

Tesis Doctoral Internacional – International PhD Thesis

Programa de Doctorado en Psicología

**HUMOR SUBVERSIVO  
CONTRA EL SEXISMO: ANÁLISIS DE SU  
ENTIDAD EMPÍRICA Y DE SU INFLUENCIA  
SOBRE LA CONFRONTACIÓN DEL SEXISMO**

**SUBVERSIVE HUMOR  
AGAINST SEXISM: ANALYSIS OF ITS  
EMPIRICAL ENTITY AND ITS INFLUENCE  
ON CONFRONTING SEXISM**

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Editor: Universidad de Granada. Tesis Doctorales  
Autor: Andrés Riquelme Riquelme  
ISBN: 978-84-1117-131-1  
URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/10481/71630>

La presente tesis doctoral fue financiada por:

- El **Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades** (Proyecto: “*Violencia contra las mujeres: mitos, actitudes e influencia de los mensajes y el lenguaje en su percepción social*” Ref. PSI2016–79812-P) (Proyecto: “*Sexismo y violencia contra las mujeres: percepción social y nuevas formas de expresión*” Ref. PID2019-104239GB-I00 / AEI / 10.13039/501100011033)
- El **programa Operativo FEDER** (Proyecto: “*Factores predictores de diferentes formas de violencia contra las mujeres*” Ref. FEDER/Junta de Andalucía-Consejería de Economía y Conocimiento/ Proyecto B-SEJ-135-UGR18).



**“El humor hecho por mujeres,  
y sobre todo, el humor feminista,  
con mujeres riéndonos de quienes  
nos dominan y de cómo nos dominan,  
es el principio del fin”**

Irantzu Varela

**“Humor can bring energy to social movements,  
make it fun to be involved,  
draw in new members,  
attract usually more media coverage,  
and thus well serve the serious causes  
of social protest in the end again”**

Marjolein't Hartz



# **Agradecimientos**

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## **Acknowledgments**





**Shakespeare tenía una hermana [...] Murió joven, y, ay, jamás escribió una palabra [...] Vive en vosotras, y en mí, y en muchas otras mujeres que no están aquí esta noche porque están lavando los platos y poniendo a los niños en la cama [...] Pero si cada una de nosotras tiene quinientas libras al año y una habitación propia [...] Llegará la oportunidad y la poetisa muerta que fue la hermana de Shakespeare recobrará el cuerpo del que tan a menudo se ha despojado.**

Una habitación propia (pp. 152-153) – Virginia Woolf



Han pasado algo más de tres años desde que la aventura comenzó, y al fin, el sueño se ha hecho realidad. Cierro los ojos con fuerza y doy rienda suelta a mis pensamientos. El sueño tiene mucho de la faceta académica, pero también de la personal. Que le pregunten a *Morfeo* si no me creen, pues hasta él llora de felicidad. Las emociones son las que sacan sus lazos para pulir diamantes en bruto. Es esa la esencia que lo impulsa todo. Sin emoción no hay acción. Sin emoción no hay vida. Sin emoción no hay nada.

Soy un calco de *Marianne Dashwood*, y nada me avergüenza decir que la sensibilidad prevalecerá siempre en mí por encima del sentido. Tanto es así que mi mundo de sensibilidad es un símil de las novelas de *Jane Austen* o las *hermanas Brontë*. Allí hay un corazón grande en el centro, y permanecen todas las personas que lo tocaron. Frente a mis retinas visualicé un largo sendero que atravesar, repleto de flores de colores y de alguna que otra espina en la mitad. Al emprender el camino, fueron surgiendo obstáculos en la oscuridad de los bosques, pero al avanzar, muchas manos se extendieron al alza ofreciendo luz y serenidad. Fui acariciando cada una de ellas, desde el principio hasta el final, mientras emergía desde mi pecho una vorágine de mariposas. Y seguí las señales de sus aleteos hasta llegar a la estación de destino.

Con una mirada violeta quisiera agradecer este camino a todas las mujeres que de alguna u otra forma se dedican a combatir el patriarcado con humor. La lista es larga, y ahora más que nunca es necesario reivindicar el papel de las mujeres en este ámbito, tanto aplicado como en investigación. Especialmente, me gustaría comenzar destacando la mano que me ofreció una de estas mujeres. Su trayectoria profesional ha sido fundamental para la columna vertebral de mi camino. Hablo de la profesora **Mónica Romero Sánchez**. Gracias Mónica, por amar tu trabajo, y por haber ofrecido la idea de esta tesis. Gracias por ser tan exhaustivamente minuciosa. Por haber mostrado tanta empatía y preocupación: “*El amor vence al temor y la gratitud vence al orgullo*” (Mujercitas – Louisa May Alcott). Por saber que tras un doctorando/a hay mucho más que un/a alumno/a que pasa estudios. Mónica se implicó conmigo durante todo el proceso, y siempre estuvo ahí, al pie del cañón. Tengo que agradecerte infinitamente todo lo que me has aportado. Gracias por tus críticas constructivas y por las enseñanzas de la vida, más allá de lo académico. Esté donde esté, siempre te llevaré en el corazón. Esta tesis va por ti y por todas las que como tú usan el humor para conseguir un mundo más justo: “*Los chistes se escriben con el cerebro, no con el pene, y las mujeres también tenemos cerebro*” (Patricia Sornosa – Mujer tenías que ser).

Siguiendo por el sendero, destaco las manos ofrecidas por mis directores, **Hugo Carretero Dios** y **Jesús López Megías**.

**Hugo**, gracias por ser tan mágicamente enigmático. Tu confianza puesta sobre mi persona me ayudó siempre a seguir adelante. Debo agradecerte la tinta que has sudado conmigo. Las respuestas inmediatas. Las revisiones con lupa. Las palabras de ánimo y las ironías los días serios de desesperanza. Te doy las gracias por haberme adentrado en el espléndido mundo del humor en el que tantos años llevas ya trabajando, y también por mostrarme el mundo de los análisis factoriales, pero sobre todo por haberme incitado al cambio para mejorar tanto profesionalmente como personalmente: *“Solo después de cierto número de transformaciones de la visión, el estudiante se convierte en habitante del mundo de los científicos, ve lo que ven los científicos y responde de la misma forma que ellos”* (La estructura de las revoluciones científicas – Thomas Khun). Eres el tipo de persona que siempre quise tener en mi círculo. Te quiero por la ayuda que tu mano me ofreció al romper la piedra que tenía sobre la espalda. En mi corazón siempre estarás.

**Jesús**, gracias por ser tan humildemente sabio. Tus amplios conocimientos sobre las cuestiones de género, y también sobre aspectos metodológicos me han permitido ver las cosas de una forma más crítica: *“La afirmación del machismo pasa por la negación de la realidad que él mismo crea, ésa es la forma de hacerse invisible en una sociedad que lo señala en cada uno de sus actos”* (Miguel Lorente Acosta). Jesús estuvo presente en el tribunal de mi trabajo de fin de grado, y hasta el día de hoy, es alguien a quien tengo especial cariño y admiro gratamente. Le tengo como figura de referencia en la que poder convertirme algún día. Gracias Jesús por tus consejos y explicaciones en todo este camino. Gracias por mantener la serenidad en todo momento. No conozco de ti la elevación del tono de voz o una palabra malsonante. Gracias por haber ofrecido una visión tan precisa y nítida a todo el trabajo que hemos ido realizado juntos. La academia necesita más personas como tú. Gracias a ti también hoy soy quien soy. Te llevaré siempre en el corazón.

Llegados a este punto del sendero, toca agradecer el apoyo incondicional que me ha otorgado la mano del amor de mi vida: **Mi madre**. Sin ella, todo este camino habría sido mucho más complejo: *“Su corazón era como una planta sensible, que se abre por un momento a la luz del sol, pero se encoge en sí mismo con el menor toque del dedo, o el aliento más ligero del viento”* (La inquilina de Wildfell Hall – Anne Brontë). Porque ante cada palabra negativa que salía de mis labios, ante cada noche en vela o ante cada espina del bosque incipiente, ella siempre se encargaba de tornar el negro en rosa. Caí en la cuenta de que mi madre es quien tanto tiempo estuve buscando una vez fuera, entre castillos rotos y almas en pena: *“De lo que sea que las almas están hechas, la mía y la suya son iguales”* (Cumbres borrascosas – Emily Brontë). Te quiero mamá. Has sido los brazos y piernas de

esta tesis fuera del contexto académico. Porque mamá, sin ti, yo no. Gracias por ese amor perenne e inquebrantable. Por guiarme en todo momento. Por seguir a mi lado y resurgir como el ave fénix: *“No veo la felicidad en el matrimonio. Quiero, para expresarlo a mi manera, estar casada conmigo misma, y ser mi propia cabeza de familia”* (Tristana – Benito Pérez Galdós).

Dos manos surgen de forma simultánea a las que me aferré para seguir por el sendero con ilusión. Dos manos que se corresponden con las de **mi hermana** Alba y su hija, **mi sobrina** Emma.

**Alba**, qué puedo decir yo de la única hermana que tengo. Gracias por haberme apoyado en todo este proceso. Nos necesitamos mutuamente, y fue en la distancia cuando llegué a darme cuenta plena de la joya que tengo conmigo. Gracias por preguntarme cómo iba el sendero académico. Por ser quien eres, y porque te quiero con locura. Siempre apoyaré tus pasos más allá de lo que hagas o a donde vayas. Porque contigo puedo ser yo. Porque conmigo puedes ser tú. Cántale siempre a tu valía para que nunca se detenga: *“Cuando buscas la belleza en el universo, comienzas también a ver tu propia belleza”* (La princesa que creía en los cuentos de hadas – Marcia Grad Powers).

**Emma**, mi guerrera valiente. La niña de mis ojos. Te quiero como a una hija propia. Aunque sé que ahora mismo no entiendes muy bien qué es eso de una tesis doctoral, te agradezco infinitamente cada sonrisa tuya. Porque a veces, las cosas más sencillas de la vida son las que más revitalizan el alma y el corazón. Prometo ser el tito enrollado y confidente. Para ti, deseo un mundo en el que llegues a ser y a hacer todo lo que te propongas: *“Para subir a lo alto de la montaña de piedras, solo habían tenido que hacer una cosa: desplegar sus alas”* (Cuando las niñas vuelan alto – Raquel Díaz Reguera).

Y el sendero continuó, y fueron tres manos más las que me regocijaron en el seno de sus abrazos. Me refiero a la **tríada de mis tías**: María, Encarni y Fina. Son tres mujeres que me vieron nacer, y que me acunaron hasta los días presentes. Gracias por haberme ofrecido todo lo que teníais en vuestra mano. Sin vosotras tampoco habría llegado hasta aquí: *“¡Fuente Ovejuna, todos a una!”* (Fuente Ovejuna – Lope de Vega). **María**, siempre tan entregada a los suyos. Gracias por quererme tanto y por habérmelo demostrado siempre. Por haberme secado las lágrimas en los peores momentos. Por haber estado arropándome, dándome ternura e interesándote por mi bienestar, te quiero. **Encarni**, gracias por ser tan cariñosa y haberme entregado un mundo de amor verdadero. Gracias

por tu ayuda imperecedera. Siempre estaremos conectados. No hay barrera ni muralla que pueda impedirlo, te quiero. **Fina**, te doy las gracias por las veces que te preocupaste por mí.

Avanzando con paso firme, el sendero cobró aún más vitalidad y fuerza con las manos de **mis amigas/os**. Las primeras fueron las manos de mi Cádiz: **Alina y Julia**, dos hermanas a las que tanto quiero, muchas gracias por todo, me he convertido en el girasol de vuestros rayos. **María G.**, me complace admitir que contigo siempre siento que bailo por primera vez. **Isa**, infinitas gracias por todo lo que tu candor hizo por mí cuando más lo necesitaba. **Toñi**, te has convertido en una figura en la que poder confiar plenamente. **Javi F.**, gracias por haberme mostrado cuánto vale una amistad.

A las caricias de las manos que ahora tocan distintos lugares del mundo. **Daria y Miguel**, os conservo desde el grado. Gracias a ambos por ser tan espléndidas personas y haber constituido dos pilares importantes durante todo este proceso. A **Darío**, a quien conocí en una etapa fundamental. Me enseñaste a apreciar las cosas de la vida que merecen la pena. Gracias por poner tu mano en cada uno de mis sístoles y diástoles. A **Marta M.**, quien menguó mi incertidumbre académica y me mostró cosas muy bonitas.

Recordando más manos que salían del bosque oscuro, el sendero fue un lugar más reconfortante gracias a las de **mis compañeras/os de doctorado**:

**Ximo**, gracias por ser tan infinitamente maravilloso, el color “*bondad*” de tus ojos caló en mi persona desde el máster. Te seguiré como sigo el amor, porque tú eres el vivo reflejo de la llama incandescente. **Mariela**, gracias por los secretos compartidos, las charlas picarescas de verano, y el apoyo mostrado. La amistad que hemos forjado es digna de celebrar porque es difícil de encontrar como una aguja en el pajar. **Mar**, gracias por tu humildad y por haberme ofrecido un bello mundo de empatía. Te portaste conmigo como la primavera con las flores. **Ana B.**, gracias por las travesías surcadas y por nuestra enorme conexión emocional. Sabes que siempre velaré por tu bienestar. Pase el tiempo que pase, la imagen de una muchacha cándida siempre en mí permanecerá. **Sofía**, gracias por haber sido tan comprensiva y generosa conmigo, recuerdo solo cosas buenas de ti. Personas como tú son dignas de conservar, pues tienes contigo la esencia de lo magnánimo. **Mariola**, gracias por ser tan linda y por haberme abierto las puertas de tu vida para mostrarme el lado bueno de las cosas. Me has enseñado cuánto es posible sentir con algo tan sencillo como un abrazo. **Laura V.**, gracias por haber estado presente ofreciéndome sabios consejos con candor y embriagándome de fuerza. Deseo que no te alejes de mí demasiado, pues contigo me siento completamente en paz.

**Ángel del F.**, mereció mucho la pena conocerte, gracias por ampliarme la visión sobre las temáticas de género. **Eva**, gracias por la dulzura aportada en cada una de las cuestiones que me preocupaban y por arroparme más de una vez. **Laura T.**, gracias por ser tan cercana y fomentar siempre el compañerismo. **Andrea V.**, gracias por los momentos y las risas compartidas durante las clases de inglés. **María A.**, gracias por haberme ayudado las veces que lo necesité. **Celia**, gracias por las charlas durante esos almuerzos los dos a solas. **Lucía**, gracias por haberme ofrecido palabras de apoyo. **Juan M.**, gracias por crear siempre un buen ambiente de trabajo.

Y no se me olvidan, por supuesto, las manos de las personas que me estuvieron ofreciendo luz en el sendero durante el inicio de la andanza. Gracias **Virginia, Julia S., Álvaro** y **Roberto**, por escucharme durante los primeros meses de frío en el edificio blanco. A **María S.** y **Marta V.**, debo agradecerles que permanezcan a pesar de la distancia y de todo el tiempo transcurrido ya desde el máster. **Rocío V.** gracias por la gran ayuda ofrecida; estoy seguro de que llegarás muy lejos. **Alba, Jorge** y **Antonella**, tres personas que forman parte de mi grupo de investigación, gracias por ser tan auténticos. A los/as profesores/as **Rosa, Miguel, Rocío, Sole** y **Guille**, agradecerlos las veces que hemos coincidido y todo lo que me habéis aportado estos años. Gracias también a las profesoras **Mari Carmen Herrera** y **Paqui Expósito** por haberme motivado a realizar el máster con el que pude iniciar el sendero investigador.

Thanks to all the hands of the research group who wrapped me up with a lot of love and offered me great wisdom during my research stay in Padova (Italy). Thank you **Mara Cadinu** for having been so lovely and competent. Thanks **Francesca Guizzo** for having involved in my thesis and being so kind. Thanks **Chiara Bartolli** for transmitting positivity to me during the months of a very difficult research stay.

Finalmente, quisiera dar las gracias a la mano de **Javier**, pues durante el aleteo de las mariposas que me llevaban hacia la estación de destino, hizo que afloraran en mí cosas que creía ya muertas: *“No puedo oírte. No puedo oír tu voz. Es como si me bebiera una botella de anís, y me durmiera en una colcha de rosas”* (Bodas de sangre – Federico García Lorca).





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**“What would happen, for instance, if suddenly, magically, men could menstruate and women could not? The answer is clear: menstruation would become an enviable, boast-worthy, masculine event”.**

Gloria Steinem

**“¿Qué le dice una mujer violada a su violador? Cariño, mañana hay que llevar a los niños al dentista”.**

Alicia Murillo

**“Asking who's the man and who's the woman in a same-sex relationship is like asking which chopstick is the fork”.**

Ellen Degeneres



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# **Planteamiento general**

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El humor es un fenómeno social, emocional y cognitivo que forma parte del día a día de las personas. Entre sus múltiples funciones, las investigaciones han mostrado que el humor se asocia con numerosos aspectos positivos en los procesos de interacción social, como fomentar la creación de una identidad colectiva y fortalecer la cohesión grupal (Fine y Soucey, 2005), o guiar las normas establecidas en los distintos grupos sociales (Martineau, 1972).

Sin embargo, en la otra cara de sus funciones sociales, se ha destacado que el humor tiene un “*lado oscuro*” (Kirsh y Kuiper, 2003). En este contexto, cobra especial relevancia el llamado humor de denigración, entendido como “*un tipo de humor cuya intención es provocar diversión mediante la denigración, humillación o menosprecio de un objetivo específico*” (Ferguson y Ford, 2008, p. 283). En concreto, cuando el blanco de la denigración son las mujeres, este humor se ha conceptualizado como humor sexista y es uno de los que más atención empírica ha recibido. En las últimas décadas, numerosos estudios han informado sobre las importantes consecuencias negativas que provoca este tipo de humor. De manera destacada, se ha demostrado que refuerza la discriminación y la desigualdad de género (Ford et al., 2015), e incluso orienta las conductas sexuales violentas en el caso de hombres sexistas (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017).

Estos resultados, que sirven para resaltar el “*lado oscuro*” del humor en el campo de los estudios de género, son útiles para reflexionar sobre su alcance. Así como el humor puede reforzar la discriminación y opresión de las mujeres, se podría considerar si el humor también podría usarse en sentido contrario, es decir, para cuestionar, debilitar y confrontar valores, actitudes o comportamientos sexistas que promueven y mantienen la desigualdad entre hombres y mujeres (Kramer, 2015). El humor que tendría este propósito es el llamado “*humor subversivo contra el sexismo*” o “*humor feminista*” (Shifman y Lemish, 2011) ya que intenta redefinir las actitudes, roles y estereotipos de género, actuando como una herramienta para cambiar la subordinación de las mujeres y empoderarlas (Case y Lippard, 2009).

Los escasos estudios empíricos en torno a este tipo de humor (p.ej., Case y Lippard, 2009) han tenido como objetivo analizar el contenido de chistes supuestamente subversivos contra el sexismo, siguiendo criterios de selección y clasificación ambiguos sin demostrar realmente que el humor subversivo contra el sexismo tenga su propia entidad empírica y diferenciada de otros tipos de humor. Tampoco se ha demostrado que tenga el supuesto efecto social de subvertir el sexismo. Además, teóricamente se sugiere que el humor subversivo contra el sexismo tiene peculiaridades interpretativas debido a su naturaleza ambigua (Strain et al., 2016). En concreto, se plantea que interpretar el humor subversivo en la dirección de

subvertir (vs. reforzar) las desigualdades sociales, depende de las actitudes de los/as perceptores/as (Miller et al., 2019).

El objetivo principal de esta tesis doctoral es dar respuesta a las cuestiones que aún quedan por resolver en la literatura, planteando que el humor subversivo contra el sexismo constituye empíricamente un tipo de humor independiente y diferente a otros tipos de humor, como el humor de denigración del hombre o el humor sexista. Asimismo, dadas las lagunas que existen sobre cómo se interpreta este tipo de humor y las implicaciones de su interpretación, nos propusimos estudiar su apreciación e interpretación a partir de las actitudes de quienes son expuestos/as a él. Por último, analizamos si el humor subversivo contra el sexismo podría contribuir a la confrontación del sexismo (Case y Lippard, 2009; Strain et al., 2016, Willett et al., 2012) y si en última instancia, esta confrontación podría llegar incluso a la participación en acciones colectivas que buscan la igualdad de género (p.ej., Guizzo et al., 2017).

En referencia a su contenido, la presente tesis doctoral se estructura en cuatro capítulos. El **primer capítulo** presenta el humor desde una perspectiva general, abordando las principales teorías que lo han analizado y las funciones sociales que se le atribuyen. Asimismo analiza un tipo de humor que refuerza las desigualdades sociales, específicamente, el humor sexista. A continuación, se exponen los aspectos más relevantes del humor feminista, entendido como una forma de subvertir la jerarquía del género, incluyendo su origen, definición, y su apreciación e interpretación. Por último, se explica la relación del humor feminista con las actitudes y formas de percibirlo, y se estudia cómo podría contribuir a la igualdad de género, en concreto, a través de las acciones colectivas. El **segundo capítulo** presenta los objetivos e hipótesis de los estudios presentados. El **tercer capítulo** incluye los siete estudios empíricos que configuran la presente tesis doctoral. El **cuarto capítulo** incluye una discusión general derivada de los principales resultados, donde se exponen las conclusiones, limitaciones y futuras líneas de investigación a seguir.

Es importante señalar que a lo largo de la tesis se aporta información reiterada sobre conceptos, teorías y explicaciones, ya que los estudios empíricos del capítulo tres, fueron escritos con la intención de ser publicados en revistas y poseen entidad en sí mismos. Asimismo, de acuerdo con las normas del Programa Internacional de Doctorado de la Universidad de Granada, algunas secciones han sido escritas en español, mientras que otras lo han sido en inglés.

# Overview

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Humor is a social, emotional and cognitive phenomenon that is part of people's everyday life. Among its multiple functions, research has shown that humor is associated with numerous positive aspects in social interaction processes, such as fostering the creation of a collective identity and strengthening group cohesion (Fine & Soucey, 2005), or guiding norms established in different social groups (Martineau, 1972).

However, on the other side of its social functions, it has been highlighted that humor has a “*dark side*” (Kirsh & Kuiper, 2003). In this context, the so-called disparagement humor takes on special relevance and “*refers to remarks that (are intended to) elicit amusement through the denigration, derogation, or belittlement of a given target*” (Ferguson & Ford, 2008, p. 283). Specifically, when women are the target of denigration, this humor has been conceptualized as sexist humor, which is a specific type of humor that has received a great deal of empirical attention and research. In recent decades, numerous studies have identified significant negative consequences that this type of humor causes. For the most part, it has been shown to reinforce gender discrimination and inequality (Ford et al., 2015), and even guide violent sexual behaviors in the case of sexist men (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017).

These results, which serve to highlight the “*dark side*” of humor in the field of gender studies, are useful to reflect on its scope. Just as humor can reinforce discrimination and oppression of women, it could be considered if humor could also be used in the opposite sense, that is, to question, weaken and confront sexist values, attitudes or behaviors that promote and maintain inequality between men and women (Kramer, 2015). The type of humor that would have this purpose is the so-called “*subversive humor against sexism*” or “*feminist humor*” (Shifman & Lemish, 2011) since it tries to redefine gender attitudes, roles and stereotypes, acting as a tool to change the subordination of women and empower them (Case & Lippard, 2009).

The few empirical studies around this type of humor (e.g., Case & Lippard, 2009) have aimed to analyze the content of supposedly subversive jokes against sexism following ambiguous selection and classification criteria without showing that subversive humor against sexism has its own empirical and distinct entity from other types of humor. Nor it has been proven that it has the supposed social effect of subverting sexism. Furthermore, it is theoretically suggested that subversive humor against sexism has peculiarities that can be interpreted in a number of different ways due to its ambiguous nature (Strain et al., 2016). Specifically, it is proposed that interpreting subversive humor

in the direction of subverting (vs. reinforcing) social inequalities depends on the attitudes of the perceivers (Miller et al., 2019).

The main objective of this doctoral thesis is to answer the questions that have yet to be resolved in past literature and studies, stating that subversive humor against sexism empirically constitutes a unique type of humor that is independent and different from other types of humor, such as from man disparagement humor or from sexist humor. Likewise, given the gaps that exist on how this type of humor is interpreted and the implications of its current interpretation, we set out to study its appreciation and interpretation based on the attitudes of those who are exposed to it. Finally, we'll set out to analyze whether subversive humor against sexism could in actual fact be used to confront sexism (Case & Lippard, 2009; Strain et al., 2016, Willett et al., 2012) and if ultimately, this confrontation could even play a role in collective actions that seek gender equality (e.g., Guizzo et al., 2017).

With regards to its content, this doctoral thesis is divided into four chapters. **The first chapter** presents humor from a general perspective, addressing the main theories that have analyzed it and the social functions attributed to it. It also analyzes a type of humor that reinforces social inequalities, specifically, sexist humor. Next, the most relevant aspects of feminist humor are exposed, understood as a way of subverting gender hierarchy, including its origin, definition, as well as its appreciation and interpretation. Finally, the relationship between feminist humor with attitudes and ways of perceiving it will be explained and how it could contribute to gender equality, specifically, through collective actions. **The second chapter** presents the objectives and hypotheses of the studies presented. **The third chapter** will focus on the seven empirical studies that make up this doctoral thesis. **The fourth chapter** includes a general discussion derived from the main results, where the conclusions, limitations and future lines of research to be followed are discussed.

Finally, it is highlighted that repeated information on concepts, theories and explanations is provided, since the empirical studies in chapter three were written with the intention of being published in journals. Likewise, in accordance with the regulations of the International Doctoral Program of the University of Granada, some sections were written in Spanish, while others were written in English.



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# **Capítulo 1. Introducción**

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# **Chapter 1. Introduction**



## 1. Introducción al estudio del humor

El humor es un fenómeno que forma parte de la vida cotidiana de las personas (Fine, 1983; Kuipers, 2008). Driessen (1999) y Lefcourt (2001) sostienen que estaría presente en todas las culturas conocidas. Aunque presentaría diferencias según la cultura, la mayoría de autores/as que estudian el humor sostienen que entre culturas habría algunos componentes en común, y entre ellos se destacaría la existencia de elementos que resultan inadecuados, incongruentes o sorprendentes para el/la receptor/a del humor, que finalmente podrían generar diversión (Martin y Ford, 2018).

Además, es concebido como un tipo de juego que conlleva adoptar un “set mental” a través del cual las ideas no han de ser tomadas con seriedad (Ford et al., 2015). Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, el humor se ha visto relacionado con amplias funciones que lo convierten en un tema serio además de importante como objeto de investigación científica por sus implicaciones positivas, por ejemplo, en el campo de la salud física y psicológica, como el afrontamiento del estrés (Fritz et al., 2017; Lefcourt y Martin, 1986) o de los síntomas de la depresión (Wellenzohn et al., 2018).

Debido a sus múltiples funciones, el estudio del humor ha sido foco de interés de diferentes disciplinas a lo largo de la historia, como la filosofía, la teología, la literatura o la sociología (Bremmer y Rodenburg, 1999). Concretamente, en la presente tesis doctoral nos centramos en el estudio del humor desde la psicología. Algunos/as teóricos/as como Ruch (2008), destacan que la psicología siempre ha sido una de las disciplinas que más ha contribuido en el conocimiento del humor, intentado dar respuesta a los procesos involucrados a la hora de interpretar un chiste o de percibirlo como divertido, o a los factores psicosociales que se asociarían con este complejo fenómeno.

Desde un punto de vista psicológico, el humor puede ser considerado como un fenómeno multidimensional. Para explicar esto de forma más concreta, Martin (2007; edición española de 2008) desarrolló un marco conceptual a través del cual desgrana que el humor es el resultado de cuatro componentes principales: (1) el contexto social (p. ej., interacciones entre personas desconocidas o personas que se conocen desde hace mucho tiempo) (2) los procesos cognitivos-perceptuales (p. ej., mecanismos implicados en la percepción del humor como la memoria) (3) la respuesta emocional (p. ej., respuestas afectivas relacionadas con ser expuesto al humor, como el afecto positivo) y (4) la respuesta comportamental (p. ej., la risa como manifestación externa de la emoción positiva que nos provoca la experiencia del humor).

No obstante, y sin restar valor al resto de dimensiones, ponemos en valor que la forma en la que el humor se transmite, depende en gran medida de las normas y del contexto social (Fine, 1983). De este modo, el humor puede ser descrito como un fenómeno social (Ziv, 2010), y en consecuencia, la psicología social puede aportar numerosas contribuciones en el estudio de sus diferentes funciones sociales. No obstante, antes de detenernos en estas funciones sociales, consideramos relevante desarrollar las teorías más importantes que han intentado abordar la descripción, explicación y predicción del humor.

## **1.1 Teorías generales sobre el humor**

Como hemos señalado, los procesos y mecanismos implicados en el humor han sido abordados desde diferentes disciplinas, ofreciendo cada una de ellas una visión particular al estudio del humor (Roedelein, 2002). A continuación, presentaremos brevemente las cinco teorías que han sido más influyentes en la investigación psicológica del humor.

### ***1.1.1 Teorías psicoanalíticas***

Freud (1905; edición española de 1994) definía la risa como una forma de liberar el exceso de energía nerviosa acumulada en el interior de las personas. De este modo, para poder alcanzar el equilibrio interno, es necesario que se produzca un proceso de regulación energética, en el cual, el “*ello*” (instintos primarios inconscientes) actúa reprimiendo la energía, y la libera en forma de risa cuando el “*superyó*” (normas y reglas sociales) queda en un segundo plano.

La liberación de energía puede producirse a través de tres tipos de elementos: el humor, lo cómico y el chiste (Freud, 1905; edición española de 1994). En referencia a la categoría del humor, Freud se refiere a él como un tipo de mecanismo de defensa que tiene el propósito de enfrentarnos a las situaciones difíciles o desagradables. En este sentido, la presencia de elementos divertidos durante una experiencia dolorosa o triste, alteran la realidad mediante connotaciones positivas, evitando así las sensaciones desagradables derivadas de esas experiencias. Por otro lado, la categoría de lo cómico se centra en todas las manifestaciones no verbales que permiten generar diversión a través de algunos hechos o experiencias, como por ejemplo, ver que alguien tropieza en la calle. En este tipo de situaciones, la energía mental se almacena anticipando lo que va a suceder, de manera que al surgir un elemento no esperado, emerge la risa.

El tercer componente propuesto por Freud es el chiste. Según el autor, el chiste es una de las formas que permiten lograr el equilibrio entre los impulsos sexuales y agresivos,

y la presión de tener que reprimir tales impulsos. Los chistes suelen caracterizarse por presentar mecanismos como la unificación, la condensación o la incongruencia. Estos mecanismos sirven como distractores al “*superyó*” (consciente), permitiendo que las pulsiones del “*ello*” (inconsciente) no se repriman, emerjan liberándose en forma de risa, y generen disfrute al expresar el placer ilícito (Newirth, 2006).

La mayor parte de la investigación realizada sobre las teorías psicoanalíticas se han centrado más en los chistes que en el humor, mientras que a efectos empíricos lo cómico ha sido prácticamente ignorado (Martin, 1998). Además, los resultados encontrados en torno a los chistes han ofrecido resultados ambiguos y muchas veces en la dirección contraria a lo teóricamente esperado (Ruch y Hehl, 1988).

### ***1.1.2 Teorías de la superioridad***

Según las teorías de la superioridad, el humor puede ser considerado como una forma de posicionarse por encima de otros/as. La base agresiva de la risa con el propósito de manifestar superioridad hacia los/as demás se ha visto en muchos escritos, algunos de ellos bastante antiguos. Por ejemplo, en el Antiguo Testamento destacan unas 29 referencias humorísticas asociadas con la burla de algunas características individuales (Koestler, 1964).

Platón (428 a. C. - 347 a. C.) y Aristóteles (384 a. C. - 322 a. C.) fueron los primeros en plantear las ideas originarias de las teorías de la superioridad. Según estos filósofos, la gente se ríe y se divierte con los defectos y debilidades de los demás (Morreall, 2014). De estas ideas, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) planteaba que la diversión y la risa aparecen como resultado de un proceso de comparación entre las personas, donde una persona o grupo se siente superior y menosprecia las características defectuosas o desaventajadas de otros/as (Morreall, 2014).

Contrariamente a las ideas freudianas donde se planteaba la posibilidad de crear humor sin agresión, los/as autores/as de las teorías de la superioridad sostienen que esto no es posible. De hecho, plantean que la agresión y la hostilidad son dos rasgos definitorios de los chistes (Koestler, 1964; Lefcourt, 2001). Específicamente, Gruner (1997) defiende que incluso los chistes que tratan de ser juguetones y sutiles, presentan inherentemente alguna forma de agresión. Sin embargo, con respecto a experimentar diversión en la devaluación de otros/as, “*la teoría de la superioridad disposicional*” expone que depende de las actitudes que se tengan hacia quien el chiste se dirige (Zillmann y Cantor, 1996).

En línea con estas ideas, aunque las teorías de la superioridad plantean que divertirse a costa de las debilidades de los/las demás incrementa el bienestar propio y la

autoestima (Wills, 1981), en su contraparte, los estudios realizados en torno a ellas destacan que podrían tener un impacto negativo en las relaciones (p.ej., Mendiburo-Seguel y Ford, 2019).

### **1.1.3 Teorías del arousal**

De acuerdo con las teorías del arousal, la función de la risa también sería la de liberar energía acumulada, pero en este caso, se puntualiza que dicha liberación se produce con base en principios psicológicos y fisiológicos. El origen de la teoría del arousal se remonta a “*la teoría hidráulica de la energía nerviosa*” (Spencer, 1860). En concreto, la teoría hidráulica defiende que la energía acumulada y reprimida en el cuerpo debe ser liberada a través de los movimientos musculares ejercidos por la risa.

Berlyne (1972) propuso que en realidad la risa no se libera como consecuencia de la energía reprimida, sino que tal liberación se produce como una relación en U invertida entre la excitación fisiológica y el placer subjetivo. Por lo tanto, en lugar de ver la risa como una forma de liberar tensión reprimida, Berlyne la define como una forma de expresar el placer para conseguir un estado de excitación óptimo. De este modo, el mayor placer se asocia con un estado de excitación moderado, mientras que muy poca o demasiada excitación se traduciría en una sensación desagradable.

Los estudios que se han realizado con el propósito de someter a contraste las hipótesis de Berlyne han mostrado que el humor está asociado con incrementar el estado de excitación autónoma (p.ej., Langevin y Day, 1972). Sin embargo, son escasos los hallazgos que han permitido demostrar la relación de U invertida entre el nivel de excitación y el disfrute, ya que más bien se ha mostrado que la relación es lineal (McGhee, 1983).

### **1.1.4 Teorías de la incongruencia**

Las teorías de la incongruencia plantean que para que algo resulte gracioso es necesario que sea percibido como incongruente, inesperado, sorprendente y en definitiva, diferente a lo que en un principio esperamos (Watson, 2015). Estas teorías fueron ampliamente desarrolladas por Kant (1724-1804) y Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Mientras que el primero defendía que basta con que la incongruencia se manifieste para que aparezca el humor, el segundo planteaba la necesidad de que esa incongruencia fuera resuelta con un sentido lógico (Morreall, 1989). De estas ideas, Koestler (1964) desarrolló el concepto de “*bisociación*” a través del cual explica que cuando dos situaciones o ideas se perciben como incompatibles o dispares, se produce esa incongruencia que genera una experiencia divertida cuando el contexto no es amenazante y por lo tanto la sorpresa propia de la incongruencia o del fenómeno inesperado no se vincula a una respuesta de miedo.



A partir de este concepto, Shultz (1974) propuso que los chistes están divididos en dos partes. La primera sería aquella en la que se presenta algún tipo de información incompleta al/a la receptor/a, y la segunda comprendería los datos que se aportan como resolución a la primera parte, y que resultan como inesperados e incongruentes. De este modo, durante el proceso de interpretación de un chiste, el/la receptor/a necesita recurrir a diversos mecanismos fonológicos, gramaticales o léxicos que le lleve a encontrar sentido a esta incongruencia, momento en el cual el chiste es comprendido y llega a resultar divertido. Si bien esta explicación es sucesora de las ideas que planteaba Schopenhauer, lo cierto es que actualmente también se defienden las ideas de Kant, a través de las cuales no sería necesario que la incongruencia fuese resuelta con sentido para que el humor aparezca.

En este debate, a pesar de que algunos/as autores/as han planteado que la incongruencia por sí sola no es una característica suficiente para que surja la diversión (Morreall, 1989; Suls, 1983), los estudios empíricos realizados en torno a estas teorías han mostrado que los factores de incongruencia-resolución (INC-RES) e incongruencia sin sentido (SINS) se aíslan de manera clara como componentes estructurales del sentido del humor (Carretero-Dios, 2005; Ruch y Hehl, 1998; Ruch, 1992). Además, a diferencia de las teorías psicoanalíticas, de la superioridad y del arousal, donde lo cognitivo tiene un papel más secundario, las teorías de la incongruencia se centran en los procesos cognitivo-perceptuales del humor. Sin embargo, no tienen en consideración sus facetas emocionales o sociales.

### ***1.1.5 Teorías de la inversión***

Aunque son menos conocidas que las descritas anteriormente, algunos/as autores/as plantean que las teorías de la inversión permiten integrar y unir a las demás teorías, especialmente porque pretenden explicar el humor desde una visión multifactorial (Fry, 1963; Gruner, 1997). Estas teorías sostienen que el humor surge a raíz de un estado de ánimo lúdico que aporta un marco protector o de seguridad psicológica. Este marco protector permite aislar a las personas de las preocupaciones serias del mundo real, transformándolas en estados lúdicos para que no causen daño. El estado lúdico es definido por Apter (2001) como “*paratélico*”, mientras que se refiere al estado serio como “*télico*”. De este modo, continuamente estaríamos realizando cambios hacia adelante y hacia atrás entre estos dos estados mentales a lo largo de nuestro día a día.

Las teorías de la inversión, por un lado, retoman las teorías psicoanalíticas y de la superioridad describiendo el humor como una estrategia para regular la excitación emocional que puede desprenderse al abordar temas sexuales y agresivos. Se consideraría

que el estado lúdico (paratélico) provocaría un incremento de la excitación, generando sensaciones agradables y emocionantes. Por otro lado, las teorías de la inversión retoman los componentes cognitivos de las teorías de la incongruencia para explicar cómo en esos estados lúdicos (paratélicos) se activan ciertas estructuras y mecanismos cognitivos para permitir enmascarar o enfrentarse a las causas serias (télicas). De este modo, tanto el/la emisor/a como el/la receptor/a del humor pueden entrar en ese estado de juego en el que se da pie a múltiples interpretaciones con la inclusión de los mecanismos típicos de los chistes, como la incongruencia.

Muchos de los estudios empíricos que se han realizado en torno a las teorías de la inversión han tenido el propósito de estudiar lo que sucede ante la activación de los estados lúdicos o paratélicos (p.ej, Wyer y Collins, 1992), constatando lo hipotetizado por las teorías de la incongruencia (p.ej., Ruch, 1992; Shultz, 1974) o del arousal (p.ej., Apter, 2013; Cantor et al., 1974).

