1998; Gapinski et al. 2003). Understanding how trait self-objectification moderates the negative effects of objectifying situations is crucial, because it can provide ideas as to how the negative effects of objectification could be tackled (Gay & Castano, 2010).

Despite trait self-objectification having this potentially important moderating role in objectifying situations, little previous research has addressed it. Gay and Castano (2010) found that for negative consequences to appear a combination between trait self-objectification and an objectifying context was necessary. These negative consequences include the increase of the cognitive load, and, as a result, the deterioration of women's performance. Calogero, Herbozo and Thompson (2009) found that when faced with appearance criticisms women high in trait self-objectification reported more body surveillance and body dissatisfaction than those low in self-objectification. Similarly, with the already classic 'Swimsuit-Sweater

Paradigm', Fredrickson and collaborators (1998) found that the swimsuit condition elicited higher levels of body shame, yet only in those participants high in trait self-objectification.

According to objectification theory, women high in trait self-objectification might not react as negatively to objectifying behaviors (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In accordance with this theory, these women would have developed a tendency to view themselves with a greater emphasis on their body qualities (to the detriment of other mental frameworks that could also be of use for self-perception). It would therefore be interesting to analyse whether women's trait self-objectification level could influence their reaction when they are faced with *piropos* (behaviors considered objectifying). Thus, even when the *piropo* is lewd, some women could interpret receiving it as proof that others see them from the perspective of their physical appearance. It would be a validation of their self-perception (Swami, et al., 2010).

Specifically, it could be expected that women with a high level of trait self-objectification will not react as negatively to *piropos* as women that show a lower level of self-objectification. If women high in self-objectification do indeed react differently, this would reveal that self-objectification could serve to maintain the status quo and legitimise unequal gender relationships (Calogero & Jost, 2011).

### The Present Research

The present research has two fundamental objectives: 1) to analyse how women react to an objectifying behavior, in this case a clearly hostile and vulgar *piropo*; and 2) to analyse the moderating role that trait self-objectification levels could have on women's reactions.

Firstly, we expect women to show a clear rejection of, and negative reactions towards, hostile and vulgar *piropos* (Hypothesis 1). This expectation is based on surveys as well as on opinions generated by debates that have recently taken place in Spanish media, which clearly show that women reject vulgar and hostile *piropos* ("Eres maravillosa" ["You're Wonderful"], 2009).

Secondly, we expect women high in self-objectification to not react as negatively to objectifying behaviors, such as a *piropo* (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) (Hypothesis 2).

The Body Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) (McKinley and Hyde, 1996) was used for measuring the self-objectification trait. Scores on this scale reflect a primary and fundamentally cognitive manifestation of objectified body consciousness (another way of referring to self-objectification) (Lindberg, Hyde & McKinley, 2006), something that occurs when an individual monitors their own body and sees it from an external perspective. This reflects in recurrent thoughts about appearance and continuous checking to see if the body conforms to cultural norms.

We believe the main effect of the *piropo* is to make a woman conscious of her body, independently to her seeing it as something flattering or insulting. Some women may come to expect to be objectified, and *piropos* may serve as reminders of the fact that others are evaluating their bodies (Calogero et al., 2009; Tiggemann & Boundy, 2008). Thus, we consider that the effects of the *piropo* and the moderating role of Self-Surveillance (self-objectification) will be relatively independent from other characteristics of women that are related to self-objectification, such as their BMI and their Self-Shame (a self-objectification component that is fundamentally affective because it considers whether or not an individual feels bad or guilty because s/he believes that their body does not meet cultural standards) (Lindberg et al., 2006). As indicated by Calogero (2011, p. 24), self-objectification and its negative consequences can occur both in women who are satisfied with their bodies and those who are dissatisfied.

### **Pilot Study**

We sought to select *piropos* that, apart from being clearly objectifying, were also unpleasant. In a previous study first year Psychology students (men and women) at a University in the South of Spain produced a list of *piropos* that they had heard a man say to a woman on the street. We selected 25 of the most common *piropos*, and tried to include as many differing types of *piropos* as possible.

Subsequently, 136 Psychology students (73% women) assessed, via an on-line questionnaire, 7 aspects of each of the 25 *piropos* (see table 1). The response format was from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). The on-line platform Qualtrics, which was used for completing the questionnaire, randomly assigned the *piropos* to be assessed by the participants to achieve a more or less equitable distribution. Approximately half of the individuals would assess 12 *piropos* and the other half 13.

The three *piropos* that appear in Table 1 were selected. According to the participants, the three *piropos* were assessed as being unpleasant, highly objectifying and having a sexual content. In general, there were hardly any differences between men and women in the assessment of the three *piropos* in each of the dimensions (women only scored higher than men in the dimension “it presents women simply for the enjoyment and use of men” for *piropo 2*, and also considered it to be more unpleasant). As our study was only going to include women, the scores presented in Table 1 only represent the female participants’ responses to the three *piropos*.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics (means and SDs) for *Piropos* used in the present research.

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Piropos, Mean (SD)</i>		
	1. "I would eat you up and sew up my arse to not crap you out" (n = 51)	2. "Now that's what I call an end [bum], not what my mum trims off the cucumbers" (n = 56)	3. "If your arse was a bank, I would stick it [penis] in a fixed term deposit account" (n = 53)
It treats women as objects, not as people	5.31 (1.74)	5.77 (1.4)	6.62 (.81)
It presents women simply for the enjoyment and use of men	5.67 (1.52)	5.39 (1.46)	6.72 (.57)
It has sexual connotations	5.10 (1.77)	5.84 (1.17)	6.85 (.5)
It reflects that men depend on and need women	3.04 (1.88)	3.14 (1.85)	3.68 (1.93)
It reflects a positive image of women	1.86 (1.26)	2.29 (1.4)	1.49 (.85)
I think this type of <i>piropo</i> is unpleasant	6.22 (1.1)	4.96 (1.73)	6.47 (1.05)
It represents women focusing only on one part of their bodies	3.00 (1.9)	6.84 (.5)	6.28 (1.47)

*Note.* Scale end-points are 1 = not at all and 7 = very much



## Method

### Participants

A total of 352 women, with a mean age of 21.00 years ( $SD = 3.85$ ), participated in the study. All had Spanish nationality, with the exception of one Swiss and one Ecuadorian. Many of them (39%) had completed secondary studies or university studies (completed or ongoing) (61%). 96.5% indicated being heterosexual. In some analyses the number of participants is inferior due to missing values in some measures.

### Procedure

This is an experimental study with a hypothetical scenario methodology and a sole independent variable (*piropo* exposure versus control). In the '*piropo*' condition participants were presented with a specific scenario and asked to imagine that what was described actually happened to them. Approximately half of the women (50.8%) were assigned to this condition and the other half (49.2%) to the control condition. The three *piropos* selected in the pilot study were used: "Now that's what I call an [end] bum, not what my mum trims off the cucumbers," "I would eat you up and sew up my arse to not crap you out" ["Te comía entera y me cosía el culo pa' no cagarte"], and "If your arse was a bank, I would put it [penis] in a fixed term deposit account". The participants were recruited by first year Psychology students and

answered the questionnaires at their request. Half read the questionnaire that included one of the three *piropos* and half (control condition) only answered the dependent measures. Of those participants assigned to the *piropo* condition, 30.6% of the participants read *piropo* 1, 28.6% read *piropo* 2 and 40.8% read *piropo* 3. Differences according to the type of *piropo* were only found in relation to Body Shame (scores in Body Shame were higher for participants exposed to *piropo* 1, followed by those exposed to *piropo* 2 and lastly those exposed to *piropo* 3). However, neither in this nor in any of the other measures was the interaction between the type of *piropo* and the experimental manipulation significant. Therefore, in the analysis the three *piropos* were considered together.

In the *piropo* condition, after the presentation of the research, the participants read the following text:

*“Imagine that you are in the following situation:*

*You are walking along the street alone. You are walking briskly and thinking to yourself, without paying too much attention to what is going on around you. When you cross the road, you realise that you are about to pass by a square where a group of young lads are sitting on a bench, and are looking at you. You continue walking and pass by without looking at them or paying attention to what they are doing. Then, as you are passing, one raises his voice and says to you:*

***“(one of the three piropos appeared here)”***

The participants then answered the dependent measures, which appeared in the order listed below.

1) *Mood and emotions*. After reading the scenario, participants in the experimental group were asked to respond to the 16 items of the Escala de Valoración del Estado de Ánimo (EVEA) [Scale for Mood Assessment] (Sanz, 2001). This was to ascertain the mood that they thought they would experience if they found themselves in a situation like the one described (participants from the control group were asked to indicate how they felt at that moment). The EVEA assesses four moods, each of which is measured by four items: *Sadness-depression* (melancholy, depressed, downcast, and sad); *Anxiety* (nervous, tense, anxious, and restless); *Happiness* (happy, optimistic, joyful, and cheerful); and *Anger-hostility* (irritated, angry, annoyed, and displeased). The response format is from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very much*). The EVEA measure has shown a high internal consistency (with alphas between .86 and .92 for Sadness-depression; between .92 and .94 for Anxiety; between .93 and .95 for Anger-hostility and between .88 and .96 for Happiness; Sanz, Gutiérrez, & García-Vera, 2014). Appropriate test-retest reliability and discriminant validity have also been demonstrated (Sanz, 2001). In our case the reliability coefficients obtained were: .87 for Sadness-depression; .77 for Anxiety; .94 for Anger-hostility and .91 for Happiness).

2) *Feelings of Power and Discomfort/Helplessness*. We subsequently included 12 items, prepared by us and used in previous

studies, to measure the Feelings of Power ( $\alpha = .81$ ) and Discomfort/Helplessness ( $\alpha = .86$ ) experienced by women when faced with the situation described above in the *piropo* condition. The response format was identical to that of the EVEA. Examples of the 6 items that comprise the Power dimension are: “I would feel powerful” and “I would feel in control of the situation”. Examples of the 6 items that comprise the Discomfort/Helplessness dimension are: “I would feel weak” and “I would feel humiliated”. As with the EVEA scale, participants in the control group answered these same power and discomfort/helplessness items, however, they were asked to answer according to how they felt at that moment.

3) *Self-Objectification*. The Spanish version of the *Body Surveillance Subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS)* (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Spanish version by Moya-Garófano, Megías, Rodríguez-Bailón & Moya, 2015) was used. The surveillance subscale is based on the idea that as women are an object of continuous sexual attention, this translates into a constant monitoring of their bodies to ensure that they conform to dominant beauty cannons. Participants respond by showing their degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the eight statements presented by the subscale, in a Likert type answer format with 7 points from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*) (4 being *neither agree nor disagree*); in each item the alternative response NA (if they consider that the item is not applicable) also appears. A high score indicates that the individual self-surveys his/her

appearance and thinks often about how his/her body looks; a low score indicates that the individual rarely self-surveys his/her appearance and instead tends to focus on how s/he feels on a physical level. An example of an item is: "I often worry about if the clothes I'm wearing look good on me". Body Surveillance subscale scores have been found to be internally consistent, stable over a 2-week period and demonstrated evidence of construct validity (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). In the present study, the alpha coefficient for this measure was .71.

4) *Body Shame*. The Spanish version of the *Body Shame Subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS)* (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Spanish version by Moya-Garófano et al., 2015) was used. The Body Shame subscale aims to assess the internalisation of cultural body standards, as it is understood that shame arises from the impossibility of attaining this imposed ideal of beauty. It is comprised of 8 items with the same response format as the previous scale. People that score highly on this scale feel that they are less valid if they do not manage to achieve the cultural expectations about how the body must be. On the contrary, people that have low scores do not see their personal value reduced if they do not conform to said body expectations. An example of an item is: "I feel bad when I don't look as good as I could". Body Shame subscale scores have been found to be internally consistent, stable over a 2-week period, and related to measures of negative body image (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). In this study, the alpha coefficient of this subscale was .79.

5) *Body Mass Index* (BMI). Self-reported weight and height information was collected to calculate relative weight to height ratios using BMI:  $\text{weight/height}^2$  ( $\text{kg/m}^2$ ; Garrow & Webster, 1985).

## Results

In Table 2 mean scores are presented for all the measures of emotions, feelings of power and helplessness, and self-objectification. Scores are presented as totals as well as being separated according to the experimental condition (*piropo* versus control).

**Table 2.** Summary of Means and *t*-Values for the different variables studied ( $n = 352$ ).

	Total sample	'Piropo'	Control	<i>t</i> -Value
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	
<b>Anger-Hostility (EVEA)</b>	3.14 (2.86)	4.25 (2.87)	2.02 (2.38)	7.66***
<b>Happiness (EVEA)</b>	4.95 (2.63)	3.69 (2.49)	6.21 (2.12)	-9.91***
<b>Sadness-depression (EVEA)</b>	1.80 (2.13)	.998 (1.51)	2.61 (2.34)	-7.44***
<b>Anxiety (EVEA)</b>	3.78 (2.28)	4.45 (2.08)	3.11 (2.28)	5.58***
<b>Sense of power</b>	4.18 (2.31)	3.20 (2.18)	5.17 (2.00)	-8.52***
<b>Sense of helplessness</b>	2.1 (1.87)	2.55 (1.92)	1.64 (1.71)	4.58***
<b>Body Surveillance (OBCS)</b>	3.06 (1.05)	3.06 (.99)	3.06 (1.12)	-.008
<b>Body Shame (OBCS)</b>	2.56 (1.29)	2.56 (1.21)	2.56 (1.37)	-.008

<b>BMI</b>	21.71 (2.85)	21.36 (2.6)	22.05 (3.05)	-2.06*
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Note: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

As we expected (Hypothesis 1), women exposed to the *piropo* showed considerably more negative emotions (less happiness, more anger and anxiety) and feelings related to the lack of power, than those who were not exposed to a *piropo*. An exception to this general pattern of results occurred in the sadness-depression subscale (EVEA), where women exposed to the *piropo* scored lower.

Curiously, women in the *piropo* condition scored lower in BMI than those in the control condition.

With regard to the Body Surveillance and Body Shame measures, in neither were there differences according to the experimental manipulation. However, women scored higher in Body Surveillance than in Body Shame (as is usual when these measures are used). The scores were somewhat lower than those obtained by McKinley and Hyde (1996) in the original measure.

In Table 3 the bivariate correlations between the main measures of the study are presented. Scores in the Surveillance and Shame subscales of the OBCS correlated significantly, although the magnitude of the correlation was somewhat lower than that found in other studies. The different emotional reactions also appeared to be related to each other in the direction that would be expected. It is worth noting the positive evaluation of the feelings associated with power; given their

positive correlation with other positive emotions and negative correlation with negative emotions; except in the case of the positive correlation between power and sadness-depression. However, emotions and self-objectification measures did not appear to be related to each other (or only very weakly in some cases). BMI did not correlate significantly with Self-objectification (surveillance), which is consistent with objectification theory (Calogero, 2004). In order to test Hypothesis 2, several hierarchical linear regressions were conducted using each of the different measures (Happiness, Anger-hostility, Sadness-depression, Anxiety, feelings of Power and Helplessness) as the criterion variable for each analysis. All continuous variables were centered prior to calculating the interaction term (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). In the first step of the regression, scores in Body Shame were included (with the aim of controlling the effects of the more affective aspects of self-objectification)<sup>2</sup>. The experimental manipulation (coded 0 = control, 1 = *piropo*), and scores in the Body Surveillance scale were entered in the second step. The third step was to test for two-way interaction.

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<sup>2</sup> The same analyses were conducted using Body Shame and BMI in the first steps. Results were exactly the same that those without including BMI. Because including BMI implied a reduction in the number of participants, we decide to present the results without including this variable.



**Table 3.** Zero-order correlations among the main variables of the study.

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Happiness	-.54**	.07	-.20**	.74**	-.30**	.08	-.01	.16
2. Anger-Hostility	-	.18**	.56**	-.34**	.62**	-.07	.02	-.10
3. Sadness-Depr		-	.28**	.14**	.39**	.01	.14*	.09
4. Anxiety			-	-.12*	.65**	.06	.022	-.035
5. Power				-	-.20**	-.06	-.03	.06
6. Helplessness					-	.02	.10	-.08
7. Surveillance (OBCS)						-	.23**	-.00
8. Shame (OBCS)							-	.26**
9. BMI								-

Note: OBCS, Objectified Body Consciousness Scale; BMI, Body Mass Index. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

### Happiness

With regard to the emotions included in this subscale (e.g., “happy”, “optimistic”, etc.) the analysis, as expected, yielded a main effect of the experimental manipulation: women reported less positive emotions in the *piropo* condition than in the control condition,  $b = -2.54$ ,  $t(325) = -10.11$ ,  $p = .000$ , 95% CI = [-3.04, -2.05]. Central to Hypothesis 2, we found a significant interaction between participants’ Body-surveillance and the experimental manipulation,  $b = .81$ ,  $t(325) = 3.36$ ,  $p = .001$ , 95% CI = [.34, 1.28]. Simple slopes tests showed that exposure to the *piropo* had a higher significant negative impact on happiness in women low in Body Surveillance,  $b = -3.39$ ,  $t = -9.53$ ,  $p < .00$ , CI = [-4.1, -

2.7], than in women high in Body Surveillance,  $b = -1.65$ ,  $t = -4.63$ ,  $p < .00$ ,  $CI = [-2.35, -.95]$  (see Figure 1).

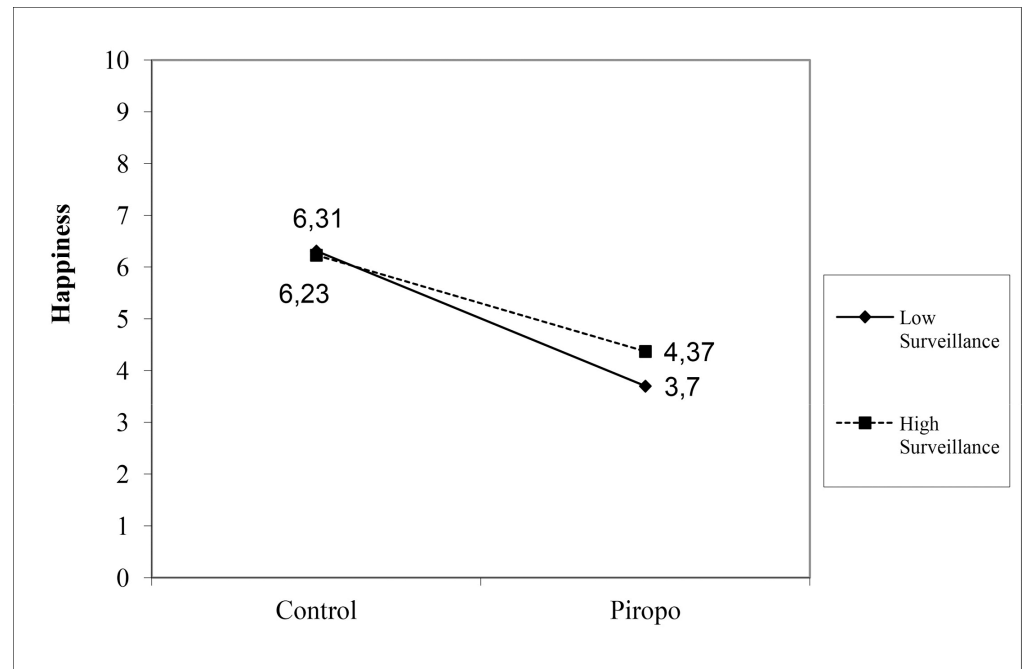


Figure 1. Moderation model with experimental manipulation (piropo versus control) as the independent variable, Body Surveillance as the moderator, and Happiness as the dependent variable.