Descritas las teorías generales del humor, pasaremos a explicar algunas de sus funciones sociales, puesto que los objetivos de nuestra tesis se ubican dentro de esas funciones.

## **1.2 Principales funciones sociales del humor**

El humor entendido como fenómeno social permite ofrecer una visión de cómo los chistes y otras intervenciones cómicas orientan las formas en la que los individuos interaccionan entre sí. Continuamente, en estas interacciones el canal comunicativo humorístico se intercala con la forma seria del discurso (Mulkay, 1988). Debido a que las opiniones entre las personas suelen diferir, cuando son transmitidas en clave humorística les permiten negociar sobre la pertinencia de ciertas ideas, y hacer posible que sean más aceptadas (Mendiburo-Seguel y Heintz, 2019). En comparación con la comunicación seria, la que se da a través del humor hace más tolerable las incongruencias, ambigüedades e incoherencias que se suelen presentar en las relaciones interpersonales.

De este modo, el humor se encargaría de fomentar un ambiente de entretenimiento placentero, posibilitaría expresar ideas y opiniones controvertidas disminuyendo tensiones y permitiría a las personas afiliarse a un grupo con el que establecer relaciones fluidas (Ziv, 2010). En este último sentido, el uso del humor durante las relaciones sociales guiaría los procesos comunicativos incrementando los beneficios, y al mismo tiempo reduciendo los posibles costos de tales interacciones (Cook y Rice, 2003). En la disminución de estos costos, el humor permitiría evitar las disputas que puedan surgir en estas interacciones, posibilitando liberar las tensiones para poder mantener el equilibrio y el orden social (Fine

y Soucey, 2005), logrando una mejor adaptación a los eventos estresantes (Fritz et al., 2017), y funcionando en última instancia como un mecanismo de adaptación social.

Específicamente, en referencia a las dinámicas que suceden en los procesos de socialización de los grupos, Tajfel (1978) en su teoría de la Identidad Social (TIS) asume la existencia de dos tipos de comportamientos grupales: los comportamientos endogrupales (aquellos que se llevan a cabo dentro del grupo al que se pertenece) y los comportamientos exogrupales (aquellos que se realizan hacia otros grupos). En el primero de los tipos de comportamientos explicados por Tajfel (1978), es decir, los comportamientos endogrupales, Fine (1987) destaca la “*idiocultura*” como el conjunto de conocimientos, creencias y costumbres que definen a los miembros de un grupo y a través de los cuales dichos miembros pueden compartir un sentimiento de pertenencia. En este sentido, el humor en forma de chistes, bromas, apodos divertidos de los miembros del grupo y el uso de una jerga específica, construyen una realidad compartida y dotada de significado propio.

Esta realidad grupal compartida a través del humor posibilita liberar y disminuir las tensiones fomentando la armonía del grupo, crear un código de lenguaje en común con el que relacionarse entre los miembros, favorecer la identidad colectiva fortaleciendo la cohesión grupal, crear, conservar, y guiar las normas establecidas dentro del grupo, así como distanciarse de otros grupos para mantener el poder, el estatus y la posición del propio grupo en la sociedad (Fine y Soucey, 2005; Ziv, 2010).

En este sentido, y como consecuencia de tener un gran peso con respecto al mantenimiento del orden social, el humor tendría un papel importante en guiar el comportamiento dentro de las normas grupales (Martineau, 1972). De esta forma, el humor sería uno de los factores encargados de ejercer el control social de los/as individuos/as que forman parte de los grupos (Fine y Soucey, 2005), considerando lo que debe resultar divertido y lo que no (Lee y Lim, 2013), fomentando las normas sociales instauradas (Mechling y Mechling, 1985) y de ser necesario, incluso las posibles sanciones en caso de que se violen o no se cumplan estas normas consensuadas en el grupo (Robinson y Smith-Lovin, 2001).

En definitiva, las funciones anteriores del humor pueden resumirse en mantener el orden social, primero a través de la liberación de las tensiones que se puedan generar en las interacciones (Apte, 1985; Sykes, 1966), y segundo, mediante el control social que permita mantener la cohesión del grupo (Billig, 2005). Estas funciones se enmarcan en el denominado enfoque funcionalista del humor. Sin embargo, desde las ciencias sociales han

existido también otros enfoques de estudio del humor, como el interaccionista simbólico, fenomenológico, histórico-comparativo o del conflicto (Kuipers, 2008).

Concretamente, la presente tesis se inspira en el enfoque del conflicto. Este enfoque vendría a definir el humor como una expresión del conflicto social entre los grupos, ya sea como una forma de manifestar agresión y hostilidad para posicionarse por encima de otros/as (Speier, 1998), o por el contrario para enfrentarse y sublevarse ante la opresión y la discriminación (Shifman et al., 2007). En este sentido, además de generar diversión y liberar tensiones, funcionar como instrumento para el control social, la gestión del discurso, el establecimiento de lazos y relaciones sociales, la creación de una identidad colectiva y el fortalecimiento de la cohesión grupal, también se destaca que socialmente el humor puede tener una base agresiva, un “*lado oscuro*” (Kirsh y Kuiper, 2003) causante de efectos negativos.

Este lado oscuro del humor surgiría a raíz de algunos comportamientos que se realizan hacia otros grupos externos en los procesos de relaciones sociales. En concreto, se refiere al conjunto de intervenciones comunicativas y discursos en los que el humor se usa con la intención de deslegitimar, marginar, discriminar y/o deshumanizar a ciertos colectivos o grupos, provocando su discriminación. Todo esto, finalmente daría lugar al reforzamiento de jerarquías sociales entre ellos, y al mantenimiento de las desigualdades (Hodson y MacInniuios, 2016).

Sin embargo, en la dirección contraria, también se sugiere desde este enfoque del conflicto que el humor podría manifestarse como una forma de subvertir jerarquías en lugar de reforzarlas (Strain et al., 2016). En este sentido, y en línea con el principal propósito de la presente tesis doctoral, nos preguntamos si el humor podría visibilizar, criticar, cuestionar y confrontar los estándares, comportamientos, valores o normas sociales que mantienen la desigualdad a nivel interpersonal e intergrupal, promoviendo modelos alternativos contra el *status quo* desigual para lograr modificar finalmente el comportamiento de los/as individuos/as, y en última instancia, transformar la sociedad (Kramer, 2015; Ziv, 2010). Específicamente, hay que tener en cuenta que para que los mensajes humorísticos críticos contra actitudes, valores y normas puedan ejercer cambios en la totalidad de la sociedad, es importante que esos mensajes persuadan e influyan en las personas con respecto a sus formas de pensar y de actuar frente a las desigualdades sociales.

Las formas en las que el humor puede actuar como estrategia para influir sobre el pensamiento y el comportamiento de las personas ha recibido especial atención desde el

Modelo de Probabilidad de Elaboración (Petty y Cacioppo, 1986). Según este modelo, la influencia y persuasión se producen a través de dos vías: la central y la periférica. La vía central se activa en aquellas personas que consideran el argumento o las ideas del mensaje persuasivo relevantes a nivel personal, y tienen creencias sólidas y convincentes, así como ideas preexistentes con respecto a dicho argumento. Por otro lado, la vía periférica se activa en aquellas personas que no se centran en el contenido del argumento, se fijan más en señales heurísticas personales sobre el tema que se trata (p.ej., simpatía que genera el mensaje) o no están del todo motivadas con el mensaje global que se transmite.

De este modo, se plantea que el humor podría funcionar como una herramienta de influencia en el comportamiento a través de la ruta periférica. En estos casos, Lyttle (2001) sugiere que el humor usado para generar un cambio en el comportamiento de las personas poco motivadas con el tema, permite crear un estado de ánimo más positivo en estos/as receptores/as a través del cual el mensaje resulta más motivador. Asimismo, al distraer la atención de estos/as receptores/as menos motivados/as, el humor podría impedirles construir argumentos contra los mensajes persuasivos y hacer que sea menos probable centrarse en el contenido serio del mensaje con el que pueden mostrar más rechazo o desacuerdo.

Entonces, ¿esto quiere decir que los mensajes humorísticos son más persuasivos que los mensajes serios? Esta pregunta ha suscitado especial interés, por ejemplo, en el ámbito de la publicidad (Dong-Hun, 2009; Teixeira y Stipp, 2013; Weinberger y Gulas 1992), o de la política (Baumgartner y Lockerbie, 2018; Lee y Kwak, 2014), y la investigación que se ha realizado con el propósito de responderla, ha ofrecido resultados en varias direcciones.

Con respecto a la participación política, los estudios que van en la línea de mostrar la relación positiva entre el humor satírico político y el incremento de la participación política de la ciudadanía, se han hecho en su mayoría en Estados Unidos (p.ej., Baumgartner y Lockerbie, 2018; Lee y Kwak, 2014; Moy et al., 2005). Éstos se han basado en medir el grado de participación en las elecciones presidenciales (American National Election Studies, ANE), constatando que la exposición a ese tipo de programas (p.ej., *“The Daily Show with Jon Stewart”* *“The Colbert Report”*) aumentaba la participación. No obstante, otros estudios encaminados en estudiar los efectos sobre la participación política de ser expuesto/a a esos programas, han mostrado que cuando desaparece el componente satírico del humor político, el efecto no se produce (p.ej., Hoffman y Young, 2011).

Asimismo, con el propósito de comprobar si los mensajes humorísticos influyen más que los serios en la influencia de la publicidad, Weinberger y Gulas (1992) realizaron una revisión de una serie de estudios encontrando también resultados diferentes. Concretamente, cinco de estos estudios mostraron que la publicidad en clave de humor generaba un efecto positivo con respecto a la persuasión de los/as clientes/as, ocho estudios encontraron un efecto mixto o nulo, y uno de ellos encontró que el uso del humor en la publicidad se asociaba de forma negativa con el efecto persuasivo.

Los resultados dispares que se han encontrado apuntarían a que la capacidad persuasiva del humor funciona en unas ocasiones pero no en otras. Por tanto, el efecto del humor en el campo de la persuasión depende de una multitud de factores, como pueden ser el tema que se aborda, las características de los/as receptores/as, el contexto, la fuente del mensaje, el tipo de humor que se usa para influir, etc. En este sentido, centrándonos en la función social del humor desde el enfoque del conflicto (Kuipers, 2008), el presente trabajo trataría de analizar el humor cuando se usa como forma de motivar el cambio social mediante su influencia en el comportamiento de los/as individuos/as para romper con las desigualdades de género.

En resumen, dependiendo de cómo se use el humor, algunas veces puede actuar con el propósito que pretendemos estudiar, es decir, para subvertir jerarquías sociales mediante la cooperación y la reivindicación, mientras que otras reforzaría el *status quo* desigual y dichas jerarquías a través de la hostilidad y la agresión (Rappoport, 2005; Saucier et al., 2018; Strain et al., 2016).

## **2. Humor que refuerza la desigualdad: el humor de denigración**

El humor de denigración es aquel que pretende generar diversión mediante la denigración, marginación o menosprecio de una persona, colectivo o grupo social específico (Ferguson y Ford, 2008; Zillmann, 1983). En concreto, la denigración se produciría al resaltar los estereotipos físicos, psicológicos o sociales del grupo social al que el humor se dirige con la intención de desprestigiarlo.

Estas características estereotípicas generalmente están dirigidas hacia diferentes personas o grupos sociales, por ejemplo, las personas con obesidad (Burmeister y Carels, 2014), los homosexuales (McCann et al., 2010), los musulmanes (Ford et al., 2014), las personas de raza negra (Weaver, 2010) o las mujeres (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017).

En las últimas décadas, algunos estudios han señalado que el humor de denigración también puede generar otras respuestas junto a la diversión, como la vergüenza, la culpa, la ira o la frustración (Ferguson y Ford, 2008). Esta ambivalencia

emocional que el humor de denigración puede despertar podría deberse al propio componente de burla presente sobre el grupo social al que se dirige. Por este motivo, las características individuales tienen un papel determinante en cómo se reacciona al humor de denigración (Ruch, 2008), pudiendo resultar inapropiado, hostil, hiriente, amenazante o inmoral en función de las actitudes de los/as perceptores/as (Koszałkowska y Wróbel, 2019).

En términos generales, el uso de este tipo de humor se justifica con el hecho de ser percibido “*solo como un chiste*” (Johnson, 1990) y por tanto sin la necesidad de tomar en serio el mensaje que transmite, ni de reprobar al emisor del mismo. No obstante, lejos de ser algo inocuo, numerosos estudios realizados sobre el humor de denigración han demostrado que constituye una vía sutil para expresar prejuicios hacia el grupo al que se dirige (Ford et al., 2015), favoreciendo el surgimiento de actitudes negativas hacia dicho grupo (Hobden y Olson, 1994) y en definitiva, reforzando sus estereotipos (Maio et al., 1997). Debido a esto, el humor de denigración se plantea como una forma de mantener la superioridad social de unos grupos frente a otros (Saucier et al., 2016).

Todos estos planteamientos que muestran las consecuencias negativas del uso del humor denigración en las relaciones interpersonales han intentado ser explicados por la Teoría de la Norma Prejuiciosa (Ford y Ferguson, 2004).

### **2.1 La Teoría de la Norma Prejuiciosa**

Ford y Ferguson (2004) desarrollaron la Teoría de la Norma Prejuiciosa para explicar la razón por la que el humor de denigración actúa como un canal para la expresión del prejuicio. Ford et al. (2015) definen esta teoría en función de cuatro componentes principales. En primer lugar, el humor activaría una norma de levedad a través de la cual las personas dejan de percibir el mensaje que se transmite como algo serio, y pasan a percibirlo con una mentalidad no crítica (Gruner, 1997). Por tanto, al considerar como inocuas la burla y la discriminación, el humor de denigración hace que el/la perceptor/a active esa norma de levedad viendo los prejuicios como aceptables, y con el único fin de entretener y divertir (Montemurro, 2003).

En segundo lugar, el mensaje que transmite el humor de denigración acerca de que el prejuicio no debe ser tomado en serio, es comprendido únicamente por aquellos/as perceptores/as que activan la norma de levedad y lo interpretan con una mentalidad no crítica (Khoury, 1985; Meyer, 2000). De hecho, para que pueda ser comprendido, tanto el/la emisor/a como el/la perceptor/a del humor han de aprobar este “*acuerdo social*” a través del cual no se debe interpretar el mensaje con una mentalidad seria (Emerson, 1969).

Es así como se podrían abordar cuestiones contra un grupo social que en la modalidad seria del discurso podrían ser consideradas como inapropiadas.

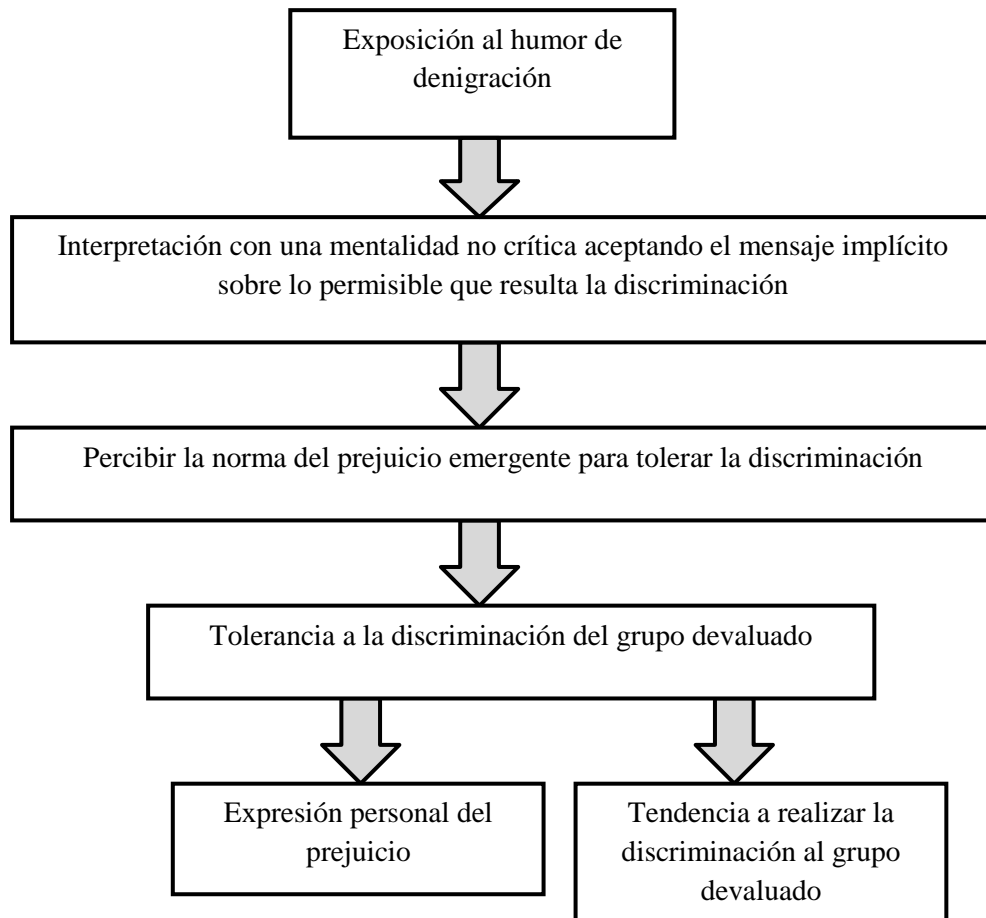
Tercero, la teoría propone que la levedad y la aceptabilidad percibida del humor de denigración va a depender del nivel de prejuicios que se tengan sobre el grupo al que el humor devalúa (Zillman y Cantor, 1976). En este sentido, aquellas personas con mayores actitudes negativas hacia el grupo social dado, son las que activan en mayor medida la norma de levedad y lo interpretan sin un juicio crítico. Por tanto, es esperable que sobre las respuestas de estas personas con mayores actitudes negativas hacia el grupo devaluado se obtengan mayores respuestas de valencia positiva y menores de valencia negativa hacia este tipo de humor (Zillman, 1983).

Por último, si las personas con mayores prejuicios son las que en mayor medida interpretan el prejuicio expresado a través del humor con una mentalidad no crítica, entonces, en estas personas se crearía una norma emergente. Según esta norma, las personas más prejuiciosas se basan en las claves del contexto social inmediato para determinar si expresar el prejuicio es adecuado o no, considerando que el humor es una clave contextual idónea para hacerlo. De este modo, al activar esta norma emergente a través del humor, finalmente, se llegaría a tolerar la discriminación hacia el grupo objetivo. A continuación se presenta un esquema de estos componentes que plantea la Teoría de la Norma Prejuiciosa (Ford y Ferguson, 2004) (Figura 1).



**Figura 1**

*Esquema de la Teoría de la Norma Prejuiciosa*



Llegados a este punto, es necesario resaltar que la teoría de la Norma Prejuiciosa se ha aplicado especialmente respecto a las consecuencias sociales que se derivan del uso del humor de denigración hacia las mujeres, o más conocido como humor sexista.

## **2.2 El humor denigratorio contra las mujeres o humor sexista**

Teniendo en cuenta la definición del humor de denigración a la que hicimos referencia anteriormente (Ford y Ferguson, 2004), podemos decir que el humor sexista es aquel tipo de humor que pretende generar diversión o entretenimiento resaltando las características físicas o mentales negativas que estereotípicamente se han atribuido a las mujeres. Un ejemplo de humor sexista sería el siguiente:

*-¿Por qué una mujer se alegra al acabar en 6 meses un puzzle de 4 piezas?*

*+Porque en la caja ponía de 2 a 3 años.*

Cuando se han estudiado los efectos de ser expuestos/as a humor sexista, los resultados han puesto de manifiesto que este tipo de humor no es inocuo ni inofensivo, y que por el contrario, permite normalizar actitudes y comportamientos degradantes, discriminatorios y cosificadores hacia las mujeres (Ford, 2000; Ford et al., 2008; Thomae y Pina, 2015).

El humor sexista transmitiría el mensaje implícito de que la discriminación de las mujeres debe ser interpretada como algo sin importancia, y como consecuencia, sin la necesidad de reprobación a quien lo expresa (Attardo, 1993). De este modo, la interpretación no crítica compartida entre quien emite este tipo de humor y quien lo recibe, hace que se active una norma social que dicta que la discriminación de las mujeres es aceptable por el contexto específico en el que se da (es decir, el contexto lúdico del humor) (Meyer, 2000).

Además, esta norma se activaría principalmente en aquellos hombres que tienen altos prejuicios sexistas hacia las mujeres y por tanto, serían quienes asumirán en mayor medida que “*solo se trata de un chiste*” (Ford et al., 2008). Por tanto, estos hombres más sexistas que recurren a las claves del contexto para determinar si la expresión del prejuicio sexista es aceptable (siendo el humor un canal apropiado para hacerlo) son también quienes usan estas claves para guiar posteriormente sus actitudes y comportamientos hacia las mujeres (Ford et al., 2015).

En línea con estas ideas, ha tenido gran respaldo empírico la constatación de consecuencias negativas del humor sexista en los hombres. Por ejemplo, Ford (2000) mostró que cuando hombres eran expuestos al humor sexista, posteriormente toleraron más un comportamiento sexista en el que un hombre denigraba a una compañera de trabajo. Asimismo, el efecto se atenuaba cuando el material de exposición no eran chistes sexistas sino enunciados sexistas serios (ver también Ford et al., 2001).

En otro estudio, Ford et al. (2008) encontraron que, tras ser expuestos a humor sexista, los hombres con mayores actitudes sexistas mostraban menores intenciones de donar una hipotética cantidad de dinero a asociaciones de mujeres, en comparación con aquellos que fueron expuestos a humor neutral o a enunciados sexistas serios. En esta misma dirección, O'Connor et al. (2017) sugieren que la diversión expresada por los hombres que oyen un chiste sexista, sirve como una vía para reafirmar sus valores de masculinidad en situaciones de amenaza.

Con respecto a las mujeres, Mallet et al. (2016) encontraron que las que eran expuestas a humor sexista e interpretaban un incidente sexista (específicamente de acoso

sexual) sin mentalidad crítica, luego mostraban menos apoyo a la mujer del escenario víctima del incidente. Asimismo, el efecto se vio acentuado con la internalización del sexismo hostil, que llevó a que las mujeres interpretasen el humor sexista en menor medida como sexista, y consecuentemente a confrontarlo menos.

Además de la tolerancia a eventos sexistas y de promover la discriminación de género, también se ha comprobado que el humor sexista guía y banaliza el comportamiento sexual violento en el caso de hombres con actitudes sexistas. Viki et al. (2007) expusieron a hombres a humor sexista (vs. humor neutral), mostrando que aquellos con altas actitudes sexistas percibieron menor gravedad, mayor culpabilidad de la víctima y mayor proclividad a violar en el caso de una violación cometida por un conocido (vs. desconocido). Por su parte, Romero-Sánchez et al. (2017) mostraron que los hombres sexistas hostiles que fueron expuestos a humor sexista (vs. humor neutral), informaron mayor proclividad a la comisión de ciertas agresiones sexuales.

En definitiva, la exposición al humor sexista puede reforzar la discriminación y desigualdad de género. Sin embargo, más allá de este “*lado oscuro del humor*” (Kirsh y Kuiper, 2003), pasaremos a presentar su perspectiva social más positiva, y desde la cual pretendemos construir la presente tesis. En concreto, hacemos referencia al humor usado para el fomento del cambio social que intenta revertir la desigualdad de género, criticando y cuestionando la ideología patriarcal y el sexismo que se deriva de ésta.

### **3. Humor para subvertir la desigualdad: el caso concreto del humor feminista o humor subversivo contra el sexismo**

Los planteamientos que relacionan el humor con funciones destinadas a criticar y desafiar las relaciones de poder tienen una larga tradición en la literatura (Kramer, 2013). De hecho, esta función del humor ya se observa incluso en el siglo III d. C. en el manuscrito “*Philogelos*” o “*Amante de la risa*”. Éste es posiblemente el análisis de contenido de chistes más antiguo del mundo, en el que en 110 chistes (de un total de 265) se critican los privilegios de los “*scholas*”, la clase social poderosa de la época (Bremmer y Rondenburg, 1999).

Tal y como indica Douglas (1999), la mera existencia del humor no hace que cambie el *status quo* ni que se ataquen las relaciones de poder entre unos grupos sociales y otros. Los chistes contra las clases o grupos privilegiados más bien pondrían de manifiesto una crítica contra las injusticias sociales. Sin embargo, estos chistes atacan lo formal a través de lo informal, desafían las normas establecidas en la sociedad y permiten escapar

del control ejercido por estas normas sociales, motivando consecuentemente el cambio de las desigualdades de forma crítica y reflexiva.

Existen numerosos trabajos teóricos que se centran en analizar el humor como forma de desafiar las relaciones de poder existentes, para concienciar y visibilizar las situaciones de desigualdad social, cuestionándolas y criticándolas, con el propósito último de subvertirlas (Strain et al., 2016). En este sentido, debido a las características y funciones teóricas que se le atribuyen, este tipo de humor ha sido denominado como “*humor subversivo*” (Holmes y Marra, 2002).

Cuando el objetivo concreto del humor subversivo es el de luchar frente a la desigualdad de género, hablamos de “*humor subversivo contra el sexismo*” o “*humor feminista*” (Case y Lippard, 2009; Franzini, 1996; Shifman y Lemish, 2010), un humor que tiene como característica esencial el hecho de ser generalmente creado y difundido por mujeres.

### **3.1 Orígenes del humor subversivo contra el sexismo**

Históricamente, debido a las fuentes predominantemente masculinas con respecto al humor, apenas se tiene constancia del humor creado por mujeres (Bremmer y Rodenburg, 1999). No obstante, la visión de Platón (428 a. C. - 347 a. C.) y Aristóteles (384 a.C. - 322 a. C.) sobre los matices de la comedia permiten aportar un marco para explicar la exclusión de las mujeres en este ámbito.

A través de lo cómico, Platón plantea que nos reímos de la soberbia de los demás y eso nos permite regocijarnos ante sus desgracias, pero al mismo tiempo ello implica una especie de maldad que hace emerger simultáneamente el placer y el sufrimiento. En su obra “*República II*” (370 a.C.; edición española de 1993), explica que la risa debe permanecer limitada por la razón. Ante la existencia de un mundo perfecto, los guardianes y personas con responsabilidades no deben reírse, porque la comedia manifiesta las imperfecciones, y eso sería incongruente con la existencia del estado utópico que plantea. Por su parte, Aristóteles reconoce que lo risible es una subdivisión de lo feo; un defecto y una distorsión pero que no lleva asociado dolor ni sufrimiento. En su obra “*Poética*” (335 a.C.; edición española de 2013), las máscaras de lo cómico son deformes, defectuosas, carentes de belleza, y aunque no generan ningún tipo de perjuicio representan a los peores tipos de hombres.

En consonancia con las ideas de Platón (428 a. C. - 347 a. C.) y Aristóteles (384 a. C. - 322 a. C.), en muchos de sus tipos y formas, el humor suele ser impetuoso, impropio, inmoral y aborda temáticas que muchas veces son hostiles o constituyen tabúes sociales

(Plester y Inkson, 2019). Por este motivo, el humor ha resultado ser incongruente con la feminidad tradicional, ya que precisamente a través de ésta siempre se ha esperado que las mujeres sean perfectas, bellas, correctas, tranquilas, buenas y amables (Bilger, 2002). De este modo, podemos decir que tradicionalmente se ha sostenido que permitir a las mujeres crear y difundir humor podría romper el orden social instaurado en torno a los géneros, y consecuentemente, podría debilitar el control social ejercido sobre ellas.

No obstante, la inclusión de la mujer como creadora y difusora de lo humorístico fue una cuestión destacada y ampliamente debatida durante el periodo de la Ilustración (Bilger, 2002), momento en el que algunas mujeres como Olympe de Gouges (*“Declaración de los Derechos de la Mujer y la Ciudadana”*, 1791; edición española de 2017) comenzaron a tomar conciencia de la discriminación que sufrían las mujeres por el mero hecho de serlo. A raíz de esa toma de conciencia, en esos años comenzó la reivindicación de la igualdad social y legislativa por parte del sexo femenino en la llamada primera ola feminista (Varela, 2008).

En referencia a España, Lorenzo-Modia (2003) plantea que a finales del siglo XVIII, ésta seguía estando muy influenciada por algunos textos renacentistas como los de *“La instrucción de la mujer cristiana”* (1525) de Juan Luis Vives o *“La perfecta casada”* (1583) de Fray Luis de León. Sin embargo, la Ilustración también supuso un gran avance en la preocupación por la situación de las mujeres en el territorio nacional. Ejemplo de ello según Pajares (2000) son las ideas de Inés Joyes y Blake al reflejar en *“Apología de las mujeres”* (1798), que la mujer no es inferior al hombre, sino que es la cultura la que la excluye y le otorga un rol inferior y subordinado.

En 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft reflejó y criticó en *“Vindicación de los derechos de las mujeres”* (edición española de 2005), la situación de subordinación en la que se encontraban las mujeres en Inglaterra. A través de su manifiesto, Wollstonecraft incitaba y alentaba la revolución femenina, declarando que existía un gran enmascaramiento en la opresión real de la mujer. Sus principios básicos eran cuatro: (1) la libertad constituye la base de toda virtud cívica, (2) la moral debe permanecer anclada en principios inmutables, (3) los seres racionales deben guiarse únicamente por la razón, y (4) para que se puedan producir los tres principios anteriores, es necesario la revolución femenina en la consecución de la igualdad de derechos.

Más allá de las propuestas similares planteadas por otras autoras, el programa de Wollstonecraft mencionado (*“Vindicación de los derechos de las mujeres”*) destacaba por un elemento relevante para la tesis que nos ocupa: el humor. La autora dedicó una parte

central del programa a parodiar los prejuicios más hostiles contra las mujeres y animaba a los lectores a reírse de ellos, a la vez que intentaba concienciar sobre lo absurdos e irracionales que son (Bilger, 2002). Debido a que centra la descripción de la opresión de la mujer en los estereotipos y prejuicios sobre las mujeres, se esfuerza por burlarse de ellos con el objetivo último de combatirlos y erradicarlos.

Wollstonecraft (1792; edición española de 2005) defiende además, que muchos de estos prejuicios se asentaban en la base de las expresiones misóginas tradicionales, usadas para relegar a las mujeres a una posición de inferioridad y subordinación. Especialmente, se refería a “los chistes burlones masculinos”, que tenían el propósito de hacer reír y burlarse a costa de las limitadas capacidades de libertad y expresión de las mujeres. Alude a que reírse de un ser al que no se le permite actuar libremente es tan absurdo como cruel.

Por este motivo, según la autora, cualquier hombre que se ría de los estereotipos femeninos, probablemente se burla de las mujeres escondido detrás de sus propias carencias. Por ejemplo, critica a teóricos como Rousseau o Fordyce, empeñados en mantener el orden patriarcal. También, los poetas que comparaban a las mujeres con los ángeles y veneraban la debilidad del sexo femenino, debían en su opinión, dejar de lado esas ideas para comenzar a considerar las desventajas de las mujeres.

En referencia a todo lo planteado anteriormente, tras el surgimiento de los primeros planteamientos feministas, se tiene constancia de los primeros indicios de humor creado por mujeres, en concreto, por mujeres feministas.

### **3.2 Conceptualización del humor subversivo contra el sexismo**

Tal y como hemos descrito anteriormente, al igual que en un principio la creación de humor fue negado a las mujeres en general, también dicha creación contó con reprimendas sociales hacia las mujeres feministas (Bilger, 2002). De hecho, incluso actualmente sigue existiendo la creencia estereotípica de que las mujeres feministas son incapaces de crear humor porque su sentido del humor es inexistente (Willett et al., 2012).

Sin embargo, lejos de estos planteamientos, como venimos diciendo, el humor ha tenido un papel importante en el feminismo (Sheppard, 1986). De hecho, tal y como defienden algunos/as autores/as (p.ej., Franzini, 1996; Ruiz-Gurillo y Linares-Bernabeu, 2020; Willett et al., 2012) algunas mujeres feministas se han hecho visibles a través de sus intervenciones cómicas. Ejemplos internacionales pueden ser Sarah Silverman, Margaret Cho, Wanda Sykes, Tina Fey o Mo'Nique. En el panorama español destacan algunas como Patricia Sornosa, Alicia Murillo, Irantzu Varela o Pamela Palenciano.

En este sentido, entre las múltiples estrategias para lograr sus objetivos, las feministas también han utilizado el humor. Concretamente, “*el humor subversivo contra el sexismo*” o “*humor feminista*” es usado como herramienta de confrontación para evidenciar, cuestionar y desafiar la ideología patriarcal y la discriminación de género con el propósito de redefinir las actitudes, roles y estereotipos de género y así cambiar el estado actual de subordinación de las mujeres (Case y Lippard, 2009; Franzini, 1996).

Shifman y Lemish (2011) definen el humor feminista a partir de tres características: (1) se opone y critica las desigualdades de género predominantes y los estereotipos asociados; (2) puede ser un medio de expresión de empoderamiento para promover la capacidad de las mujeres a fin de expresar libremente sus pensamientos críticos; y (3) requiere de medios de difusión adecuados para alcanzar sus objetivos (p. ej., internet).

Cuando este tipo de humor se pone en práctica se manifiestan varios mecanismos. Fishkin (2011) divide estos mecanismos en tres tipos: iluminación, suplantación, e inversión. La iluminación consiste en visibilizar las desventajas sociales de las mujeres para criticarlas y cuestionarlas, rompiendo con las creencias y mitos sexistas, e incitando la subversión de estas desventajas. Por otro lado, la suplantación es poner en voz propia los comentarios y discursos misóginos con un tono sarcástico y burlesco para mostrar desacuerdo, reírse de ellos y manifestar una necesidad de cambio. En último lugar, la inversión implica imaginar a los hombres en los roles, ropas y cuerpos de las mujeres, y a las mujeres en los cuerpos, ropas, y roles de los hombres, con el propósito de mostrar las (des)ventajas sociales del grupo (femenino) masculino.

En la presente tesis abordamos el humor subversivo contra el sexismo como una forma de visibilizar y plasmar de manera crítica las desventajas sociales de las mujeres con el propósito de alentar la toma de conciencia y motivar el cambio (Shifman y Lemish, 2011). Concretamente, pretendemos analizar si el humor subversivo contra el sexismo fomenta la crítica y el cuestionamiento del sexismo social, sin circunscribir los efectos esperados a una situación sexista concreta del plano interpersonal (p.ej., Gervais y Hillard, 2014; Good et al., 2012).

De acuerdo con estas ideas, el humor subversivo ha sido propuesto como una herramienta de confrontación no agresiva que podría alentar una mejor aceptación del mensaje de crítica subyacente (Saucier et al., 2018). Dado que el humor es un canal de comunicación que ayuda a expresar y transmitir un mensaje a nivel social (Case y Lippard,

2009; Ford, 2000), podría convertirse en una herramienta de sensibilización que permita abordar de manera crítica la discriminación sexista (Shifman y Lemish, 2011).

### **3.3 ¿Por qué estudiar empíricamente el humor subversivo contra el sexismo?**

A pesar de todo lo planteado anteriormente, existen muchas preguntas no resueltas en torno al humor feminista, ya que la mayoría de acercamientos al mismo han sido fundamentalmente teóricos. Las pocas aproximaciones empíricas (p.ej., Case y Lippard, 2009), se han basado en analizar el contenido del humor feminista con criterios de clasificación ambiguos, sin mostrar evidencia que indique que dicho humor constituye una entidad conceptual en sí misma y que es diferente respecto a otros tipos de humor.

Además, tampoco se han encontrado evidencias empíricas que corroboren que tenga la supuesta función de subvertir el sexismo para combatir la desigualdad de género. Como bien sabemos, el sexismo es uno de los principales factores que refuerza y sostiene esta desigualdad (Connor et al., 2017). Aunque han sido muchos los planteamientos teóricos en relación al sexismo, haremos mención a la teoría del sexismo ambivalente. En ella, Glick y Fiske (1996) propusieron que a menudo la hostilidad hacia las mujeres va acompañada de sentimientos subjetivos positivos hacia ellas. Por tanto, según esta teoría, el sexismo es un constructo multidimensional formado por dos conjuntos de actitudes: hostiles (prejuicios basados en la defensa del poder masculino y la supuesta inferioridad de las mujeres) y benevolentes (actitudes hacia las mujeres, que son sexistas porque defienden estereotipos y roles tradicionales sobre ellas, pero a su vez tienen un afecto positivo a través del paternalismo o el deseo de mantener relaciones íntimas).

La asociación existente entre el sexismo y la desigualdad de género se ha visto refrendada en numerosos trabajos. Por ejemplo, la ideología sexista se ha visto relacionada con tener una visión más negativa de las mujeres en las áreas profesionales que tradicionalmente han sido más masculinas (Sakalli-Ugurlu, 2010), una menor probabilidad de votar candidaturas políticas presididas por mujeres (Swim et al., 1995), mostrar oposición a las políticas públicas diseñadas para corregir la desigualdad de género (Sibley y Perry, 2010), incrementar la proclividad a difundir material sexual (p.ej., fotografías, vídeos) de mujeres sin su consentimiento (Pina et al., 2017), mostrar oposición a la lactancia materna en público (Huang et al., 2020) o tolerar el acoso sexual hacia ellas (Russell y Oswal, 2016).

Las evidencias que relacionan el sexismo con la desigualdad de género han sido encontradas no solo en estudios realizados en el mundo occidental con indicadores específicos, sino también en estudios transculturales que miden la desigualdad de género



basándose en índices aportados por la “*United Nations Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) - United Nations Development Program*”.

En este sentido, Glick et al. (2000) realizaron un estudio con una muestra de 15.000 participantes hombres y mujeres de 19 países distintos, mostrando que tanto el sexismo hostil como el benevolente correlacionaron en todas las naciones con los índices de desigualdad medidos (GEM, 1998). Asimismo, los hallazgos de Glick et al. (2000) han sido replicados por otros/as autores/as como Napier et al. (2010), que llevando a cabo una investigación longitudinal en 32 países, constataron que el sexismo ambivalente correlaciona con esta desigualdad (GEM, 2000).

En consonancia con los hallazgos anteriores, intentando dar un paso más en la relación entre sexismo y desigualdad de género, Brandt (2011) llevó a cabo otra investigación longitudinal con una muestra de 87.905 participantes hombres y mujeres de 57 países, en la que mostró que el sexismo predecía directamente el incremento de la desigualdad de género (GEM, 2005, 2006, 2007/2008, 2009).

La omnipresencia del sexismo a nivel global refuerza la desigualdad de género provocando importantes consecuencias negativas sobre las mujeres (Hamilton y DeHart, 2020). Por tanto, teniendo en cuenta todo esto, existe una clara necesidad de estudiar todas las posibles herramientas que puedan subvertir el sexismo causante de esta desigualdad. En línea con estas ideas, y en consonancia con los planteamientos teóricos que existen sobre el humor subversivo contra el sexismo (Case y Lippard, 2009; Shifman y Lemish, 2011), pretendemos comprobar si este tipo de humor puede convertirse en un instrumento para combatir el sexismo, motivando el cambio social para la consecución de la igualdad de género.