### Anger-hostility

In these emotions (e.g., “irritated”, “angry”, etc.), the opposite pattern to happiness was found: the analysis also yielded a main effect of the experimental manipulation – women reported more anger-hostility in the *piropo* condition than in the control condition,  $b = 2.27$ ,  $t(325) = 7.84$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $95\% CI = [1.7, 2.84]$ . Confirming our Hypothesis 2, we found a significant interaction between participants’ Body-surveillance and the experimental manipulation,  $b = -.76$ ,  $t(325) = -2.73$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $95\% CI = [-1.32, -.2]$ . Simple slopes tests showed that the exposure to the *piropo* significantly increased anger-hostility more at 1 SD below the

Body Surveillance mean,  $b = 3.08$ ,  $t = 7.49$ ,  $p < .00$ ,  $CI = [2.3, 3.9]$ , than at 1 SD above the Body Surveillance mean,  $b = 1.43$ ,  $t = 3.49$ ,  $p < .00$ ,  $CI = [.62, 2.24]$  (see Figure 2).

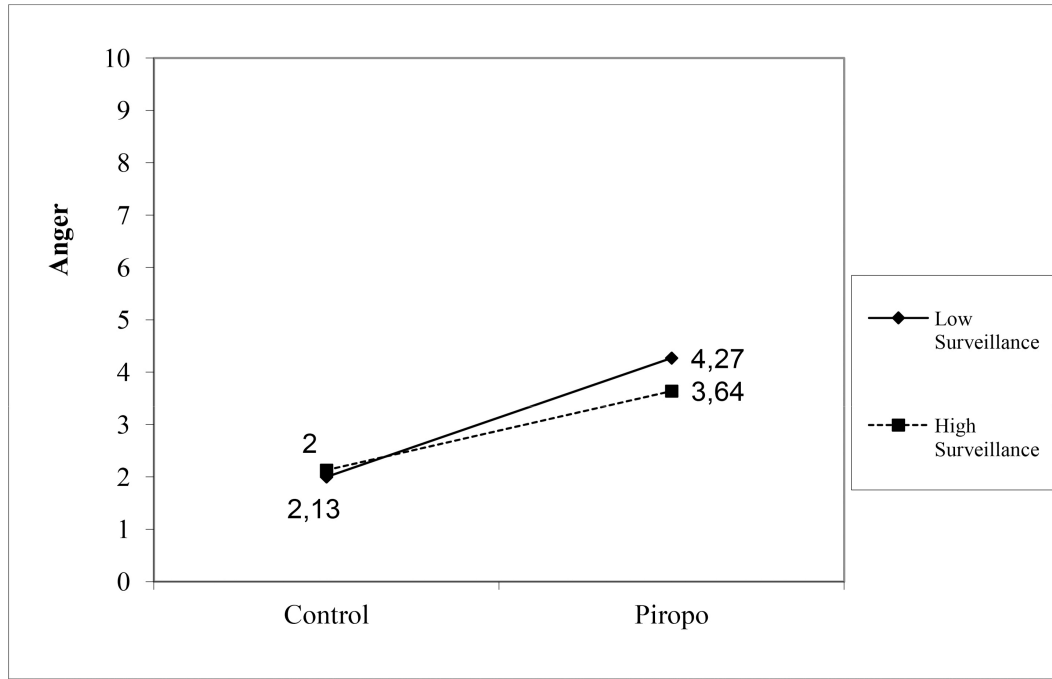


Figure 2. Moderation model with experimental manipulation (piropo versus control) as the independent variable, Body Surveillance as the moderator, and Anger-hostility as the dependent variable.

### Sadness-depression

Included in this subscale are emotional states such as depressed, sad, etc. We found only a main effect: Coinciding with the findings of the t-test analysis, the participants experienced more sadness in the control condition than in the *piropo* condition,  $b = -1.59$ ,  $t(325) = -7.35$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $95\% CI = [-2.02, -1.17]$ .

### Anxiety

In the case of these emotions (nervous, tense, etc...), only a main effect of our experimental manipulation was found: women

experienced more anxiety when they received the *piropo* than when they did not receive it,  $b = 1.35$ ,  $t(325) = 5.57$ ,  $p = .000$ , 95% CI = [.87, 1.33].

### Feelings related to power

For these feelings (e.g., powerful, encouraged, etc.), there was a significant main effect of the experimental manipulation. Women reported less feelings of power in the *piropo* condition than in the control condition,  $b = -1.99$ ,  $t(325) = -8.72$ ,  $p = .000$ , 95% CI = [-2.44, -1.54]. However, this effect was qualified by a condition x participant's self-surveillance interaction,  $b = .76$ ,  $t(325) = 3.5$ ,  $p = .001$ , 95% CI = [.33, 1.19]. Simple slopes tests showed that exposure to the *piropo* condition had a higher significant negative impact on power related feelings at 1 SD below the Body Surveillance mean,  $b = -2.78$ ,  $t = -8.6$ ,  $p < .00$ , CI = [-3.42, -2.14], than at 1 SD above the Body Surveillance mean,  $b = -1.16$ ,  $t = -3.59$ ,  $p < .00$ , CI = [-1.8, -.52] (see Figure 3).

### Feelings related to helplessness

For these feelings (e.g., inferior, down, etc.) only a main effect of the experimental manipulation was found,  $b = .96$ ,  $t(325) = 4.79$ ,  $p = .000$ , 95% CI = [.56, 1.35]; women exposed to the *piropo* showed higher helplessness feelings.

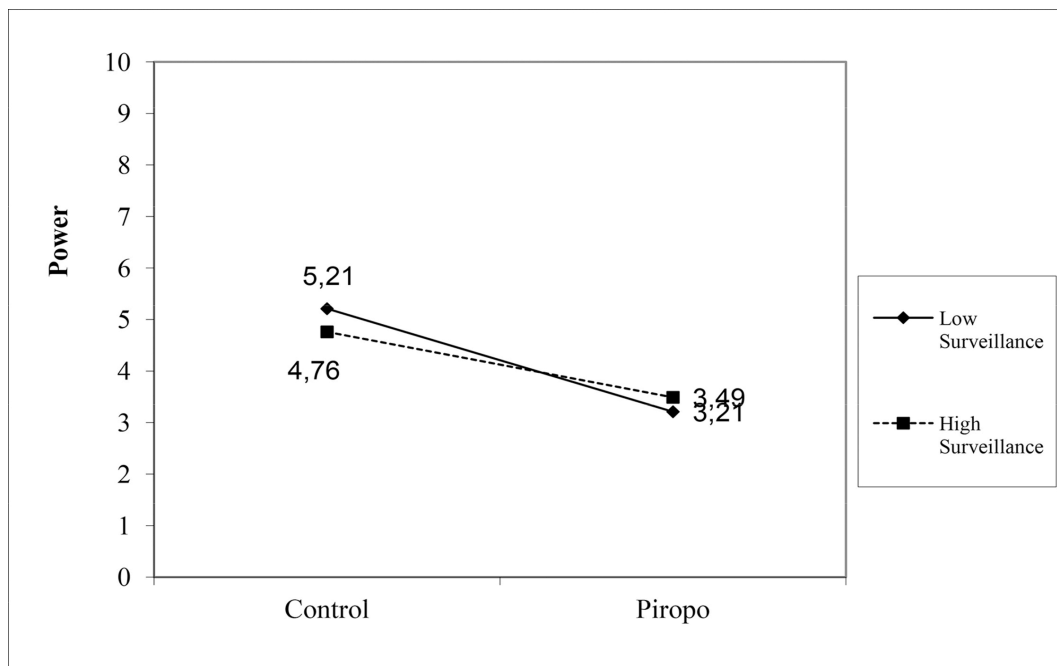


Figure 3. Moderation model with experimental manipulation (*piropo* versus control) as the independent variable, Body Surveillance as the moderator, and Power related feelings as the dependent variable.

### Discussion

Although there are great differences between countries and cultures, in their daily lives women are still exposed to objectifying remarks by strangers. In the Latin cultures these remarks are usually called *piropos* and vary in different dimensions, such as their level of hostility, obscenity, sexual focalisation, and on how they are perceived by the women themselves. Not all women react in the same way towards a *piropo*. Thus, although an apparently flattering *piropo*, like “What a beauty!” may be perceived in a positive way by some women, it can also be clearly rejected by others.

In the present study we have focused on common street *piropos* in a Spanish context that are clearly hostile and perceived as unpleasant

(both by men and women); as demonstrated by the pilot study. A primary objective of the present study was to confirm that when women are exposed to this type of *piropo*, it does indeed produce negative effects on their mood and perceptions of control and power. The results of our study show that this is the case: women exposed to the *piropo* experienced more clearly more emotions related to anger-hostility, anxiety and feelings of helplessness; they also experienced less happiness and feelings related to power. These results, together with the pilot study, clearly confirm that at least the vulgar *piropos* we have studied, are negatively experienced by women.

When some people, including women who hold prestigious positions, within the Spanish context, defend the *piropo*, they normally refer to the gallant and nice *piropo*. However, it is not wholly unusual for even the most vulgar *piropo* to be defended, because it is claimed that deep down it reflects that women are deserving of the attentions of men. A well-known Spanish contemporary writer, Carmen Posadas (n.d.), said: *"...in our country the compliment is dead and buried: a beauty with a glorious body can pass in front of a group of men and not one of those machos will move a muscle. The Latin Americans are much more prone to saying nice things... In Spain on the contrary, in the past a country witty at flirtatious comments, nice words aren't heard any more, not even a swear word like the one builders used to throw at us from the scaffolding. It's over, we women seem not to inspire any comment at all, be it good or bad."*

Although it seems clear that there is certain variability in the reactions of the women who participated in our research towards vulgar *piropos*, and it is possible that some women even like them, our results clearly show that hostile *piropos* are rejected by women. Even the feelings of power that women can experience, something that some research has found on occasion to increase when women are objectified (Breines, Crocker & Garcia, 2008; Calogero et al., 2009), decrease in women exposed to this type of *piropos*. We did not find even those supposedly 'positive' consequences of the *piropo* (consequences whose positive character, on the other hand, is not without controversy).

An unexpected result was that the women exposed to the *piropo* experienced less sadness-depression. One possible explanation for this unexpected result might be that the increase in anger may have reduced sadness/depression. Research on emotion has shown that although both anger (high in those exposed to the *piropo*) and sadness are negative emotions, they are associated with opposing tendencies; anger being an approach-related emotion and sadness an avoidance-related emotion (e.g. Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009).

A second objective of our study was to analyse what role women's self-objectification levels could play in their reactions towards hostile *piropos*. The results show a moderating effect of women's trait self-objectification, measured with the Self-Surveillance subscale of the OBCS, at least in the three dependent measures that were used. Therefore, although exposure to the *piropo* produced more anger, less

happiness and less feelings of power, this pattern of results was weaker for women who scored high in Self-Surveillance (in comparison with those who scored low). Women who tend to self-objectify themselves are women that place great importance on their physical appearance and who tend to perceive themselves in terms related to it (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Thus, it could be possible that, despite the obscenity of the *piropo*, women high in self-objectification do not perceive it as negatively as women who self-objectify themselves less, because deep down the *piropo* is a comment about an aspect that is highly important for their self-concept. To paraphrase what was said by the writer C. Posadas, it may be that women high in self-objectification do not reject the *piropo* as much because, although unpleasant, it at least means that someone is paying attention to their appearance.

The main effects of the exposure to the *piropo* and the moderation exerted on these effects by female participants' self-objectification levels were independent to their scores in Body Shame and their BMI. This result corroborates the proposition of objectification theory that the effects of worrying about appearance (self-objectification) are independent of body size (Calogero, 2004) and women being satisfied or dissatisfied with their bodies (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011).

Our results add a new negative consequence of self-objectification to the numerous negative consequences that have already been made clear by previous research (about self-esteem,



anxiety, health issues...): women's self-objectification can contribute to their continuing objectification, by weakening their negative reactions towards objectifying behaviors (*piropos*) and consequently making it harder for them to show a clear opposition to them. A similar circumstance occurs with the benevolent component of ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996): different research has revealed that women with high adherence to this type of beliefs show less rejection towards sexist or even violent behaviors that come embellished with benevolent sexist justifications (e.g. Dardenne, Dumont, & Bollier, 2007; Durán, Moya & Megías, 2014; Moya, Glick, Expósito, de Lemus, & Hart, 2007).

Despite the interesting results that can be obtained from the present research, it has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, our study has focused on a type of *piropo* that is clearly vulgar and unpleasant. Future research must consider if this rejection also occurs (with the same or less intensity) in the case of 'more polite' *piropos*. Secondly, the use of a procedure based on a scenario can remove certain realism from the study of a form of behavior (and reactions to it) that occurs in the street and in everyday situations. It would be interesting to see if experimental studies whereby women were really exposed to *piropos* would produce clearer effects than those found here. Finally, although the dependent measures used (basically emotional reactions) are measures whose relationship with many other variables is highly documented, they remain but only some of the

possible reactions of women towards objectifying situations. In the same way that other authors have studied clearer strategies of coping or rejection in the face of objectification, it would be interesting to include measures of this nature in future studies.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations we consider that the present research constitutes an important beginning in the study of an objectifying behavior (the *piropo*) that is highly widespread in certain countries (Latin and Mediterranean). This study has enabled us to analyse, for the first time, how certain types of *piropos* (vulgar ones) are perceived. It has additionally shown that the negative perception of these *piropos* is dependent on women's levels of self-objectification. This fact alerts us to a further consequence of women's self-objectification, and reinforces the need to combat it.

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## **Chapter 5:**

**How women's reactions to piropos  
affect the way they are perceived by  
others**





**“Sweet Things Never Made Anyone Bitter”? Not Always: The  
Negative Consequences of Becoming Happy after an  
Objectifying Behavior (“*Piropos*”)**

### Abstract

This study is about how women are perceived based on their reaction to a gallant *piropo*. *Piropos* are appearance-related comments in the street that are very common in Spain. In Study 1 ( $n = 118$ ), men and women evaluated the competence, warmth, capacity for leadership, and superficiality/depth of a woman who reacted to a gallant *piropo* (““Giiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun”) very positively, negatively, or indifferently. The results showed that women who reacted positively (with joy) were viewed as less competent and more superficial than the women who reacted negatively or indifferently. In Study 2, using different measurements, 172 men and women assessed a superficial person and a person with depth. The results showed that the person with depth was clearly preferred. Together, the results of both studies show the unexplored consequences of objectifying behaviors toward women that appear to be positive but that can clearly be detrimental.

**Keywords:** women, social perception, competency, superficiality, depth

A piropo is “a short saying that praises some quality of someone, especially the beauty of a woman” (Real Academia Española - RAE [Royal Spanish Academy], 2014a), and piropos can be different in nature; some piropos are undoubtedly labeled as rude and lewd, but others are considered nice and even flattering by others. Piropos are typical in Spain, but they are also present in many countries with a Mediterranean culture as well as other Spanish-speaking countries (Fridlitzius, 2009). Piropos generate very different reactions among the Spanish population (Agudo, 2015). Some people call for the elimination of piropos in the street, affirming that they are “an invasion of women’s privacy” (“La Presidenta,” 2015); others defend them (Sust, 2015); and others take a position somewhere in the middle, considering that certain obscenities that are yelled at women in the street should not be tolerated but that, when the piropos are pleasant and enjoyable comments, they do not have to be considered negative or be banned (Ferrerias, 2015). Referring to this type of piropo, it is common to hear the expression “Sweets never made anyone bitter,” which means that, no matter how small it may be, everything that produces pleasure, joy, or happiness in us is welcome.

This study focuses on *piropos* that are considered gallant or flattering because these are the type about which there is less agreement and more controversy. These *piropos* also have parallels with benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001) because they simultaneously portray a supposedly positive vision of women and a biased vision—

limiting women to traditional gender roles, in the case of benevolent sexism, and objectifying them, in the case of the *piropo* (Moya-Garófano, Megías, Rodríguez-Bailón, & Moya, 2015).

As we have suggested, there is a diversity of opinions regarding gallant *piropos* in Spanish media and social networks, ranging from rejection to acceptance. Despite this debate, the limited previous research that exists on the issue has found that, although women reject lewd *piropos* much more than gallant *piropos* and they feel worse when they receive them, women who are exposed to a gallant *piropo* do not feel better than those who do not receive a *piropo* (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al., 2015). Gallant *piropos* do not seem to have the positive effects that some claim they do, and, furthermore, it is possible that they may have other negative effects that have not been studied. The basic goal of our inquiry is precisely to analyze some of these other effects, focusing on how women are perceived based on their feelings when they receive a gallant *piropo*. Furthermore, we seek to go beyond the simple positive or negative evaluation of women based on their reactions to *piropos*. As the vast literature on stereotypes and prejudices has shown (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Glick & Fiske, 2001), prejudiced and damaging attitudes can hide behind a “positive” view of women, becoming even more damaging because they are difficult to identify as prejudiced. That is, it is not simply a matter of analyzing whether women are evaluated positively or negatively based on their reaction; instead, the issue is to study how they are perceived in other

areas. If a woman were positively assessed because she is happy to receive a *piropo* that objectifies her, then we should be careful because a positive evaluation has also been shown to have negative consequences, such as reinforcing women's subordination to men, in the same way as benevolent sexist views of women that are positive (Glick et al., 2000). Thus, it becomes necessary to analyze the concrete extent and content on which perceptions of women are produced when they react to a *piropo*.

### **Objectification**

Previous studies have shown that *piropos* are a type of sexual objectification (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al., 2015). Sexual objectification occurs when a person is treated as a mere body that exists for the sexual use and pleasure of others (Bartky, 1990; Nussbaum, 1999). Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) argues that girls and women are sexually objectified more frequently than men in different ways and that there are multiple negative psychological consequences that derive from being treated as an object (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011). Since its formulation, objectification theory has led to many studies, some of which consider objectification as a relatively recurrent experience over time whereas others have approached it as an isolated event. Within this second perspective, there is a line of research that has focused on creating an objectifying experience and analyzing the consequences for women.

Some of the situations or behaviors that have been defined as sexual objectification include “gazing or leering at women’s bodies, making sexual comments about women, whistling or honking at women, taking unsolicited photographs of women’s bodies, presenting sexualized images of women in media or pornography, sexually harassing women, and engaging in sexual violence against women” (Calogero, 2011, p. 34).

Although *piropos* can also come from a known individual or from someone with whom a relationship is maintained, this article addresses comments that come from strangers, a phenomenon known as “street harassment” or “stranger harassment” (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008). Stranger harassment has been defined as the “[sexual] harassment of women in public places by men who are strangers,” and it “includes both verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls, and stranger remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman’s physical appearance or on her presence in public” (Bowman, 1993, p. 523). Within this area of study, there is barely any research on the direct exposure to objectifying situations (see Calogero, 2011, p. 222; for an exception, see Wiener, Gervais, Allen, & Marquez, 2013).

### **Piropos**

A *piropo* is a short saying that praises some quality of someone, especially the beauty of a woman. Although the *piropo* could be considered a form of “stranger harassment,” we consider that it

presents certain peculiarities. First, it typically makes explicit reference to a woman's appearance, whereas some behaviors related to stranger harassment (whistling, blowing kisses) simply attempt to attract the woman's attention. Such behaviors are more general and are not aimed specifically at her actual appearance. Second, *piropos* have a certain rhetorical elaboration that distinguishes them from other types of comments about appearance that are typical of street harassment (e.g., "Heyyy, good morning, lady!," "What a beauty!"). Finally, *piropos* are highly accepted in Latin and Mediterranean cultures. This acceptance could be related to the fact that these cultures are considered to use a positive or solidarity-based mode of politeness rather than a negative or distancing-based mode of politeness (Haverkate, 2000). This fact is reflected not only in their relatively wide prevalence in Latin and Mediterranean cultures but also in the fact that, although stranger harassment is clearly rejected in some other Western cultures (Belgium, for example, recently introduced a new law that criminalizes street harassment) (Cruz, 2015), in the case of *piropos*, there is an ongoing debate in Spanish society.