Sin embargo, antes de comprobar esto, es necesario prestar atención a cómo se aprecia y se interpreta este tipo de humor con el propósito de verificar que tiene una entidad empírica propia e independiente de otros tipos de humor.

### **3.4 Apreciación e interpretación del humor subversivo contra el sexismo**

Las respuestas que el humor puede generar han sido ampliamente estudiadas desde un punto de vista empírico (p.ej., Carretero-Dios, 2005; Carretero-Dios et al., 2010; Deckers y Ruch, 1992; Henkin y Fish, 1986; Love y Deckers, 1989). No obstante, en el intento de concretar las respuestas relativas a la apreciación del humor, Ruch y Hehl (2007) plantearon que dicha apreciación puede definirse en función de las respuestas de diversión y rechazo. De este modo, ambas dimensiones ortogonales indican cómo las reacciones al

humor pueden ser el resultado de una respuesta de valencia positiva (la diversión) y de otra negativa (el rechazo).

En los casos de contenidos humorísticos no neutrales (p.ej., humor sexual, humor negro), las respuestas de diversión y rechazo se encuentran negativamente relacionadas entre sí, aunque de forma moderada (entre  $r = -.25$  y  $r = -.40$ ) (Carretero-Dios et al., 2010). De esta forma, una mayor apreciación al humor se traduciría en la tendencia a una mayor diversión y un menor rechazo del material humorístico no neutral.

Algunos/as autores/as plantean que el humor subversivo contra el sexismo presenta algunas particularidades interpretativas. En concreto, Strain et al. (2016) afirman que, por un lado, el contenido del mensaje que transmite el humor subversivo contra el sexismo puede ser ambiguo, desencadenando múltiples interpretaciones que podrían causar un efecto opuesto al esperado (reforzar aún más las desigualdades). Por otro lado, dado que este tipo de humor tiene un mensaje literal (el chiste en sí mismo) y un mensaje implícito (el mensaje de subversión o confrontación), se requiere un procesamiento cognitivo adicional para evitar que el mensaje literal ("*el sexismo es divertido*") tenga más peso que el mensaje implícito ("*el sexismo es pernicioso y debe ser confrontado*"), evitando así reforzar estos prejuicios (Saucier et al., 2018).

Concretamente, la situación humorística en sí misma representa tanto el elemento sexista que se critica (p.ej., las tareas del hogar son esencialmente realizadas por mujeres) como la crítica satírica de ese elemento sexista (esto es, el componente subversivo del humor). Además, es importante puntualizar que la defensa del elemento sexista es llevada a cabo por los poderosos (los hombres) mientras que la crítica satírica la sostienen las desfavorecidas (las mujeres).

Por este motivo, existe la duda de si el humor subversivo contra el sexismo puede ser simplemente una variante del humor de denigración del hombre (Stillion y White, 1987; Strain et al., 2016). Al poner de manifiesto una situación de desigualdad de género y criticar la injusticia de dicha situación, en el humor subversivo podría percibirse que el objetivo último es burlarse de ellos y ridiculizarlos, constituyendo así un tipo de humor que los denigra.

Sin embargo, es importante señalar que en el humor de denigración del hombre, el objetivo de la burla son las características estereotípicamente atribuidas al género masculino (p.ej., los hombres solo piensan en sexo, los hombres se comportan como niños pequeños cuando enferman, etc.) que apuntan exclusivamente a denigrar a los hombres. Debido a ello, se plantea que este tipo de humor no hace nada por intentar subvertir o

cambiar la situación actual de las mujeres, sino que se basaría en reforzar los estereotipos y prejuicios hacia ellos, enfrentando así a los géneros (Bing, 2004).

Por el contrario, el humor subversivo contra el sexismo tiene como objetivo principal concienciar sobre las situaciones que oprimen a las mujeres. Se plantea como un tipo de humor inclusivo donde las desventajas de las mujeres se tratan de forma crítica para fomentar el cambio social (Shifman y Lemish, 2011). En cualquier caso, aunque teóricamente parezcan tipos diferentes de humor, nos surge la primera pregunta: debido al componente último donde se ridiculiza a los hombres a través de la confrontación, ¿podría ser percibido como un tipo de humor que denigra a los hombres en lugar de criticar al sexismo?

Por otro lado, y dado que el humor subversivo contra el sexismo se presenta como una sátira social y también posee un componente en el que se denigra a las mujeres, es posible que pudiera percibirse como despectivo hacia ellas en lugar de como una forma de criticar y cuestionar el sexismo. Por tanto, debido al elemento sexista que se expone antes de que la mujer en el material humorístico confronte las actitudes sexistas, ¿podría ser interpretado como un tipo de humor donde se pone en evidencia el sexismo contra las mujeres, y en última instancia se considere que el contenido las denigra, asemejándose así al humor sexista?

En definitiva, actualmente existe un amplio debate sobre si este tipo de humor puede en realidad subvertir el sexismo, o bien, actuar precisamente de forma contraria a la que pretende, es decir, reforzando y afianzando las actitudes sexistas que supuestamente confronta. De este modo, algunos estudios dirigidos a analizar la interpretación del humor subversivo (p.ej., Saucier et al., 2018) destacan que cuando el humor subversivo es interpretado como denigrante en lugar de como una forma de criticar y confrontar las actitudes que pretender subvertir, entonces no se cumpliría con la función de subvertir los prejuicios, sino que paradójicamente podría reforzarlos. No obstante, en estas diferentes posibilidades interpretativas han de jugar un papel muy relevante las actitudes de las personas que interpretan el material humorístico subversivo (Miller et al., 2019).

#### **4. Análisis psicosocial del humor subversivo contra el sexismo**

Las teorías del humor aplicadas al humor feminista permiten explicar los principios de actuación subyacentes de este tipo de humor, así como sus posibles efectos potenciales, como la liberación de energía ante las divertidas incongruencias subversivas (Streenten, 2020), la creación de una identidad colectiva (Yus, 2016) o la manifestación de superioridad ante las actitudes sexistas (Greenbaum, 1999).

Derivado de esta aplicación, el humor feminista podría actuar como una herramienta psicológica de resistencia e influencia con la que emancipar a las mujeres en las sociedades patriarcales (Bilger, 2002; Meisner y Mounsef, 2014), que en última instancia, se traduzca en la movilización social para subvertir la desigualdad de género (Willett, et al., 2012).

Sin embargo, es necesario puntualizar que para permitir que el humor feminista actúe como una forma de subvertir esta desigualdad, es necesario que sea interpretado en esa dirección, y esto dependerá de las características individuales de los/as perceptores/as (Miller et al., 2019).

#### **4.1 El papel de las actitudes individuales en la percepción del humor subversivo**

En otros tipos de humor, se ha analizado con profusión el papel que juegan las diferencias individuales con respecto a su forma de apreciarlo e interpretarlo (p.ej., Carretero-Dios et al., 2010; Heintz, 2020; Martin, 1998; Ruch, 2008). En lo que respecta al humor subversivo, debido a que presenta cierta complejidad en cuanto a su procesamiento cognitivo (Strain et al., 2016) y que por ello puede ser malinterpretado (Saucier et al., 2018), no cabría duda en pensar que en su percepción pueden influir variables relacionadas con los procesos cognitivos involucrados (Chan et al., 2016; Gignac et al., 2014) así como con los rasgos de personalidad de los/as perceptores/as (Galloway y Chirico, 2008; Ruch, 2001).

Sin embargo, estudios recientes señalan que las variables de tipo actitudinal o ideológico juegan un papel esencial en la interpretación del humor subversivo (Miller et al., 2019). En este sentido, otro de los objetivos de esta tesis doctoral ha sido el estudio de las diferencias individuales en la apreciación e interpretación del humor subversivo en función de estas variables concretas. Pero, ¿qué implicaciones podrían tener las actitudes de los/as receptores/as del humor en la apreciación e interpretación de este tipo de humor? Para dar respuesta a una pregunta similar pero en relación al humor anti-racista, Vidmar y Rokeach (1974) analizaron los prejuicios racistas y étnicos de quienes eran expuestos/as a una serie cómica de la época llamada “*All in the family*,” que subvertía estos prejuicios, encontrando que los/as individuos/as con mayores prejuicios racistas y étnicos fueron más propensos/as a malinterpretar la función esperada de este tipo de humor.

En este sentido, puede que las personas más prejuiciosas interpreten más el humor subversivo como una forma de denigrar, que como una forma de criticar la desigualdad y de intentar subvertir el *status quo*. Esto podría deberse a que este tipo de humor muestra el prejuicio presente en la sociedad como una sátira social, y por ende, puede resultar

ambiguo. De este modo, necesita un procesamiento cognitivo adicional donde se comprenda en su totalidad toda la información incluida en el chiste, reconociendo e identificando la realidad de la asimetría social y de los prejuicios que se critican (Strain et al., 2016).

Con el propósito de estudiar el humor subversivo anti-racista (vs. humor racista) en relación a las actitudes de los/as perceptores/as, Miller et al. (2019) midieron la apreciación (diversión y rechazo) y la interpretación que los/as participantes realizaban de unos chistes cuyo objetivo era denigrar a las personas negras (vs. desafiar la asimetría social entre las personas negras y blancas). En concreto, los/as participantes tenían que considerar si los chistes eran racistas contra las personas negras, racistas contra las blancas o si eran subversivos anti-racistas. Los/as autores/as mostraron que los participantes con mayores actitudes igualitarias (específicamente, con mayores tendencias a detectar las expresiones de prejuicio así como con mayor motivación para suprimirlas) interpretaron más negativamente el humor racista (es decir, les resultaba menos divertido y más racista contra las personas negras) mientras que interpretaban más positivamente el humor subversivo anti-racista (es decir, les generaba más diversión y lo percibían como más anti-racista). De manera opuesta, los/as participantes con mayores tendencias prejuiciosas (específicamente, quienes obtuvieron mayores puntuaciones en racismo moderno) percibieron el humor racista de forma más positiva y el humor subversivo anti-racista más negativamente.

En consonancia con los hallazgos encontrados en torno al humor subversivo racial, sería esperable que el grado de sexismo o de adhesión de los/as perceptores/as a ideologías igualitarias (p.ej., feminismo) jugase un papel relevante en la apreciación e interpretación del humor subversivo contra el sexismo. Al ser la crítica, el cuestionamiento y la subversión del sexismo los principales objetivos de este tipo de humor, algunos estudios plantean que tener una mayor identidad feminista se asociaría con una mayor apreciación del humor subversivo contra el sexismo (es decir, estas personas se divierten más con él y les genera menos rechazo) (Gallivan, 1992; Stillion y White, 1987).

Por otro lado, en cuanto a su interpretación, podría ocurrir que el humor feminista provoque efectos contrapuestos. Primero, podría actuar como una herramienta adecuada para que las personas no sexistas reafirmen sus creencias igualitarias (p.ej., serían quienes en mayor medida interpretarían el humor subversivo como forma de criticar y cuestionar el sexismo). Sin embargo, como Saucier et al. (2018) explican, podría alternativamente

fortalecer las actitudes sexistas de las personas más prejuiciosas (p.ej., sería el caso de quienes focalizan su atención en la ridiculización del hombre).

En conclusión, parece clara la necesidad de estudiar los efectos de la exposición a este tipo de humor, considerando el papel de las actitudes de los/as perceptores/as en su valoración. Si conceptualizamos la lucha contra el sexismo en las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, ¿es posible que ser expuesto/a al humor subversivo contra el sexismo pueda motivar incluso este tipo de acciones?

## **4.2 Humor subversivo como motivador de las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género**

En el mundo occidental, los avances en materia de igualdad de género han sido posibles gracias sobre todo a que las feministas se han movilizadado contra el sexismo y los bastiones del patriarcado (Becker y Wright, 2011). En este sentido, entre las distintas formas de movilización, se han destacado las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género (Guizzo et al., 2017).

Van Zomeren et al. (2008) plantearon que las acciones colectivas pueden ser definidas como cualquier comportamiento que se lleva a cabo de forma voluntaria, ya sea pública y grupalmente (p.ej., asistir a una manifestación contra una situación social injusta) o privada e individualmente (p.ej., firmar una petición online en defensa de un grupo o colectivo que sufre algún tipo de discriminación), con el objetivo de conseguir romper con las desigualdades que mantienen en desventaja a un grupo oprimido.

Así, teniendo como referencia las acciones colectivas en general, es posible definir las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género como el conjunto de todos aquellos comportamientos voluntarios y coordinados que tienen como propósito cambiar la opresión que padecen las mujeres y la consecución de conseguir la igualdad y la justicia social entre mujeres y hombres (p.ej., hacer una huelga para denunciar la brecha salarial de género) (Radke et al., 2016).

En este sentido, van Zomeren et al. (2008) han planteado que existen diferentes formas posibles de medir las acciones colectivas. Una de las formas más efectivas de hacerlo ha sido evaluar la proclividad general de los/as participantes a realizar acciones colectivas (p.ej., estar de acuerdo en participar en una manifestación por la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres). No obstante, y más próximo a lo que sería el comportamiento real, otra estrategia ha sido evaluar las intenciones conductuales de los/as participantes, es decir, determinar su intención de participar en una acción específica asociada a una situación

particular de discriminación (p.ej., firmar una petición para que en las escuelas enseñen valores de igualdad a niños y niñas).

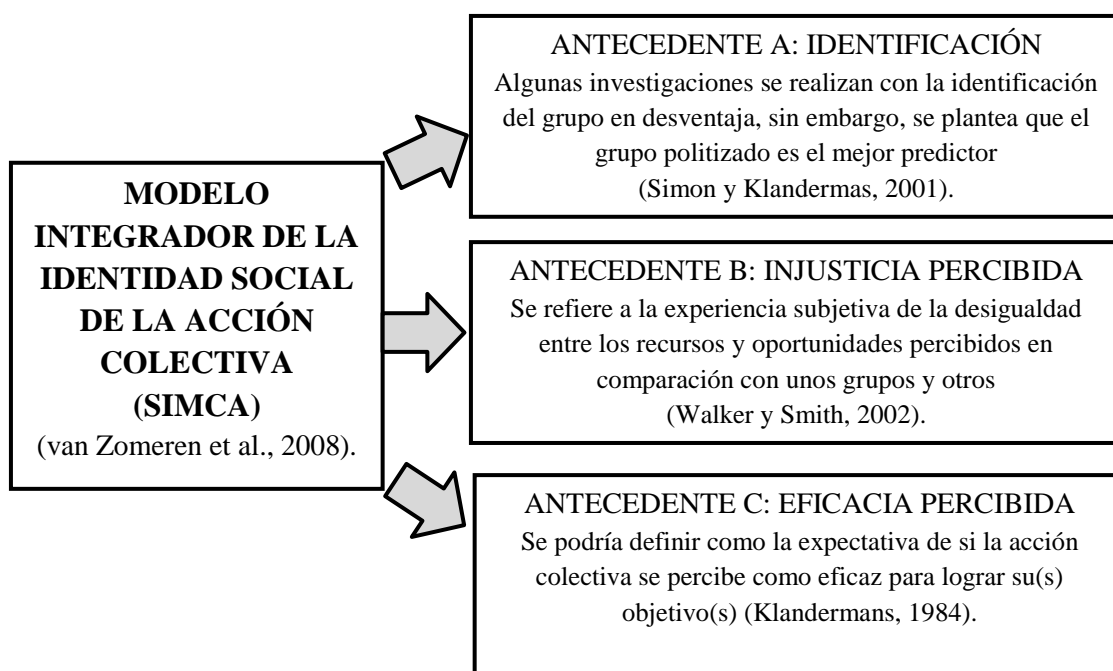
A la hora de identificar los factores que intervienen en la realización de las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, la investigación se ha centrado en estudiar variables tanto externas como internas asociadas con la vida de las mujeres participantes (p.ej., Liss et al., 2004). No obstante, recientemente, debido a los avances producidos en términos de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres (Sen, 2019), en este campo también se está comenzando a realizar investigaciones con hombres (p.ej., Guizzo et al., 2017; Wiley et al., 2013).

En el estudio de todos estos factores, por ejemplo, Nelson et al. (2008) encontraron que adherirse a ideologías igualitarias (en concreto, feministas) aumentaba la identidad feminista y, en consecuencia, las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género (p.ej., participar en una manifestación o movimiento por los derechos de las mujeres, o contribuir a una recaudación de fondos para asociaciones de mujeres). Generalmente, en la literatura centrada en estudiar la predicción de las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género se destaca que la identidad feminista ha sido quizás el factor que más atención ha recibido tanto de forma teórica (Radke et al., 2016) como empírica (Liss et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2008; Radke et al., 2018; Weis et al., 2018).

Concretamente, en la presente tesis nos centramos en este factor, es decir, en la identidad feminista. Sin embargo, con el objetivo de obtener una visión más amplia del estudio empírico centrado en analizar los antecedentes que predicen las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, consideramos como referencia obligada el Modelo Integrador de la Identidad Social de la Acción Colectiva (SIMCA) propuesto por van Zomeren et al., (2008). Según este modelo, las acciones colectivas son el resultado de tres antecedentes: (a) injusticia percibida, (b) eficacia percibida y (c) identidad. El esquema del modelo se presenta en la figura 2.

**Figura 2**

*Modelo Integrador de la Identidad Social de la Acción Colectiva (SIMCA) (van Zomeren et al., 2008).*



En este sentido, desde el modelo SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008), Radke et al. (2016) identifican los antecedentes que promueven y las barreras que imposibilitan las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género. En concreto, Radke et al. (2016) plantean que las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género serían el resultado de tres antecedentes que favorecen su participación: (a) identificarse con las feministas, (b) percibir la injusticia del sexismo y responder a ésta emocionalmente, y (c) percibir la eficacia de la acción colectiva para lograr la igualdad de género.

Teniendo en cuenta todas estas ideas, si el humor subversivo contra el sexismo se centra en cuestionar las actitudes sexistas, estereotipos y roles de género que se originan en el sistema patriarcal, ¿cuál podría ser su papel a la hora de combatir el sexismo a través de la acción colectiva por la igualdad de género? En este sentido, es necesario esclarecer de qué forma el humor subversivo contra el sexismo podría funcionar como un antecedente que beneficie y motive la realización de este tipo de acciones colectivas.



Como hemos abordado anteriormente, a la hora de estudiar el humor como método para influir y motivar el comportamiento de las personas, el humor ha mostrado tener efectos positivos en la consecución de algunos objetivos sociales específicos, como por ejemplo, motivar la conducta de compra de los/as consumidores/as (Dong-Hun, 2009) o incentivar la participación política (Baumgartner y Lockerbie, 2018; Lee y Kwak, 2014). No obstante, ninguno de estos estudios se centró específicamente en el potencial efecto facilitador del humor subversivo contra el sexismo en la participación en acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, que como venimos diciendo, incluye actuaciones tanto sociales como políticas a favor de las mujeres (Becker y Wright, 2011).

Concretamente y en línea con las ideas expuestas, el movimiento feminista ha usado de forma aplicada el humor para visibilizar la discriminación sexista y la desigualdad de género con el propósito de subvertir las desigualdades entre hombres y mujeres (Willett et al., 2012). Por ejemplo, en sus reivindicaciones, a finales de los años sesenta y principios de los setenta, las feministas que luchaban en Estados Unidos contra la cosificación sexual de la mujer, –entre otras causas–, se enfrentaron a la figura de “*la conejita playboy*”. Si los hombres habían creado una figura seria para obtener las atenciones masculinas, el movimiento feminista lo ridiculizaría y se burlaría de ella con humor mediante la suya propia: “*the male chauvinist pig*”. El anterior es un claro ejemplo de cómo la capacidad de motivar la movilización en los movimientos feministas algunas veces ha sido reforzada por el contexto lúdico del humor feminista (Willett et al., 2012).

Con el objetivo de analizar las formas en las que el humor feminista podría motivar los antecedentes de las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, podemos recurrir al Modelo de Probabilidad de Elaboración (Petty y Cacioppo, 1986) que hemos explicado anteriormente. En este sentido, dado que nos centramos en el antecedente de la identificación feminista (de los tres planteados a partir del modelo de van Zomeren et al. 2008), en las personas con mayor identidad feminista se activaría la ruta central, de tal forma que estas personas se divertirían más con este tipo de humor (Gallivan, 1992; Stillion y White, 1987), se centrarían más en el contenido, interpretarían en mayor medida el mensaje global en la dirección de subvertir el sexismo, y a través de su exposición podrían reafirmar las creencias y argumentos sólidos que tienen sobre el feminismo, así como seguir implicándose en las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género.

No obstante, a través de la ruta periférica del modelo, en aquellas personas que tienen una identidad feminista menor, es posible que el mensaje de crítica contra el sexismo de una forma lúdica, divertida y humorística, riéndose de lo absurdo que resulta el

sexismo, pueda ofrecer una visión más positiva de las feministas, impulsando mayor simpatía, empatía, solidaridad y conexión con los mensajes de confrontación que se transmiten, sin sentir la obligación de refutar la crítica del contenido contra el sexismo (Strain et al., 2016). En definitiva, al igual que podría generar una mejor aceptación del mensaje de crítica con una visión más positiva, este tipo de humor también podría facilitar la concienciación social sobre la problemática del sexismo en estas personas, incrementando su percepción de injusticia y por tanto, motivando su implicación en acciones que contrarresten la desigualdad y discriminación de género.

Al abordar la identificación con las feministas como antecedente de las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, es necesario destacar que actualmente, identificarse con ellas todavía sigue siendo un estigma social. Aunque la forma en que se percibe a las feministas puede variar (Twenge y Zucker, 1999), a menudo han sido percibidas con muchos estereotipos negativos, como ser mujeres feas, agresivas o que odian a los hombres (Berryman-Fink, & Verderber, 1985). Esto lleva a que las mujeres se sientan más reacias a identificarse a sí mismas como feministas porque, las mujeres feministas son evaluadas de manera más negativa que las mujeres en general (Twenge y Zucker, 1999). En una línea similar, los hombres que se asocian con la etiqueta feminista tienden a ser cuestionados sobre su rol masculino y su orientación sexual (Wiley et al., 2013).

Todos estos estigmas sociales provocan consecuentemente que se disminuya la identificación con las feministas. Sin embargo, identificarse menos con las feministas tendría un impacto negativo a la hora de participar en las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género (Radke et al., 2016). En este sentido, el humor subversivo contra el sexismo podría replantear los estereotipos negativos que se les atribuyen a las feministas creando un vínculo a través del humor que motive desafiar el *status quo*. Además, este vínculo que se ve reforzado con las feministas podría derivar de sentir menos amenaza por la crítica manifestada a través del humor, ya que se presenta en un contexto de diversión lúdica donde se motiva a los receptores a reírse y sentir que se pueden burlar de las situaciones sexistas absurdas.

De hecho, esta mayor aceptación del humor subversivo ayudaría a combatir las concepciones post-feministas que se han instaurado en el mundo occidental (Gill, 2017), según las cuales la igualdad de género ya está conseguida. De estas creencias se extrae la conclusión errónea de que las acciones colectivas en favor de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres ya no son necesarias en occidente (MacCarteney, 2018). Sin embargo, creer que la desigualdad de género ya no es un problema actual, podría tener numerosas consecuencias

negativas. Por ejemplo, podría transmitir a las mujeres la idea de que sus experiencias de desventaja u opresión social se deben a situaciones aisladas, que nada tienen que ver con factores sociales y culturales relacionados con el sexismo.

De este modo, cuestionando, criticando y burlándose de las ideas post-feministas, el humor feminista permitiría visibilizar las situaciones sexistas cotidianas de las mujeres como consecuencia de la dominación masculina y las desventajas sociales que sufren ellas por cuestión de género (Connor et al., 2017; Swim et al., 2001), y no como producto del mero azar. Al visibilizar y plantear que el sexismo es una problemática que perdura en nuestros días, se da voz a la idea de que es necesario seguir realizando acciones que permitan luchar y trabajar contra el sexismo para combatirlo y erradicarlo.

## 5. Conclusiones

En el capítulo 1, en primer lugar, hemos intentado ofrecer una visión global del humor recurriendo a las principales teorías que han tenido mayor implicación en su estudio. A continuación, entendiéndolo como fenómeno social (Fine, 1983; Ziv, 2010), aludimos al enfoque funcionalista del humor (Kuipers, 2008) para conceptualizarlo como instrumento que permite mantener el orden social, ya sea mediante la liberación de las tensiones que se puedan generar en las interacciones (Apte, 1985; Sykes, 1966), o a través del control social que permita mantener la cohesión del grupo (Billig, 2005).

Seguidamente, destacamos que el humor también puede ser usado como forma de alterar el orden social. Para explicarlo, pasamos al enfoque del conflicto (Kuipers, 2008), desde donde el humor puede funcionar como una forma de reforzar las asimetrías y jerarquías sociales (Speier, 1998) o por el contrario, para romper con el *status quo* imperante y subvertir las desigualdades (Shifman et al., 2007).

En este último sentido, nos focalizamos en el “*humor subversivo contra el sexismo*” o “*humor feminista*”. Primero, planteamos las ideas principales de sus orígenes. Segundo, lo conceptualizamos como un tipo de humor generalmente creado y difundido por mujeres, y que se usa como una forma de visibilizar y confrontar los estereotipos, roles de género y cuestiones sexistas que mantienen a las mujeres en desventaja social (Case & Lippard, 2009). A raíz de esto destacamos la necesidad de estudiar este tipo de humor ante la omnipresencia del sexismo (Glick et al., 2000) y de sus consecuencias negativas (Huang et al., 2020; Pina et al., 2017; Russell y Oswald, 2016). Por último, destacamos las implicaciones con respecto a sus particularidades interpretativas (Strain et al., 2016).

Abordados todos estos aspectos, analizamos el humor subversivo contra el sexismo desde una perspectiva psicosocial. Concretamente, este análisis se realiza a través

de dos vías. En primer lugar, se analizan las diferencias actitudinales en su percepción, donde se discuten las consecuencias de percibirlo como forma de criticar el sexismo o de denigrar, en función del sexismo hostil y de la identidad feminista. En segundo lugar, se indaga en el papel de este tipo de humor en la subversión del sexismo a través de las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género (Radke et al., 2016). Además, para explicar los factores que predicen la realización de estas acciones, se explica el Modelo SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008) y se hace hincapié en el antecedente de la identificación feminista.

Tras tener en cuenta estas ideas, volvemos a remarcar la escasa existencia de estudios empíricos que avalen los planteamientos teóricos del humor feminista. Por este motivo, primero es necesario comprobar que constituye un tipo de humor independiente con respecto a otros (p.ej., humor neutral, humor sexista y de denigración del hombre), luego es preciso examinar la influencia de las actitudes a la hora de apreciarlo e interpretarlo y por último, abordado todo esto, ya se podrían analizar sus efectos de exposición sobre las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género.

Para verificar que es diferente con respecto a otros tipos de humor, se seguirán los pasos estandarizados que se suelen seguir a la hora de estudiar empíricamente conglomerados de items (p.ej., Carretero-Dios y Pérez, 2005; Carretero-Dios et al., 2010): (a) justificación teórica, (b) delimitación conceptual, (c) construcción y evaluación cualitativa de items, (d) análisis de la estructura interna de los items, (e) estimación de fiabilidad, y (f) evidencias de validez externa.

**Capítulo 2.  
Objetivos e hipótesis  
de investigación**

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**Chapter 2.  
Aims and hypotheses  
of research**



El *primer objetivo* de la presente tesis doctoral consistió en analizar la validez de contenido y la validez de constructo del humor subversivo contra el sexismo, en contraste con el humor de denigración del hombre y el humor neutral. Hasta ahora, el humor feminista se había medido basándose en la selección de chistes y viñetas siguiendo criterios de clasificación ambiguos, y sin seguir los pasos necesarios para constatar que es un tipo de humor independiente con respecto a otros (p.ej., análisis de su estructura interna a través de análisis factoriales). Especialmente, existe la duda de si este tipo de humor podría ser considerado como un tipo de humor de denigración del hombre por su componente de ridiculización hacia el grupo masculino (Case y Lippard, 2009).

Para cubrir este objetivo, seleccionamos una batería de estímulos humorísticos (chistes y viñetas humorísticas) con el propósito de medir las respuestas de apreciación (diversión y rechazo) (Ruch y Hehl, 2007) del humor subversivo contra el sexismo, usando otras dos categorías con las que someterlo a contraste (humor de denigración del hombre y humor neutral). En el estudio 1, se analizó la validez de contenido de la batería humorística a través de un juicio de expertos en género y en humor de la Universidad de Granada. Seguidamente, con el propósito de analizar la validez de constructo de estos estímulos humorísticos, se realizaron los estudios 2 y 3.

En el estudio 2 se ejecutaron estrategias exploratorias (análisis factorial exploratorio) para corroborar la entidad empírica independiente del humor subversivo contra el sexismo, en comparación con el humor de denigración del hombre y el humor neutral. En el estudio 3, para replicar la independencia empírica hallada en el segundo estudio, se recurrió a estrategias confirmatorias (análisis factorial confirmatorio) y para dar soporte y validez a esta independencia, se ofrecieron las primeras evidencias de la relación que las respuestas de apreciación (diversión y rechazo) (Ruch y Hehl, 2007) del humor subversivo mantienen con algunas variables de corte actitudinal, como la identidad feminista (Leach et al., 2008) y la hostilidad hacia los hombres (Glick y Fiske, 1999) así como con variables relacionadas con la acción y la movilización del comportamiento (es decir, acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género) (Liss et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2008).

En este sentido, teniendo en cuenta que algunos estudios indican que quienes muestran mayor identidad feminista se divierten más con el humor feminista (Gallivan, 1992; Stillion y White, 1987), esperábamos encontrar correlaciones positivas entre la apreciación de este tipo de humor y la identidad feminista (**Hipótesis 1**). Sin embargo, dado que el humor de denigración del hombre se basa en resaltar los estereotipos

masculinos físicos, psicológicos y sociales, sería esperable encontrar una relación positiva entre tener mayores actitudes hostiles hacia ellos (Glick y Fiske, 1999) y una mayor apreciación del humor de denigración del hombre (**Hipótesis 2**). En tercer lugar, con respecto al estudio de la relación entre humor subversivo y aspectos relacionados con la acción y la movilización (Mazur, 2015), hipotetizamos que cuanto mayor fuese la apreciación al humor subversivo contra el sexismo, mayor sería la proclividad a participar en acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género (**Hipótesis 3**). Asimismo, esperábamos que esta asociación estuviese moderada por la identidad feminista de los/as participantes (**Hipótesis 4**).

El *segundo objetivo* fue analizar la validez de constructo del humor subversivo contra el sexismo en contraste con el humor sexista. Para alcanzar este objetivo, exploramos empíricamente la independencia de los constructos psicológicos subyacentes de ambos tipos de humor (humor subversivo vs. humor sexista) en referencia a su apreciación (diversión y rechazo) (Ruch y Hehl, 2007) e interpretación (en qué medida cada tipo de humor es percibido como denigratorio hacia los hombres, como denigratorio hacia las mujeres o como una crítica al sexismo). Además, para dar soporte a la diferenciación de ambos tipos de humor, exploramos los patrones de relación entre la apreciación e interpretación de ambos tipos de humor y ciertas variables actitudinales: identidad feminista (Weis et al., 2018) y sexismo hostil (Glick y Fiske, 1996).

Dado que las personas con una mayor identidad feminista tienden a percibir en mayor medida las expresiones de prejuicio contra las mujeres (Leaper y Arias, 2011), era esperable que fuesen más sensibles a la discriminación de las mujeres que se expone en el humor subversivo. Por lo tanto, era más probable que estas personas detectasen en mayor medida las críticas al sexismo incluidas en esta categoría de humor, y por lo tanto, apoyen más las creencias feministas destinadas a subvertir el sexismo (Redford et al., 2018). Esto, a su vez, es lo que probablemente causaría que estas personas perciban la confrontación como un medio para combatir el sexismo y lograr la igualdad de género y no como un arma para denigrar a los hombres.

En el estudio 4, esperábamos que los constructos psicológicos relativos a la apreciación (diversión y rechazo) y a la interpretación (denigración del hombre, denigración de la mujer y crítica del sexismo) de cada tipo de humor (humor subversivo vs. humor sexista) se agrupasen en dos factores diferentes (**Hipótesis 1**). Con respecto a la apreciación, si el objetivo último del humor subversivo es criticar el sexismo al cuestionarlo, era esperable que una mayor identidad feminista se asociase con una mayor



apreciación del humor subversivo (Gallivan, 1992; Stillion y White, 1987). Por el contrario, esperábamos que las actitudes sexistas más hostiles estuviesen asociadas con una menor apreciación de este tipo de humor (**Hipótesis 2.1**).

En lo que respecta a la interpretación, esperábamos encontrar una relación positiva entre la identidad feminista y el grado en que los/as participantes consideran que el humor denigra a las mujeres y critica el sexismo y una relación negativa entre la identidad feminista y la percepción de que este tipo de humor denigra a los hombres (**Hipótesis 2.2**). En relación con el sexismo hostil, era esperable lo contrario, es decir, que las personas con mayor sexismo hostil interiorizado, fuesen menos sensibles al componente de crítica del sexismo presente en el humor feminista y percibiesen una mayor denigración de los hombres en este tipo de humor. No esperábamos encontrar ninguna relación entre sexismo hostil y la pregunta sobre si el humor subversivo denigra a las mujeres.

En el estudio 5, dando un paso más allá, analizamos desde un diseño entre-grupos los efectos de ser expuesto al humor subversivo contra el sexismo (vs. humor sexista) tanto sobre la apreciación como sobre la interpretación del mismo, y estudiar si tales efectos podrían estar moderados por la identidad feminista y el sexismo hostil. En este sentido, hipotetizamos efectos principales y efectos de interacción. En cuanto a los efectos principales del tipo de humor (humor subversivo vs. humor sexista) (**Hipótesis 1**), esperábamos que el humor subversivo se considerase como más divertido y con menor rechazo, y se percibiese como menos denigrante hacia las mujeres y más hacia los hombres, y con mayor crítica al sexismo. Con respecto a los efectos de interacción (**Hipótesis 2**), esperábamos encontrar patrones de interacción opuestos entre el tipo de humor (humor subversivo vs. humor sexista) y las variables actitudinales (identidad feminista y sexismo hostil).

Los/as participantes expuestos al humor subversivo (vs. humor sexista) con una identidad feminista mayor (o menor sexismo hostil) percibirían mayor diversión, menor rechazo, mayor crítica al sexismo y menor denigración del hombre. No se esperaba observar estos efectos moderadores en las respuestas con respecto a la denigración de la mujer (**Hipótesis 2.1**). Por otro lado, los/as participantes expuestos al humor sexista (vs. humor subversivo) con una mayor identidad feminista (o menor sexismo hostil) reportarían menos diversión, mayor rechazo y mayor denigración de la mujer. Sin embargo, para estos/as participantes no esperábamos encontrar efectos significativos en cuanto a la crítica al sexismo y a la denigración del hombre en el humor sexista (**Hipótesis 2.2**).

Por último, el *tercer objetivo* de la tesis doctoral consistió en examinar el papel del humor subversivo contra el sexismo como posible antecedente de las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, ampliando con un enfoque experimental los hallazgos correlaciones del estudio 3. Con esto, podríamos dar respuesta empírica a los planteamientos teóricos que sugieren que el humor subversivo puede ser considerado como una herramienta para motivar la movilización social (Hartz, 2007; Tejerina y Perugorría, 2017). Así, analizamos los efectos de ser expuesto/a al humor subversivo contra el sexismo sobre (a) la proclividad de los participantes a la acción colectiva (van Zomeren et al., 2004) y (b) sus intenciones conductuales (Guizzo et al., 2017). Comparamos sus efectos con una condición de humor neutral para probar si fueron exclusivos del humor subversivo contra el sexismo o aplicable al humor de manera más amplia. También analizamos si estos efectos se encontraban moderados por la identidad feminista (Weis et al., 2018).

En el estudio 6, esperábamos encontrar una mayor proclividad a las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género en los/as participantes expuestos/as al humor subversivo contra el sexismo, en comparación con el humor neutral (**Hipótesis 1**). Asimismo, esperábamos que la identidad feminista se relacionase positivamente con la proclividad a participar en las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género (**Hipótesis 2**). Además, se esperaba que la identidad feminista actuase como moderadora de la relación entre este tipo de humor y la proclividad a las acciones colectivas (**Hipótesis 3**).

En el estudio 7, se exploró si la exposición al humor subversivo contra el sexismo (vs. humor neutral) incrementaba no solo la proclividad a las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, sino también las intenciones conductuales. En primera instancia, pretendimos replicar los hallazgos del estudio previo, esperando encontrar una mayor proclividad a las acciones colectivas en los/as participantes expuestos/as al humor subversivo (vs. humor neutral) (**Hipótesis 1**). Además, esperábamos una relación positiva entre la identidad feminista y dicha proclividad (**Hipótesis 2**), y que la identidad feminista moderase el efecto del tipo de humor sobre esta proclividad (**Hipótesis 3**).

Por otro lado, intentamos dar un paso más considerando las intenciones conductuales. Específicamente esperábamos que ser expuesto/a al humor subversivo contra el sexismo (vs. humor neutral) incrementase las intenciones conductuales (**Hipótesis 4**), que la identidad feminista se relacionase positivamente con estas intenciones (**Hipótesis 5**), y que la identidad feminista moderase los efectos del tipo de humor sobre las intenciones conductuales (**Hipótesis 6**).

De este modo, planteados los principales tres objetivos de la presente tesis con sus respectivas hipótesis, en el siguiente capítulo presentaremos los distintos estudios empíricos.



# **Capítulo 3.**

## **Estudios empíricos**

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# **Chapter 3.**

## **Empirical studies**



**Subversive humor against sexism: Conceptualization and first evidence  
on its empirical nature**

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**ARTICLE PUBLISHED AS:**

Riquelme A. R., Carretero-Dios, H., Megías, J. L., & Romero-Sánchez, M. (2019). Subversive humor against sexism: Conceptualization and first evidence on its empirical nature. *Current Psychology*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00331-9>

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## Subversive humor against sexism: Conceptualization and first evidence on its empirical nature

### Abstract

Through its many faces, humor may perpetuate inequalities and intergroup differences (*disparagement humor*) or, on the contrary, it may question such inequalities and differences and try to subvert hierarchies and social asymmetries (*subversive humor*). This research focuses on the kind of subversive humor that questions and confronts sexist ideology and behaviors and has come to be called subversive humor against sexism or feminist humor. Despite repeated allusions to the subversive function of this type of humor, no empirical evidence shows that subversive humor against sexism constitutes an empirical entity independent from other types of humor. After conceptually defining subversive humor against sexism, in Study 1, five experts analyzed the content validity of a pool of subversive humorous stimuli compared to stimuli from other humor categories (i.e., man disparagement humor and neutral humor). In Study 2 ( $n = 203$ ), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) empirically isolated three related factors identified as subversive humor against sexism, man disparagement humor and neutral humor. Study 3 ( $n = 229$ ) replicated these results through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and provided evidence on the specific relationships among this type of humor, feminist identity and collective actions for gender equality.

**Keywords:** Subversive humor against sexism, Feminist humor, Feminist Identity, Collective actions for gender equality, Sexism.

In addition to fun and entertainment, humor has multiple functions. Although it may seem comical in form, it serves a weighty purpose (Driessen, 1999). In fact, a traditional study objective in the humor research has been to determine these functions at the individual, interpersonal, and social levels. The research results have shown numerous positive aspects associated with humor (e.g., Booth-Butterfield et al., 2014; Fritz et al., 2017; Horn et al., 2018; Kuiper, 2012). However, humor also has a “dark” side (Kirsh & Kuiper, 2003). In this context, so-called *disparagement humor*, understood as “*a form of humor that refers to remarks that (are intended to) elicit amusement through the denigration, derogation, or belittlement of a given target*” (Ferguson & Ford, 2008, p. 283), holds special relevance.

The empirical research on disparagement humor has shown that it is a tool that undermines, marginalizes, discriminates and/or dehumanizes certain social groups, reinforcing the status quo in the relationships established between them and maintaining social inequalities (Hodson & MacInnis, 2016). However, it is worth examining whether humor could also be used in the opposite direction, that is, to question, weaken, and confront behaviors, values, or social norms that promote and maintain oppression and inequality between social groups or at the interpersonal level (Kramer, 2015). In fact, disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, and literature have attributed humor with the ability to criticize and confront situations of abuse and injustice (e.g., Kramer, 2013). In this respect, several studies focus on how humor can be used to challenge existing power relations, while subverting the status quo, from a theoretical point of view. This type of humor is so-called “*subversive humor*” (Holmes & Marra, 2002; Strain et al., 2016), and it is used as a social awareness instrument to evince inequality and try to subvert it (Strain et al., 2016).

The present research is based on views that define humor as tool to confront sexism (i.e., subversive humor against sexism). It focuses on humorous material itself and not on subversive humor understood as a variable of individual differences. It is a broader line of research ultimately motivated by the lack of empirical data on this type of humor and aimed at studying the psychosocial correlates and consequences of subversive humor against sexism, while at the same time finding empirical evidence about this humor as an independent category from other types of humor, specifically of man disparagement humor. Based on a conceptualization of this type of humor, this first empirical analysis is presented.

### **Humor to maintain and strengthen inequality**

Disparagement humor seeks to highlight a physical, psychological, or social feature stereotypically linked to an individual or collective to ridicule and make him, her, or it an object of derision. There are multiple characteristics that, through humor, may be causes of denigration, including the following: physical appearance (Baumeister & Carels, 2014), political preferences (Braun & Preiser, 2013), race (Weaver, 2010), or sex (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017). Although the negative consequences of disparagement humor have usually been undervalued, in recent years, an extensive body of knowledge that questions this conclusion has emerged. Such growth was favored by the development of the prejudiced norm theory (Ford & Ferguson, 2004), whose main objective is to explain and predict the consequences of disparagement humor.

This theory asserts that disparagement humor targeting groups or individuals affects how the content of the message is perceived and interpreted, thereby trivializing it. According to this theory, exposure to disparagement humor creates a social norm of tolerance that enables prejudiced people to feel comfortable expressing prejudice towards a group, simultaneously reducing social disapproval and rejection and increasing the acceptance of the derogatory information included in the joke. In this way, this norm would imply that the joke teller is not necessarily prejudiced towards the denigrated group because it is “*just a joke*”.

When studying the consequences of disparagement humor from an empirical point of view, maybe the type of humor that has received the most attention is that which focuses on the denigration of women (i.e., sexist humor). The results highlight that this type of humor is not harmless, and as predicted by the prejudiced norm theory (Ford & Ferguson, 2004), it is associated with significant negative consequences. For example, Ford et al. (2013) showed that exposure to sexist humor enables the subsequent justification of the status quo in relation to gender equality and social devaluation in women, especially in the case of sexist men. Furthermore, it has been observed that this type of humor fosters greater tolerance to sexist events (Ford 2000; Ford et al., 2001), generates greater willingness to discriminate against women (Ford et al., 2008), and encourages sexually violent behaviors, mainly by sexist men (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2010; Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017).

Overall, the prejudiced norm theory (Ford & Ferguson, 2004) has obtained significant empirical support. It can be concluded that sexist humor disseminates, maintains, and reinforces gender inequality and discrimination, mainly in those people who

are highly biased against women. However, these results, which highlight the "dark side" of humor, are useful in their reflection of its scope. In the same way in which such humor can reinforce gender inequality, it could also question it and raise awareness of the factors that in some way or another promote inequality and gender discrimination.

### **Subversive humor against sexism**

In line with feminist tenets on the empowerment of women as a group (Case & Lippard, 2009), we could define subversive humor against sexism as a confrontation tool used by women to evince, question, and challenge patriarchal ideology and gender discrimination. Two essential aspects should be highlighted in this definition: 1) it is humor related to women, 2) and it is used as a strategy to confront sexism.

#### ***Women-related humor***

If subversive humor against sexism is seen as an empowering tool for women, it can focus on questioning the status quo derived from the gender roles, attitudes, and stereotypes established by the patriarchy, encouraging collective actions that help subverting unequal relations. For this to happen and to be effective, humor by the oppressed group (women) should challenge oppression using the words and stereotypes used by the powerful group against them (Sorensen, 2008).

Therefore, women have a leading role in the production and dissemination of subversive humor. Historically, feminist women have been portrayed as unable to generate humor; however, humor has played a key role in the feminist movement (Strain et al., 2016; Willet et al., 2012), by redefining gender attitudes, roles, and stereotypes. Moreover it constitutes a tool used to change the current state of women's subordination and empower them (Case & Lippard, 2009), highlighting the irrationality of gender stereotypes and inequality (Gallivan, 1992). In short, feminism advocates for the use of subversive humor against sexism as a way to raise awareness and to challenge male domination and patriarchy (Case & Lippard, 2009; Franzini, 1996). Thus, humor functions as a response to the disadvantageous situation faced by women at a cultural level and as an attempt to change such a situation (Rappoport, 2005).

#### ***A tool for situational and social confrontation***

The literature focused on the analysis of discrimination confrontation is extensive (e.g., Becker et al., 2015). Previous results show that the use of different confrontation strategies is associated with the reduction of prejudiced expressions (e.g., Chaney & Sanchez, 2018) and the improvement of psychological and physical well-being of those who engage in this type of behavior (e.g., Sánchez et al., 2015).

Regarding sexism, it has been observed that women employ different confrontation strategies (Swim et al., 2001). Choosing one strategy or another depends on different factors, including the way in which the confrontational agent hopes those who engage in sexist discrimination will react, as well as the potential consequences of such reaction (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). The most direct type of interpersonal confrontation entails expressing disapproval of the person(s) who performed the sexist act (Kaiser & Miller, 2004). Such disapproval mainly resorts to two types of confrontation: assertive strategies (e.g., to address the perpetrator politely) and aggressive strategies (e.g., to insult him) (Becker & Barreto, 2014).

Although the debate on the consequences of using both types of confrontation remains open (Becker & Barreto, 2014), in general terms, aggressive confrontations encourage greater negative and/or violent responses, while assertive confrontations increase the likelihood of the perpetrator(s) assimilating or accepting the confrontation (Baumeister & Campell, 1999). In this sense, one might wonder if subversive humor against sexism could work as a non-aggressive confrontation tool which, ultimately, would encourage people to better accept the underlying message.

### **The present research**

Although several authors have pointed out the possible role of subversive humor against sexism at the interpersonal and social levels, to the best of our knowledge, it has predominantly been investigated through exclusively theoretical approaches. The few existing empirical approaches (e.g., Case & Lippard, 2009) that have analyzed the content of allegedly subversive humor against sexism jokes have ambiguous selection and classification criteria and show no evidence indicating that such humor constitutes a conceptual entity on its own and is different from other types of humor. Further, the extant empirical approaches do not hypothesize the social effect of subverting sexism.

First, there is controversy over whether subversive humor against sexism may simply be a variant of man disparagement humor (Stillion & White, 1987; Strain et al., 2016). By bringing a situation of inequality to light and accentuating its injustice, subversive humor could ultimately be seen as ridiculing men and, therefore, denigrating them. However, it is important to note that in man disparagement humor, the objects of derision are the characteristics stereotypically attributed to the male gender (e.g., ways of being, acting, thinking) aiming exclusively at denigrating men. In contrast, the focus of subversive humor against sexism is aimed at raising awareness regarding the unequal and discriminatory situations faced by women. In any case, although they seem to be different

types of humor, differences between man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism must be addressed empirically.

### *Aims*

To be able to study subversive humor against sexism, previously it must be found empirical evidence suggesting that this humor is independent from other types of humor, specifically from man disparagement humor. Such empirical evidence, along with a study of the differential correlates (i.e., ideological variables), would ultimately allow conclude about the construct validity of this type of humor. That is the main objective of this research, empirically determining the entity of subversive humor against sexism.

First, based on its theoretical conceptualization, a pool of humorous stimuli intended to evaluate the appreciation of this type of humor were proposed. In this work, we understand humor appreciation as the degree of funniness and aversiveness experienced as a response to a given humor stimulus (Ruch & Hehl, 2007). Along with subversive humorous stimuli, humorous material belonging to the other two categories is used for contrast analysis. These categories are man disparagement humor and neutral humor. Taking into account the humorous stimuli belonging to the three types of humor, a group of experts conducted an analysis of content validity (Study 1). A first statistical analysis (i.e. exploratory factor analysis) is performed on this material to corroborate the empirical entity of subversive humor (Study 2). Finally, after implementing confirmatory strategies to replicate the results of the previous study, correlates between funniness and aversiveness responses to subversive humor against sexism and feminist identity, as well as involvement in collective actions for gender equality and hostile attitudes towards men, are analyzed (Study 3).

## **Study 1**

### **Method**

#### *Participants*

We followed the considerations of Crocker et al. (1988) to select the experts. Given the characteristics of the task, the criteria we used to select our judges were that they should be psychologists with research experience in the field of humor (2 experts) and/or sexism (3 experts) and unaware of the study's aims.

#### *Instruments*

Before conducting the study, subversive humor against sexism was defined as follows: "jokes or comic vignettes where humor seeks to raise awareness and criticize sexist behaviors and situations against women, evincing and questioning situations of

inequality and discrimination against them in various fields (e.g. love life, social relations, work)". The material selection was guided by this definition. The materials consisted of 15 comic vignettes and jokes from different sources published in Spanish: online magazines (i.e., *Pikara Magazine*, *Playground Magazine*), blogs (i.e., *Moderna de pueblo*, *Feminista Ilustrada*), satirical newspapers (i.e., *Mundo Today*), comics (i.e., *Diana Raznovich*, *Maitena Burundarena*), and other web pages. In addition to these 15 jokes or comic vignettes, a similar number of humorous stimuli were selected for the categories man disparagement humor (16 jokes or vignettes) and neutral humor (14 jokes or vignettes), as suggested by the conceptualization of Carretero-Dios et al. (2010) ([see an example of each type of humor in Appendix](#)).

We selected 15 humorous stimuli with subversive humor against sexism content in this first pool to triple the number of humorous stimuli required for future research (4 or 5). The previous research has shown that such a number of jokes or vignettes generates substantive effects when experimentally examining the consequences of being exposed to humorous stimuli from the same category in addition to facilitating responses with  $\geq .70$  reliability, as calculated through Cronbach's alpha index (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2010, 2017).

### **Procedure**

Judges were handed a booklet that included –in this order– the instructions about the task, the conceptual delimitation of the constructs (subversive humor against sexism, man disparagement humor, and neutral humor), and the randomly ordered jokes and vignettes. The judges had to indicate the category of humor to which each joke or comic vignette belonged and their representativeness. For this last criterion, a 4-point Likert-scale was used (1 = *not representative*; 4 = *very representative*). Additionally, general considerations and specific comments with regard to aspects including the task and humorous stimuli were gathered.

### **Results**

A Content Validity Index (CVI)  $\geq 80\%$  was established as a selection criterion, as recommended by Hyrkäs et al. (2003). In relation to joke and comic vignette categorization, the CVI was the proportion of judges that matched each joke or vignette to its intended type of humor. Regarding representativeness, the CVI score was computed by summing the number of experts giving a rating of 3 or 4 by the total number of experts. Again, as suggested by the aforementioned authors, jokes and vignettes were considered adequate if there was  $\geq 80\%$  agreement.

Following these criteria, out of 45 humorous stimuli subjected to evaluation, eight had insufficient content validity. The rest were classified by the experts in three clearly differentiated type of humor, as hypothesized: 12 as subversive humor against sexism, 12 as man disparagement humor, and 13 as neutral humor.

### **Discussion**

The results obtained regarding categorization and representativeness reveal that, according to the judgment of the experts, subversive humor against sexism and man disparagement humor constitute different types of humor, due not only to the way in which they are conceptualized but also to the material that ultimately defines them operationally. In turn, both categories are different from neutral humor. Taking these results into account, it is necessary to analyze whether the differentiation supported by expert judgment also emerges empirically when considering funniness and aversiveness responses by participants.

### **Study 2**

The aim of this study was to analyze whether reactions to the 37 selected humorous stimuli in Study 1 allow subversive humor against sexism to be distinguished from man disparagement humor and neutral humor. To achieve this, the standardized steps through which clusters of items are statistically studied from a theoretical point of view evaluating different dimensions were followed (see below under "Statistical Analysis") (Carretero-Dios et al., 2010). As suggested by the literature (Ruch, 1992), the analysis of the factorial structure of humorous material focused on the funniness responses. In other analyses, aversiveness responses are also included.

### **Method**

#### ***Participants***

The sample comprised 206 university students (111 women and 95 men) pursuing various degrees, who voluntarily participated in the study. Three participants were excluded because Spanish was not their native language. The ages of the women ranged between 18 and 46 years ( $M = 22.07$ ;  $SD = 4.49$ ) and that of the men ranged between 18 and 45 years ( $M = 22.50$ ;  $SD = 4.34$ ).

#### ***Instruments***

A booklet including 37 humorous items was created. Each item was assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale based on the degree of funniness (from 0 = *not at all funny*, to 4 = *very funny*) and aversiveness (from 0 = *not at all aversive* to 4 = *very aversive*).



***Procedure***

The sampling was conducted at different university libraries. Once students voluntarily agreed to participate, they were told that the study aimed at knowing their opinion regarding humorous material published in print and online media. The booklet included 37 jokes and comic vignettes randomly sorted, each followed by funniness and aversiveness questions. Finally, after completing a sociodemographic questionnaire (sex, age, nationality, native language, and university degree), they were thanked for their participation and provided with contact information in case they wished to know the study results.

***Statistical Analysis***

The first step was to conduct an exploratory study on the internal structure of the pool of jokes and vignettes. To do so, we performed an EFA with principal axis factoring on the funniness scores. Given that types of humor are interrelated, we used an oblique rotation (direct oblimin). To verify that the factorial solution was interpretable, we used the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value and the Bartlett's sphericity index. Since the Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues  $> 1$ ) frequently leads to an overestimation of the number of factors to be retained, a Parallel Analysis (PA) was performed following Horn (1965). Then, to corroborate whether the solution was similar for men and women, the factorial congruence coefficient between both samples was calculated. Factorial congruence coefficients (Tucker, 1951) have been used as an exploratory similarity index of the factorial structure observed for different samples, keeping in mind that values greater than .95 indicate factor similarity and those lower than .85 indicate important differences (Van de Vijver & Poortinga, 2002). Finally, the effects of sex and age on funniness and aversiveness responses, as well as the interrelations between them, were analyzed.

***Results******Exploratory factor analysis***

Both the KMO index (.87) and the Bartlett's sphericity index (Chi-square = 3133.78,  $df = 66$ ,  $p < .001$ ), confirmed the relevance of this type of analysis. There was a total of four factors with eigenvalues  $> 1$  (10.10, 2.84, 1.67, and 1.05). The scree test suggested retaining three factors accounting for 39.52% of the variance, and this was also supported by the data provided by the Parallel Analysis (Horn, 1965). Then, an oblimin rotation with a factorial solution restricted to three factors was performed (Table 1).

**Table 1***Loadings of the humor stimulus on the three rotated factors (Oblimin)*

Items	F I	F II	F III	$h^2$
Disparagement29	.79			.68
Disparagement22	.73			.63
Disparagement31	.72			.66
Disparagement36	.70			.74
Disparagement15	.69			.67
Disparagement12	.68		.41	.66
Disparagement16	.64			.65
Disparagement8	.58			.54
Disparagement24	.56			.57
Disparagement11	.55		.46	.68
Disparagement4	.41			.56
Disparagement1	.36			.36
Neutral21		.72		.60
Neutral34		.72		.63
Neutral25		.68		.61
Neutral26		.67		.60
Neutral17		.59		.48
Neutral18		.55		.51
Neutral33		.53		.52
Neutral7		.50		.47
Neutral19		.48		.45
Neutral9		.48		.46
Neutral14		.42		.41
Neutral3		.26		.38
Neutral2		.24		.39
Subversive13			.62	.53
Subversive5			.61	.53

Items	F I	F II	F III	$h^2$
Subversive30			.53	.55
Subversive10			.50	.53
Subversive20			.46	.52
Subversive37			.43	.53
Subversive35			.42	.42
Subversive23			.41	.41
Subversive27	.42		.33	.56
Subversive6			.32	.35
Subversive32			.31	.57
Subversive28			.31	.42

Note:  $N = 203$ . Men  $N = 95$ ; Women  $N = 108$ .

Disparagement = man disparagement humor. Neutral = neutral humor. Subversive = subversive humor against sexism.  $h^2$  = comunalidad. Secondary loadings  $> .40$  are reported.

As shown in Table 1, the three factors corresponded to the three types of humor theoretically proposed and supported by the expert judgment in Study 1, with loadings between .36 and .79 for the disparagement humor, between .31 and .62 for subversive humor against sexism, and between .24 and .72 for neutral humor. In the last case, two jokes or vignettes had loadings  $< .30$ , and they were eliminated from further analysis. Similarly, for subversive humor against sexism, one stimulus (Subversive27) had a higher loading on secondary factor (i.e., man disparagement humor) and was also eliminated. The other items were used to check whether the three-factor solution was similar between men and women; thus, the congruence factor between both samples was calculated. The factor congruence index (Tucker, 1951) was high (Congruence Index = .988).

#### ***Descriptive statistics and discrimination and reliability indices***

The descriptive statistics and discrimination indices of the humorous stimuli retained in the EFA are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics and corrected item-total correlation for the humor stimulus by type of humor*

	Funniness			Aversiveness		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	citc	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	citc
<b>Disparagement</b>						
Disparagement1	2.10	1.09	.35	1.54	1.19	.62
Disparagement4	1.44	1.10	.51	1.70	1.35	.69
Disparagement8	2.05	1.44	.62	1.83	1.48	.78
Disparagement11	1.45	1.29	.66	1.89	1.43	.74
Disparagement12	1.32	1.30	.72	2.15	1.48	.85
Disparagement15	1.49	1.36	.73	2.26	1.41	.83
Disparagement16	1.25	1.32	.70	1.98	1.41	.81
Disparagement22	1.58	1.32	.67	1.95	1.45	.83
Disparagement24	1.42	1.35	.61	2.10	1.40	.74
Disparagement29	1.15	1.26	.73	2.43	1.35	.80
Disparagement31	1.02	1.23	.69	2.49	1.42	.84
Disparagement36	1.37	1.31	.67	2.35	1.46	.87
<b>Neutral</b>						
Neutral7	2.32	1.17	.47	.14	.57	.44
Neutral9	2.32	1.25	.51	.18	.57	.48
Neutral14	2.02	1.26	.45	.14	.59	.44
Neutral17	2.17	1.28	.55	.31	.76	.45
Neutral18	2.19	1.32	.55	.43	.86	.49
Neutral19	1.91	1.28	.48	.10	.43	.51
Neutral21	2.07	1.13	.64	.08	.43	.62
Neutral25	1.38	1.17	.67	.29	.69	.51
Neutral26	2.11	1.23	.58	.09	.43	.55
Neutral33	2.79	1.18	.55	.09	.46	.21

	Funniness			Aversiveness		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	citc	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	citc
Neutral34	1.90	1.33	.59	.06	.28	.31
Subversive						
Subversive5	2.44	1.23	.48	1.04	1.14	.54
Subversive6	1.08	1.16	.31	1.72	1.58	.56
Subversive10	2.13	1.30	.51	1.30	1.35	.55
Subversive13	2.29	1.36	.52	1.11	1.29	.67
Subversive20	.70	1.18	.42	2.34	1.65	.55
Subversive23	2.16	1.41	.39	1.20	1.43	.65
Subversive28	.95	1.23	.36	1.79	1.55	.64
Subversive30	2.15	1.40	.58	1.36	1.33	.66
Subversive32	1.61	1.24	.51	1.43	1.43	.62
Subversive35	1.52	1.34	.42	1.49	1.45	.68
Subversive37	1.68	1.22	.47	1.52	1.46	.73

Note: *N* = 203. Men *N* = 95; Women *N* = 108.

Disparagement = man disparagement humor. Neutral = neutral humor. Subversive = subversive humor against sexism. citc = corrected item total correlation. \* = selected humor stimuli (see selection of humor stimulus section).

The corrected-item total correlation were  $> .30$  for all the stimuli of subversive humor against sexism. This result was observed for both funniness (between .31 and .58) and aversiveness (between .54 and .73) responses, with Cronbach's alpha  $> .70$  for both types of responses ( $\alpha$  funniness = .80;  $\alpha$  aversiveness = .89). This pattern was reproduced for man disparagement humor both for funniness (discrimination indices between .35 and .73;  $\alpha$  = .90) and aversiveness (discrimination indices between .62 and .87;  $\alpha$  = .95). Regarding neutral humor, the resulting data for funniness were along the same lines (discrimination indices between .45 and .67;  $\alpha$  = .86). For aversiveness, although the Cronbach's alpha index was also adequate ( $\alpha$  = .78), a humorous stimulus showed a discrimination index  $< .30$  (Neutral33 = .21), thus, it was eliminated from further analysis. Thus, in the end, there were 33 jokes or vignettes remaining: man disparagement humor =

12; neutral humor = 10; and subversive humor against sexism = 11 (see supplementary material).

### *Effect of sex and age and correlations among the different types of humor*

With the total humorous stimuli available, the effects of sex and type of humor were analyzed in relation to funniness responses. Repeated ANOVA measures with type of humor as the intra-group independent variable (IV) and sex as the inter-group variable did not yield main effects of sex on funniness responses,  $F(1, 192) = 0.22, p = .64$ . Similarly, there was no statistically significant interaction between sex and type of humor  $F(2, 384) = 0.31, p = .74$ . Finally, there was a significant effect of the type of humor on funniness responses,  $F(2, 384) = 44.39, p < .001$ . Bonferroni contrasts showed that all types of humor differed from one another ( $p < .001$ ). Descriptive statistics associated with these analyses are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive statistics for funniness and aversiveness by type of humor (Study 2)*

<i>Humor</i>	<i>Men n = 95</i>			<i>Women n = 108</i>			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>		
DISPf	1.73	.85	.73	1.74	.94	.77	.02	.98
DISPa	1.89	1.11	.88	1.81	1.16	.88	-.48	.63
NEUTf	1.90	.85	.78	1.94	.99	.79	.34	.74
NEUTa	.18	.28	.74	.28	.49	.70	1.76	.08
SUBf	1.91	.84	.70	1.87	.97	.72	-.37	.72
SUBa	1.19	1.01	.84	1.44	1.06	.81	1.78	.08

*Note:*  $N = 203$ .

DISPf = funniness man disparagement humor; DISPa = aversiveness man disparagement humor; NEUTf = funniness neutral humor; NEUTa = aversiveness neutral humor; SUBf = funniness subversive humor against sexism; SUBa = aversiveness subversive humor against sexism.

Regarding aversiveness responses (Table 3), again, there was a lack of a main effect on both the variable sex  $F(1, 189) = 0.19, p = .66$  and the interaction between sex and type of humor,  $F(2, 378) = 3.07, p = .08$ . As in the case of funniness, the type of humor had a statistically significant effect on aversiveness responses  $F(2, 378) = 370.70, p < .001$ . Thus, the Bonferroni contrasts showed that all types of humor differed from one another ( $p < .001$ ).

Age was not correlated in a statistically significant way ( $p_s > .11$ ) with funniness and aversiveness responses of any type of humor.

Finally, intercorrelations among the different types of humor were computed (see Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Intercorrelations between types of humor (Study 2)*

	DISPf	NEUTf	SUBf	DISPa	NEUTa	SUBa
DISPf	---	.32**	.29**	-.46**	-.15	-.13
NEUTf	.34**	---	.37**	-.06	-.13	.06
SUBf	.52**	.39**	---	-.24**	-.10	-.45**
DISPa	-.42**	.05	-.25**	---	.30**	.65**
NEUTa	.03	.02	-.02	.24*	---	.26*
SUBa	-.21*	-.01	-.37**	.65**	.26**	---

*Note:*  $N = 203$ ; Men  $N = 95$ ; Women  $N = 108$ . \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Intercorrelations for men above diagonal. Intercorrelations for women below diagonal. DISPf = funniness man disparagement humor; DISPa = aversiveness man disparagement humor; NEUTf = funniness neutral humor; NEUTa = aversiveness neutral humor; SUBf = funniness subversive humor against sexism; SUBa = aversiveness subversive humor against sexism.

The funniness responses to the different types of humor significantly correlated with one another, highlighting the high correlation between subversive and disparagement humor ( $r = .60$ ). This same pattern was observed in the aversiveness responses, which also showed high correlation between aversiveness towards disparagement humor and subversive humor ( $r = .70$ ). The correlations between funniness and aversiveness were negative and significant for both subversive and disparagement humor but not for neutral humor.

### **Discussion**

The main distinction established by the judgment of the experts between subversive humor against sexism and man disparagement humor arises from analyzing the funniness and aversiveness responses evoked in a group of university students who were exposed to these types of humor. Although the data from this study represent the first empirical step towards demonstrating that subversive humor against sexism can be considered a different type of humor than man disparagement humor, further evidence is required. For example, regarding the internal structure observed through the EFA of

funniness responses, it would be necessary to determine whether this structure is corroborated by approximations based on Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of independent samples. Similarly, it should be demonstrated that both types of humor relate differently with variables that are theoretically relevant for one and not for the other.

### Study 3

The main aim of this study was to corroborate the results found in study 2 through a confirmatory approach (i.e., CFA). To obtain a pool with fewer items that is easier to use during research, five jokes or comic vignettes from each type of humor were selected. The selection of the humorous stimuli attempted to include those 1) with higher corrected-item total correlation values; 2) with descriptive statistics that reflected variability in participant responses (standard deviations  $> 1$ ); 3) with no floor effect (average scores in funniness  $> 1$  and close to the midpoint on the response scale); and 4) with low secondary loadings (see selected stimuli in supplementary material).

The second aim of this third study was to analyze whether funniness and aversiveness responses of subversive humor against sexism relate to attitudinal variables differently from those evoked by man disparagement humor. If subversive humor against sexism is seen as an expression of what, in other contexts, is called feminist humor, one would expect to find positive correlations between preference towards this type of humor and feminist identity (hypothesis 1). In this sense, some studies indicate that those who most identify with feminism show greater sympathy for feminist humor (e.g., Gallivan, 1992; Stillion & White, 1987).

However, we hypothesize that man disparagement humor will relate to another type of attitudinal variable. In particular, this research focuses on hostile attitudes towards men (Glick & Fiske, 1999). Given that man disparagement humor highlights physical, psychological, and social male stereotypes, a relation between increased hostility towards them and greater inclination towards man-disparagement humor would be expected (hypothesis 2).

Third and last, we aim to analyze the relationship between subversive humor and aspects related to action and mobilization (i.e., Mazur, 2015). In this regard, we hypothesize that the greater the inclination towards subversive humor was, the greater the tendency to take collective action for gender equality would be (hypothesis 3). However, we expect this association to be moderated by participants' feminist identity (hypothesis 4).



## Method

### *Participants*

The sample comprised 234 participants, among which 131 were women and 103 were men (5 participants were excluded because Spanish was not their native language). The average age of the women ranged between 18 and 71 years ( $M = 30.11$ ,  $SD = 12.93$ ) and that of the men ranged between 19 and 63 years ( $M = 34.39$ ,  $SD = 12.88$ ).

### *Instruments*

In the first section of the booklet used in this study, the participants used a Likert-type scale to assess funniness (from 0 = *not at all funny*, to 4 = *very funny*) and aversiveness (from 0 = *not at all aversive* to 4 = *very aversive*) evoked by the 15 comic vignettes and jokes (five for each type of humor). In the second part, the participants had to complete the following inventories and scales.

***Ambivalence toward Men Inventory (AMI) (Glick & Fiske, 1999).*** For this research, 10 items from the subscale of hostility towards men were considered. Through a Likert scale, where 0 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *totally agree*, a single score that would reflect different manifestations of hostility towards men and resentment of paternalism (e.g., “Men usually try to dominate conversations when talking to women”) or heterosexual hostility (e.g., “A man who is sexually attracted to a woman typically has no morals about doing whatever it takes to get her bed”) was provided. The Cronbach's alpha was adequate ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

***Multicomponent Ingroup Identification (Leach et al., 2008).*** Scale items assessing solidarity (i.e., the feeling of a psychological link with ingroup members) and centrality (i.e., central ingroup aspect in self-concept) were used. The six items were assessed using a Likert-type response format, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *totally agree*. The scale used in this study was adapted to evaluate identification with feminism since the original scale measures ingroup identification in general (e.g., solidarity: “I feel solidarity with [feminists]”), (e.g., centrality: “the fact that I am [feminist] is an important part of my identity”). The Cronbach's alpha was adequate ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

***Collective Actions for Gender Equality.*** Following van Zomeren et al. (2004), we assessed participants' collective action for gender equality using six items (e.g., “going on strike to fight the wage gap between men and women”). Participants responded on 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). Given the good reliability of the scale ( $\alpha = .86$ ), an average index of Collective Action for Gender Equality was calculated.

### *Procedure*

Sampling was carried out at different libraries and public spaces (e.g., bus station). Once the participants voluntarily agreed to participate, they were informed about their participation in two independent studies: one on humorous preferences and another on people's attitudes and behaviors towards different topics. In the first case, the participants had to provide funniness and aversiveness responses to 15 humorous jokes or comic vignettes, which were randomly presented. In the second one, they completed the AMI (Glick & Fiske, 1999), the multicomponent ingroup identification scale (Leach et al., 2008), and the collective actions for gender equality index (van Zomeren et al., 2004). On the last page of the booklet, the participants included their demographic data (sex, age, nationality, education level, native language, and sexual orientation), and they were provided with information to contact the researchers in case they required more information.

### **Results**

#### *Confirmatory factor analysis*

We conducted a CFA on funniness responses (Mplus 7.11; Muthén & Muthén, 2012) with the aim of exploring whether the dimensional structure observed in Study 2 was replicated. The MLR estimator was used, which takes into account the non-independence of observations as well as the possible non-normality of the data. The model fit was assessed with the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) with a 90% confidence interval (CI). TLI and CFI values greater than .90 and RMSEA values less than .08 indicate acceptable model fit, whereas TLI and CFI values greater than .95 and RMSEA values less than .05 indicate good model fit (Kaplan 2000). Three different models were tested (see Table 5): a three-factor model (Model 1) composed of the three types of humor (i.e., subversive humor against sexism, man disparagement humor, and neutral humor); a two-factor model (Model 2) composed of neutral humor versus man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism; and a one-factor model (Model 3) composed of all the humor stimuli.

**Table 5**

*Confirmatory factor analysis of the humor stimulus used to assess subversive humor against sexism, man disparagement humor and neutral humor*

Models	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1	142.641 (87)	.924	.908	.055 [.038, .070]
Model 2	180.401 (89)	.875	.853	.069 [.055, .084]
Model 3	244.064 (99)	.789	.754	.089 [.076, .103]

*Note: Note: N = 234.*

CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval. Model 1 = three-factors composed of the three types of humor (i.e. subversive humor against sexism, man disparagement humor and neutral humor). Model 2 = two-factors model composed of neutral humor versus man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism. Model 3 = one-factor model composed of all the humor stimulus.

As shown in Table 5, CFA confirmed that a structure defined by the three original factors (i.e., subversive humor against sexism, man disparagement humor, and neutral humor) showed the best model fit in the assessed sample. All standardized factor loadings were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). Cronbach's alphas were  $\geq .70$  for funniness (Cronbach's alphas between  $\alpha = .71$  and  $\alpha = .80$ ) and aversiveness (Cronbach's alphas between  $\alpha = .74$  and  $\alpha = .89$ ) (Table 6).

### ***Replication results***

Repeated-measures ANOVA with type of humor as the intra-group independent variable and sex as the inter-group variable showed a main effect of type of humor  $F(2, 454) = 16.01, p < .001$ , and sex  $F(1, 227) = 4.18, p < .05$  on funniness responses. There was no a significant interaction between both variables,  $F(2, 454) = 0.77, p = .46$ . Descriptive statistics associated with these analyses are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6***Descriptive statistics for funniness and aversiveness by type of humor (Study 3)*

<i>Humor</i>	<i>Men n = 103</i>		<i>A</i>	<i>Women n = 131</i>		$\alpha$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
DISPf	1.59	.99	.81	1.77	.98	.71	-1.43	.15
DISPa	1.43	1.22	.89	1.65	1.13	.83	-1.42	.16
NEUTf	1.87	.97	.80	2.02	.94	.72	-1.23	.22
NEUTa	.32	.61	.74	.35	.59	.74	-.44	.66
SUBf	1.45	.97	.75	1.76	.97	.71	-2.37	.02
SUBa	1.39	1.17	.83	1.40	1.08	.75	-.08	.93

*Note: N = 234.*

DISPf = funniness man disparagement humor; DISPa = aversiveness man disparagement humor; NEUTf = funniness neutral humor; NEUTa = aversiveness neutral humor; SUBf = funniness subversive humor against sexism; SUBa = aversiveness subversive humor against sexism.

Neutral humor evoked greater funniness than the other two types of humor (Bonferroni contrasts,  $p < .001$ ). No differences were observed ( $p = .71$ ) between subversive humor against sexism and man disparagement humor. However, women reported higher funniness scores than men (Men:  $M = 1.64$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ; Women:  $M = 1.85$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ).

Aversiveness responses (Table 6) essentially replicated the results from Study 2. In particular, statistically significant effects of the type of humor on aversiveness responses were found,  $F(2, 448) = 164.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ; however, the effects were significant neither for sex  $F(1, 224) = 0.95$ ,  $p = .33$  nor for the interaction between both variables,  $F(2, 448) = 1.39$ ,  $p = .25$ . Post hoc comparisons (Bonferroni contrasts,  $p < .001$ ) showed that aversiveness observed in response to neutral humor was less than that recorded in response to both man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism. However, there were no statistically significant differences between these last two (Bonferroni contrasts,  $p = .12$ ). Finally, as noted in Study 2, the correlations between age and funniness and aversiveness responses to the different types of humor were close to zero ( $p_s > .13$ ).

The correlations between funniness and aversiveness responses of the different types of humor exhibited the same pattern as that observed in Study 2 (see Table 7).

**Table 7***Intercorrelations between types of humor (Study 3)*

	DISPf	NEUTf	SUBf	DISPa	NEUTa	SUBa
DISPf	---	.59***	.57***	-.45***	-.003	-.23*
NEUTf	.45***	---	.60***	-.002	.06	-.02
SUBf	.57***	.32***	---	-.13	.20*	-.29**
DISPa	-.54***	-.12	-.39***	---	.37***	.65***
NEUTa	.11	.08	-.09	.26**	---	.33**
SUBa	-.17	.20*	-.27**	.49***	.33***	---

Note:  $N = 234$ ; Men  $N = 103$ ; Women  $N = 131$ . \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Intercorrelations for men above diagonal. Intercorrelations for women below diagonal. DISPf = funniness man disparagement humor; DISPa = aversiveness man disparagement humor; NEUTf = funniness neutral humor; NEUTa = aversiveness neutral humor; SUBf = funniness subversive humor against sexism; SUBa = aversiveness subversive humor against sexism.

The funniness responses of the three types of humor positively correlated with one another, again, with the highest correlation between subversive humor against sexism and man disparagement humor ( $r = .57$ ). A similar correlation pattern was found for aversiveness responses. Funniness and aversiveness responses were also negatively correlated both in the case of subversive humor against sexism ( $r = -.28$ ) and of man disparagement humor ( $r = -.48$ ); however, they were not for neutral humor.

#### ***Relationship between subversive humor and attitudinal variables***

Table 8 shows the correlations between subversive humor and disparagement humor with the attitudinal variables measured, controlling for sex, age, and preferences towards neutral humor.

**Table 8**

*Partial correlations between attitudinal variables and funniness and aversiveness of man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism (controlling sex, age and funniness and aversiveness of neutral humor)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$	DISf	DISa	SUBf	SUBa
Feminist identification	3.89	2.05	.96	-.04	.21**	.20**	-.09
Collective Action	5.78	1.36	.86	-.06	.11	.24***	-.23**
Hostility towards men	1.49	1.02	.85	.22*	-.20*	.05	.01

Note:  $N = 234$ ; Men  $N = 103$ ; Women  $N = 131$ . \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Feminist Identification (Likert scale 1-7); Collective Action (Likert scale 1-7); Hostility Toward Men (Likert scale 0-5); DISPf = funniness man disparagement humor; DISPa = aversiveness man disparagement humor; SUBf = funniness subversive humor against sexism; SUBa = aversiveness subversive humor against sexism.

As was expected, funniness resulting from subversive humor against sexism correlated positively with feminist identity ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ) (Hypothesis 1). However, hostility towards men correlated positively with disparagement humor towards them ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ) and negatively with aversiveness of this type of humor ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ) (Hypothesis 2). As predicted (Hypothesis 3), funniness evoked by subversive humor against sexism also correlated positively with the tendency to participate in collective actions for gender equality ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ), while aversiveness did so in a negative way ( $r = -.23, p < .001$ ).

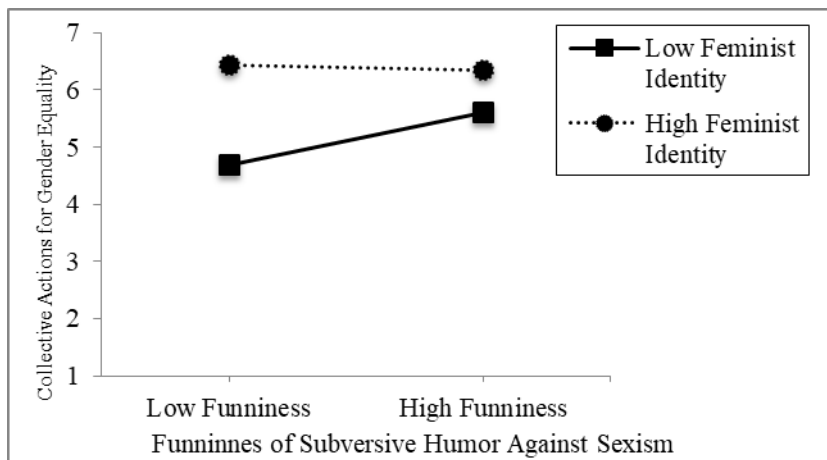
To deepen our understanding of the relationship between subversive humor against sexism and participation in collective actions for gender equality, a moderation analysis was performed with feminist identity as the moderator variable. The analyses were performed with the PROCESS macro for the SPSS statistical program (model 1). Funniness evoked by subversive humor against sexism was the IV, and collective actions for gender equality served as the DV. Sex, age, and funniness and aversiveness towards neutral humor were considered covariates.