To date, the few existing studies on *piropos* have focused on how they are perceived and on the possible consequences that they have for women who receive them. Moya-Garófano, Megías et al. (2015) collect many common Spanish *piropos* and analyze the degree to which they were accepted and if they were perceived as an objectifying behavior. The participants in their study consider most *piropos* to be objectifying



because they treat women as an object, not a person; they view women simply as being for the pleasure and use of men; and they only focus on a part of the woman's body as being representative of her. However, they find some variation in the perceptions of the 25 *piropos* that were studied. *Piropos* are also negatively evaluated, although there is some variation. In a second study, Moya-Garófano, Megías et al. (2015) analyze the specific reactions of women toward two prototypical *piropos*, a lewd *piropo* ("I better not find out that that ass goes hungry!") and "gallant" *piropo* ("Giiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun"). The results confirm the adverse nature and the negative consequences of the lewd *piropo*. In the case of the gallant *piropo*, the consequences are not as negative as with the group that was exposed to the hostile *piropo*, but none of the positive effects that some people claim appear (i.e., positive emotions, empowerment).

### **The perceptions of women based on their reactions to objectifying situations**

If the studies about how women react when facing objectifying situations are scarce, then those that analyze how they are perceived based on these reactions are practically nonexistent. However, there are two areas that allow us to make certain inferences about how women would be perceived depending on their reactions to *piropos*. The first area includes studies that address confronting sexism, whereas the second area is framed within objectification theory and research.

Although some studies (Gervais, Hillard, & Vescio, 2010) have found that women (but not men) who show inconformity to the sexist behavior to which they are victims observe increased levels of their own sense of competency, self-esteem, and empowerment, these apparently positive consequences do not seem to have the same correlation with the impression that they have on others. Oftentimes, women who confront sexism are perceived as problematic people who react disproportionately or are whiny, hyper-sensitive, cold at the interpersonal level, or fearful of the repercussions (i.e., Becker, Zawadzki, & Shields, 2014; Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dodd, Giuliano, Boutell, & Moran, 2001; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Kaiser & Miller, 2001). Confronters are also often considered impolite and aggressive (Swim & Hyers 1999). The evaluation of women based on their reactions when faced with sexism seems to be closely linked to traditional (sexist) conceptions of gender relations. For example, Gervais and Hillard (2014) manipulate the message used to confront sexism (direct, i.e., openly labeling the act as sexist, vs. indirect, i.e., tentatively labeling the act as problematic but not explicitly sexist), the source (male leader vs. female leader), and the context (public vs. private). Their findings show that the participants evaluated the male leader more positively when she confronted sexism in an indirect and public manner and the female leader more positively when she confronted sexism in an indirect but private manner. Closely related to our study, Becker and Barreto (2014) analyze how a woman was perceived by other people, men and women,

based on confronting her sexist perpetrator in an aggressive manner or a non-aggressive manner or if she decided not to respond to the sexist incident. Their results show that the choice that was evaluated most favorably by participants was the non-aggressive confrontation and that they supported this approach more than the aggressive response or the non-response. In this manner, according to this literature, if women were to follow traditional gender prescriptions, then the most expected responses to *piropos* would be passive or accepting (the same responses that would be expected when faced with sexist comments).

The theory and research on objectification and self-objectification would also support the finding that women would be better evaluated (although simultaneously perceived as in line with their traditional gender roles) when they felt good about receiving a gallant *piropo*. Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) argues that girls and women are sexually objectified more frequently than men in different ways, such as interpersonal and social encounters or by means of audio-visual media that reproduce such encounters or expose women to films, advertisements, magazines, pornography, etc. Among the main psychological consequences that result from sexual objectification is self-objectification (for a review, see Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011). Faced with the continued exposure to the objectifying gaze of others, women end up adopting the perspective of the external observers, considering themselves to be a body to be looked at and evaluated. In this manner, *piropos* (especially gallant

*piropos*) can be considered an objectifying behavior toward women that is very common in our culture, and it would be expected that, by accepting cultural norms, they would be well received by women themselves. In turn, this reaction would lead to a better social evaluation of women.

### **The study**

With the goal of analyzing how women are perceived based on their reactions to gallant *piropos*, we presented men and women with a scenario in which the woman reacted in three different ways to a *piropo*: positively (with joy), negatively (with anger), and indifferently. The following *piropo* was used: "Giiiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun!". A previous study found that this *piropo* was perceived as being slightly objectifying -i.e., it represents women as an object, not a person,  $M = 4.74$  on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot) and slightly unpleasant ( $M = 2.45$  on a scale of 1 (not unpleasant) to 7 (very unpleasant)).

The dependent measurements that were used addressed the impression that women generated in terms of competence, warmth, capacity for leadership, and superficiality/depth.

In terms of the competence/warmth category, research has clearly shown that the mental image that people have of others' personality has at least two characteristics that are relatively independent of each other: competence and warmth (Abele &

Wojciszke, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). We hypothesized (Hypothesis 1a) that women who feel good when receiving a gallant *piropo* would be perceived as less competent than women who feel bad. Such a hypothesis is based on previous research, although the evidence is somewhat indirect. Previous studies have shown that women who evaluate themselves based on their appearance (i.e., they self-objectify) perceive themselves as being less competent (Gapinski, Brownell, & LaFrance, 2003) and perform tasks in a less competent manner (e.g., Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Quinn, Kallen, Twenge, & Fredrickson, 2006). Furthermore, many studies on physical attractiveness and the impression that women produce in terms of their competence have shown that, when being considered for high-status positions, being physically attractive decreased the perception of women as competent but did not do so for the perception of men as competent (e.g., Glick, Larsen, Johnson, & Branstiter, 2005; Heilman & Stopeck, 1985). For their part, Rudman and Borgida (1995) find that men considered women to be less competent after having just been exposed to a sexualized image of another woman. Finally, in a study more directly related to ours, Heflick and Goldenberg (2009) find evidence that focusing on the physical appearance of a woman (which could occur when the woman is exposed to a *piropo*) vs. focusing on her person decreased the level of competency with which she is perceived. Therefore, we expect that this result will also be the case with this study. In terms of warmth, given that the gallant *piropo* reflects a

traditional view of women, it would be expected that women who react positively to the *piropo* would be perceived as more sociable than women who react with displeasure (Hypothesis 1b).

In terms of the capacity for leadership with which women are perceived based on their reactions to a gallant *piropo*, we hypothesize (Hypothesis 2) that women who feel good about such a *piropo* would be perceived as having less capacity for leadership than woman who react with anger or indifference. According to the “role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders” (Eagly & Karau, 2002), when women comply with feminine stereotypes, they are perceived as weak leaders. In our case, we could say that this result would happen to women who happily accept the *piropo* and the objectification that it implies.

Finally, we have included a new measurement to evaluate women based on their reaction to a *piropo*: “superficiality/depth.” According to the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy of Language (RAE, 2014b), superficial refers to the “apparent, without soundness or substance; the frivolous, without basis,” whereas someone who has depth is someone “of a penetrating or profound understanding. A philosopher, a mathematician, or a person with deep wisdom” (2014c). In everyday parlance in Spain, it is very common to hear expressions about whether a person (especially a woman) is more or less superficial (depth is less used, being the antithesis of the aforementioned end of the spectrum). In this manner, for example, on the internet, it is easy to find self-administered tests for a woman to know whether she is more

or less superficial (<http://ocio.redmujer.com/tests/personalidad/eres-superficial.html>; <http://siempremujer.com/test-abc/eres-una-mujer-superficial/61073/>; <https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/YSCNGt>) and recommendations to strive against superficiality ([http://www.sportmagister.com/reportaje.asp?id\\_rep=5337&idTest=133](http://www.sportmagister.com/reportaje.asp?id_rep=5337&idTest=133)). Hypothesis 3 establishes that women who feel good when hearing a *piropo* will be perceived as being more superficial (with less depth) than those who react with anger.

Two studies are included in this analysis. The first study analyzes how women are evaluated based on how they feel when hearing a gallant *piropo*. The second study analyzes what other implications arise from perceiving a woman as being superficial or as having depth.

### **Study 1**

A scenario methodology was used, presenting the participants with the description of a situation in which a woman received a gallant *piropo*, including how she felt when receiving it and her evaluation of the situation. After presenting the scenario, we included a series of items to evaluate how the participants perceived the woman in the vignette in the areas of competency, warmth, leadership, and superficiality/depth.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 118 first-year students in the schools of psychology and social work from a university in the south of Spain ( $M = 19.81$  years old;  $SD = 2.91$ ), the majority being women (79.7%), answered the questions.

### Procedure

The students' participation in completing a questionnaire was requested in exchange for class credit. This study uses an experimental design with one single independent variable with three levels (happy reaction vs. anger vs. indifference when exposed to a *piropo*). On a random basis, 40 participants were assigned the scenario with the happy reaction, 39 the scenario with the angry reaction, and 39 the scenario with the indifferent reaction.

In all of the groups, the participants were asked to imagine what was being described in the scenario.

*"Imagine the following situation:*

*Lucía is walking along the street alone. She is walking briskly and thinking to herself, without paying too much attention to what is going on around her. When she crosses the road, she realizes that she is about to pass by a square where a group of young guys are sitting on a bench and looking at her. She continues walking and passes by without looking*



at them or paying attention to what they are doing. Then, as she is passing, one raises his voice and says to her:

***“Giiiiirl, careful with those bonbons, they melt in the sun!”***

Up until this point, the scenario was identical for the three reactions; next, the questionnaire included a brief paragraph describing the effect that the *piropo* had on the woman:

1) In the “happy” reaction: *The girl feels good when she hears the piropo because it brings her happiness and optimism and increases her self-esteem. Far from irritating or bothering her, the piropo improves her mood.*

2) In the “angry” reaction: *The girl feels bad when she hears the piropo because it causes her anger, irritation, and annoyance. Far from feeling happy, the piropo makes her feel undervalued and puts her in a bad mood.*

3) In the “indifferent” reaction: *The girl is neither happy nor angry about the piropo; it simply does not produce any emotion or special reaction in her. We can say that her reaction is indifferent.*

Next, the participants answered the dependent measurements, which appeared in the following order.