In line with Hypothesis 4, a significant two-way interaction was observed between funniness of subversive humor and feminist identity,  $b = -0.13, t = -3.69, p < .001$ , (CI 95% = -0.2001, -0.0606), suggesting that the relationship between funniness of subversive

humor against sexism and collective actions for gender equality depended on the feminist identity. As shown in Fig. 1, the analysis revealed that, in low feminist identity participants, higher funniness scores were related to more collective actions,  $b = 0.45$ ,  $t = 4.18$ ,  $p < .0001$  (CI 95% = 0.2370, .6596), but not in participants high in feminist identity,  $b = -0.09$ ,  $t = -0.77$ ,  $p = .44$  (CI 95% = -0.3188, 0.1396).

**Figure 1**

*Collective Actions for Gender Equality as function of funniness of subversive humor against sexism and feminist identity*



## Discussion

Replicating the internal structure of the pool of humorous stimuli using CFA adds empirical evidence to the conceptualization of subversive humor against sexism and man disparagement humor as different entities. Furthermore, this study established a different relationship pattern among both types of humor and feminist identity, hostility towards men, and participation in collective actions for gender equality. Moreover, as anticipated by the theory presented, the moderating role of feminism in these relationships was corroborated.

### General discussion

This research was motivated by the lack of empirical data on the type of humor aimed at subverting gender asymmetries and inequalities at the interpersonal and social levels (e.g., Case & Lippard, 2009). Through three studies, the conceptual independence of this type of humor with respect to man disparagement humor and neutral humor was analyzed, specifically comparing it to man disparagement humor. Experts in Study 1 defined subversive humor against sexism as a typology that is independent from man

disparagement humor and neutral humor. In Study 2, an EFA of funniness responses corroborated the factorial independence of subversive humor against sexism. This result was confirmed through CFA in Study 3, even maintaining a positive relationship with man disparagement humor. In the same way, the existence of a differential relational pattern between these two types of humor and certain attitudinal variables was demonstrated.

As the theory indicated, man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism share some criticism towards or ridicule of men (Stillion & White, 1987; Strain et al., 2016). In fact, the participants who find subversive humor against sexism to be funny also enjoy man disparagement humor. In the case of man disparagement humor, mockery is directed at and subjected to stereotypical aspects attributed to being man. Conversely, in subversive humor, criticism is indirect, since the focus is not on men but on the various behaviors or actions of a sexist society that often give men a prevalent role. For this reason, it was expected that, at the empirical level, direct deprecation targeting men would cause greater disapproval than subversive and neutral humor, as we found in Studies 2 and 3.

However, a highly positive relation between aversiveness towards man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism was found. This finding is in line with the previous research (Carretero-Dios et al., 2010), which notes that aversiveness responses towards humor with demeaning or inappropriate content (e.g., black humor) tend to be positive and highly interrelated. Such results would reveal that people tend to disapprove of over-the-top or offensive humor (Ruch, 1992; Ruch & Hehl, 2007).

This pattern of correlations, especially the one that has to do with the positive relationship between funniness of subversive humor against sexism and man disparagement humor, raises the unresolved issues that relate to the expected effects of using and being exposed to subversive humor against sexism. Strain et al. (2016) claim that, on the one hand, message content conveying subversive humor can be ambiguous, triggering multiple interpretations that could cause an effect opposite to that expected (i.e., further reinforce inequalities). On the other hand, since this type of humor has a literal message (i.e., the joke in itself) and an implicit message (i.e., the confrontational message), additional cognitive processing is required to prevent the literal message (i.e., “*sexism is funny*”) from carrying more weight than the implicit message (i.e., “*sexism is pernicious and must be confronted*”), reinforcing these prejudices (Saucier et al., 2018).

Regarding the effects of being exposed to this type of humor, different results could be expected depending on the receiver’s degree of prejudice or alternatively on his/her adherence to egalitarian ideologies (i.e., feminism). As mentioned above, the



studies on disparagement humor targeting women have found that sexist humor provokes multiple negative effects, especially in participants with sexist attitudes (Ford, 2000; Ford et al., 2008; Ford et al., 2001; Ford et al., 2013; Romero-Sánchez et al., 2010, 2017). However, one might ask what the expected effects of subversive humor against sexism are. According to the literature presented above, this type of humor may become a double-edged sword. First, it could act as a suitable tool for non-sexist people to reaffirm their egalitarian beliefs, thus reflecting and deepening them. However, second, as Saucier et al. (2018) explain, it could strengthen the sexist attitudes of prejudiced people. In short, the above indicates the need to study the effects of exposure to this type of humor, considering its possible moderation by attitudinal factors.

We also found a different relational pattern among subversive humor against sexism, man disparagement humor and the attitudinal variables linked to gender relations (Study 3). These different relations validate the distinction between the two types of humor and strengthen the conceptual entity of subversive humor against sexism. Thus, it was noted that funniness evoked by subversive humor against sexism, but not by man disparagement humor, related positively with feminist identity and a tendency to engage in collective actions for gender equality. These data show the link between critical content regarding asymmetries between men and women present in subversive humor against sexism and feminism. Feminism is understood as “*a social movement whose basic goal is equality between women and men*” (Lorber, 2010, p. 1). However, both funniness and aversiveness evoked by man disparagement humor, but not by subversive humor against sexism, were significantly associated with hostile attitudes towards men. More specifically, the greater the hostility expressed towards men was, the greater the tendency to perceive the jokes and comic vignettes that denigrated them as funnier. In addition, the less hostile the attitudes were towards men, the greater the aversiveness of such material.

This pattern of results obtained in Study 3 between the ideological variables and the appreciation of both types of humor (i.e., man disparagement humor and subversive humor against sexism) strengthens the distinctions between these two categories. Thus, when individuals are faced with a type of humor that directly ridicules men based on negative stereotypes, the ideology that best predicts the funniness and aversiveness experienced is that which endows men with traits such as power and dominance (i.e., male hostility). At the same time, these results support the idea that subversive humor against sexism is not intended to directly ridicule, denigrate, or show hostility towards men; rather, it aims to directly challenge the sexist social structure that keeps women in a

disadvantageous position to subvert it and thus achieve women's empowerment (Shifman & Lemish, 2011).

Finally, the relationship between funniness derived from subversive humor against sexism and support of collective actions for gender equality was moderated by the degree to which the participants identify with feminism. The results showed that in participants low in feminist identity, but not in participants high, the more funniness of subversive humor against sexism was related to more intentions for collective actions. Although this result comes from a correlational approach, it shows a positive and significant relation between subversive humor against sexism and behavioral intentions that directly challenge male dominance and gender inequality (Case & Lippard, 2009; Franzini, 1996; Strain et al., 2016). In this sense, it may be that this relation is not significant for participants high in feminist identity because they express a high tendency to engage in collective actions for gender equality, regardless of the funniness evoked by subversive humor against sexism.

In short, our results empirically demonstrate that subversive humor against sexism is a type of humor different from man disparagement humor, which does not seem to directly aim at denigrating and humiliating men but rather at criticizing and raising awareness of the situation of inequality faced by women. This research also provides a better understanding of some of the ideological variables involved in humor appreciation while making available a validated pool of stimuli to be used in future studies.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Although this research offers a first approach to empirically tackling subversive humor against sexism as an entity different from man disparagement humor, it has some limitations that should be taken into account. On the one hand, although the ideological variables analyzed are representative of the attitudes that may influence the appreciation of this type of humor, we are aware of the existence of other variables that might also affect both how such humor is perceived and the consequences of being exposed to it. Second, the social context in which participants have been exposed to humor must not be disregarded. For example, being exposed to humor in more realistic contexts (e.g., people telling these jokes or viewing videos of famous comedians) or learning about other people's reactions to this type of humor could moderate its appreciation and social consequences. Based on this, future research should consider the effects of being exposed to this type of humor in more realistic environments, where humor is naturally present. Finally, in relation to the link between the appreciation of subversive humor against sexism and in support of collective actions, we must consider this result only as a first approach to the analysis of

the influence of this type of humor when supporting and/or promoting social change in unequal relations between men and women. Future research, following experimental approaches, should expand on this result to determine the role of this type of humor as an awareness-raising and/or confrontation tool.

### **Funding**

This research was financially supported by the Spanish Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad with research grants PSI2016–79812-P.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

Conflict of interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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**Individual differences in the appreciation and interpretation of  
subversive humor against sexism versus sexist humor: The role of  
feminist identity and hostile sexism**

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**ARTICLE PUBLISHED AS:**

Riquelme, A. R., Carretero-Dios, H., Megías, J. L., & Romero-Sánchez, M. (2021). Individual differences in the appreciation and interpretation of subversive humor against sexism versus sexist humor: The role of feminist identity and hostile sexism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *177*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.110794>

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**Individual differences in the appreciation and interpretation of subversive humor against sexism versus sexist humor: The role of feminist identity and hostile sexism**

**Abstract**

In two studies, we analyzed the differences in the appreciation (i.e., funniness and aversiveness) and interpretation (i.e., criticism of sexism and woman and man disparagement) of subversive humor against sexism compared to sexist humor. In Study 1 ( $n = 202$ ), we used a confirmatory factor analysis to verify the independence of subversive humor and sexist humor. The pattern of relations between feminist identity and the appreciation and interpretation of subversive humor against sexism was the opposite to that found between feminist identity and the appreciation and interpretation of sexist humor. The same happened with the relations between hostile sexism and subversive humor vs. sexist humor. In Study 2 ( $n = 169$ ), we experimentally manipulated the type of humor. The pattern of interactions between type of humor and feminist identity was the opposite to that found between type of humor and hostile sexism. Both studies revealed that the appreciation of subversive humor was higher in more feminist participants but the appreciation of sexist humor was higher in more sexist participants. Participants with the highest levels of feminist identity and the lowest levels of hostile sexism perceived the greatest criticism of sexism in subversive humor and the highest woman disparagement in sexist humor.

**Keywords:** Subversive humor against sexism, sexist humor, feminist identity, hostile sexism, individual differences.

Humor can be used as a subtle way to express prejudice (Ford et al., 2015). In fact, it can be a way to disparage or delegitimize a social group and avoid any reprobation for it, since it is “*just a joke*”. When humor is used this way, it tends to reinforce social hierarchies and asymmetries (Saucier et al., 2016). Yet, humor can also be used to criticize and challenge inequality (Saucier et al., 2018) and become an instrument to subvert the status quo (e.g., Strain et al., 2016).

In fact, humor has actively been used by feminists to counter misogyny and sexism (Case & Lippard, 2009). Although different types of feminism have been identified based on different epistemological and ontological points of view, we have relied upon the ideas of Varela (2008) to conceptualize the former. In this sense, feminism stands as a political theory and social practice based on justice but, equally, as a way of being in the world that implies becoming aware of the discrimination suffered by women and organizing to end it in order to transform the society.

Among the multiple strategies for achieving their goals, feminists have used humor as an empowering tool of confrontation to evince, question, and challenge the status quo derived from the gender roles, attitudes, and stereotypes established by the patriarchy. Humor that is understood in this way has been known as “subversive humor against sexism” or “feminist humor” (Case & Lippard, 2009).

There are many open questions about the nature of feminist humor. One of its most relevant aspects is how it is interpreted by its recipients. For example, is it perceived as humor that questions sexism or as one of the many ways of denigrating women? Given that subversive humor against sexism is presented as a social satire, it can be interpreted ambiguously (Strain et al., 2016) and even be perceived as disparaging instead of as a way to criticize and question sexism. Therefore, it could have similarities with sexist humor (e.g., Mallet et al., 2016).

The interpretative ambiguity of subversive humor has recently been explored focusing on anti-racist (vs. racist) humor. Miller et al. (2019) observed that some individual variables (i.e., the tendency to detect expressions of racial prejudice, the motivation to suppress them, and attitudes about modern racism) predicted the appreciation and interpretation of anti-racist (vs. racist) humor. In fact, the appreciation and interpretation of subversive humor has been associated with attitudes toward the two players involved in this humor: the people who benefit from the discrimination or inequality situation and the people who suffer from it and try to change the situation. Transferring these ideas to the context of feminist humor would mean that its

appreciation and interpretation depend on attitudes toward the oppressed or disadvantaged group (i.e., women) that confronts, criticizes and faces up to the advantaged group (i.e., men) that benefits from the discrimination and inequality situation.

Taking as a reference the results of Miller et al. (2019) regarding anti-racist (vs. racist) humor, the main objective of this research was to explore the appreciation (i.e., funniness and aversiveness) and interpretation (i.e., woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement) of feminist humor (vs. sexist humor) and determine whether the feminist identity and sexist attitudes of perceivers can modulate these perceptions.

### **Disparagement humor: The case of sexist humor**

Disparagement humor is conceptualized as “remarks that (are intended to) elicit amusement through the denigration, derogation, or belittlement of a given target” (Ferguson & Ford, 2008, p.1). A clear example of disparagement humor is sexist humor, which is defined as a type of humor that focuses on the denigration of women.

In this area of study, the prejudiced norm theory (Ford & Ferguson, 2004) is the most valuable framework to understand the process through which men are more tolerant of prejudice against women in a humorous context. This theory postulates that humor activates a ‘rule of levity’ to switch from the usual serious mindset to a non-serious humor mindset for interpreting the message. Thus, receivers who endorse this rule consider that prejudice against women is more acceptable and permissible. It has been reported that, when exposed to this type of humor, men who have sexist attitudes against women are likely to increase their tolerance to gender discrimination at the workplace (Ford, 2000), sexual harassment (Mallet et al., 2016), and sexually violent behaviors toward women (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017).

At this stage, it would be good to ask ourselves whether, just as sexist humor reinforces and maintains gender discrimination, other types of humor lead people to question the patriarchal ideology and gender discrimination and ultimately encourage change by subverting sexism. In this regard, humor could be used as a tool to promote the opposite effects to those of sexist humor without the need to directly face the social costs of criticizing sexism in a serious way (Saucier et al., 2018).

### **Subversive humor against sexism**

Subversive humor is used as a social awareness instrument to evince inequality and try to subvert it (Strain et al., 2016), making it possible to challenge the status quo and relationships of power between privileged and subordinate individuals in a more acceptable and less violent way than using other means to overcome oppression (Holmes & Marra, 2002). It can also be seen as a tool that enables oppressed groups to rebel by reinforcing the links between them.

In the feminist movement, women have used subversive humor to create bonds between them that they can use to question and criticize gender prejudices, stereotypes, and roles (Shifman & Lemish, 2010). Subversive humor against sexism or feminist humor is likely to allow women to laugh at the established social norms and stereotypes that keep them in a disadvantaged situation. By criticizing, exaggerating, and ridiculing these roles and stereotypes, they may be able to redefine reality and propose alternative interpretations aimed at subverting sexism and reaching equality between men and women (Case & Lippard, 2009).

In short, two essential aspects should be highlighted in the conceptualization of feminist humor: 1) it is humor related to women, to the extent that they are the main protagonists in the production and dissemination of this type of humor, 2) and it is used as a tool for situational and social confrontation, whose main objective is to subvert gender asymmetries and inequalities at the interpersonal and social levels (Riquelme et al., 2019).

Subversive humor against sexism has gained importance in feminist movements and received much theoretical attention. However, empirical studies about this type of humor are practically nonexistent to date. Recently, studies such as those conducted by Riquelme et al. (2019) have obtained evidence supporting the empirical entity of this type of humor. However, despite these findings, there is still a need to clarify how feminist humor is interpreted by recipients, among other issues. In this regard, Vidmar and Rokeach (1974) already argued that more prejudiced individuals were particularly prone to interpret subversive humor in the opposite way as that intended, that is, as a way of denigrating instead of subverting. The reason for this may be that this type of humor shows the prejudice present in society as a social satire; this means that it should be processed transcending the information included in the joke and thus recognizing the prejudiced social reality it criticizes (Strain et al., 2016).

The interpretive ambiguity of this type of humor is also influenced by its format, which together with individuals' prejudice can make the content represented to be misinterpreted. For example, in subversive humor against sexism, a joke or humorous situation itself represents both the sexist element that is criticized (e.g., the household tasks are essentially performed by women) and the satirical criticism of this sexist element (i.e., the subversive component of humor). In this example, the defense of the sexist element is played by the powerful group (i.e., men) and the satirical criticism is played by the disadvantaged group (i.e., women).

Due to its interpretive peculiarity, it is possible that subversive humor can be misinterpreted. Thus, individuals high in sexist prejudice may focus only on the part in which the woman challenges the man and consider that the man is being denigrated. This may even reinforce their prejudice against women and function in a similar manner to sexist humor. Conversely, individuals high in feminist attitudes would best extract the global critical message of subversive humor. However, these people would also be more sensitive to the situation of inequality or denigration represented in the subversive humor. Therefore, there could be a greater probability that they focus more on the denigration received by the woman than on the confrontation that she enacts. In this line of analysis, Saucier et al. (2018) exposed participants to anti-racist subversive humor (vs. racist humor vs. neutral humor). They found that 15 of the 50 participants exposed to the subversive humor condition misinterpreted this type of humor by perceiving it as disparaging.

### **Individual differences**

It has been recently observed that the misinterpretation of subversive humor seems to depend on the individual attitudes of recipients. Miller et al. (2019) measured the appreciation (i.e., funniness and aversiveness) and interpretation of anti-racist (vs. racist) subversive humor. Their results showed that participants' tendency to detect expressions of prejudice and also their motivation to eliminate them were associated with less favorable responses to racist humor (i.e., it was seen as less funny and more racist) and more positive responses to anti-racist subversive humor (i.e., it was seen as funnier and more anti-racist). By contrast, participants with more favorable attitudes toward modern racism were associated with a more positive perception of racist humor and a more negative perception of anti-racist subversive humor.

These results of Miller et al. (2019) about racist (vs. anti-racist) humor underline the importance of considering that individual attitudes can also affect the interpretation of subversive humor against sexism (vs. sexist humor). The study of such attitudes is likely to reveal individual differences in the appreciation and interpretation of feminist (vs. sexist) humor and also to show whether both types of humor can be considered as independent humor types based on the responses of recipients.

Following this logic, we considered feminist identity and hostile sexism as variables of individual differences that are particularly relevant to explore the appreciation and interpretation of feminist (vs. sexist) humor. Redford et al. (2018) argue that feminist identity is associated with feminist behaviors and beliefs whose ultimate purpose is to subvert social asymmetries between men and women. By contrast, hostile sexism is considered to include favorable beliefs on male power and status (Glick & Fiske, 1996). According to Radke et al. (2016), hostile sexism reduces individuals' awareness of social sexism and their intentions to take action to subvert sexism.

### **The present research**

The aim of the present research was to analyze the appreciation (i.e., funniness and aversiveness) and interpretation (i.e., woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement) of subversive humor against sexism (vs. sexist humor) taking as a reference the possible influence of participants' feminist identity and hostile sexism. Due to its interpretative peculiarity (Strain et al., 2016), subversive humor may even be perceived as disparaging and thus similar to sexist humor; therefore, at an empirical level (i.e., factor analysis), subversive and sexist humor may be a single humor category. In the case of sexist humor, the content of each joke/vignette was based on highlighting and making fun of a set of physical, psychological, or social stereotypes and prejudices against women (e.g., women only think about clothes). On the other hand, subversive humor against sexism presents different scenarios based on stereotypes and prejudices against women (e.g., unequal gender division of housekeeping or obligation of women to wax) where a situation of discrimination against women will be represented and, in turn, a woman will confront it with humorous responses.

It should be noted that previous studies have provided the first empirical data on the influence of individual variables on the appreciation of feminist humor (e.g., Gallivan, 1992; Stillion & White, 1987). Yet, these studies had a number of limitations



that we have tried to overcome in our research. For example, Gallivan (1992) used cartoons or slogans from feminist products, without verifying whether this type of material could be classified as feminist humor or empirically differed from other types of humor. In addition, the appreciation of feminist humor has only been based on funniness ratings (e.g., Stillon & White, 1987). However, assessing the appreciation of non-neutral humorous material only based on the funniness it elicits is incomplete. Aversiveness ratings make it possible to account for a variance not covered by funniness ratings (see Carretero-Dios et al., 2010). This is particularly relevant when exploring the relationship between humor appreciation and variables of individual ideological differences (Ruch, 2001).

Continuing with the limitations of previous studies, it is worth noting that studies assessing feminist identity in relation to humor appreciation have only used one single item in which participants reported to what extent they considered themselves feminists. In this regard, Leach et al. (2008) argued that feminist identity should be addressed as a construct that is one-dimensional but includes several components that must be included in the assessment. In the current research, following Leach et al. (2008), we measured solidarity and centrality as components of the feminist identification of perceivers, which implied a more comprehensive measurement.

### Study 1

The main objectives of Study 1 were to empirically explore the independence of the underlying psychological constructs pertaining to this research (i.e., subversive humor against sexism vs. sexist humor) and explore the relationship patterns between both types of humor and a) feminist identity and b) hostile sexism.

Our analysis of both types of humor was based on participants' responses in relation to humor appreciation and interpretation. Humor appreciation can be defined by means of two orthogonal dimensions that group responses with a positive valence (*funniness*) and a negative valence (*aversiveness*) (Ruch & Hehl, 2007). Moreover, to explore the interpretation of humor, we assessed to what extent subversive humor and sexist humor were interpreted as a way of denigrating women, of criticizing sexism, or of denigrating men.

The main function of subversive humor is to confront prejudice (Strain et al., 2016). Interestingly, this type of humor depicts women who are in discriminatory situations and confront such discrimination. Given that people with a more feminist

identity tend to perceive of expressions of prejudice against women to a greater extent (Leaper & Arias, 2011), they can be expected to be more sensitive to the discriminatory information about women included in subversive humor. They should therefore be more likely to detect the criticism of sexism included in this humor category. This is because they have a greater feminist consciousness and therefore support feminist beliefs aimed at subverting sexism more than other people (Redford et al., 2018). This, in turn, is likely to make these people perceive confrontation as a means to end sexism and achieve gender equality and therefore not to consider that men are being denigrated.

We expected to find empirical support for our first hypothesis: that the assessments of subversive humor and sexist humor would cluster into two different factors. Furthermore, if the ultimate goal of subversive humor is to subvert sexism by criticizing and questioning it, it is logical to expect a more feminist identity to be associated with a greater appreciation of subversive humor (Gallivan, 1992; Stillion & White, 1987). Conversely, we expected more hostile sexist attitudes to be associated with a lower appreciation of this type of humor (Hypothesis 2.1). We also expected to find a positive relationship between feminist identity and the degree to which individuals consider that feminist humor denigrates women and criticizes sexism, and a negative relationship between feminist identity and the perception that this type of humor denigrates men (Hypothesis 2.2.). In relation to hostile sexism, it is logical to expect the opposite, that is, that individuals higher in hostile sexism are less sensitive to the component of criticism of sexism present in feminist humor and tend to perceive a greater denigration of men in this type of humor. We did not expect to find any relationships between hostile sexism and responses to the question about whether feminist humor denigrated women.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

In the context of a power analysis, we consider correlations of 0.10, 0.20, and 0.30 as relatively small, typical, and relatively large (Gignac & Szodorai, 2016). Sample size was determined a-priori and calculated using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009), which determined that the minimum required sample size for bivariate correlations was 191 in order to capture Pearson's  $r$  effect size = 0.20 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 80% power. Using the same software, in respect of the preliminary analyses based on the gender differences in attitudinal variables the required sample size was determined to be 120 to conduct one-way ANOVAs with gender as the inter-group independent variable ( $f$  effect size 0.25

( $\eta^2 = 0.06$ ), power 0.80,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Finally, the minimum required sample size for repeated measures ANOVAs with type of humor as the intra-group independent variable and gender as the inter-group variable was 98 ( $f$  effect size 0.25 ( $\eta^2 = 0.06$ ), power 0.80,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

Moreover, following Batista-Foguet et al. (2004), we decided to require a minimum of 200 participants to perform a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The sample comprised 220 undergraduate students from a range of disciplines. Data from 18 participants were excluded from the analyses: 5 participants did not return the booklet, 10 participants reported that Spanish was not their native language, and 3 participants did not complete the study. The final sample was composed of 202 undergraduate students (100 women and 102 men). The age of females ranged between 18 and 43 years ( $M = 22.32$ ;  $SD = 3.89$ ); the age of males ranged between 18 and 39 years ( $M = 22.45$ ;  $SD = 3.81$ ).

### ***Instruments***

We presented participants with two supposedly different studies with a booklet divided into two parts. The first part contained 5 subversive humor against sexism stimuli from a battery empirically analyzed by Riquelme et al. (2019) and 5 sexist humorous stimuli from a battery by Romero-Sánchez et al. (2017) ([see the supplementary material for the jokes in their English translation](#)). Jokes and cartoons were presented randomly; we assessed their funniness (subversive humor:  $\alpha = .71$ ,  $\omega = .72$ ; and sexist humor:  $\alpha = .81$ ,  $\omega = .82$ ) and aversiveness (subversive humor:  $\alpha = .77$ ,  $\omega = .78$ ; sexist humor:  $\alpha = .90$ ,  $\omega = .90$ ) on two 5-point Likert scales from 0 (*not at all funny/not at all aversive*) to 4 (*very funny/very aversive*). Moreover, for each joke or cartoon, we used a 5-point Likert scale (from 0 = *totally disagree* to 4 = *totally agree*) to assess how participants perceived they depicted woman disparagement (i.e., in this joke/vignette women are denigrated) (subversive humor:  $\alpha = .80$ ,  $\omega = .81$ ; sexist humor:  $\alpha = .83$ ,  $\omega = .83$ ), criticism of sexism (i.e., in this joke/vignette sexism against women is criticized) (subversive humor against sexism:  $\alpha = .78$ ,  $\omega = .80$ ; and sexist humor:  $\alpha = .92$ ,  $\omega = .92$ ), or man disparagement (i.e., in this joke/vignette men are denigrated) (subversive humor:  $\alpha = .81$ ,  $\omega = .82$ ; and sexist humor:  $\alpha = .68$ ,  $\omega = .70$ ).

In the second part, participants had to complete the following inventories and scales:

***Multicomponent Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008).*** Scale items assessing solidarity (i.e., the feeling of a psychological link with ingroup members) and centrality (i.e., central ingroup aspect in self-concept) were used. The six items had a Likert-type response format (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = totally agree). The scale used was adapted to evaluate identification with feminists since the original scale measures ingroup identification in general (e.g., solidarity: “I feel solidarity with [feminists]”), (e.g., centrality: “The fact that I am [a feminist] is an important part of my identity”). A total mean score of feminist identification was used ( $\alpha = .94$ ,  $\omega = .95$ ). A principal axis factor analysis showed a unique factor with an eigenvalue of 4.81. All items loaded strongly on this unique factor (with factor loadings  $> .79$ ), and the explained variance was 76.37%.

***Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Expósito et al., 1998).*** We focused on the hostile sexism subscale. The subscale comprised 11 items with statements such as “Women seek to gain power by getting control over men” ( $\alpha = .93$ ,  $\omega = .93$ ). Participants indicated their agreement with each statement on a 6-point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Principal axis factor analysis showed a unique factor with an eigenvalue of 6.36. Loadings were  $> .65$ , and the explained variance was 57.81%.

### ***Procedure***

Potential participants were approached in several libraries of a university in southern Spain and asked if they accepted to take part in the study voluntarily. They did not receive any monetary or academic compensation for their participation. They were instructed to participate in two allegedly unrelated studies without being informed of the specific topics of the research (i.e., feminism, sexism). Participants first read 10 jokes and cartoons (5 subversive and 5 sexist ones) and rated the funniness, aversiveness, woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement of each one. Later, participants completed the Multicomponent Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008) and the Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Expósito et al., 1998). Finally, they completed a sociodemographic questionnaire (i.e., sex, age, nationality, native language, university degree, and sexual orientation) and were thanked for their participation and fully debriefed about the goals of our research.

## Results

### *Preliminary analyses*

Two one-way ANOVAs with gender as the independent variable and feminist identity or hostile sexism as the dependent variable showed that women's feminist identity scores ( $M = 5.40$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ) were higher than men's feminist identity scores ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ),  $F(1, 200) = 26.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ , and that hostile sexism was higher in the case of men ( $M = 1.42$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) than in the case of women ( $M = 0.74$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ),  $F(1, 200) = 25.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ . Feminist identity correlated negatively with hostile sexism ( $r = -.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *Appreciation and interpretation of feminist humor versus sexist humor*

We performed a CFA using the Mplus 7.11 statistical package (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) to test the dimensional independence between the underlying psychological constructs of both types of humor explored. We estimated the parameters for the CFA model with the MLR estimation procedure. We assessed model fit using the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI). RMSEA values less than or equal to .05 and CFI and TLI values greater than or equal to .95 were considered evidence of acceptable fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). We tested two different models based on the single items (Table 1): a one-factor model composed of all the humorous stimuli (Model 1); and a two-factor model composed of subversive humor against sexism vs. sexist humor (Model 2).

**Table 1***Confirmatory factor analysis of humor appreciation and interpretation*

Funniness				
Models	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1	386.785 (35)	0.120	-0.132	0.225 [0.205 0.245]
Model 2	48.36 (34)	0.964	0.952	0.046 [0.000 0.074]
Aversiveness				
Models	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1	148.222 (35)	0.832	0.756	0.140 [0.118 0.163]
Model 2	58.092 (34)	0.960	0.940	0.070 [0.042 0.096]
Woman disparagement				
Models	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1	167.036 (35)	0.763	0.667	0.147 [0.126 0.170]
Model 2	44.622 (34)	0.976	0.965	0.047 [0.000 0.077]
Criticism of sexism				
Models	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1	158.222 (35)	0.802	0.726	0.142 [0.128 0.174]
Model 2	58.055 (34)	0.968	0.957	0.060 [0.032 0.086]

Models	Man disparagement			
	$\chi^2(df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1	73.612 (35)	0.863	0.818	0.077 [0.053 0.102]
Model 2	40.80 (34)	0.973	0.963	0.035 [0.000 0.066]

Note.  $N = 202$ ; males  $N = 102$ ; females  $N = 100$ .

CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval. Model 1 = one-factor model composed of all the humorous stimuli. Model 2 = two-factor model composed of sexist humor vs. subversive humor against sexism.

As shown on Table 1, the CFA confirmed that the structure defined by the two original factors (i.e., subversive humor and sexist humor) showed the best model fit in the sample for all mean scores. This finding corroborated that the items were grouped in the predicted directions according to Hypothesis 1. The standardized factor loadings for subversive humor against sexism were appropriate for all the appreciation and interpretation responses to humor (funny: from .40 to .76; aversiveness: from .56 to .71; woman disparagement: from .52 to .73; criticism of sexism: from .62 to .82; man disparagement: from .58 to .76). In the case of sexist humor, standardized factor loadings were also appropriate (funny: from .51 to .89; aversiveness: from .64 to .88; woman disparagement: from .56 to .79; criticism of sexism: from .65 to .89; man disparagement: from .55 to .66). Modification indices as reported by Mplus did not reveal any significant secondary factor loadings.

Descriptive statistics by gender and type of humor, for funny, aversiveness, woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement, are presented in Table 2. We conducted repeated measures ANOVAs with type of humor as the intra-group independent variable and with gender as the inter-group variable, and the results may also be observed in Table 2.

**Table 2***Descriptive statistics of humor responses by type of humor and gender*

Measures	Subversive humor			Sexist humor			ANOVA effects			Humor	
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Funniness	1.78 (0.81)	1.60 (0.90)	1.96 (1.01)	0.81 (0.94)	1.29 (1.04)	0.32 (0.48)	10.33	.002	0.05	143.99	<.001
Aversive.	1.23 (0.99)	1.11 (0.98)	1.34 (1.05)	2.79 (1.19)	2.28 (1.26)	3.31 (0.83)	27.77	<.001	0.12	358.60	<.001
Woman D.	1.48 (1.12)	1.23 (1.06)	1.73 (1.13)	3.29 (0.85)	3.06 (0.88)	3.52 (0.75)	17.54	<.001	0.08	582.09	<.001
Criticism	2.73 (0.99)	2.49 (1.02)	2.96 (0.92)	1.43 (1.45)	1.20 (1.29)	1.67 (1.57)	13.67	<.001	0.06	117.34	<.001
Man D.	0.76 (0.86)	0.88 (0.98)	0.63 (0.70)	0.21 (0.43)	0.31 (0.54)	0.10 (0.23)	8.40	.004	0.04	101.95	<.001

*Note.* *N* = 202; males *N* = 102; females *N* = 100.

Aversive. = Aversiveness, Woman D. = Woman disparagement, Criticism = Criticism of sexism, Man D. = Man disparagement.



As shown Table 2, subversive humor against sexism received higher funniness scores and lower aversiveness scores than sexist humor. Moreover, perceived criticism of sexism and man disparagement was higher in subversive humor, while woman disparagement was perceived as greater in sexist humor. With respect to the type of humor x gender interactions, these were only statistically significant on funniness and aversiveness scores. Specifically, females evoked greater funniness than males in the case of subversive humor,  $F(1, 199) = 6.75, p = .01, \eta^2 = 0.03$ , while males evoked greater funniness than females in the case of sexist humor,  $F(1, 199) = 70.87, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.26$ . In addition, aversiveness scores in regard to sexist humor were higher for females than males,  $F(1, 199) = 46.48, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.18$ . However, gender differences were not found in the aversiveness responses pertaining to subversive humor,  $F(1, 199) = 2.81, p = .09, \eta^2 = 0.01$ .

With consideration to our results concerning the gender effects on attitudinal variables and humor responses, subsequent analyses were carried out controlling for gender. The results shown concerning the gender role in the humor responses (Carretero-Dios et al., 2010; Kochersberger et al., 2014) or attitudinal variables (e.g., Riquelme et al., 2019) are in line with previous research. Partial correlations (controlling for gender) between all of the humor appreciation and interpretation variables are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3***Partial correlations between humor responses (controlling for gender)*

Measures	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Subversive humor								
(1) Funniness	1.78	0.97	–					
(2) Aversiveness	1.23	0.99	-.44**	–				
(3) Woman disparagement	1.48	1.12	-.16	.64**	–			
(4) Criticism of sexism	2.73	0.99	.22*	-.07	.19	–		
(5) Man disparagement	0.75	0.86	-.18	.35**	.09	-.20*	–	
Sexist humor								
(6) Funniness	0.81	0.94	.17	-.02	-.22*	-.31**	.30**	–
(7) Aversiveness	2.79	1.19	.02	.37**	.45**	.42**	-.03	-.45**
(8) Woman disparagement	3.30	0.85	-.02	.21*	.42**	.58**	.01	-.45**
(9) Criticism of sexism	1.43	1.45	-.07	.35**	.58**	.07	.12	-.05
(10) Man disparagement	0.21	0.43	.05	.30**	.12	-.22*	.43**	.25**

*Note.*  $N = 202$ ; males  $N = 102$ ; females  $N = 100$ .

*Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons with a significance threshold  $\leq 0.005$ . \*  $p < .005$  two-tailed \*\*  $p < .001$ , two-tailed.*

As shown in Table 3, funniness evoked by subversive humor correlated negatively with aversiveness to this type of humor ( $r = -.44, p < .001$ ) and positively with the interpretation that subversive humor's main objective is to criticize sexism ( $r = .22, p = .002$ ). Funniness scores for subversive humor did not correlate significantly with any sexist humor response. On the other hand, aversiveness evoked by subversive humor correlated positively with the perception of woman disparagement ( $r = .64, p < .001$ ) and of man disparagement ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ) concerning subversive humor. Moreover, aversiveness to subversive humor correlated positively with: aversiveness ( $r = .37, p < .001$ ), woman disparagement ( $r = .21, p = .003$ ), man disparagement ( $r = .30, p < .001$ ), and criticism of sexism ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ). Lastly, higher criticism of sexism scores for subversive humor was associated with lower perceived man disparagement ( $r = -.20, p = .004$ ) regarding this type of humor. At the same time, higher scores on criticism of sexism with respect to subversive humor were associated with greater aversiveness ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ) and greater woman disparagement ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ) regarding sexist humor.

***Relationship between humor and attitudinal variable***

Partial correlations between humor and attitudinal variables controlling for gender can be observed in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Partial correlations between attitudinal variables and humor (controlling for gender)*

Attitudes	Subversive humor again sexism				Criticism of sexism
	Funniness	Aversiveness	Woman disparagement	Sexist humor	
Feminist identity	.30**	-.15	.10		.46**
Hostile sexism	-.16	.08	-.18		-.52**
Attitudes	Sexist humor				Criticism of sexism
	Funniness	Aversiveness	Woman disparagement	Sexist humor	
Feminist identity	-.34**	.31**	.34**		-.01
Hostile sexism	.49**	-.37**	-.43**		.10

*Note.*  $N = 202$ ; males  $N = 102$ ; females  $N = 100$ .

*Critic. of sexism = criticism of sexism. Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons with a significance threshold  $\leq .01$ . \*  $p < .05$ .*

Feminist identity (Likert scale 1-7); hostile sexism (Likert scale 0-5).

In keeping with Hypothesis 2.1, we found an opposite pattern of relationships between feminist identity and hostile sexism in responses on appreciation and interpretation of subversive humor (vs. sexist humor). As shown on Table 4, the higher the feminist identity of participants, the higher their appreciation of subversive humor (i.e., higher funniness and lower aversiveness). We found the opposite trend between hostile sexism and the funniness and aversiveness of subversive humor, although it did not reach statistical significance (Hypothesis 2.1). We ran Meng et al.'s *Z* tests (see Diedenhofen & Musch, 2015) to compare the pairs of correlation coefficients. The *Z* test indicated significant differences among the pairs of correlation coefficients between each humor appreciation response and feminist identity or hostile sexism (funniness:  $Z = 5.06, p < .001, [0.288 - 0.653]$ ; aversiveness:  $Z = -2.89, p = .003, [-0.388 - -0.746]$ ). The pattern of results for the relationships between attitudinal variables and the appreciation of sexist humor was the opposite to that observed for subversive humor. Meng et al.'s *Z* test again indicated significant differences between these correlation coefficients ( $ps < .001$ ).

Concerning humor interpretation (Hypothesis 2.2), feminist identity was positively correlated with the perceived criticism of sexism in subversive humor ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ) and negatively correlated with the perceived man disparagement in this type of humor ( $r = -.33, p < .001$ ). The correlation between feminist identity and woman disparagement in subversive humor was positive but not statistically significant ( $r = .10, p = .15$ ). Hostile sexism correlated positively with perceived man disparagement in subversive humor ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ) and negatively with the perceived criticism of sexism of this type of humor ( $r = -.52, p < .001$ ). Moreover, its relationship with woman disparagement was not statistically significant ( $r = -.18, p = .010$ ). Meng et al.'s *Z* test showed significant differences between all the pairs of correlation coefficients between each humor interpretation response to subversive humor and feminist identity or hostile sexism (women disparagement:  $Z = 3.66, p < .001, [0.131 - 0.433]$ ; criticism of sexism:  $Z = 10.47, p < .001, [0.872 - 1.274]$ ; man disparagement:  $Z = -8.96, p < .001, [-0.863 - -0.553]$ ).

As regards sexist humor, the most relevant results were related to woman disparagement and man disparagement. Specifically, we found a positive correlation between woman disparagement and feminist identity ( $r = .34, p < .001$ ) and a negative correlation between woman disparagement and hostile sexism ( $r = -.43, p < .001$ ). We found the opposite pattern for man disparagement, that is, a negative relationship with

feminist identity ( $r = -.27, p < .001$ ) and a positive relationship with hostile sexism ( $r = .28, p < .001$ ). Meng et al.'s  $Z$  test again showed significant differences between these pairs of correlation coefficients ( $ps < .001$ ).

### Discussion

The results of Study 1 provide relevant insight on the appreciation and interpretation of subversive humor against sexism (vs. sexist humor). As expected according to Hypothesis 1, the CFA corroborated the differentiation between subversive humor and sexist humor for each of the responses considered in the study (i.e., funniness, aversiveness, woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement). In addition, subversive humor (vs. sexist humor) was perceived as being more critical of sexism, less disparaging of women, and more disparaging of men.

As expected, regarding *humor appreciation* (Hypothesis 2.1) we observed that a more feminist identity was associated with a greater appreciation of subversive humor (Gallivan, 1992; Riquelme et al., 2019). By contrast, more hostile sexist attitudes were associated with a greater appreciation of sexist humor (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017). As regards the *interpretation of humor* (Hypothesis 2.2), a higher feminist identity was associated mainly with a higher perceived criticism of sexism and lower man disparagement in this type of humor. By contrast, higher hostile sexist attitudes were associated with a higher perceived man disparagement and a lower criticism of sexism in subversive humor. This finding suggests that people with higher levels of feminist identity are more able to see subversive humor as an attempt to criticize and question sexism and gender roles and stereotypes and not as a direct way of denigrating men but rather of criticizing their privileged status and their social advantages. In addition, the results obtained on hostile sexism could indicate that people higher in hostile sexism focus their attention on man disparagement.

To obtain greater insight on the effects generated regarding the appreciation and interpretation of the types of humor explored, we conducted Study 2 with a between-group manipulation of type of humor. We chose this methodological approach to analyze the potential moderating role of attitudinal variables on the expected effects of this type of humor on appreciation and interpretation responses.

### Study 2

The main objective of this study was to analyze the effects of being exposed to subversive humor against sexism (vs. sexist humor) on its appreciation and interpretation exploring whether such effects could be moderated by feminist identity

and hostile sexism. Considering the results of Study 1, we formulated the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* As regards the main effects of type of humor, subversive humor, by comparison with sexist humor, will be assessed as being funnier, less aversive, less woman disparaging, more critical of sexism, and more man disparaging.

*Hypothesis 2:* With respect to interaction effects, we will find opposite interaction patterns between type of humor (i.e., subversive humor against sexism vs. sexist humor) and attitudinal variables (i.e., feminist identity and hostile sexism). Participants exposed to subversive humor (vs. sexist humor) with a more feminist identity (or lower hostile sexism) will perceive greater funniness, lower aversiveness, a greater criticism of sexism, and lower man disparagement. These moderating effects will not be observed in responses regarding woman disparagement (Hypothesis 2.1). Participants exposed to sexist humor (vs. subversive humor) with a more feminist identity (or lower hostile sexism) will report less funniness, greater aversiveness, and higher woman disparagement. We will not find any significant effects regarding criticism of sexism and man disparagement (Hypothesis 2.2).

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

Using G\*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009), we calculated a sample size of 128 for a small-to-medium effect size of  $f = .25$ , a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$ , and a power of .80 (two groups, between-subject design with type of humor as independent variable and gender as covariate). Furthermore, to verify the equivalence of humor conditions in attitudinal variables through ANOVAs 2 (type of humor: subversive humor vs. sexist humor) x 2 (gender: male vs. female), the required sample size was 128 ( $f$  effect size 0.25 ( $\eta^2 = 0.06$ ), power 0.80,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Minimum sample size requirements were based on a goal of 30 participants per cell (Simmons et al., 2011) to test interaction considering feminist identity and hostile sexism as moderator variables. Data from 15 participants were excluded from the analysis: 8 participants reported that Spanish was not their native language, 4 participants did not return the booklet and 3 participants did not complete the study. The final sample consisted of 169 undergraduate students from a range of disciplines (88 women, 81 men). The age of females ranged between 18 and 39 years ( $M = 21.54$ ;  $SD = 3.09$ ), while the age of males ranged between 18 and 35 years ( $M = 22.94$ ;  $SD = 3.91$ ).

### ***Instruments***

We created a booklet in which the first section included scales related to ideological variables and the second one included the experimental manipulation with questions to assess appreciation and interpretation of humor.

***Ideological variables.*** We used the same instruments as in Study 1: the Multicomponent Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008) ( $\alpha = .94$ ,  $\omega = .94$ ) to assess feminist identification and the Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Expósito et al., 1998) to assess hostile sexism ( $\alpha = .90$ ,  $\omega = .91$ ).

***Experimental manipulation.*** We used the same 5 subversive and 5 sexist jokes as in Study 1.

***Appreciation and interpretation of humor.*** All reliability indices were adequate. In subversive humor against sexism: funniness,  $\alpha = .68/\omega = .70$ ; aversiveness,  $\alpha = .78/\omega = .79$ ; woman disparagement,  $\alpha = .73/\omega = .75$ ; criticism of sexism,  $\alpha = .77/\omega = .78$ ; man disparagement,  $\alpha = .60/\omega = .62$ . In sexist humor: funniness,  $\alpha = .80/\omega = .80$ ; aversiveness,  $\alpha = .92/\omega = .92$ ; woman disparagement,  $\alpha = .81/\omega = .82$ ; criticism of sexism,  $\alpha = .93/\omega = .93$ ; man disparagement,  $\alpha = .89/\omega = .90$ .

### ***Procedure***

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions (i.e., subversive humor against sexism vs. sexist humor). Thus, type of humor was the independent variable, and hostile sexism and feminist identity were measured as individual difference variables. The dependent variables were the questions related to appreciation (i.e., funniness and aversiveness) and interpretation of humor (i.e., woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement).

Participants were approached in several university libraries of a university in southern Spain. First, they were instructed to participate in a study on attitudes and opinions about different society issues by completing the Multicomponent Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008) and the Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Expósito et al., 1998). Second, participants were told they would participate in an allegedly unrelated study to obtain their opinion on humorous material (subversive or sexist jokes and cartoons). Finally, they were invited to complete a questionnaire including sociodemographic information (similar to Study 1) and were thanked and debriefed.



## Results

### *Preliminary analyses*

To verify the equivalence of humor conditions in attitudinal variables, we conducted separate 2 (type of humor: subversive humor vs. sexist humor) x 2 (gender: male vs. female) ANOVAs of feminist identity and hostile sexism. We estimated effect size calculating partial eta-squared ( $\eta^2 \geq 0.01/0.06/0.13$  indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988).

Feminist identity did not differ between groups (subversive humor condition,  $M = 5.23$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ; sexist humor condition,  $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ),  $F(1, 164) = 0.18$ ,  $p = .67$ ). Feminist identity was higher in females ( $M = 5.83$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ) than in males ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ),  $F(1, 164) = 45.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.22$ . No interactions between type of humor and gender predicted responses in the scale of feminist identity,  $F(1, 164) = 0.30$ ,  $p = 0.58$ . In addition, there were no statistically significant differences in participants' hostile sexism between both types of humor,  $F(1, 165) = 0.53$ ,  $p = 0.47$  (subversive humor,  $M = .96$ ,  $SD = .82$ ; sexist humor,  $M = 1.09$ ,  $SD = .93$ ). Hostile sexism was higher in males ( $M = 1.39$ ,  $SD = .95$ ) than in females ( $M = .69$ ,  $SD = .67$ ),  $F(1, 165) = 30.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.15$ . No interactions between type of humor and gender predicted responses on hostile sexism,  $F(1, 165) = 1.27$ ,  $p = .26$ . Hostile sexism correlated negatively with feminist identity ( $r = -.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *Subversive humor versus sexist humor*

We conducted separate one-way ANOVAs considering type of humor as a between-subject factor for its appreciation and interpretation. In all cases, gender was considered as a covariate.

Funniness responses reported by participants were significantly higher in subversive humor ( $M = 1.76$ ;  $SD = 0.95$ ) than sexist humor ( $M = 0.65$ ;  $SD = 0.83$ ),  $F(1, 163) = 66.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.29$ . Moreover, participants found sexist humor to be more aversive ( $M = 3.06$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ ) than subversive humor ( $M = 1.13$ ;  $SD = 0.99$ ),  $F(1, 163) = 160.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.50$ . As regards the interpretation responses, participants perceived more woman disparagement in sexist humor ( $M = 3.19$ ;  $SD = 0.83$ ) than in subversive humor ( $M = 1.37$ ;  $SD = 1.02$ ),  $F(1, 165) = 176.282$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.52$ . They also perceived more criticism of sexism in subversive humor ( $M = 2.84$ ;  $SD = 0.97$ ) than in sexist humor ( $M = 1.71$ ;  $SD = 1.45$ ),  $F(1, 165) = 34.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.17$ . They perceived more man disparagement in subversive humor ( $M = 0.64$ ;  $SD = 0.63$ ) than in

sexist humor ( $M = 0.30$ ;  $SD = 0.73$ ),  $F(1, 164) = 11.42$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.06$ . All these results were in line with our Hypothesis 1.

#### ***Appreciation and interpretation of humor as a function of attitudinal variables***

Using the PROCESS macro, we conducted several moderation analyses (model 1) with type of humor as the independent variable and feminist identity and hostile sexism as moderators, respectively. Dependent variables were scores in funniness, aversiveness, woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement. Gender was introduced as a covariate. We calculated the standardized effect size  $f^2$  for the interaction between type of humor and ideology. It provides information on the magnitude of the interaction ( $\geq 0.02/0.15/0.35$  indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988) on the basis of the change in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta f^2$ ) in small/medium/large ( $\geq 0.02/0.15/0.35$ ) effects (Cohen, 1988).

***Interaction effects.*** In keeping with Hypothesis 2, we found statistically significant interactions between type of humor and feminist identity in responses on funniness ( $b = 0.41$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = 4.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CI [0.23, 0.58]$ ,  $\Delta f^2 = 0.08$ ), aversiveness ( $b = -0.44$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = -4.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $95\% CI [-0.64, -0.25]$ ,  $\Delta f^2 = 0.05$ ), perceived woman disparagement ( $b = -0.19$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = -2.08$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $95\% CI [-0.37, -0.009]$ ,  $\Delta f^2 = 0.01$ ), and criticism of sexism, ( $b = 0.29$ ,  $SE = 0.12$ ,  $t = 2.43$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $95\% CI [0.06, 0.53]$ ,  $\Delta f^2 = 0.03$ ). The interaction between type of humor and feminist identity was not significant for man disparagement scores ( $b = -0.09$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = -1.26$ ,  $p = 0.21$ ,  $95\% CI [-0.22, 0.50]$ ).

As regards significant interactions, higher (vs. lower) feminist identifiers assessed subversive humor as being funnier ( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = 2.06$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $95\% CI [0.005, 0.30]$ ). By contrast, higher (vs. lower) feminist identifiers assessed sexist humor as being less funny ( $\beta = -0.25$ ,  $SE = 0.50$ ,  $t = -4.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $95\% CI [-0.35, -0.15]$ ) (Figure 1a). There were no significant differences in aversiveness between higher and lower feminist identifiers when assessing subversive humor ( $\beta = -0.11$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t = -1.33$ ,  $p = .19$ ,  $95\% CI [-0.27, 0.05]$ ). Yet, participants with higher (vs. lower) feminist identity reported a greater aversiveness of sexist humor ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $SE = 0.70$ ,  $t = 4.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $95\% CI [0.18, 0.44]$ ) (Figure 2a). We found no differences between higher and lower feminist identifiers in perceived woman disparagement in subversive humor ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t = 0.27$ ,  $p = .78$ ,  $95\% CI [-0.13, 0.18]$ ). Yet, higher (vs. lower) feminist identifiers perceived higher woman disparagement in sexist humor ( $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $SE = 0.50$ ,  $t = 4.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $95\% CI [0.11, 0.32]$ ) (Figure 3a). In addition, higher

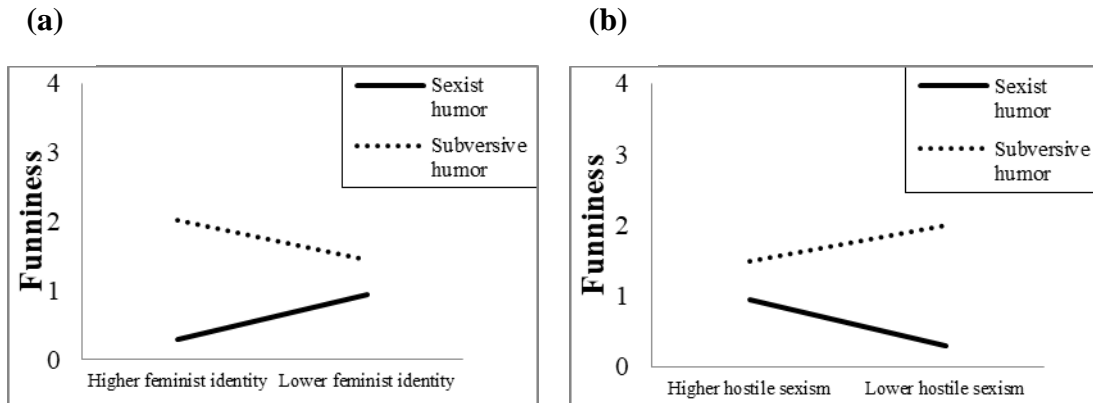
(vs. lower) feminist identifiers perceived a higher criticism of sexism in subversive humor ( $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t = 5.17$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.20, 0.45]). However, we found no differences between higher and lower feminist identifiers in criticism of sexism scores when presented with sexist humor ( $\beta = 0.03$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $t = 0.27$ ,  $p = .78$ , 95% CI [-0.17, 0.23]) (Figure 4a).

Concerning hostile sexism, significant interactions emerged between type of humor and hostile sexism in responses regarding funniness ( $b = -0.64$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ ,  $t = -4.29$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-0.94, 0.35],  $\Delta f^2 = 0.08$ ), aversiveness ( $b = -0.44$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = -4.46$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-0.64, -0.25]),  $\Delta f^2 = 0.04$ ), and criticism of sexism ( $b = -0.83$ ,  $SE = 0.21$ ,  $t = -3.93$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-1.24, -0.41],  $\Delta f^2 = 0.07$ ). Interactions between type of humor and hostile sexism were not significant for woman disparagement ( $b = 0.30$ ,  $SE = 0.16$ ,  $t = 1.89$ ,  $p = 0.06$ , CI [-0.01, 0.62]) or man disparagement ( $b = -0.10$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = -0.89$ ,  $p = 0.37$ , CI [-0.33, 0.12]).

Considering the interactions that were found to be significant in hostile sexism, it should be underlined that participants with higher (vs. lower) hostile sexist beliefs rated subversive humor as being less funny ( $\beta = -0.25$ ,  $SE = 0.12$ ,  $t = -1.97$ ,  $p = .05$ , 95% CI [-0.50, 0.002]). Yet, these participants were those who rated sexist humor as being funnier ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = 4.63$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.23, 0.57]) (Figure 1b). As happened with feminist identity, we found no differences between participants higher and lower in hostile sexism regarding the aversiveness scores of subversive humor ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $SE = 0.13$ ,  $t = 1.03$ ,  $p = .30$ , 95% CI [-0.13, 0.40]). Yet, participants higher (vs. lower) in hostile sexism rated sexist humor as being less aversive ( $\beta = -0.47$ ,  $SE = 0.12$ ,  $t = -4.05$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-0.70, -0.24]) (Figure 2b). These participants reported lower perception that subversive humor was being used to criticize sexism ( $\beta = -0.60$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = -5.33$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [-0.82, -0.38]). When assessing sexist humor, we found no differences between participants higher and lower in hostile sexism in perceived criticism of sexism ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $SE = 0.17$ ,  $t = 1.31$ ,  $p = .19$ , 95% CI [-0.11, 0.56]) (Figure 4b).

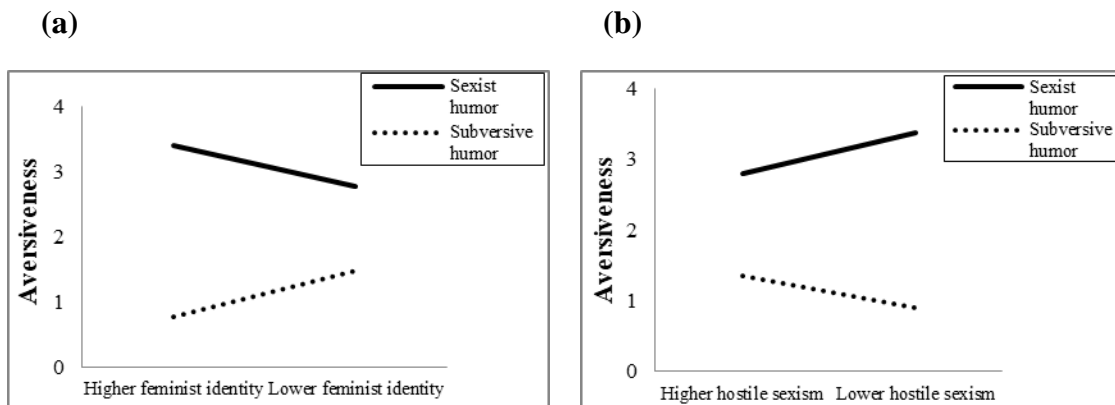
**Figure 1**

*Funniness as a function of ideological variables and type of humor*



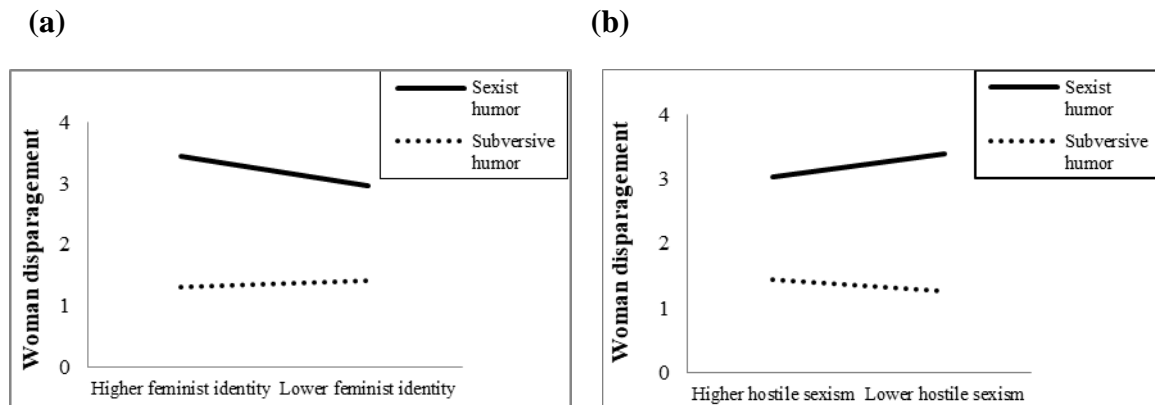
**Figure 2**

*Aversiveness as a function of ideological variables and type of humor*

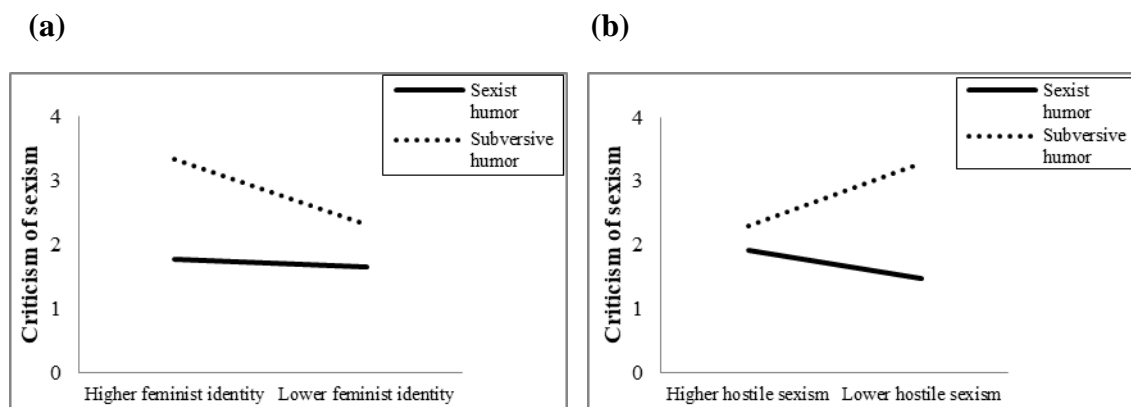


**Figure 3**

*Woman disparagement as a function of ideological variables and type of humor*

**Figure 4**

*Criticism of sexism as a function of ideological variables and type of humor*



## Discussion

In accordance with Hypothesis 1, subversive humor, when compared to sexist humor, was perceived as being funnier, less aversive, less woman disparaging, more critical of sexism, and more man disparaging.

In line with Hypothesis 2.1, as regards subversive humor against sexism, higher funniness was associated with a higher feminist identity and lower hostile sexism. Interestingly, as predicted, participants with higher feminist identity and lower hostile sexism scores perceived greater criticism of sexism in subversive humor.

In support of Hypothesis 2.2, we found the opposite pattern of results for sexist humor: it was considered funnier by participants higher in hostile sexism and lower in feminist identity. In addition, participants with higher feminist identity and lower

hostile sexism scores found greater aversiveness in regard to sexist humor. Moreover, participants with higher feminist identity and lower hostile sexism scores perceived higher denigration of women in sexist humor.

In sum, these findings underline the importance of attitudinal variables in the appreciation and interpretation of subversive humor against sexism versus sexist humor. Specifically, people with higher feminist identity and lower hostile sexism scores made the best interpretation of the contents used to define both types of humor.

### **General Discussion**

The present research was motivated by several open questions on the empirical nature of subversive humor against sexism (Case & Lippard, 2009). Riquelme et al. (2019) argued that, given its interpretative peculiarity, this type of humor can be perceived as an attempt to denigrate the social group it aims to defend rather than as an attempt to criticize its oppressed status (Saucier et al., 2018). Thus, subversive humor against sexism could be considered as a variation of sexist humor. In this regard, the main objective of the present research was to analyze how feminist humor (vs. sexist humor) is appreciated and interpreted and explore how these perceptions may be modulated by the feminist identity and hostile sexism of perceivers.

In Study 1, a CFA corroborated the independence of funniness, aversiveness, woman and man disparagement, and criticism of sexism among subversive humor and sexist humor. It also showed that feminist identity and hostile sexism exhibited an opposite pattern of relationships in the appreciation and interpretation of both types of humor. In Study 2, through a between-group experimental design, we confirmed the opposite interaction pattern between type of humor and the attitudinal variables explored in the prediction of the appreciation and interpretation of humor.

A higher feminist identification is closely related with interiorizing and/or supporting beliefs associated with equality between men and women (Redford et al., 2018). By contrast, a higher hostile sexism is associated with a higher aversion of women based on stereotypical ideas on their individual and social inferiority. In our research, the relationship we found between feminist identity and hostile sexism on one side and the appreciation of subversive (vs. sexist) humor on the other was as expected. Specifically, people with a higher feminist identification tended to report a higher appreciation of this type of humor and a lower appreciation of sexist humor. Conversely and consistent with previous research (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017), a greater

adherence to hostile sexist beliefs was associated with a higher appreciation of sexist humor.

Going one step further, we found an opposite pattern of results regarding the interpretation of subversive humor against sexism and sexist humor (i.e., woman disparagement, criticism of sexism, and man disparagement) as a function of participant ideology (i.e., feminist identity and hostile sexism). The most relevant findings of the present research were that people with a higher feminist identity perceived higher woman disparagement in sexist humor and a greater criticism of sexism in subversive humor. By contrast, participants with a higher adherence of hostile sexism interpreted subversive humor less as a way of criticizing sexism and in turn detected woman denigration less in sexist humor. Moreover, in general, higher hostile sexism led participants to interpret a higher man disparagement.

People with a higher feminist ideology are more aware of gender inequality (Leaper & Arias, 2011) and therefore are more sensitive to the prejudice and discrimination against women present in sexist jokes. In subversive humor against sexism, we did not find a significant relationship between a higher feminist identity and higher perceived woman disparagement. In principle, participants higher in feminist identity could be expected to perceive higher woman disparagement in subversive humor against sexism given that this humorous material is characterized not only by using satire to criticize a given sexist element (i.e., the subversive component of humor) but also by the presence of the sexist element that it aims to criticize. For this reason, people higher in feminist identity may focus on the sexist element present in the joke and perceive it as woman disparagement humor. However, our findings did not go in this direction. In fact, although higher feminist identifiers detected gender discrimination situations more and were more aware of them, they were also those who best interpreted the global message of subversive jokes. Thus, when faced with a subversive joke, they seem to go beyond the perception of woman denigration presented in the narration of the sexist situation (e.g., inequality in heterosexual relationships) and focus essentially on the ultimate objective of this humorous material, that is, to subvert unequal gender relations.

As pointed out by previous studies, when feminist humor is used, it is done with the intention of criticizing and questioning sexism in society (Case & Lippard, 2009; Shifman & Lemish, 2010). In this regard, our results clearly showed that, despite

the ambiguity of this type of humor, people with higher feminist identification had a greater tendency to perceive the criticism of sexism than those higher in hostile sexism.

Finally, in reference to the absence of significant interaction effects on perceived man disparagement, the interpretation of subversive humor by people higher in feminist identity seems to focus on the global message aimed at criticizing sexism. In fact, these people are likely to interpret the confrontation of women present in subversive jokes as a way of ending social sexism; thus, they would not consider that men are being disparaged, even if they are indirectly attacked and criticized. However, our findings about hostile sexism should be highlighted. It was logical to expect participants high in hostile sexism to report a greater perception that men are being disparaged and ridiculed in subversive humor. Yet, interestingly, we found that, regardless of the type of humor presented (i.e., subversive vs. sexist), interiorizing greater hostile sexist attitudes was associated with perceiving greater man disparagement.

### **Limitations and future research directions**

Despite their relevance, these results should be considered along with certain limitations of this research. One of such limitations relates to the sample analyzed: a population of undergraduate students, who have a similar level of studies and age range. Previous studies on sexist humor have revealed that older people perceive this type of humor as less funny and more aversive compared to younger people (LaFrance & Woodzika, 1998). Future studies should be conducted with a more heterogeneous population in terms of age and other sociodemographic variables to be able to better generalize the results obtained.

Second, it is important to mention the influence that the sample sizes of our research could have on the stability of the reported results. In the case of Study 2, where the interaction processes between the type of humor and the ideological variables were analyzed by adopting an experimental approach, we should consider increasing the sample size in order to correctly analyze these interactions (Gelman et al., 2020). Regarding the study of the relationships between variables (Study 1), it would be interesting to analyze the latent correlations between the assessed dimensions, since the Pearson correlations are attenuated due to error measurement. In relation to computing latent correlations, recent simulation studies underline that the sample sizes required to estimate stable measurement-error-free correlations have been found to approach  $N = 490$  for typical research scenarios (population correlation  $\rho = .20$ ;



composite score reliability  $\omega = .70$ ) (Kretzschmar & Gignac, 2019).

Third, in this research our aim was to explore appreciation and interpretation of subversive (vs. sexist) humor, taking only attitudinal variables into account as individual differences. However, we are aware that individual differences are also derived from other types of variables. Due to the fact that subversive humor presents a complexity in terms of its cognitive processing (Strain et al., 2016) and that because of this it can be misinterpreted (Saucier et al., 2018), it would be interesting to analyze not only the role of substantive personality traits (Gignac et al., 2014), but, also, the cognitive processes involved in the perception of this type of humor (Chan et al., 2016; Ruch, 2001).

Fourth, and finally, future studies could consider other formats of humorous material in which humor emerges more naturally and can have a greater impact on perceivers, for example through audiovisual material with stand-up monologues of feminists or in face-to-face laboratory situations.

### **Conclusions**

In the 21st century the struggle for gender equality is still evident. Many strategies are being implemented to raise awareness concerning this equality. In this sense, subversive humor against sexism is being engaged with as a tool for criticizing and questioning sexism in society. However, given the ambiguity of this type of humor, it can be misinterpreted, to the extent of being perceived as an attempt to denigrate the social group it aims to defend. Our research contributes to the growing interest in analyzing this type of humor, showing that feminist humor is an independent category of humor (distinct from sexist humor) and underlining the relevance of individual differences (specifically feminist identity) in its interpretation and appreciation.

### **Open Science Requirement**

The authors of this paper confirm that they have included information concerning all the measures used, conditions, and data exclusions. Additionally, we point out that the size of the samples has been calculated through G\*Power (Faul et al., 2009).

### **Credit authorship contribution statement**

All four authors contributed to the design, hypothesis development, and data analysis. The first author led the writing of the manuscript with contributions and reviews and revisions from the second, third and fourth authors.

### Funding

This work was financially supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and University under Grant Ref. PDI2019-104239GB-100 (State Research Agency / 10.13039/501100011033) and Programa Operativo FEDER 2018 under Grant Ref. B-SEJ-135-UGR18.

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**Joking for gender equality: Subversive humor against sexism  
motivates collective action in men and women with weaker  
feminist identity**

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**ARTICLE PUBLISHED AS:**

Riquelme, A. R., Carretero-Dios, H., Megías, J. L., & Romero-Sánchez, M. (2021). Joking for gender equality: Subversive humor against sexism motivates collective action in men and women with weaker feminist identity. *Sex Roles*, *84*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01154-w>

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**Joking for gender equality: Subversive humor against sexism motivates collective action in men and women with weaker feminist identity**

**Abstract**

Subversive humor has historically been considered a way of protesting, raising awareness, and seeking change. However, to date, no known empirical research has explored the consequences of exposure to humor that criticizes, confronts, and questions sexism (i.e., subversive humor against sexism or feminist humor). In the present research, we conducted two experiments to analyze the impact of exposure to subversive humor against sexism (vs. neutral humor) on the degree of involvement in collective action for gender equality, taking into account the feminist identity of participants. The results of Study 1 ( $n = 135$ ) revealed that Spanish women and men with weaker feminist identification showed a higher proclivity to participate in collective action for gender equality after being exposed to subversive humor against sexism (vs. neutral humor). Study 2 ( $n = 134$  Spanish women and men) replicated these results and expanded them to behavioral intentions to participate in this type of collective action. Our findings show the potential implications of using this type of humor for collective action for gender equality. Overall, subversive humor against sexism may function as a supportive tool to combat sexist attitudes, discrimination against women, and gender inequality by raising awareness in people with lower feminist identity to get them more involved in collective action. This approach would facilitate recruiting activists, getting more media coverage, and building a collective identity supporting mobilization against sexism.

**Keywords:** subversive humor against sexism, feminist humor, feminist identification, collective action for gender equality, sexism.

In the last century, many advances in women's rights, especially in the Western world, have taken place because feminists have mobilized to protest against gender inequality and prevailing sexism. These advances have highlighted the relevance of collective action for gender equality (Becker & Wright, 2011; Guizzo et al., 2017) as one of the most effective ways to eradicate sexism (Becker et al., 2014).

*Collective action* can be defined as any voluntary behaviors carried out either publicly and in groups (e.g., taking part in a demonstration against an unfair social situation) or privately and individually (e.g., signing an online petition to defend a group exposed to discrimination) with the intention of subverting the status quo and improving the social conditions of an oppressed group (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Specifically, collective action for gender equality includes coordinated actions aimed at changing the situations of social disadvantage endured by women to achieve change, equality, and justice between men and women (e.g., actively lobbying for women's interests; Radke et al., 2016). The present research was based on existing studies aimed at identifying the individual and situational factors related to participation in collective action for gender equality (e.g., Guizzo et al., 2017; Liss et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2008).

In this sense, numerous predictors of participation in this type of collective action have already been identified, feminist identity being one of the most relevant (Radke et al., 2018; Weis et al., 2018). However, the role of other possible factors has yet to be explored in detail. This is true of humor, which has, theoretically, been confirmed as an important factor in collective social mobilization (Hartz, 2007; Tejerina & Perugorría, 2017), but has yet to be thoroughly analyzed in the context of collective action for gender equality. Humor can act as a tool that delegitimizes, discriminates against, and/or dehumanizes a social group, reinforcing social hierarchies and asymmetries (Hodson & MacInnis, 2016). It can, however, also be used to criticize and confront inequality (Saucier et al., 2018), and as an instrument for social mobilizations seeking to subvert the status quo (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). In this regard, subversive humor against sexism, also known as feminist humor, has been described as a confrontation tool used by feminist women to evince, question, and challenge patriarchal ideology and gender discrimination (Case & Lippard, 2009). The main objective of our research was to explore subversive humor against sexism as a possible antecedent facilitating involvement in this type of collective action by encouraging the struggle against gender inequality and sexism.

### Gender Inequality, Sexism, and Collective Action

Gender inequality, defined as “*allowing people different opportunities due to perceived differences based solely on issues of gender*” (Parziale, 2008, pp. 2), is present at all levels of society (Lorber, 2010). This inequality is clearly present in the family context (Allen, 2016) and in intimate relationships (Herrero et al., 2017) but also transcends the private sphere, becoming globally evident in other social contexts, such as the work environment (Harris & Estevez, 2017) and the political sphere (Lombardo & Meier, 2009). Gender inequality is based on a patriarchal culture (Vachhani & Pullen, 2019) that legitimizes and reinforces sexist beliefs that sustain social asymmetries and hierarchies, not only between men and women (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), but also between transgender/non-binary and cisgender people (Davidson, 2016).

The relationship between sexism and gender inequality has been demonstrated repeatedly through research conducted not only in independent samples across Western cultural contexts (e.g., Hideg & Ferris, 2016), but also in other non-Western countries around the world. For example, Glick et al. (2000) showed that sexist ideology was a predictor of gender inequality in all 19 countries included in their multi-country study. A longitudinal study of 57 countries, conducted by Brandt (2011), also showed the connection between sexism and existing gender inequality. Given the undeniable presence of sexism in all social spheres (Swim et al., 2001) and its negative consequences for women of different cultures and societies (Brandt, 2011; Glick et al., 2000), there is an obvious need to highlight the importance of promoting collective action for gender equality aimed at combating sexism at a societal level (Radke et al., 2016).

In this specific context, several factors have been associated with a greater involvement in this type of collective action: having a feminist mother (Liss et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2008), having taken a women’s studies class (Liss et al., 2004; Reid & Purcell, 2004), having been a victim of sexist discrimination (Liss et al., 2004), and supporting feminist attitudes and beliefs (e.g., liberal feminism), particularly gender collectivism (i.e., the idea that women must work together to achieve equality; Liss et al., 2004). However, feminist identity has been presented as one of the most important antecedents of collective action for gender equality, both from a theoretical (Radke et al., 2016) and from an empirical point of view (Liss et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2008; Radke et al., 2018; Weis et al., 2018). We therefore considered it a key variable in the present research.

In addition to taking feminist identity into account and to further explore other antecedents of collective action for gender equality, we focused our attention on subversive humor against sexism. If we understand this humor as a non-serious instrument that can awaken social awareness of gender inequality, sexist attitudes, and discrimination against women, this type of humor may ultimately favor collective action aimed at undermining the existing social asymmetries between men and women. Following this line of argument, humor can be understood as an essential communicative and emotional strategy for collective mobilization (Klutz-Flamenbaum, 2014) that facilitates participation (Moy et al., 2005), as well as resistance (Tuene, 2007).

### **Humor and Collective Action**

In certain social movements, such as the Spanish *15-M Indignados* movement, the people and organizations involved have used humor in the form of jokes, critical posters, burlesque caricatures, and more to encourage individuals to join in their collective demands (Hartz, 2007; Tejerina & Perugorría, 2017). In contexts of social protest, humor is often present as a tool intended to promote reflection on a situation of injustice and encourage action and participation, either socially (Hartz, 2007; Tejerina & Perugorría, 2017) or politically (Baumgartner & Lockerbie, 2018; Klutz-Flamenbaum, 2014). This type of humor, the purpose of which is to subvert a social hierarchy, is known as *subversive humor* (Holmes & Marra, 2002).

Subversive humor often relies on social satire (Strain et al., 2016), highlighting situations of injustice in a way that does not compel those consuming humorous material to critically or seriously refute the content in question. In keeping with the theoretical ideas of Hartz (2007), allowing receivers to laugh at the content itself by highlighting its absurdity is likely to enable them to better assimilate the underlying message being transmitted. Thus, humor can attract a large audience and create a link among the receivers of the humorous message, reducing the social tension generated by serious and direct confrontation of the inequality between certain groups (men and women, in this case) while recruiting activists and building a collective identity. Moreover, social mobilizations that use subversive humor are likely to get more media coverage than those that do not, thus achieving greater support and mobilization.

When subversive humor targets sexism, it is known as subversive humor against sexism or feminist humor, given that it seeks to redefine existing attitudes, roles, and stereotypes regarding gender and acts as a tool to empower women and undermine

the subordination to which they are subjected (Case & Lippard, 2009). According to Shifman & Lemish (2011), this type of humor is based on three fundamental premises: (a) it opposes and criticizes prevailing gender inequalities and associated stereotypes, (b) it can be a means to express empowerment by promoting the ability of women to freely communicate their critical thoughts, and (c) it requires an adequate mode of dissemination to achieve its objectives (e.g., the internet). Therefore, if subversive humor against sexism focuses on questioning the status quo created by attitudes, stereotypes, and gender roles originating in the patriarchal system, what role might it play in overcoming sexism through collective action for gender equality?

Radke et al. (2016) turn to the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (Van Zomeren et al., 2008) to explain three antecedents that favor involvement in this type of action: (a) identifying with feminists, (b) perceiving the injustice of sexism and responding to it emotionally, and (c) perceiving the efficacy of collective action to achieve gender equality. According to these authors, there are several social barriers that demotivate these antecedents in people, such as perceiving social stigmatization of feminists, holding post-feminist perceptions of gender equality, or endorsing sexist beliefs. In the present research, we try to answer whether and how feminist humor can help combat such barriers. The message of questioning and criticizing in a humorous way can potentially provide a more positive view of feminists by prompting laughter at the absurdity of sexism. This type of humor may also facilitate the emergence of social awareness of the problem, amplifying perceptions of the injustice of sexism that affects women and ultimately leading to increased involvement in collective action aimed at confronting this situation of inequality and discrimination. To this end, women themselves must use humor to challenge oppression, taking into account the sexist attitudes that the existing powers use to turn them against themselves (Sorensen, 2008). In this regard, it is reasonable to expect that if the role of this type of humor is to subvert gender inequality, it will find greater acceptance among individuals with a stronger feminist identification (Gallivan, 1992; Stillion & White, 1987).