1) *Competence and warmth*. Three descriptors attributed to the woman in the scenario were used to measure competence (*competent, intelligent, capable*) ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and four to measure warmth (*attentive, romantic, affectionate, kind*) ( $\alpha = .79$ ). The descriptors concerning competence came from the work of Heflick and Goldenberg (2009), and

those concerning sociability were taken from Barreto, Ellemers, Piebinga, and Moya (2010). The participants had to answer in a seven-point Likert-type answer format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (totally agree).

2) *Leadership*. We included six items to measure the capacity for leadership that was given to the protagonist of the vignette, inspired by the Affective-Identity measurement of the Motivation to Lead Subscale (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). The person had to show his or her agreement or disagreement using a scale of 1 (no agreement) to 7 (total agreement). Examples of the items include the following: "I think that Lucia..."; "If she were a university student, she would be a good student representative"; and "If she worked in a company, she would be able to perform perfectly in an executive position." The alpha of this measurement was .75.

3) *Superficiality/depth*. With the aim of measuring this category, we conducted a previous pilot study that analyzed the assessment of a series of characteristics and preferences as superficial or deep. To create the different items, we used information gathered from experts and from online forums, posts, and websites about this topic. A total of 55 first-year students from a social work school in the south of Spain (73% women,  $n = 40$ ), with an average age of 20.68 years old ( $SD = 4.79$ ), completed the assessments. The participants completed a questionnaire that had 12 items about a person's different behaviors, habits, or interests (see Table 1), and they were asked to evaluate them

as characteristic of a superficial person or a person with depth on a scale of 1 (superficial) to 7 (depth).

No differences were found between men and women in the evaluation of the different items. Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, there were significant differences with the scale's midpoint (using t-test for only one sample) in all of the items, except for 3 and 9. Table 1 shows that four items were associated with the superficial end of the spectrum and six with the depth end of the spectrum.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the items in the pilot study in the “behavior, habits, and interests” category.

Scale 1 (superficial) -7 (depth, reflective)				
	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
1. Likes to see informative shows on TV	1.00	7.00	4.63 <sub>b</sub>	1.65
2. One of the things they value most about their job is the relationships with colleagues	2.00	7.00	5.37 <sub>b</sub>	1.25
3. Despite having a family, would not resign from a job	1.00	7.00	4.26	1.39
4. Enjoys reading good literature	1.00	7.00	5.02 <sub>b</sub>	1.69
5. Would like to marry, have children, and stop working	1.00	7.00	3.3 <sub>a</sub>	1.74
6. Enjoys going shopping	1.00	6.00	2.93 <sub>a</sub>	1.55
7. Has many professional aspirations	1.00	7.00	5.18 <sub>b</sub>	1.27
8. Likes to talk about deep topics that concern their ideas and feelings	2.00	7.00	5.89 <sub>b</sub>	1.31
9. One of the things they most value about their job is the possibility of advancement and promotion	1.00	7.00	4.31	1.67
10. Is very concerned with the political situation of our country	2.00	7.00	5.59 <sub>b</sub>	1.31
11. Likes to talk about superficial topics with some friends	1.00	7.00	2.90 <sub>a</sub>	1.74
12. Likes to watch reality shows on TV	1.00	6.00	2.57 <sub>a</sub>	1.39

*\*Note: Because they differ significantly from the average of the scale, the average scores of items considered superficial appear with the subscript <sup>a</sup> and those of the items considered deep with the subscript <sup>b</sup>.*

In Study 1, the participants were asked to imagine what would be tastes and preferences of Lucia, the protagonist of the scene presented in the scenario, using the information they had about her. The six characteristics that had been rated significantly as deep and the four that were rated as superficial in the pilot study were included (see Table 1). The participants were asked to answer by showing their agreement or disagreement with the different characteristics in a seven-point Likert-type answer format ranging from 1 (no agreement) to 7 (total agreement), depending on whether they thought the characteristic described Lucia. For the analyses, the four items concerning superficiality were inverted, and the average of the total was calculated so that higher scores indicated that the person was perceived as having more depth ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

4) *Socio-demographic information.* Finally, information on sex, age, and the degree that was being pursued was requested.

## Results

All of the dependent variables were analyzed using a two-way ANOVA, introducing information about the woman's "reaction" to the piropo (joy, anger, and indifference reactions) and the participant's gender as the two between-subjects factors (see Table 2). The participants' ratings about how they perceived women in terms of

competence, warmth, leadership skills, and superficiality/depth were taken as the dependent variables.

In the competence measurement, the effect of the experimental manipulation turned out to be significant,  $F(2, 118) = 4.85$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ , confirming Hypothesis 1a. Post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that the woman in the joy reaction condition was significantly perceived as less competent ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = .97$ ) than the woman in the anger ( $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) ( $p < .05$ ) and indifference ( $M = 4.91$ ,  $SD = .95$ ) ( $p < .05$ ) conditions. In this measurement, there was also a marginally significant effect of sex,  $F(2, 118) = 4.85$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ ; thus, in general, the women evaluated the woman in the scenario as being more competent ( $M = 4.80$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ) than the men did ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 1$ ) ( $p = .06$ ).

**Table 2.** Means (and standard deviations) for measures by experimental condition and gender.

Measure	Joy reaction		Anger reaction		Indifference reaction	
	Women (N = 34)	Men (N = 6)	Women (N = 29)	Men (N = 10)	Women (N = 31)	Men (N = 8)
Competence	4.42 (1.0)	3.72 (.44)	5.05 (1.07)	4.8 (1.13)	4.99 (.95)	4.62 (.93)
Warmth	4.31 (.96)	3.96 (1.18)	3.98 (1.29)	3.97 (1.23)	3.67 (.9)	4.06 (.98)
Leadership	4.11 (1.06)	4.33 (.57)	4.11 (1.08)	4.48 (.7)	3.9 (.65)	4.12 (.98)
Superficiality/ Depth	3.68 (.9)	3.17 (.7)	4.71 (.63)	4.31 (.73)	4.42 (.59)	4.26 (.51)

In terms of warmth and the capacity for leadership, the main effects of sex and experimental manipulation were not significant, nor was the interaction between the two variables. Therefore, neither Hypothesis 1b nor Hypothesis 2 was confirmed.

In terms of the ratings concerning superficiality/depth, Hypothesis 3 was confirmed because we found a main effect of the experimental manipulation “woman’s reaction to the *piropo*,”  $F(2, 118) = 15.07, p < .000, \eta^2 = .21$ , and of the participant’s sex,  $F(2, 118) = 4.61, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$ . Post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that the woman in the joy reaction condition was significantly perceived as having less depth (that is, as being more superficial) ( $M = 3.6, SD = .89$ ) than the woman in the anger ( $M = 4.61, SD = .67$ ) ( $p < .000$ ) and indifference ( $M = 4.39, SD = .58$ ) ( $p < .000$ ) conditions. The woman who reacted with anger and the woman who reacted with indifference were perceived in the same manner in this area. In terms of sex, the women rated the woman in the scenarios as having more depth (regardless of her reaction) ( $M = 4.24, SD = .85$ ) than the men did ( $M = 4.01, SD = .80$ ).

### Discussion

As we predicted, the reactions of the female protagonists of the different *piropo* scenarios affected the manner in which the participants perceived them in terms of competence and superficiality/depth. When the woman was happy to receive a *piropo*, she was viewed as being less

competent and more superficial than when she reacted with anger or with indifference. However, the findings did not support the idea that the manner in which a woman reacts to a *piropo* affects the manner in which she is viewed in terms of sociability and the capacity for leadership.

This study presents some important new findings that show that the manner in which a woman experiences *piropos* has an influence on the impression that she has on others, not only in terms of competence but also in terms of superficiality/depth. There exists an ample literature on the importance of competence in the perception of others. Competence (i.e., intelligence, power, efficacy, and skill), also defined as the capacity that is attributed to others to carry out their plans, is something that is valued in people and in groups (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007), and it has been linked to status (groups with high status tend to be viewed as being more competent than those of low status). Perceiving a person as having little competence has important consequences for how they are perceived in other areas, such as leadership and interpersonal attraction, or in organizational terms (Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011).

In contrast to what occurs with competence, there are no studies that show the consequences that arise from labeling someone as being more or less deep or superficial. For example, is the person who is perceived as having more depth better valued than the person who is considered superficial? To analyze some of these consequences, we



designed Study 2, including general assessments of superficial people and people with depth, in addition to as their consideration in different everyday life activities.

### Study 2

Despite the idea, upheld by certain segments of the population, that *piropos*, when they are not lewd, are positive for women, the findings from Study 1 show that the women who are happy to receive a gallant *piropo* are “penalized,” being considered less competent and deep (or more superficial). To explore the possible positive and negative connotations that these perceptions of superficiality/depth have, we designed this second study. We presented participants with descriptions of two different types of women: a superficial woman and a woman with depth, based on some of the characteristics previously piloted in Study 1. After each description, we included a series of measurements to evaluate the impression that had been formed about each of the women, and we asked the participants the probability with which they would like to become involved with previously described women in different types of activities.

### Method

#### Participants

A total of 172 third-year psychology students from a university in the south of Spain ( $M = 21.75$  years old,  $SD = 4.43$ ), mostly women (77.3%), answered the survey.

### Procedure

The students' participation in completing the questionnaire was requested in exchange for class credit.

We designed an experimental between-subject study. Two questionnaire models that varied in the order of the measurements were used. On a random basis, 85 participants answered the questionnaire that first presented the description of the woman with depth and then the description of the superficial woman, and 87 saw the description of the superficial woman first and then the description of the woman with depth. Eight of the piloted items that were included in Study 1 and that appear in Table 1 were used for the description. Concretely, the participants were asked to "imagine a woman with the following characteristics," and they were then presented with items 2, 7, 8, and 10 as characteristic of the woman described as having depth and items 5, 6, 11, and 12 as characteristic of the superficial woman. The terms "superficial" and "deep" did not appear in the descriptions.