Given that subversive humor may contribute to efforts aimed at combating barriers to collective action, we consider potential ways to measure the effect of subversive humor on collective action. In their research, van Zomeren et al. (2008) proposed various strategies to conduct empirical explorations of collective action empirically. One of the most successful has been to assess the general proclivity of participants to engage in this type of action (e.g., whether they would agree to take part

in a demonstration for equality between men and women). Another strategy has been to assess the behavioral intentions or action tendencies of participants, that is, to determine their intention to participate in a specific action associated with a particular situation of discrimination (e.g., signing a letter aimed at getting schools to teach equality values to children). General proclivity to take part in collective actions tends to be of a more idealistic nature, whereas behavioral intentions tend to take practical limitations as more challenging obstacles. In the present work, we used both strategies.

Subversive humor against sexism has been sparsely addressed from an empirical point of view (e.g., Case & Lippard, 2009). Yet, various exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have recently confirmed that this type of humor constitutes an empirical entity independent from other types of humor (Riquelme et al., 2019). In their research, Riquelme et al. (2019) found that, as expected from a theoretical point of view, a greater funniness of subversive humor against sexism was associated with a stronger feminist identity and a greater proclivity to participate in collective action for gender equality. They also found that feminist identity moderated the relationship between the perceived funniness of subversive humor against sexism and participation in collective action for gender equality: among participants with a weaker feminist identification, higher funniness scores were related to more collective actions, but not in individuals with a stronger feminist identification.

### **The Present Research**

The research conducted by Riquelme et al. (2019) cannot be used to draw any conclusions on the possible causal influence of exposure to subversive humor against sexism on participants' proclivity to collective action because of its correlational nature; it only identified the relationships between these constructs. In the current research we used an experimental design to explore subversive humor against sexism as an antecedent of collective action for gender equality, extending the findings of previous correlational studies. In this sense, we sought to examine the effects of exposure to subversive humor against sexism on (a) participants' proclivity to collective action and (b) their behavioral intentions. We also analyzed the possible moderation of these effects by strength of feminist identification (Weis et al., 2018). In two studies, we manipulated exposure to type of humor (i.e., subversive humor against sexism vs. neutral humor) and measured how strongly participants identified with feminists. In Study 1, participants responded to a measure of proclivity to collective action (from van Zomeren et al., 2004). In Study 2, we sought to replicate the results of Study 1, but in

addition to measuring proclivity to collective action, we also assessed behavioral intentions (from Guizzo et al., 2017).

### Study 1

As shown by the existing literature, subversive humor can be a tool to motivate social mobilization (Hartz, 2007; Tejerina & Perugorría, 2017). We expected to find a higher proclivity to collective action for gender equality among participants exposed to subversive humor against sexism compared to those exposed to neutral humor (Hypothesis 1). We compared the subversive humor condition with a neutral humor condition to test whether the effects were unique to subversive humor against sexism or applicable to humor more broadly. We also expected to find that feminist identity is positively related to proclivity to collective action for gender equality (Hypothesis 2). In light of previous results (Riquelme et al., 2019), we expected feminist identity to function as a moderator of the relationship between type of humor and proclivity to collective action (Hypothesis 3).

### Method

#### *Participants*

Using G\*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009), we calculated a sample size of 128 for a small-to-medium effect size of  $d = .50$ , a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$  and a power of .80 (two groups, between-subject design). Moreover, considering feminist identity as a moderator in our analyses, minimum sample size requirements were based on a goal of 30 participants per cell (Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011) to test the predicted interactions. The initial sample consisted of 140 undergraduate students (70 women and 70 men), studying a range of disciplines at a university in southern Spain, who took part in the study voluntarily. Data from five participants were excluded from the analysis: 1 participant reported that Spanish was not his native language; 2 participants did not finish the study; and 2 participants did not deliver us the booklet that contained all the measures. The final sample consisted of 135 participants (subversive humor against sexism: 35 women, 34 men and neutral humor: 35 women, 31 men). The age of female participants ranged between 18 and 50 years-old ( $M = 22.51$ ,  $SD = 5.81$ ). The age of male participants ranged between 18 and 45 years ( $M = 22.11$ ,  $SD = 4.98$ ). The present study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of our University Ethics Committee for studies involving human participants.

### *Procedure and materials*

Sampling was carried out in different libraries of the university. The experiment was conducted in Spanish. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions: subversive humor against sexism vs neutral humor. Before starting the experiment, we informed participants about the voluntary nature of the research and the anonymity of their responses, having the possibility to leave the study at any time. Once participants had voluntarily agreed to participate, they were provided instructions on how to do so. To minimize the likelihood of participants guessing the hypothesis, the material was presented as two independent studies: one study was presented as “exploring people’s humorous preferences” and the other study’s stated purpose was to assess “people’s attitudes and behaviors toward different topics.” In the putative “Study 1,” participants had to provide funniness and aversiveness responses to jokes or vignettes. In the purported “Study 2,” they completed the Multicomponent Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008) and the Collective Action Proclivity Scale (van Zomeren et al., 2004). Finally, participants were invited to complete a questionnaire on which they provided sociodemographic information (gender, age, nationality, university degree, and sexual orientation) and the study ended with a debriefing of participants.

***Experimental manipulation.*** For each condition (subversive humor against sexism vs. neutral humor) we used five jokes and vignettes from a battery of humorous stimuli empirically analyzed by Riquelme et al. (2019). ([See the online supplement for both the English translations of the jokes as well as their original Spanish](#)). Our use of multiple jokes was due to the fact that previous research has shown that four or five jokes or vignettes generate substantive effects in the context of experimental examinations of the consequences of being exposed to humorous stimuli (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2010; Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017). Using a Likert-type scale, participants rated the funniness, from 0 (*not at all funny*) to 4 (*very funny*), and aversiveness, from 0 (*not at all aversive / ningún rechazo*) to 4 (*very aversive / fuerte rechazo*), of one of the two types of jokes and vignettes presented. In regard to funniness ratings, Cronbach alphas were .67 for neutral humor and .76 for subversive humor against sexism. As for aversiveness responses, Cronbach alphas were .66 for neutral humor and .84 for subversive humor against sexism. Overall scores for funniness and aversiveness were created by averaging across items such that higher scores indicated more perceived funniness or aversiveness.



**Strength of feminist identification.** We assessed participants' strength of feminist identification by using the Multicomponent Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008). Six items were used to assess solidarity (i.e., the feeling of a psychological link with ingroup members) and centrality (i.e., the centrality of the ingroup aspect to self-concept). Items used a Likert response scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The scale was an adaptation to assess feminist identification (given that the original scale measured ingroup identification in general), including solidarity (e.g., "I feel solidarity with [feminists]") and centrality (e.g., "The fact that I am [a feminist] is an important part of my identity"). A total mean score of feminist identification was used ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

**Collective Action Proclivity Scale.** We assessed participants' proclivity to collective action for gender equality using six items (e.g., "going on strike to fight the wage gap between men and women") from the study by van Zomeren et al. (2004). Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Given the good reliability of the scale ( $\alpha = .91$ ), we calculated an average index of proclivity to collective action for gender equality such that higher scores indicate a stronger proclivity.

## Results

### *Preliminary analyses*

We performed separate one-way ANOVAs on the funniness and aversiveness scores with type of humor (neutral humor vs. subversive humor against sexism) as the between-subject factor. For these ANOVAs, estimates of effect size were calculated using partial eta-squared ( $\eta_p^2 \geq 0.01/0.06/0.13$  indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988). There were no statistically significant differences in funniness responses between neutral humor and subversive humor against sexism,  $F(1, 132) = .04, p = .83$ . This result suggests that participants found the jokes and vignettes equally funny in the neutral humor condition ( $M = 1.87, SD = 0.78$ ) and the subversive humor condition ( $M = 1.84, SD = 0.98$ ). In line with previous research (Riquelme et al., 2019), aversiveness ratings differed between types of humor,  $F(1, 130) = 36.63, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$ ; specifically, they were higher in the subversive humor condition ( $M = 1.17, SD = 1.01$ ) than in the neutral humor condition ( $M = 0.33, SD = 0.50$ ). Again, in line with previous research (Riquelme et al., 2019), funniness and aversiveness ratings were negatively correlated ( $r = -.26, p = .003$ ).

To verify the equivalence of feminist identity between groups, we performed a

2 (type of humor: neutral vs subversive) x 2 (gender: male vs. female) ANOVA on participants' feminist identity scores. Results showed that feminist identity did not differ between groups: neutral humor condition ( $M = 4.41, SD = 2.05$ ) and subversive humor condition ( $M = 4.53, SD = 1.69$ ),  $F(1, 131) = .27, p = .60$ . Feminist identity was stronger among women ( $M = 5.21, SD = 1.78$ ) than men ( $M = 3.68, SD = 1.62$ ),  $F(1, 131) = 26.87, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .17$ . There was no interaction between type of humor and gender,  $F(1, 131) = .30, p = .58$ .

### ***Hypothesis testing***

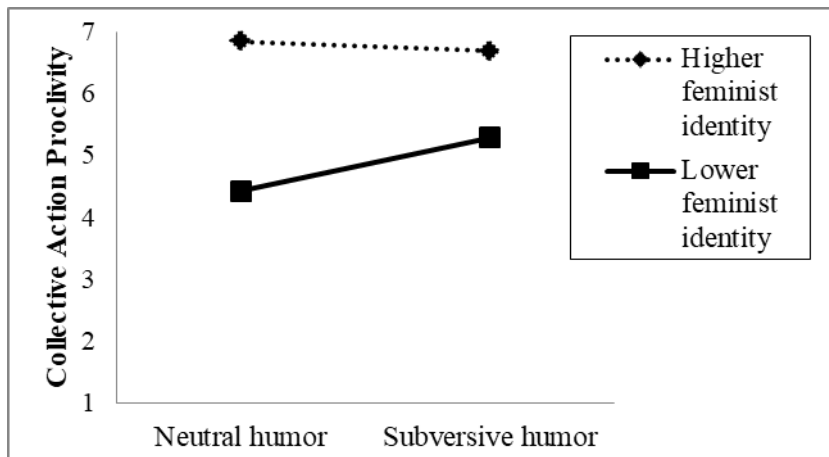
To test our predictions, a moderation analysis was performed with the PROCESS (Model 1) macro for SPSS. We considered type of humor as the independent variable, proclivity to collective action as the dependent variable, feminist identity as the moderator variable, and gender and aversiveness ratings as covariates. We calculated the standardized effect size  $f^2$  for the interaction between type of humor and feminist identity. This value offers information on the magnitude of interaction ( $\geq 0.02/0.15/0.35$  indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988) on the basis of the change in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta f^2$ ).

In accordance with Hypothesis 1, results revealed a main effect of type of humor on proclivity to collective action ( $b = 1.82, SE = 0.47, t = 3.71, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.85, 2.79]$ ), indicating that participants exposed to subversive humor against sexism reported a higher proclivity to collective action. As predicted in Hypothesis 2, results also showed a main effect of feminist identity on proclivity to collective action. Specifically, participants with a stronger feminist identity reported a greater proclivity to collective action ( $b = 0.68, SE = 0.06, t = 10.38, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.55, 0.80]$ ).

In line with Hypothesis 3, we found a significant two-way interaction between type of humor and feminist identity ( $b = -0.30, SE = 0.09, t = -3.01, p = .006, 95\% CI [-0.48, -0.10], \Delta f^2 = 0.03$ ). As shown in Figure 1, the analysis revealed that exposure to subversive humor against sexism was related to higher proclivity to collective action only in participants with weaker feminist identification ( $b = 1.05, SE = 0.25, t = 3.78, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.50, 1.60]$ ) and not in participants with stronger feminist identification ( $b = -0.04, SE = 0.25, t = -0.15, p = .88, 95\% CI [-0.56, 0.48]$ ).

**Figure 1**

*Collective action proclivity for gender equality as a function of type of humor and feminist identity, study 1. Feminist identity is graphed at  $-1$  SD (low) and  $+1$  SD (high). The black solid line indicates a significant relationship between humor and collective action proclivity at a lower level of feminist identity.*



## Discussion

The results of Study 1 extend the findings of previous correlational studies by providing experimental support for our hypotheses. First, exposure to subversive humor against sexism increased proclivity to collective action for gender equality (Hypothesis 1). Therefore, humor may be an effective tool to motivate people to engage in collective action for gender equality (e.g., Hartz, 2007; Tejerina & Perugorría, 2017). Moreover, as expected, feminist identity was related to proclivity to collective action (Hypothesis 2), supporting the importance of ingroup identification in collective social mobilization (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2008). Interestingly, a statistically significant interaction between type of humor and feminist identity emerged, suggesting that subversive humor increases the proclivity to participate in collective action for gender equality, but only in participants weaker in feminist identity (Hypothesis 3). This is also consistent with previous correlational research (Riquelme et al., 2019). It is possible that a ceiling effect for proclivity to collective action, emerging among those stronger in feminist identity, contributed to this interaction. It is likely that our findings in these participants are due to the fact that their existing convictions were sufficient to maintain a high commitment to collective action, regardless of the influence of being exposed to one type of humor

or another.

To replicate and extend the findings of Study 1, we conducted a second experiment in which, in addition to considering the proclivity to participate in collective action for gender equality, we also took into account the behavioral intention to participate in this type of collective action. Proclivity to collective action is a more distal measure of behavior, given that participants respond according to what they would like or would ideally do, without necessarily referring to a specific action. By contrast, behavioral intentions are related to a specific discriminatory situation and to the intention to act on that situation as such, they take into account the particularities and practical limitations, as well as the restricted possibilities of the situation (van Zomeren et al., 2008), and can therefore be considered a more proximal measure of collective action.

### Study 2

In Study 2, we explored whether exposure to subversive humor increases not only proclivity to collective action, but also behavioral intentions for gender equality. First, we aimed to replicate the results of Study 1. Specifically, we expected to find higher proclivity to collective action in participants exposed to subversive humor against sexism (vs. neutral humor) (Hypothesis 1). In addition, we hypothesized a positive relationship between feminist identity and higher proclivity to collective action (Hypothesis 2) and that subversive humor increases the proclivity to participate in collective action, especially in participants weaker in feminist identity (Hypothesis 3). Further, we tried to go one step further, by theorizing that subversive humor against sexism exerts a similar effect on behavioral intentions for gender equality. Specifically, we expected exposure to subversive humor against sexism (vs. neutral humor) to increase participants' behavioral intentions (Hypothesis 4), feminist identity to be positively related to behavioral intentions (Hypothesis 5) and subversive humor to increase behavioral intentions in participants weaker (but not stronger) in feminist identity (Hypothesis 6).

### Method

#### *Participants*

Like Study 1, using G\*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009), we calculated a sample size of 128 for a small-to-medium effect size of  $d = .50$ , a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$  and a power of .80 (two groups, between-subject design). Again, we considered a minimum of 30 participants per cell (Simmons et al., 2011) to test the predicted

interactions with feminist identity. The initial sample consisted of 140 undergraduate students (70 women and 70 men), studying a range of disciplines at a university in southern Spain, who volunteered to participate. Data from 6 participants were excluded from the analysis: 4 participants indicated that Spanish was not their native language and 2 participants did not deliver us the booklet that contained all the measures. The final sample consisted of 134 participants (subversive humor against sexism: 33 women, 34 men, and neutral humor: 34 women, 33 men). The age of female participants ranged between 18 and 38 years ( $M = 22.21$ ;  $SD = 3.40$ ). The age of male participants ranged between 18 and 37 years ( $M = 22.87$ ;  $SD = 3.55$ ). The present study was also conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of our University Ethics Committee for studies involving human participants.

### ***Procedure and materials***

We used the same procedure as in Study 1. Sampling was conducted in several libraries of the university. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions: subversive humor against sexism or neutral humor. At the beginning, participants were informed that the study was voluntary and that their responses would be used only for research purposes. As in Study 1, to minimize the likelihood of participants' guessing the hypothesis, they were informed about three independent studies. To avoid the potential effect of experimental manipulation on the attitudinal variable, we measured feminist identification before presenting the humorous material. In the putative first study, participants were asked to participate in a study about people's attitudes and completed the Multicomponent Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008). In the purported second study, participants were asked to participate in a study about people's humorous preferences and provide funniness and aversiveness responses to jokes or vignettes. In the presumptive third study, participants were told that the study explored people's behaviors and answered a Collective Action Proclivity Scale (van Zomeren et al., 2004) and a Behavioral Intentions Scale (Guizzo et al., 2017). Later, participants completed a questionnaire requesting sociodemographic information and, as a final step, were debriefed about the aim of the study.

The experimental manipulation was the same as in Study 1 (i.e., the same subversive humor against sexism vs. neutral jokes). Again, the study was conducted in Spanish. In regard to funniness ratings, Cronbach alphas were .77 for neutral humor, as well as subversive humor against sexism. As for aversiveness responses, Cronbach alphas were .74 for neutral humor and .84 for subversive humor against sexism.

Measures of feminist identification (Leach et al., 2008) ( $\alpha = .95$ ) and proclivity to collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2004) ( $\alpha = .89$ ) were the same as those in Study 1, but we incorporated a new dependent variable (i.e., behavioral intention). We decided to analyze behavioral intentions for gender equality by presenting participants with three petitions, assembled in a leaflet promoted by a university association in favor of women students' rights called "Association for Gender Equality at the University." Once participants had read the description of the main goal of the association, the three petitions were presented: (a) "Would you sign up to indicate that you support the aim of our association?"; (b) "Would you attend some of our lectures or workshops?"; and (c) "Would you become a member of our association?" After the presentation of each petition, participants were asked to provide a dichotomous response (Yes or No). The sum score of behavioral intentions thus ranged from 0 (*no support to any petition*) to 3 (*support to the three petitions*). An average index of behavioral intentions was calculated ( $\alpha = .73$ ).

## Results

### *Preliminary analyses*

We conducted separate one-way ANOVAs on the funniness and aversiveness scores, considering type of humor (neutral humor vs. subversive humor against sexism) as the between-subjects factor. As in Study 1, estimates of effect size were calculated using partial eta-squared ( $\eta_p^2 \geq 0.01/0.06/0.13$  indicate small/medium/large effects; Cohen, 1988). Like the pattern observed in Study 1, there were no significant differences between the funniness scores for neutral humor ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) and subversive humor against sexism ( $M = 2.18$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ),  $F(1, 132) = .21$ ,  $p = .64$ . As expected, aversiveness responses differed between types of humor. Specifically, subversive humor was considered more aversive ( $M = 1.17$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) than neutral humor ( $M = 0.47$ ,  $SD = 0.17$ ),  $F(1, 130) = 18.97$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .13$ . Consistent with the findings of Study 1 and previous research (Riquelme et al., 2019), funniness and aversiveness scores were negatively correlated,  $r = -.29$ ,  $p = .001$ .

As in Study 1, we conducted a 2 (type of humor: subversive vs. neutral) x 2 (gender: male vs female) ANOVA with feminist identity as the dependent variable, which indicated that there were no significant differences in participants' feminist identity between experimental conditions,  $F(1, 130) = 3.19$ ,  $p = .11$  (humor condition:  $M = 4.65$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ; subversive humor condition:  $M = 5.18$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ). Again, females showed higher feminist identification ( $M = 5.51$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ) than males did

( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 2.03$ ),  $F(1, 130) = 15.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .11$ . There was no interaction between type of humor and gender when predicting feminist identity,  $F(1,130) = .01$ ,  $p = .91$ .

### ***Proclivity to collective action***

Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS, we conducted a similar moderation analysis as we did in Study 1. As expected, exposure to subversive humor against sexism increased proclivity to collective action,  $b = 1.66$ ,  $SE = 0.46$ ,  $t = 3.76$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.78, 2.52]. Specifically, participants exposed to subversive humor against sexism reported higher proclivity to collective action (Hypothesis 1) than those exposed to neutral humor. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, feminist identity predicted proclivity to collective action; specifically, participants stronger in feminist identity reported a greater proclivity to collective action,  $b = 0.59$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t = 9.72$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.47, 0.71]. As shown in Figure 2a, a significant interaction between type of humor and feminist identity emerged,  $b = -0.26$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = -3.17$ ,  $p = .004$ , 95% CI [-0.43, -0.09],  $\Delta f^2 = 0.03$ . As previously determined in Study 1, exposure to subversive humor against sexism increased proclivity to collective action only in participants with weaker feminist identity,  $b = 0.86$ ,  $SE = 0.23$ ,  $t = 2.20$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.41, 1.32] (Hypothesis 3), and not in participants with stronger feminist identity,  $b = -0.13$ ,  $SE = 0.23$ ,  $t = -0.56$ ,  $p = .57$ , 95 % CI [-0.58, 0.32]. Overall, these findings replicated the results of Study 1.

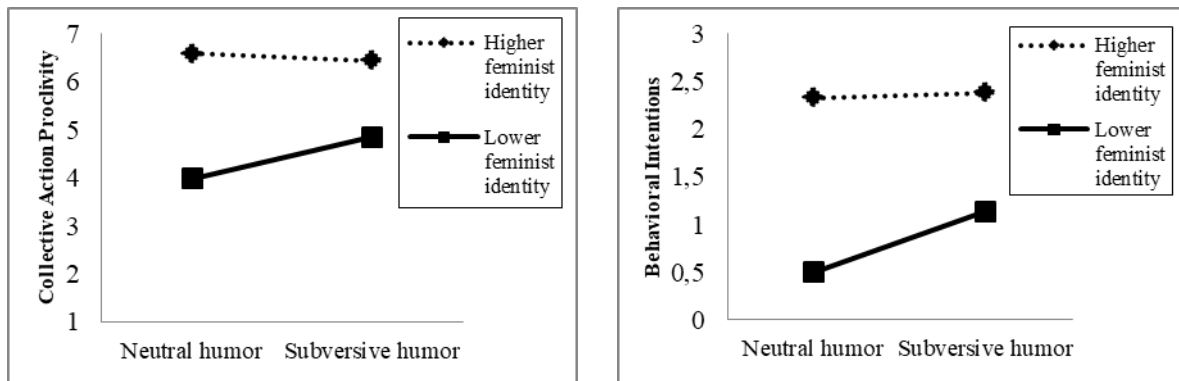
### ***Behavioral intentions***

Like to the analyses performed on proclivity to collective action, we conducted a moderation analysis, treating behavioral intentions as the dependent variable. The pattern of results was similar to that found in proclivity to collective action. Exposure to subversive humor against sexism increased behavioral intentions (Hypothesis 4),  $b = 1.04$ ,  $SE = 0.37$ ,  $t = 2.85$ ,  $p = .004$ , 95% CI [0.32, 1.78]. Likewise, feminist identity predicted behavioral intentions (Hypothesis 5),  $b = 0.43$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $t = 8.35$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.33, 0.53]. Interestingly, the model showed a type of humor x feminist identity interaction (Hypothesis 6),  $b = -0.15$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = -2.14$ ,  $p = .34$ , 95% CI [-0.29, -0.01],  $\Delta f^2 = 0.02$  (Figure 2b). Exposure to subversive humor against sexism increased participants' behavioral intentions, but only in participants weaker in feminist identity,  $b = 0.60$ ,  $SE = 0.19$ ,  $t = 3.12$ ,  $p = .001$ , 95% CI [0.22, 0.98], and not in participants stronger in feminist identity,  $b = 0.04$ ,  $SE = 0.19$ ,  $t = 0.19$ ,  $p = .85$ , 95% CI [-0.35, 0.42].

**Figure 2**

The impact of exposure to neutral or subversive humor on 2a collective action proclivity and 2b behavioral intentions for participants lower and higher in feminist identification. Solid black lines indicate significant relationships

(a) Predicting collective action proclivity      (b) Predicting behavioral intentions



### Supplementary Analyses

Given some researchers' interests in the relationship between feminist identity and collective action, we also explored the two-way interaction between feminist identity and type of humor by considering type of humor as a contextual moderator in both studies. In Study 1, feminist identity was associated with higher proclivity to collective action in both types of humor: neutral humor ( $b = 0.67$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t = 10.33$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.55, 0.80]) and subversive humor against sexism ( $b = 0.40$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t = 5.17$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.25, 0.55]). In Study 2, feminist identity again was related to greater behavioral intentions in both types of humor: neutral humor ( $b = 0.43$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $t = 8.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI [0.33, 0.53]) and subversive humor ( $b = 0.28$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $t = 5.79$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI [0.19, 0.38]). Thus the expected positive relationship between strength of feminist identification and collective action remains regardless of participants' exposure to different types of humor.

### Discussion

The replication of the results of Study 1 furnished experimental evidence to support the possible social role of subversive humor against sexism in collective action for gender equality. This approach may be a first step toward recognizing that the use of



humor that questions the attitudes, stereotypes, and gender roles of the patriarchal system may be aimed at raising social awareness about the unfair situation of women. This may be understood as being likely to motivate a proclivity for collective action for gender equality (Hypothesis 1), as well as the behavioral intention to confront such inequality and discrimination (Hypothesis 4). This study also shows the main effect of feminist identity, on proclivity (Hypothesis 2) as well as on behavioral intentions (Hypothesis 5), and highlights its moderating role in the relationship between type of humor and both proclivity to collective action and behavioral intentions (Hypotheses 3 and 6). Consistent with Study 1, the influence of exposure to subversive humor was, yet again, only observed in participants with weaker feminist identity.

### **General Discussion**

In the present research, we conducted two studies to explore the effect of exposure to subversive humor against sexism (vs. neutral humor) on proclivity to collective action and behavioral intentions, taking into account the feminist identity of participants. Both studies extended the findings of previous correlational studies (Riquelme et al., 2019). Specifically, participants exposed to subversive humor against sexism (vs. neutral humor) reported higher proclivity to collective action, as well as behavioral intentions, and these effects were moderated by feminist identity, as they were found only in participants weaker in feminist identity. These findings contribute to existing research in several ways, as we discuss below.

Subversive humor remains linked to social and political movements as a way of conveying critical messages against the established order or regime and of encouraging participation, seeking change, and inciting resistance (Klutz-Flamembaum, 2014). In her theoretical review, Hartz (2007) proposed that the study of the relationship between humor and social protest has three main objectives: determine (1) under which conditions humor can help demonstrators transmit their subversive messages aimed at seeking change, (2) the extent to which humor can strengthen social protest, and (3) the extent to which humor can be considered an instrument that facilitates social movements. However, humor has also been used to encourage reflection on inequality or injustice and to motivate action, not only in social mobilizations such as the Spanish Indignados movement (Tejerina & Perugorría, 2017), the West German student movement in Nazi Germany (Merziger, 2007), and the Solidarity movement of the 1980s (Hartz, 2007), but also in carnivals, performances, and entertainment or comedy TV shows. In fact, empirical studies conducted in the United States by American National Election Studies

(ANES) have revealed that exposure to late night talk shows that use political satirical comedy (e.g., “*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*,” “*The Colbert Report*”) has an impact on the degree of political participation of viewers, which has been found to increase after exposure to satirical political humor (e.g., Baumgartner & Lockerbie, 2018; Lee & Kwak, 2014; Moy et al., 2005).

However, to the best of our knowledge, none of these studies focused specifically on the potential facilitating effect of subversive humor on collective action for gender equality, which refers to both social and political measures in favor of women (Becker & Wright, 2011). Therefore, the present research provides the first known experimental evidence supporting the claim that subversive humor against sexism can increase collective action in support of gender equality and women’s rights, especially in individuals with weaker feminist identity. This finding is consistent with theoretical proposals, given that subversive humor against sexism may act as a tool to subvert the status quo derived from gender roles, stereotypes, and sexist attitudes established by the patriarchal system (Shifman & Lemish, 2011). This subversion has been associated with the possibility of encouraging collective action for gender equality (e.g., Radke et al., 2018; Weis et al., 2018).

In addition, when subversive humor is used by social movements as a strategy to express and communicate certain ideas opposing the social order or the established regime, it may create and reinforce the collective identity of their members; this is likely to facilitate participation and mobilization and, in turn, connection with a wider public, such as bystanders, observers, and social media (Klutz-Flamenbaum, 2014). Therefore, in agreement with previous research (e.g., Moy et al., 2005; Lee & Kwak, 2014) and theoretical literature (e.g., Hartz, 2007; Tejerina & Perugorría, 2017; Tuene, 2007), this research indicates that subversive humor may play a facilitating role in this type of collective action.

Pursuant to the idea of perceived injustice of sexism (Radke et al., 2016) based on the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA) (van Zomeren et al., 2008), the increase in participation in collective action following exposure to subversive humor may relate to the fact that this type of humor contributes to an intensified perception of injustice, first, by highlighting certain situations of gender inequality and subsequently questioning and criticizing them. This increased social awareness is likely to have the ultimate result of inciting mobilization, resistance, and social and/or political participation related to specific situations that keep women at a disadvantage.

Our results also support the findings in the literature on the relationship between feminist identity and collective action for gender equality. As previous research has revealed, feminist identity is an antecedent of such collective action. In fact, it is directly related to feminist activism (Kelly, 2015) and to a willingness to engage in specific feminist behaviors, such as attending in talks on the rights of women (Nelson et al., 2008), signing online petitions on gender issues (Liss et al., 2004), and supporting feminist organizations (Redford et al., 2018). Moreover, these findings square with the proposal of the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (van Zomeren et al., 2008), which emphasizes identity as a central element of collective action. Based on this model, Radke et al. (2016) proposed that individuals who identify with feminists also show the greatest motivation to claim, improve, and protect the rights of women. Therefore, greater identification with feminists is related to greater intentions to act collectively in the interests of women.

The result found in the moderation analysis was more remarkable. The increase in proclivity to collective action and behavioral intentions that follows exposure to subversive humor was only observed in weaker feminist identifiers. In essence, proclivity to collective action was influenced by subversive humor (situational factor), but only when the feminist identity (individual factor) was weaker, and not when it was stronger. In the latter case, people with a greater feminist identity are likelier to perceive the current situation of women as unfair and they are therefore more aware of the social problem of gender inequality that would dispose them to collective action aimed at eradicating social asymmetries between men and women (Liss et al., 2004). They are also likelier to feel a greater bond, commitment, and sense of solidarity with feminists (Leach et al., 2008), which ultimately results in a higher willingness to participate in collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Therefore, given the strong influence of these personal characteristics on the motivation to mobilize for social change, it is unlikely that an external influence, such as subversive humor, can modify existing proclivity to collective action for gender equality, which is already quite high.

The increase in proclivity to collective action caused by subversive humor in individuals with a weaker feminist identity may be related to the inherent characteristics of rendering the confrontation of gender inequality and discrimination in humorous terms. Authors, such as Guizzo et al. (2017), have shown that exposure to non-humorous information on inequality affecting women does not significantly influence the motivation of men to participate in collective action for equality. However, the use of

subversive humorous messages against sexism may introduce a “standard of lightness,” thereby offering a more positive view of the struggle against inequality and gender discrimination. In the struggle for equality, feminists use feminism as a philosophical foundation for collective action seeking to change that state of disadvantage. Thus, the standard of lightness that humor brings may allow those who identify less with feminists and feminism to laugh at the content of that humor by highlighting the absurdity of gender attitudes, roles, and stereotypes. This, in turn, is likely to enable these individuals to better assimilate the critical message against sexism, because it does not imply a serious and/or aggressive clash with their ideology. Ultimately, all of this may lead to changes in their attitudes toward collective action to improve the social situation of women.

Another potential explanation can be found in the solidarity component of feminist identity. For example, Wiley et al. (2013) reported the following results: men (who tend to have a lower feminist identity) exposed to positive descriptions of feminist men expressed greater solidarity with such men and a greater proclivity for collective action for gender equality. These results showed that feeling connected to other men through the solidarity component of feminist identity (see Leach et al., 2008) is an important antecedent of the participation of men in collective action supporting women.

Self-identification as “feminist” continues to bear a great social stigma (Weis et al., 2018). Although the research suggests that perceptions of feminists vary in current Western society (Weis et al., 2018), the truth is that there remain a social tendency to associate feminists with negative characteristics, such as having no sense of humor (Willet et al., 2012), and being tense, stubborn, angry, egotistical or anti-male (Berryman-Fink & Verderber, 1985). Similarly, feminist men tend to be qualified as more anti-masculine and perceived as having more homosexual characteristics than men in general (Wiley et al., 2013). These social stigmas cause the identification with feminists to decrease. In general, less identification with feminists can be expected to have a negative impact on involvement in collective action for gender equality (Radke et al., 2016). In this sense, subversive humor against sexism may promote rethinking of the negative stereotypes attached to feminists, by creating a link through humor that motivates challenging the status quo. Subversive humor against sexism may encourage those who have a weaker feminist identity to feel greater sympathy empathy, and a sense of solidarity and connection with the confrontational messages being conveyed, as well as with feminist individuals. This potentially stronger bond with feminist women may

derive from feeling less threatened by the criticism manifested through humor, as this criticism is presented in a context of playful fun, where everybody is invited to laugh, mock, and ridicule the situations depicted in jokes and cartoons.

Currently, feminist humor may support participation in collective action for gender equality in Western societies, in which post-feminist ideas have been established (Gill, 2017). The premise underlying this last trend would signify and end to the need for collective action, due to gender equality having been achieved (MacCarteney, 2018). Conceiving of gender inequality as a problem of the past is likely to have numerous negative consequences, such as women internalizing the belief that their social disadvantages or discriminatory situations are exceptional or isolated cases, and not attributable to social and cultural factors (MacCarteney, 2018). In this sense, subversive humor against sexism has the power to expose everyday situations that are consistent with what Swim et al. (2001) call "Everyday Sexism," referring to the sexist situations that women experience daily, which are systemic results of male domination, sexism, and patriarchy, and thereby cannot be regarded as random or isolated cases. Therefore, subversive humor has the potential to facilitate the criticizing, questioning and making fun of post-feminist conceptions by rendering everyday sexism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century visible.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This research provides the first experimental evidence supporting the potential role of subversive humor against sexism in the context of collective actions against gender inequality. However, certain limitations must be taken into account. First, both studies relied on a sample composed exclusively of university students, so the particular characteristics of this type of sample may have influenced our findings. For example, the correlational study by Riquelme et al. (2019), with non-university participants, found that older women perceived this type of humorous material as being less funny. Second, the context in which participants were exposed to subversive humor (i.e., reading and watching jokes and graphic vignettes) must be taken into account. Future research should consider exposing participants to more realistic environments, where humor emerges more organically (e.g., audiovisual media with feminist humorous discourses). Third, future research should explore the interaction between humor and other factors, to explain the greater proclivity to participate in collective action for gender equality, which issues some research projects have already begun to address (e.g., Guizzo et al., 2017). These other factors are likely to include emotions (e.g., guilt, anger), perspective taking, action support, group efficacy, and perceived threat, among

others. Taking such variables into account may affect the appreciation of subversive humor, as well as the consequences of being exposed to it.

### **Practice Implications**

The research presented here has relevant practical implications: to the best of our knowledge, it provides the first experimental evidence on the impact of exposure to subversive humor on the undertaking of collective action for gender equality. However, it is not our intention to depict humor in itself as a sufficient intervention strategy to facilitate participation in collective action for gender equality. As previously shown, feminist identity is a key variable to explain this type of collective action. Therefore, subversive humor seems to be a tool, among others, that can be used to motivate, raise awareness about gender inequality, and encourage participation in eradicating sexism through social mobilization. In this sense, subversive humor against sexism may be one of many strategies that feminist movements may use, with the main objectives of expressing disagreement and discomfort with the current situation of women, changing that situation, recruiting activists, getting greater media coverage, and creating a collective identity.

### **Conclusions**

In these two studies, we have shown that subversive humor can increase not only participants' proclivity, but also their behavioral intentions to participate in collective action for gender equality. Moreover, these effects are particularly relevant among those individuals who do not readily profess to having strong feminist identity. These findings encourage the use of subversive humor as a tool to raise awareness of gender inequality to motivate collective action, especially in people with a weaker feminist identity.

### **Funding information**

The present research was financially supported by the Spanish Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad and Programa Operativo FEDER 2018 with research grants PSI2016-79812-P and BSEJ-135-UGR18.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

My coauthors and I do not have any interests that might be interpreted as influencing or conflicting with this research. The procedures used in collection of data conform to current APA ethical standards for the protection of human subjects. These procedures were in accordance with ethical standards of the University of Granada. We

also certify that the manuscript is not under review elsewhere and has not been previously published elsewhere in whole or in part.

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# **Capítulo 4.**

## **Discusión general**

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# **Chapter 4.**

## **General discussion**



## 1. Discusión general

Esta tesis doctoral se ha centrado en el estudio del “*humor subversivo contra el sexismo*” o “*humor feminista*”, un tipo de humor que se utiliza con el propósito de subvertir la asimetría social entre hombres y mujeres (Case y Lippard, 2009; Shifman y Lemish, 2011; Willett et al., 2012). Como se muestra en el Capítulo 1, el sexismo es uno de los factores que promueven y refuerzan la desigualdad de género, y esta asociación se ha encontrado en muchos países del mundo (Brandt, 2011; Connor et al., 2017). Debido a que el sexismo es una lacra social que genera numerosas consecuencias sociales negativas, y especialmente sobre las mujeres (Hamilton y DeHart, 2020), es evidente la importancia de estudiar todas las herramientas posibles que permitan subvertir el sexismo que provoca esta desigualdad.

En este sentido, la presente tesis doctoral ha analizado el humor subversivo contra el sexismo como instrumento para combatir el sexismo social e interpersonal. Los escasos estudios empíricos que se han centrado en este tipo de humor hacen que existan aún numerosas cuestiones por responder, además de contarse con conclusiones ambiguas o derivadas de aproximaciones poco rigurosas. Teniendo en cuenta esto, en esta tesis doctoral se ha intentado dar respuesta a tres objetivos principales a través de un total de siete estudios.

Los tres primeros estudios se centraron en corroborar la independencia empírica del humor subversivo contra el sexismo respecto al humor de denigración del hombre y del humor neutral, así como en establecer los primeros correlatos diferenciales del humor feminista haciendo uso de algunas variables ideológicas (identidad feminista y actitudes hostiles hacia los hombres) y otras relacionadas con la movilización social (acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género). En el estudio 1, analizamos la validez de contenido de una batería humorística a través del juicio de expertos/as. Estos/as expertos/as evaluaron la pertenencia de los chistes a las categorías de humor feminista o de humor de denigración del hombre, además del nivel de representatividad de cada chiste o viñeta del constructo evaluado, demostrando que son dos tipos de humor diferentes. A su vez, ambas categorías también se diferenciaron con respecto a los chistes neutrales.

En el estudio 2 se analizó si la diferenciación establecida por los/as expertos/as emergía empíricamente a través de las respuestas de apreciación del humor de los participantes. Específicamente, realizamos un análisis exploratorio de la estructura factorial de la batería de chistes (AFE) derivado del juicio de expertos/as, enfocándonos

en las respuestas de diversión, tal y como sugiere la literatura (Ruch, 1992). En este sentido, a partir de estas respuestas, encontramos que el humor feminista constituye un tipo de humor independiente del humor de denigración del hombre y del humor neutral.