Once the participants had imagined the woman in the description, they completed the following assessments:

1) *Perception of the woman.* Using a seven-point Likert-type response format, the respondents were asked to indicate a) what type of impression that person had on them (from 1 -very negative- to 7 -very positive); b) the esteem with which they held the described person (from 1 -very low- to 7 -high); c) the importance they thought that a person such as that could have in their life (from 1 -little importance- to

7 -very important); and d) to what degree they would like to be like this person (from 1 -not at all) to 7 -a lot-).

*2) Activities in which you would become involved with her.*

Subsequently, they were presented with a list of 10 items that represented different types of activities or roles, and they were asked to mark the probability with which they would like to become involved in each of them with the woman who was described, using a seven-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (no probability) to 7 (all probability). Five of the items were concerned with aspects tied to the personal realm (i.e., “being your best friend”) and the other five with more mundane activities from everyday life (i.e., “talking to you while in line at the supermarket”).

*3) Socio-demographic information.* Finally, information on sex, age, and the major that was being pursued was requested.

## **Results**

Before proceeding to the main analysis, t-tests were conducted for each of the measurements, taking into consideration the order in which they had been presented. With the exception of two items, the order in which the superficial and deep descriptions were presented did not influence the participants’ responses.

All dependent variables were analyzed using a two-way ANOVA, introducing the two different women described (the superficial woman and the woman with depth) and the participant’s gender as the two

between-subjects factors. Only in one of the 14 measurements did sex interact with the repeated measure<sup>1</sup>. However, in practically all of the items, there were differences depending on whether they were applied to a superficial woman or a woman with depth. Table 3 shows that the woman with depth made a better impression on the participants, was more highly esteemed, was considered important in their lives, and induced a higher preference to be like her. Regarding the different activities/roles presented, there was a significant difference in the scores for every characteristic. The woman with depth was preferred for nine of the different activities. "Being your hairdresser" was the only role in which there was no significant differences between the superficial woman and the deep woman.

### **Discussion**

As we suspected, people formed a more negative opinion of the woman who was described as having characteristics typical of someone who is superficial and a more positive opinion of a person with depth. Compared to the superficial person, the woman with depth made a better impression, was held in higher esteem, and was considered more important in the lives of the participants, and the participants indicated that they would like to be more like her. Simultaneously, the woman with depth was preferred for all of the suggested activities and tasks, ranging from those that implied more intimacy and emotional support, time spent together, or joint work to the more casual activities such as

going out for drinks or having an informal conversation. The only exception was the item “being your hairdresser,” where there was no difference between the superficial woman and the woman who had more depth. Despite these preferences for the person with more depth for practically all of the activities, if the scores in Table 3 are analyzed, the fact that the difference with the superficial person is greater in those activities that we could consider to be more important in life (i.e., being a best friend, being source of emotional support, helping in making important decisions) can be observed.

**Table 3.** Means (and standard deviations) for measures about the superficial person and the person with depth (N = 172)

Measure	Superficial person	Person with depth	F
1. What impression did this person have on you? (1 negative, 7 positive)	3.16 (1.34)	6.06 (1.06)	377.94***
2. What degree of esteem would you have for this person? (1 very little, 7 a lot)	3.68 (1.42)	5.67 (1.09)	186.02***
3. How important do you think that a person like this would be in your life? (1 not important, 7 very important)	3.07 (1.47)	5.50 (1.11)	280.31***
4. To what degree would you like to be like this person? (1 not at all, 7 a lot)	1.95 (1.23)	5.53 (1.22)	478.45***
1. Being your best friend	2.98 (1.5)	5.41 (1.23)	225.51***
2. Travelling with you in Bla Bla Car	4.22 (1.59)	5.09 (1.5)	35.54***
3. Being your emotional support	2.49 (1.49)	5.53 (1.32)	283.32***
4. Being your instructor at the gym	2.98 (1.54)	5.41 (1.34)	159.73***
5. Being your partner in a class project	2.48 (1.45)	5.88 (1.21)	293.92***
6. Going out with you for a beer	3.97 (1.68)	5.46 (1.35)	65.44***
7. Helping you with a very important decision in your life	2.11 (1.40)	5.81 (1.24)	409.77***
8. Being your hairdresser	4.3 (1.49)	3.96 (1.64)	2.68
9. Being your housemate	3.85 (1.66)	4.37 (1.74)	12.32**
10. Talking to you at the supermarket	3.76 (1.64)	4.27 (1.57)	7.72**

\*\*\* p &lt; .000; \*\* p &lt; .01; \*p &lt; .05

### General Discussion

Despite being a very common form of sexual objectification in Spain and other Spanish-speaking and Mediterranean countries, there are barely any studies on how *piropos* are perceived by the population, especially by women, or on the consequences that they have for women.

In terms of the social perception or attitudes toward the *piropo*, we have already noted that, in the Spanish media and social networks, there appears to be a clear consensus on rejecting lewd *piropos* and more differences of opinion with regard to gallant *piropos*, which are accepted by some and rejected by others. On the other hand, the results of the few studies that exist (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al., 2015) have shown that, for the most part, *piropos* are considered objectifying; that when they are lewd, they are viewed as unpleasant; and that although they are not clearly rejected as the lewd *piropos* are, when they are “gallant,” they are not viewed as positive, either. It has also been found that the better perceived a *piropo* is, the less objectifying it is thought to be, with the dangerous consequences for women that this phenomenon could imply. Furthermore, the assessment of lewd and gallant *piropos* is highly correlated (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al., 2015).

In terms of the consequences that receiving *piropos* has for women, it has been found that lewd *piropos* provoke reactions of anger,

sadness, anxiety, helplessness, and little joy or sense of power (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al., 2015; Moya-Garófano, Rodríguez-Bailón, Megías, & Moya, 2015). Although they do not produce consequences that are as negative as the lewd *piropos*, gallant *piropos* also do not provoke the supposed positive consequences (i.e., increase in self-esteem) that some people claim (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al. 2015).

The aim of these two studies was to contribute to the understanding of the other consequences that receiving gallant *piropos* could have. Based on the literature on peoples' perception and attitudes about gender roles and the objectification of women, we have explored how women would be perceived based on whether they are happy or angry when they receive a gallant *piropo*.

The findings confirm that, when receiving a gallant *piropo* from a stranger, the types of reactions and feelings that the woman may have influence how she is perceived: as less competent and more superficial if she is happy (instead of becoming angry or reacting with indifference). The fact that the significant differences are between reacting with happiness and the other two conditions suggests that the important thing is not so much reacting with anger or indifference but rather being happy to receive a gallant *piropo* (precisely what some people contend).

Competence and warmth are two basic characteristics in social cognition, both for individuals and for groups. The manner in which we perceive others in these areas has important consequences for our relationships with them (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Wojciszke, 2005).



Concretely, considering someone to be more or less competent influences how he or she is perceived in terms of leadership, in his or her assessment as a political candidate, in terms of interpersonal attraction, or whether he or she is hired and promoted within an organization, to cite some of the areas that have been studied (Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011). On the other hand, the prescriptive aspect of female gender stereotypes (i.e., what women should be) indicates that women ought to be communal (i.e., kind, thoughtful, and sensitive to others' feelings) (Rudman & Glick, 2001) and not competent (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994), at least in the masculine realms. For example, studies conducted using the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) have shown that traditional women (housewives) appear in the cluster that is liked but disrespected (perceived as warm but not competent), whereas nontraditional women (female professionals) appear in the cluster that is respected but disliked (perceived as competent but not warm). The results of our first study show that the perception of women based on their response to *piropos* reflects the same situation that many women in leadership positions or who work in masculine fields face: if they behave in line with feminine stereotypes, then they may be viewed as “nice” but incompetent. Our findings also reflect certain similarities with the results of research on confronting sexism: women are not expected to confront it, or if they do, then they will do so in a non-aggressive, indirect, but private manner, conforming to traditional gender prescriptions (e.g., Becker & Barreto, 2014; Gervais

& Hillard, 2014). In our case, when women are happy about receiving a *piropo*, they are viewed as less competent than if they would have rejected it or appeared indifferent. The decrease in the perception of competence in the woman who received the *piropo* with pleasure could contribute to the perpetuation of the traditional subordinate role of women.

In terms of the superficiality or depth with which people are perceived, an area that is highly present in the everyday parlance of the Spanish population but that has not been empirically studied, it was necessary to first develop a measurement of these characteristics. The results of the pilot that was included in Study 1 helped us obtain information about a set of traits, interests, and preferences that differentiate superficial people from people with depth. Once the characteristics of superficial people and of people with depth were obtained, the results from Study 1 showed with a great degree of clarity that the woman who reacted with pleasure to the *piropo* was perceived as being considerably more superficial (having less depth) than the woman who reacted with displeasure. Even more important, as the findings from Study 2 show, perceiving someone as being superficial or as having depth can have notable consequences for social interaction. Our participants indicated that, in general (and not only for important matters), they preferred a person with depth to a superficial person.

Ultimately, in contrast to those who contend that gallant *piropos* have positive consequences for the women who receive them (“sweets

never made anyone bitter”) or even in contrast to those who claim that *piropos* are not important and that there is nothing to be alarmed about, “as many feminists are” (e.g., García, 2015), our research shows that, in general, people tend to punish women who are pleased to receive this type of *piropo*. These findings reinforce the results from other studies that have shown the different negative consequences of lewd *piropos* (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al., 2015; Moya Garófano, Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2015) and the absence of the alleged positive consequences of gallant *piropos* (Moya-Garófano, Megías et al., 2015).

These two studies have certain limitations that future research should attempt to resolve. First, the participants in both studies were almost exclusively university students. Although we believe that their reactions closely reproduce the reactions of women in general, it would be necessary to replicate these results with samples from the general population. Second, the perceptions of people in terms of superficiality/depth are something that is relatively new that could have great relevance, not only for the analysis of *piropos* but also for the analysis of the perceptions of people more generally. Thus, more research that corroborates its importance and its implications for social perception is needed. Finally, although it implies additional difficulty, it would be interesting to go from social perception to live interaction with women who react in different ways to the *piropos*.

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## **Chapter 6:**

### **Conclusions/Conclusiones**



This doctoral dissertation has focused on sexual objectification, a very frequent form of objectification that is especially harmful for women. As seen in Chapter 1, being treated as a sexual object is an experience from which almost all women in our culture suffer and more often than men (Calogero, Tantleff-Dun, & Thompson, 2011, p. 4).

One of the main consequences for women of being considered in a sexually objectifying way is that, over time, and after being exposed to this experience from their childhood, they can internalize a vision of themselves as observers; an effect that is called self-objectification.

Since Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) formulated objectification theory, numerous investigations have shown the dangerous consequences that self-objectification has for women, affecting, among others, their physical and mental health (e.g., depression, sexual dysfunctions, eating disorders, etc...).

The research included in this thesis has tried to generate objectifying situations through the exposure of scenarios with *piropos* and measure their effects.

*Piropos*, which are usually understood as remarks about women's appearance, are very common in Spain, as well as in other Latin and Mediterranean countries. They are usually directed at women on the street, and they come from unknown men. Although it is said that their use has declined in recent years (Fridlitzius, 2009; Preisig, 1998), they are still frequent in women's daily lives (Jiménez, 2015; "Sobre el Viejo," 2015), and they vary in their nature: some of them



being clearly labeled as lewd and hostile, and other considered as more gallant and even flattering.

Despite the fact that *piropos* are a controversial phenomenon in Spain, as far as we know there has been no research on their psychosocial effects. In order to deepen about the nature of these objectifying behaviors and their consequences the results of eight studies were shown in the present doctoral dissertation. In these studies we addressed the following issues.

**a) A self-objectification measure adapted to our context: The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS)**

Since self-objectification was going to be a variable presented in most of our studies, and considering the importance of having a valid and reliable instrument adapted to our context to assess it, in Chapter 2 we included two studies conducted to validate a Spanish version of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Study 1 presented the first psychometric data of the scale and its relation with other empirically and theoretically relevant variables. Study 2 allowed us to corroborate the three-factor structure of the OBCS (Body Surveillance, Body Shame, and Body Control Beliefs,) as well as good convergent validity in relation to the self-objectification questionnaire (SOQ) (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998), another self-objectification measure. The three subscales showed acceptable indices of internal consistency in both studies. Although the validation of the Spanish version of the OBCS was carried

out with female university students, it has proved to be an equally valid measure in other studies with women from a different population, also included in this thesis.

### **b) *Piropos* as objectifying behaviors**

In order to have a wide range of *piropos* currently used in the Spanish context, in Study 1 of Chapter 3 we asked Spanish students of both sexes to report *piropos* that they often hear. We selected *piropos* of very different types and another sample of students evaluated them on different dimensions. Our objective was to analyze how these *piropos* were perceived in terms of objectification (i.e., if they were objectifying or not) and in terms of how they were valued (if they were perceived positively or negatively). We found that the more positively the *piropo* was evaluated, the less objectifying it was considered.

In view of the results, we concluded that *piropos* are objectifying behaviors, not only because they conform to the definitions of sexual objectification given by different authors, but also because they are qualified as objectifying by most women and men. For us, this fact is another sign of the hidden dangers of these objectifying behaviors that are so deeply rooted in our society. Similarly—as occurs with benevolent sexism—there is a risk of not identifying as harmful what apparently appears as “gallant” or “chivalrous” (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

**c) The consequences of *piropos* for women**

Another objective of this dissertation was to analyze the consequences (e.g., reactions and emotions) of receiving a *piropo* and distinguishing between those that are lewd and gallant. In order to meet this goal, we conducted a study with female undergraduate students (Chapter 2, Study 2) who were exposed to a scenario with a clearly rude *piropo* or a gallant one (a control group was not exposed to any *piropo*). We asked the participants to evaluate the *piropo* and to indicate how they thought they would react in that situation. Women exposed to the lewd *piropo* reported different emotions in comparison to women in the control group: less joy, sadness, and power and more anxiety, helplessness, and anger. Consequences and reactions toward gallant *piropos* were less clear. In comparison to the lewd *piropo* condition, participants exposed to the gallant *piropo* scenario reported more joy and power, and less helplessness. However, compared to the control group, there were just differences in sadness. Therefore, we did not find the positive effects that some people assume that gallant *piropos* have (e.g., feeling more powerful or happy; Ferreras, 2015; Posadas, n.d.). The fact is that women exposed to a gallant *piropo* did not feel better than those who did not receive any type of *piropo*. The last study of Chapter 3 (Study 3) also allowed us to get more information about *piropos*. In this case, the same group of women evaluated the gallant and the lewd *piropos* that were previously used in Study 2. The results

showed that the participants' evaluations of the *piropos* influenced their reactions, regardless of whether the *piropo* was lewd or gallant.

Once we had explored some of the effects that *piropos* had on women's emotions and feelings of power and helplessness, we dedicated the next chapter to test if some of these consequences may be influenced by participants' own level of self-objectification.

#### **d) Women's reactions to *piropos* depending on their self-objectification levels**

Some previous research has shown that reactions to an objectifying situation depend on the self-objectification levels of the people being objectified. Specifically, research about state and trait self-objectification has found that state self-objectification is especially harmful for women who are high in trait self-objectification (e.g., Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Gapinski, Brownell, & LaFrance, 2003). To analyze whether this could also happen in the case of the *piropos*, in Chapter 4 we conducted a study with a wide range of women from different ages and characteristics. We analyzed some of the emotional consequences of the exposition to a lewd *piropo*, as well as the moderator role of women's self-objectification. We found that women's reactions to the *piropo* were generally negative (e.g., experiencing less joy and power, and more anger and helplessness), but less negative in those women high in trait self-objectification. Therefore, our findings added a new contribution to the multiple negative

consequences of self-objectification that have already been described in the literature. Participants' self-objectification levels affect the way in which *piropos* are received. Even in the case of the lewd *piropos* (the ones clearly rejected by most of the population), the higher women were in trait self-objectification, the more their reactions seem to conform to traditional gender roles (this is, they experienced more happiness and power and less anger and helplessness). This result highlights the high level of danger for women who are high in trait self-objectification when they face objectifying situations (*piropos*) because their reactions (more joy and power, and less anger and helplessness) could lead them to fail to reject this kind of behavior that has already been demonstrated to be pernicious.

In the last empirical chapter, we explored a different consequence of *piropos*, analyzing their effects not in women, but in the way that other people perceive them based on how they react to *piropos*.

**e) How women's reactions to *piropos* influence the way other people judge them**

*Piropos* generate very different reactions among the Spanish population (Agudo, 2015), going from those expressed by people who claim that they have to be eliminated ("La Presidenta," 2015), to others who vindicate them (Sust, 2015), and a last group who considers that some *piropos* (the lewd ones) should not be tolerated, but that others

(the gallant ones) are pleasant and enjoyable. Considering previous research about traditional gender roles and confronting sexism (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Gervais, Hillard, & Vescio, 2010), we hypothesized that it could be possible for a woman who was pleased by receiving a gallant *piropo* to somehow adjust herself to the feminine traditional role and, therefore, she would be perceived according to such visions (e.g., less competent, more superficial). To test these ideas, in Chapter 5 we ran two studies. The first one explored how women were perceived based on their reaction to *piropos*. University students from both sexes estimated the competence, sociability, capacity of leadership, and superficiality/depth of a woman who reacted with happiness, anger, or indifference after receiving a gallant *piropo*. The results showed that the woman who reacted positively (with joy) was perceived as being less competent and more superficial than the other two women who got angry or indifferent. Thus, despite the fact that some people (women and men) defend the use of gallant *piropos* and send the message that they are positive for women, at the same time, when women are pleased by and cheered up after a *piropo*, they are somehow “punished” for that. Findings from the second study, also included in Chapter 5, added a new contribution to the literature that explores perceived competence and sexual objectification (e.g., Gapinski, Brownell, & LaFrance, 2003; Quinn, Kallen, Twenge, & Fredrickson, 2006) regarding a new dimension in other people’s perceptions: superficiality/depth. In this study, we asked male and

female undergraduate students to evaluate a superficial woman and a woman with depth. The results showed that the woman with depth was clearly preferred and that the superficial woman was not chosen for almost any important role or activity in people's lives.

### **Limitations and future directions**

As we previously indicated throughout the different empirical chapters included in this dissertation, our research has certain limitations. First, most of the studies have been conducted with undergraduate participants. Therefore, it would be important to consider other kinds of populations for future studies. A second limitation is the use of scenarios to analyze the consequences of *piropos*. Although it is a very sensitive issue, the use of more natural situations could increase the validity of our research. A third limitation has to do with the similar consequences of *piropos* explored in the present work. We think that it would be important for future studies to focus on other kinds of effects that *piropos* may have on women (e.g., performance, identity, etc.).

Other questions have also emerged as a result of our studies that we would like to explore in the future. Thus, it would be interesting to analyze different contexts and *piropos'* sources. We think, for instance, that the attractiveness of a man who delivers a *piropo* could affect the way a woman experiences it. Similarly, reactions would be different, depending on where the *piropo* is expressed; for example, a *piropo* in an

amusement context (e.g., a disco) would differ from another one expressed in a traditional setting (e.g., on the street).

As has been explained in this thesis, the *piropo* is a reality that is deeply linked to a specific cultural context. To study it in other contexts could inform on how cultural norms and rules are linked to the experiences of objectification and self-objectification. Finally, and connected to the consideration of the *piropo* as a cultural product, focusing on men (the ones who make the *piropo*) could be also interesting (e.g., What leads men to perform these behaviors? What effects do they think *piropos* have on women?).

Many doubts, difficulties, and uncertainties are faced when someone conducts research (and a paradigmatic example of this is the realization of a doctoral dissertation). There are often multiple paths to take and, by choosing a particular one, we doubt whether or not it was the right one, considering that perhaps other roads could have led us to more rewarding goals. Regardless of whether or not we were successful, looking back and valuing these years of work, I appreciate what I have learned from the studies conducted: passion for research, especially for those aspects related to our psychological and social reality, and the desire for investigation to continue to help to improve the society in which we live, in our case contributing to relations that are more egalitarian and free between men and women.



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