Asimismo, en el estudio 3 se replicó mediante estrategias confirmatorias (AFC) la diferenciación del humor feminista con respecto al humor de denigración del hombre y al humor neutral. Además, encontramos un patrón de relaciones diferenciales entre el humor subversivo contra el sexismo, el humor de denigración del hombre y las variables estudiadas. Específicamente, se encontró que unas mayores respuestas de diversión en el humor feminista se relacionaron positivamente con una mayor identidad feminista y con una mayor proclividad a las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género. Por otro lado, una mayor diversión del humor de denigración del hombre se relacionó con mayores actitudes hostiles hacia ellos. Estos diferentes patrones de relaciones entre los dos tipos de humor y las variables actitudinales consideradas permitieron consolidar la diferencia entre los tipos de humor.

Así, parece que la hostilidad hacia los hombres es la actitud que mejor predice la apreciación (mayor diversión y menor rechazo) del humor de denigración del hombre. Sin embargo, no se encontró relación entre esta actitud y el humor feminista, lo que sugiere que este tipo de humor no pretende denigrar o humillar directamente a los hombres, sino que se enfoca en empoderar a las mujeres mediante la confrontación del sexismo y el desafío del poder en las relaciones de género.

Específicamente, prestando atención al patrón de relaciones que se encuentra entre la apreciación de ambos tipos de humor (diversión y rechazo), se destacó que el rechazo hacia el humor feminista está altamente correlacionado con el rechazo hacia el humor de denigración del hombre. De acuerdo con investigaciones previas (Ruch 1992; Ruch y Hehl, 2007), las personas tienden a mostrar una tendencia de rechazo hacia los tipos de humor con contenido no neutral. Por su contenido ideológico, tanto el humor feminista como el humor de denigración del hombre compartirían su no neutralidad de contenido. En este sentido, investigaciones previas han constatado que las respuestas de rechazo hacia diferentes tipos de humor no neutrales (p.ej., humor sexual o humor negro) tienden a correlacionarse alta y positivamente (Carretero-Dios et al., 2010).

En cuanto a la correlación entre las respuestas de diversión encontradas entre el humor feminista y el humor de denigración del hombre, es posible que se produzca porque ambos comparten cierto componente de ridiculización hacia los hombres (Stillion y White, 1987; Strain et al., 2016). Sin embargo, es importante diferenciar que



mientras que en el humor de denigración del hombre la ridiculización es directa al resaltar los estereotipos negativos del grupo masculino, en el humor feminista sería indirecta, y se derivaría del enfrentamiento de las actitudes sexistas y comportamientos sostenidos por los hombres. Por eso, a pesar de esta correlación, las puntuaciones en rechazo hacia el humor de denigración del hombre fueron mayores que las del humor feminista.

Por último, siguiendo una aproximación correlacional, la relación entre el humor feminista y la proclividad a las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género estuvo moderada por la identidad feminista, lo que podría indicar que el humor feminista es una forma de motivar estas acciones a favor de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres. Este hallazgo corrobora el vínculo que mantienen los chistes feministas con el feminismo, ya que pretenden criticar la asimetría social que existe entre hombres y mujeres, siendo el objetivo último lograr la igualdad de género (Lorber, 2010).

Específicamente, el efecto de moderación se encontró en participantes con menor identidad feminista. Este hallazgo está en línea con el Modelo de la Probabilidad de Elaboración (Petty y Cacioppo, 1986). A partir de los planteamientos de este modelo, la influencia para participar en las acciones colectivas se daría a través de dos vías: la central y la periférica. En este sentido, en la ruta periférica se encuentran los/as receptores/as que no están muy familiarizadas con las feministas, tienen dudas sobre los argumentos de los chistes, se centran más en “señales heurísticas” o no están del todo convencidos/as con las feministas. En estos/as destinatarios/as, el humor podría funcionar como una herramienta de confrontación no agresiva (Saucier et al., 2018) que permita una mejor asimilación del mensaje, creando un estado de ánimo más positivo, proporcionando contenido burlesco con el que reír y haciendo menos probable que se generen contraargumentos.

Por otro lado, la investigación indica que quienes tienen una mayor identidad feminista son las que ya tienen una alta motivación para participar en las acciones colectivas (Radke et al., 2018; Weis et al., 2018). En estos/as participantes habría un efecto techo, y en ellos se activaría la ruta central del Modelo de la Probabilidad de Elaboración (Petty y Cacioppo, 1986). En concreto, estas personas se sienten más identificadas con las feministas, consideran importante a nivel personal el tema de la confrontación del sexismo, tienen creencias sólidas y convincentes sobre el tema que se aborda en los chistes feministas, y mantienen también argumentos preexistentes a favor de ellos. En este caso, el humor feminista les ofrece la oportunidad de compartir sus

creencias y así reforzar una identidad colectiva (Yus, 2016), siendo de por sí alta su proclividad a las acciones colectivas.

En resumen, estos tres primeros estudios demostraron que el humor subversivo contra el sexismo es empíricamente independiente del humor de denigración del hombre (también contrastado con respecto al humor neutral), y que su objetivo no es denigrar directamente a los hombres, sino cambiar las actitudes sexistas y concienciar sobre la desigualdad de género que mantiene a las mujeres en desventaja social.

Llegados a este punto, nos dispusimos a dar respuesta al segundo objetivo de la presente tesis, es decir, al análisis de la validez de constructo del humor subversivo contra el sexismo en contraposición al humor sexista, mostrando en primer lugar la independencia empírica entre ambos, y en segundo lugar, estudiando la relación que mantiene su apreciación (diversión y rechazo) y su interpretación (percepciones de denigración de la mujer, crítica del sexismo y denigración de los hombres) con las actitudes seleccionadas (identidad feminista y sexismo hostil).

En este punto existían lagunas sobre cómo se interpreta el humor subversivo contra el sexismo. Strain et al. (2016) sugieren que en parte la dificultad de su interpretación se debe a que se presenta como una sátira social, y su significado puede ser ambiguo. Más concretamente, la ambigüedad interpretativa de este tipo de humor está influida por su formato, que junto al prejuicio de los receptores, podría provocar que el contenido representado fuese finalmente malinterpretado (Saucier et al., 2018; Vidmar y Rokeach, 1974). Específicamente, en el humor subversivo contra el sexismo, una situación humorística en sí misma representa tanto el elemento sexista que se critica (p.ej., las tareas del hogar son esencialmente realizadas por mujeres) como la crítica satírica de este elemento sexista (p.ej., reivindicar el rol de los hombres en estas tareas). Así, este humor puede desencadenar la defensa del elemento sexista por parte del grupo poderoso (los hombres), a la vez que la crítica satírica del sexismo de manos de las desfavorecidas (las mujeres). Por todo esto, es posible que el humor subversivo se pueda interpretar como humor sexista y no en sí mismo como una herramienta de crítica al sexismo.

En este sentido, en el estudio 4 corroboramos la diferenciación empírica del humor subversivo contra el sexismo con respecto al humor sexista mediante AFC tanto para las respuestas de apreciación (diversión y rechazo) como de interpretación (denigración de la mujer, crítica del sexismo y denigración del hombre) del humor. Además, encontramos diferentes resultados en la apreciación e interpretación de cada

tipo de humor en función del grado de sexismo hostil y el grado de identificación feminista.

En relación con el humor subversivo contra el sexismo, habría que subrayar que éste podría convertirse en un arma de doble filo debido a su peculiaridad interpretativa (Saucier et al., 2016). En primer lugar, podría actuar como una herramienta adecuada para que las personas no sexistas reafirmen sus creencias igualitarias, reflejándolas y profundizándolas. En segundo lugar, como Saucier et al. (2018) explican, podría fortalecer las actitudes sexistas de las personas con altos prejuicios. Esto sugiere que podría funcionar como un tipo de humor sexista, por lo que resultaba necesario estudiar los efectos de la exposición a este tipo de humor, considerando factores actitudinales (identidad feminista y sexismo hostil).

Como se hipotetizó, el humor subversivo (vs. humor sexista) fue percibido como más crítico contra el sexismo, menos denigrante de las mujeres y más denigrante hacia los hombres. Además, con respecto a la apreciación del humor se observó que una mayor identidad feminista se asoció con una mayor apreciación del humor subversivo (Gallivan, 1992; Stillion y White, 1987). Por el contrario, mayores actitudes sexistas hostiles se asociaron con una mayor apreciación del humor sexista (Romero-Sánchez et al., 2017).

Asimismo, en lo que respecta a la interpretación del humor, una mayor identidad feminista se asoció con una mayor percepción de crítica al sexismo y menor denigración del hombre. Por otro lado, mayores actitudes sexistas hostiles se asociaron con una mayor percepción de denigración del hombre y una menor crítica del sexismo en el humor subversivo. Este hallazgo sugiere que las personas con niveles más altos de identidad feminista son más capaces de ver el humor subversivo como un intento de criticar y cuestionar el sexismo y los roles y estereotipos de género y no como una forma directa de denigrar a los hombres, sino más bien como una crítica de su condición privilegiada y sus ventajas sociales. Además, los resultados obtenidos en quienes tienen mayores actitudes sexistas hostiles, servirían para evidenciar que estos participantes centran su atención en el componente de denigración del hombre.

En el estudio 5, para profundizar en las relaciones encontradas entre el humor subversivo vs. humor sexista y las actitudes individuales, realizamos un estudio entre-grupos analizando el papel moderador de la identidad feminista y del sexismo hostil sobre las respuestas de apreciación e interpretación de cada tipo de humor. Tal y como se hipotetizó, el humor feminista en comparación con el humor sexista evocó mayor

diversión y menor rechazo, y se percibió como menos denigrante hacia las mujeres, más denigrante hacia los hombres y más crítico con el sexismo. Estos hallazgos son consistentes con la literatura previa, ya que teóricamente se plantea que el objetivo del humor subversivo contra el sexismo es confrontar, criticar, cuestionar y subvertir actitudes y conductas sexistas (Case y Lippard, 2009; Shifman y Lemish, 2011), a pesar de presentar un componente de burla hacia los hombres, mientras que el de humor sexista iría en la línea de denigrar a las mujeres (Ford et al., 2015).

Asimismo, se encontró un patrón de relaciones opuesto entre la apreciación e interpretación de cada tipo de humor (humor subversivo vs. humor sexista) y las variables actitudinales (identidad feminista y sexismo hostil). Con respecto al humor subversivo, mayor diversión se asoció con una mayor identidad feminista y menor sexismo hostil. Como se predijo, los/as participantes con mayor identidad feminista y menores puntuaciones en sexismo hostil percibieron mayor crítica al sexismo en el humor subversivo. En lo que respecta al humor sexista se encontró el patrón de resultados contrario, fue considerado más divertido por los/as participantes más altos en sexismo hostil y menor en identidad feminista. Además, los/as participantes con mayor identidad feminista y menores puntuaciones en sexismo hostil se asociaron con mayor rechazo al humor sexista. Asimismo, los/as participantes con mayor identidad feminista y puntuaciones más bajas de sexismo hostil percibieron mayor denigración de las mujeres en el humor sexista.

Estos hallazgos subrayan la relevancia de las variables actitudinales en la apreciación e interpretación del humor subversivo contra el sexismo (vs. humor sexista). De acuerdo con investigaciones previas (Miller et al., 2019), las variables actitudinales son importantes en la apreciación e interpretación del humor subversivo contra el sexismo (vs. humor sexista). En concreto, las personas con una mayor identidad feminista y menores actitudes sexistas hostiles establecieron la mejor interpretación del humor subversivo contra el sexismo, es decir, en la dirección de criticar y cuestionar el sexismo (Case y Lippard, 2009; Shifman y Lemish, 2010), mientras que percibieron el humor sexista en la dirección de denigrar a las mujeres. Por tanto estas personas fueron quienes establecieron una mejor diferencia interpretativa entre ambos tipos de humor (humor sexista frente a humor feminista).

Tras analizar la forma en que se aprecia e interpreta el humor subversivo contra el sexismo, se procedió a dar respuesta al tercer objetivo de la presente tesis, es decir, a estudiar los primeros efectos potenciales del humor subversivo contra el sexismo sobre

las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género. Hasta ahora los intentos empíricos que se han realizado para subvertir el sexismo, se han hecho con herramientas serias de concienciación contra el sexismo y la misoginia, encontrando efectos beneficiosos en la lucha contra la desigualdad de género (p.ej., Greitemeyer et al., 2015; Owen y Spencer, 2013; Simon y Hoyt, 2007). Específicamente, algunos de estos estudios han encontrado que tal exposición motiva la participación en acciones colectivas para la igualdad de género (p.ej., Guizzo et al., 2017). Sin embargo, no existen estudios que hayan demostrado que el humor feminista pueda funcionar como un instrumento más para combatir el sexismo social promoviendo la participación en este tipo de acciones colectivas.

De esta forma, a lo largo de los estudios 6 y 7, con el propósito de ampliar los hallazgos correlacionales encontrados (la relación positiva entre el humor feminista y las acciones colectivas), manipulamos la exposición al tipo de humor (humor feminista vs. humor neutral) para ver su efecto sobre las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, a la vez que medimos la identificación feminista de los/as participantes.

En el estudio 6 medimos específicamente la proclividad a las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género una vez que los/as participantes fueron expuestos al humor subversivo contra el sexismo (vs. humor neutral) (van Zomeren et al., 2004). Observamos que ser expuesto/a al humor subversivo aumentaba este tipo de acciones colectivas. De acuerdo con la literatura previa (Hartz, 2007; Tejerina y Perugorría, 2017), el humor puede funcionar como un instrumento para motivar la movilización social y la protesta. Además, con respecto al Modelo Integrador de la Identidad Social de la Acción Colectiva (SIMCA) (van Zomeren et al., 2008), es posible que el incremento de la participación en las acciones colectivas tras la exposición al humor subversivo contra el sexismo pueda estar relacionado con el hecho de que este tipo de humor contribuya a intensificar la percepción de la injusticia, en primer lugar, resaltando determinadas situaciones de desigualdad de género y, posteriormente, cuestionándolas y criticándolas. Es probable que esta mayor conciencia social resulte en última instancia en motivar la movilización, la resistencia y la participación social y política relacionadas con situaciones específicas que mantienen a las mujeres en desventaja social.

Además, encontramos que los/as participantes que se identificaron más con las feministas tuvieron una mayor proclividad a las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género. En este sentido, nuestros hallazgos apoyan la idea de que cuanto mayor es la

identidad feminista, mayor es la proclividad a este tipo de acciones. De acuerdo con investigaciones previas, la identificación feminista se ha relacionado con el activismo feminista (Kelly, 2015) así como con la voluntad de participar en comportamientos feministas específicos, como asistir a charlas sobre los derechos de las mujeres (Nelson et al., 2008), firmar peticiones online sobre cuestiones de género (Liss et al., 2004), o apoyar económicamente organizaciones feministas (Redford et al., 2018).

Estos hallazgos son consistentes con el Modelo SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008), que enfatiza la identidad como un elemento central de las acciones colectivas. Basado en este modelo, Radke et al. (2016) propusieron que las personas que más se identifican con las feministas son también las que muestran mayor motivación para reivindicar, mejorar y proteger los derechos de las mujeres. Por tanto, una mayor identificación con las feministas se relaciona con una mayor proclividad a actuar colectivamente en favor de los intereses de las mujeres.

Además, siguiendo con el estudio 6, encontramos que la relación entre el humor feminista y las acciones colectivas estaba moderada por la identidad feminista. Específicamente, el humor feminista aumentó la proclividad a las acciones colectivas en el caso de los/as participantes con una identidad feminista inferior. Además, el humor feminista también motivó las intenciones conductuales en el caso de los/as participantes con una identidad feminista menor. Para explicar esto, podemos volver al Modelo de la Probabilidad de Elaboración (Petty y Cacioppo, 1986) que comentamos anteriormente.

En el caso de la ruta central se encontrarían las personas con una mayor identidad feminista. Estas personas se centrarían más en el contenido del mensaje global del humor feminista. Serían las más propensas a percibir la situación actual de las mujeres como injusta y, por tanto, son más conscientes del problema social de la desigualdad de género que las predispondría a las acciones colectivas encaminadas en erradicar las asimetrías sociales entre hombres y mujeres (Liss et al., 2004). También es más probable que sientan un mayor vínculo, compromiso y sentido de solidaridad con las feministas (Leach et al., 2008), lo que finalmente se traduce en una mayor disposición a participar en acciones colectivas (van Zomeren et al., 2004). Por tanto, dada la fuerte influencia de estas características personales en la motivación para movilizarse por el cambio social, es poco probable que una influencia externa como el humor feminista pueda modificar la proclividad a las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, que ya es de por sí alta.

En este sentido, la proclividad a las acciones colectivas estuvo motivada por el humor subversivo contra el sexismo (factor situacional), pero solo cuando la identidad feminista (factor individual) era menor. Asimismo, siguiendo con el Modelo de la Probabilidad de Elaboración (Petty y Cacioppo, 1986), la ruta periférica se activaría precisamente en aquellos/as participantes con menor identidad feminista. En este caso, el incremento de la participación puede estar relacionado con las características inherentes de traducir la confrontación de la desigualdad y discriminación de género en términos humorísticos. El uso de mensajes humorísticos subversivos contra el sexismo puede introducir un “*estándar de ligereza*”, ofreciendo así una visión más positiva de la lucha contra esta desigualdad y discriminación.

En concreto, este estándar de ligereza que aporta el humor puede permitir que quienes se identifican menos con las feministas se rían del contenido de ese humor al resaltar lo absurdo de las actitudes, roles y estereotipos de género. Esto, a su vez, probablemente permitirá a estas personas asimilar mejor el mensaje crítico contra el sexismo, porque no implica una confrontación seria y / o agresiva de su ideología. En definitiva, todo ello puede provocar cambios en sus actitudes hacia las acciones colectivas para mejorar la situación social de las mujeres.

En el estudio 7 replicamos todos los resultados del estudio 6 sobre la proclividad a las acciones colectivas, y ampliamos los hallazgos encontrados a las intenciones conductuales sobre varias peticiones de una “*Asociación Universitaria por la igualdad de género*” ficticia. De acuerdo con el estudio 6, teniendo en cuenta las intenciones conductuales, encontramos los mismos efectos que los encontrados sobre la proclividad a las acciones colectivas. En este sentido, ser expuesto/a al humor feminista (vs. humor neutral) incrementa las intenciones conductuales (Hartz, 2007; Tejerina y Perugorría, 2017). Además, una mayor identidad feminista también se asoció con mayores intenciones conductuales (Liss et al., 2004; Redford et al., 2018). Por último, el humor feminista motivó la realización de estas conductas, pero solo en el caso de los/as participantes con una identidad feminista más baja (Modelo de la Probabilidad de Elaboración; Petty y Cacioppo, 1986).

Debido a que en la actualidad se han establecido concepciones postfeministas en el mundo occidental (Gill, 2017), se cree que las acciones colectivas ya no son necesarias porque la igualdad de género ya está conseguida (MacCarteney, 2018). Sin embargo, es posible que el humor feminista pueda funcionar como un instrumento de confrontación no agresivo (Saucier et al., 2018) para motivar este tipo de acciones en

aquellas personas que no están muy familiarizadas con las feministas, no están del todo convencidas con ellas, utilizan más las señales heurísticas para la comprensión de los mensajes, o son menos conscientes de los objetivos de las feministas. El humor tal vez podría hacer que estas personas asimilen mejor el mensaje de confrontación, creando un estado de ánimo más positivo y planteando lo absurdo del sexismo, los roles y los estereotipos de género.

### **1.1. Limitaciones e investigación futura**

Aunque los estudios realizados en esta tesis doctoral aportan conocimiento interesante y creemos que valioso, también presentan una serie de limitaciones. En primer lugar, hemos concretado el humor feminista a través de una batería de chistes y viñetas humorísticas. Esto significa haber circunscrito este tipo de humor a un tipo concreto de material, sin tener en cuenta otras formas en las que el humor feminista emerge de forma más natural (Ruiz-Gurillo y Linares-Bernabéu, 2020; Willett et al., 2012). Por tanto, habiendo utilizado una batería de chistes subversivos contra el sexismo, los resultados encontrados en cuanto a la exposición al humor feminista pueden presentar limitaciones en cuanto a su validez externa. En estudios futuros se podrían analizar otros formatos y contextos donde el humor feminista aflore para exponer a los/as participantes y ver así sus efectos.

Una segunda limitación se refiere a la muestra de los diferentes estudios. Si bien el estudio 3 se realizó con participantes de la población general, el resto de estudios se centraron únicamente en la población universitaria. Esto significa que los efectos experimentales del humor feminista se comprobaron solo en estudiantes universitarios/as, y por lo tanto, también fueron limitados en términos de nivel educativo y rango de edad. De acuerdo con investigaciones anteriores (Ruch et al., 1990), la edad puede ser una variable importante a la hora de sacar conclusiones sobre la apreciación del humor. En el estudio 3, encontramos que las personas más mayores aprecian menos el humor feminista (les genera menos diversión y más rechazo). Por tanto, también sería esperable encontrar diferencias en edad con base en cómo se interpreta este tipo de humor. En consecuencia, si existen diferencias en la interpretación de este tipo de humor en función de la edad, puede haber también diferencias con respecto a los efectos de exposición sobre las acciones colectivas.

En tercer lugar, existe una limitación en torno a las variables de diferencias individuales utilizadas. De acuerdo con la literatura previa (p.ej., Case y Lippard, 2009; Ruiz-Gurillo y Linares-Bernabéu, 2020; Shifman y Lemish, 2011; Strain et al., 2016)



consideramos como representativas del estudio del humor feminista variables como la identidad feminista, las actitudes hostiles hacia los hombres o el sexismo hostil. A través del estudio de estas variables hemos podido establecer diferencias entre el humor feminista con respecto a otros tipos de humor.

Sin embargo, si la función del humor subversivo contra el sexismo es subvertir las asimetrías sociales, es posible que mantenga una asociación negativa con respecto a actitudes que defienden el poder de los grupos privilegiados (p.ej., orientación a la dominación social; Hodson et al., 2010). Por ello, este tipo de humor también podría malinterpretarse cuando estas actitudes se interiorizan más. Futuros estudios deberían investigar el papel de otras variables actitudinales no consideradas en esta tesis doctoral.

Además, dado que este tipo de humor presenta dificultades interpretativas, y que como consecuencia puede ser necesario un doble procesamiento cognitivo para comprenderlo (primero la exposición divertida del sexismo, y segundo, la crítica subversiva), es posible que los procesos cognitivos involucrados (Chan et al., 2016; Gignac et al., 2014) así como los rasgos de personalidad de los/as perceptores/as (Galloway y Chirico, 2008; Ruch, 2001) puedan influir en su interpretación. Por tanto, en líneas futuras se debería analizar el papel de determinados factores cognitivos (p.ej., memoria de trabajo) o rasgos de personalidad (p.ej., extraversión o neuroticismo).

Cuarto, en referencia a los efectos potenciales del humor subversivo contra el sexismo en las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, es necesario resaltar que estos efectos se han encontrado en comparación con la exposición al humor neutral. Futuros estudios podrían estudiar el efecto del humor feminista sobre las acciones colectivas frente a ser expuesto/a a otros tipos de humor, cambiando su contenido (p.ej., con respecto al humor sexista; Ford, 2000). Por otro lado, puede ser interesante estudiar qué sucede no solo cuando se cambia el contenido del humor (p.ej. humor neutral vs. humor feminista), sino también el formato del mensaje (p.ej., humor feminista vs. material serio de sensibilización contra el sexismo; Owen y Spencer, 2013).

Por último, en referencia a las acciones colectivas, a partir de modelos que actualizan el Modelo Integrador de la Identidad Social de la Acción Colectiva (SIMCA) (van Zomeren et al., 2008) (ej., Modelo de la Acción Colectiva Axiológico-Identitario, AICAM, Sabucedo et al., 2019), la investigación futura podría tener en cuenta el papel de otros factores específicos para motivar su participación (eficacia grupal, emociones como la ira, valores morales, etc.). Del mismo modo, podría ser interesante comparar si

estos efectos motivadores se producen en el caso de las acciones colectivas no normativas (en el presente trabajo abordamos las normativas) (Becker & Tauch, 2015).

## 1.2. Implicaciones prácticas

Los hallazgos encontrados en esta tesis podrían establecer los primeros pasos sobre la utilidad práctica del humor subversivo contra el sexismo. En este sentido, se sugiere que al utilizar el humor como estrategia de intervención psicosocial, es importante prestar atención a una multitud de factores. Esto es necesario porque según muchos enfoques e investigaciones, el humor podría ser un instrumento útil para influir en el comportamiento en algunas ocasiones, pero no en otras (Dong-Hun, 2009; Teixeira y Stipp, 2013).

En línea con estas ideas, si el humor feminista motiva la participación en las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género al cuestionar y criticar la ideología patriarcal y el sexismo que de ella se deriva (Case y Lippard, 2009; Shifman y Lemish, 2010), entonces, al utilizar el humor feminista como estrategia de sensibilización para combatir el sexismo, sería necesario tener en cuenta ciertos factores, como algunas actitudes específicas de los/as perceptores/as.

En este sentido, las personas con mayor identificación feminista son las que interpretan en mayor medida el humor feminista en la dirección de criticar y subvertir el sexismo, y quienes mejor lo diferencian del humor denigratorio (p.ej., del humor sexista). Por tanto, cabe señalar que para quienes tienen una identidad feminista mayor, el humor subversivo contra el sexismo constituye un medio de protesta pública contra el sexismo con el que reforzar la identidad feminista, compartir historias y casos reales sobre discriminación de género, así como combatir los estereotipos y prejuicios contra las mujeres a través del activismo feminista (Sowards y Renegar, 2006).

Sin embargo, las personas más sexistas hostiles asociarían más el humor subversivo contra el sexismo con la denigración de los hombres. Esto sugeriría que este tipo de humor podría tener una doble interpretación, y en su contraparte, dependiendo de las actitudes, podría interpretarse como otra forma de denigrar, reforzando así los prejuicios sexistas (Saucier et al., 2018). En este sentido, podríamos decir que el humor feminista podría no funcionar de forma adecuada para quienes internalizan mucho los prejuicios sexistas, ya que el efecto esperado de su exposición podría ser el contrario al esperado.

Concretamente, el humor feminista funcionaría más adecuadamente como estrategia motivadora para participar en las acciones colectivas en quienes tienen una

identidad feminista menor. Aunque la identidad feminista mantiene una relación negativa con el sexismo hostil (Weis et al., 2018), y por tanto, las personas con menor identidad feminista suelen tener mayores actitudes sexistas hostiles, esperamos que el humor feminista motive a los/as participantes que no tengan actitudes polarizadas.

Al presentar la desigualdad de género de una manera divertida, se ofrece la posibilidad a quienes tienen una menor identificación feminista de conectarse más con estos mensajes de confrontación a través del contexto lúdico del juego en el que se presenta. De hecho, más allá de la interpretación que el/la perceptor/a pueda hacer de este tipo de humor, las teorías sobre el humor feminista (p.ej., Strain et al., 2016) apuntan a que en general sirve para despertar la conciencia de la injusticia, generar preguntas críticas y provocar repensar modelos alternativos que al menos den visibilidad a la desventaja social de las mujeres.

## 2. Conclusiones

De los siete estudios de esta tesis doctoral podemos establecer una serie de conclusiones. En primer lugar, hemos comprobado que el humor subversivo contra el sexismo es diferente al humor de denigración del hombre, y que además, existen diferencias en cuanto a los correlatos que mantienen con algunas variables externas. Una mayor apreciación del humor feminista se relaciona con una mayor identidad feminista y una mayor proclividad a las acciones colectivas, mientras que una mayor apreciación del humor de denigración del hombre se relaciona con mayores actitudes hostiles hacia el grupo masculino. Esto sugiere que el objetivo del humor de denigración del hombre está en la línea de resaltar los estereotipos negativos de los hombres, mientras que el humor feminista se centra en criticar, cuestionar y concienciar sobre las actitudes sexistas que tiene el grupo privilegiado (los hombres).

En segundo lugar, es posible que el humor feminista pueda ser un instrumento de concienciación comprometido, ya que su interpretación puede ser diferente en función de las actitudes de los/as destinatarios/as (identidad feminista y sexismo hostil). Dada la ambigüedad de este tipo de humor, se puede malinterpretar, hasta el punto de ser percibido como un intento de denigrar al grupo social que pretende defender. En definitiva, mostramos que el humor feminista es una categoría independiente del humor con respecto al humor sexista, y que su apreciación e interpretación varía en función de las diferencias actitudinales de los/as destinatarios/as, siendo los participantes con alta identidad feminista los que más lo aprecian y los que lo interpretan más en la línea de subvertir los prejuicios contra las mujeres.

Finalmente, una vez que usamos el humor subversivo contra el sexismo (versus el humor neutral) como una herramienta de sensibilización contra el sexismo para motivar las acciones colectivas por la igualdad de género, encontramos que puede motivar no solo la proclividad de los/as participantes, sino también las intenciones conductuales de participar en este tipo de acciones. Los efectos fueron especialmente importantes en quienes mostraron una identidad feminista menor, lo que sugiere que podría motivar y sensibilizar a estas personas menos interesadas en participar en las acciones colectivas.

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**Anexos**

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**Annexes**





## Examples by type of humor: Studies 1, 2 and 3

### Subversive humor against sexism



### Neutral humor

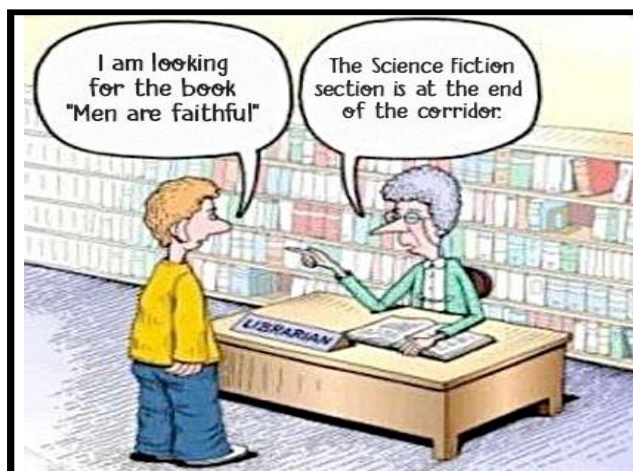
In Hollywood, two rats are eating through a film reel. One of them asks the other one:

- So, how do you like it?

The other rat replies disdainfully:

+ I liked the book better.

### Man disparagement humor





## **Supplementary Material: Studies 1, 2 and 3 (English version)**

### **1. Humorous material retained after the content validity study, item analysis and exploratory factor analysis and classified according to type of humor.**

- 1.1. Subversive humor against sexism (11 humorous stimuli)
- 1.2. Neutral humor (10 humorous stimuli)
- 1.3. Man disparagement humor (12 humor stimuli)

### **2. Humorous material by type of humor (Study 3)**

- 2.1. Subversive humor against sexism
- 2.2. Neutral humor
- 2.3. Man disparagement humor



**1. Humorous material retained after the content validity study, item analysis and exploratory factor analysis and classified according to type of humor.**

The humorous material retained after the different analyses carried out in Study 1 and Study 2 is presented below. The numbering corresponds to the order in which the humorous stimuli were presented in the booklet of Study 2. Statistics associated with each of the stimuli are shown in tables 1 and 2 of Study 2. Descriptive statistics associated with each humor type and their interrelations are presented in tables 3 and 4 of Study 2. The characteristics of the humorous stimuli retained are: 1) content validity index  $> .80$ ; 2) representative values  $> 3.2$  (response scale ranging between 1 and 4); 3) loadings  $> .30$  on the corresponding factor according to the exploratory factor analysis; 4) secondary loadings lower than those of each humorous stimulus on its corresponding factor; 5) corrected item-total correlation values  $> .30$ ; and 6) standard deviation  $> 1$ .



1.1. Subversive humor against sexism (11 humorous stimuli).

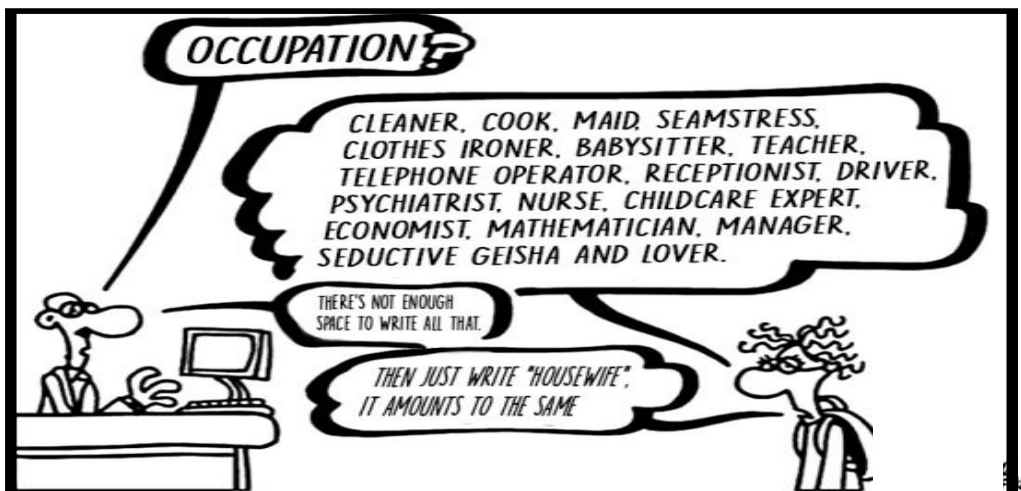
5.



Original Spanish joke.

Impossible to translate into English.

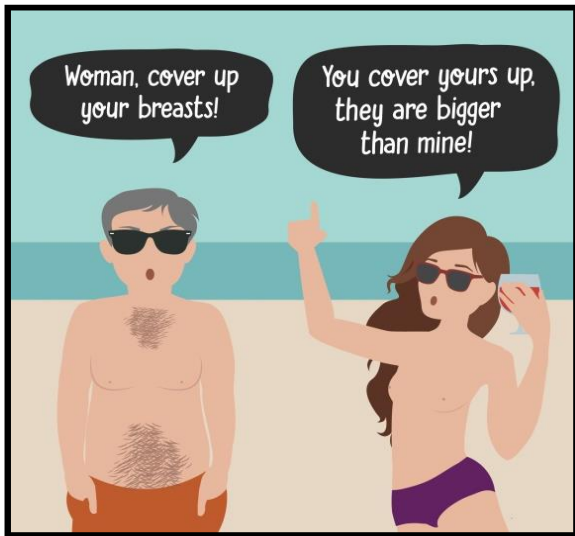
6.



10.



13.



20.



23.



Original Spanish joke.

Impossible to translate into English.



28.



30.



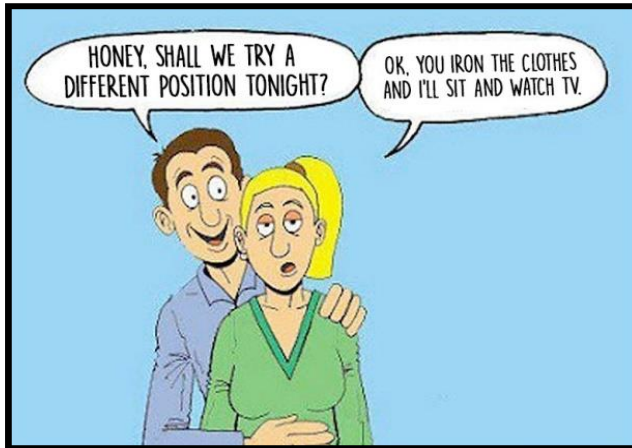
32.



35.



37.



**1.1. Neutral humor (10 humorous stimuli).**

7.

- A new teacher introduces himself to his class: Hello! My name is Long.  
+A student reply: It's all right, we've got plenty of time!

9.



Original Spanish joke.

Impossible to translate into English.

14.

A snake asks another snake:  
-Is it true that we're poisonous?  
+Yes it is, why do you ask?  
-Because I just bit my tongue.

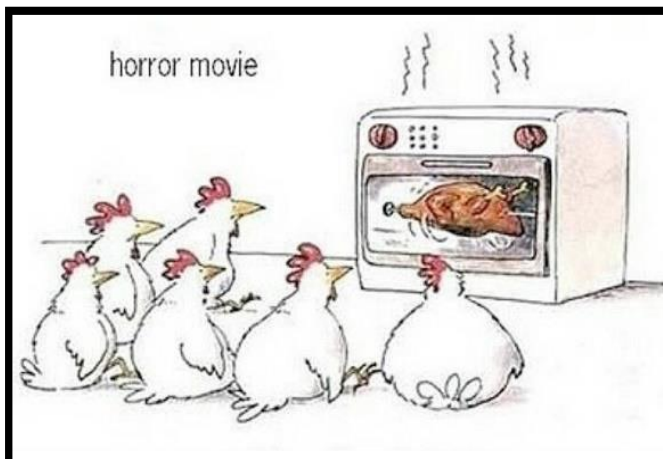
17.

-What are those tablets you're taking?  
+Memory-enhancing tablets.  
-What are they called?  
+I don't remember.

18.

In Hollywood, two rats are eating through a film reel. One of them asks the other one:  
- So, how do you like it?  
The other rat replies disdainfully:  
+ I liked the book better.

19.



**21.**

- ¿Qué le dice un gusano a otro gusano?  
+ Me voy a dar una vuelta a la manzana.

Original Spanish joke.

Impossible to translate into English.

**25.**

- What's the likeness between a boxer and a telescope?  
+ Both will make you see the stars.

**26.**

- How's your toddler?  
+ He started walking three months ago.  
- Wow! He must be a long way away by now.

**34.**

Two tomatoes are crossing the road and a car runs over one of them. The other tomato comes over and asks:  
- What happened to you?  
+ Ketchup.

## 1.1. Man disparagement humor (12 humour stimuli).

1.



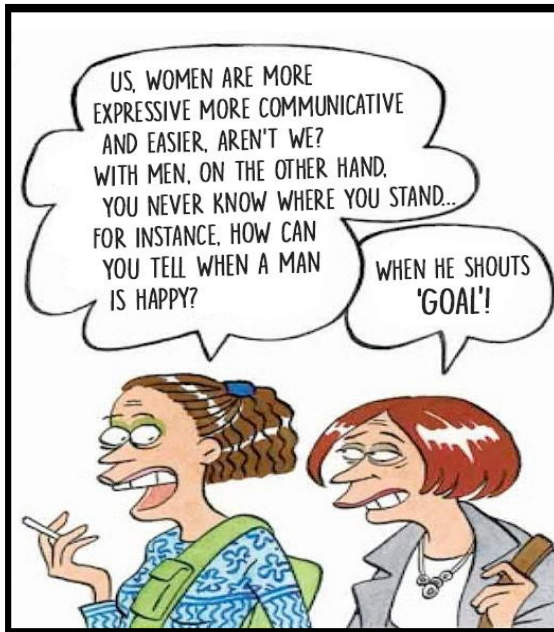
4.

-What is a torn sheet of paper to a man?  
+A puzzle.

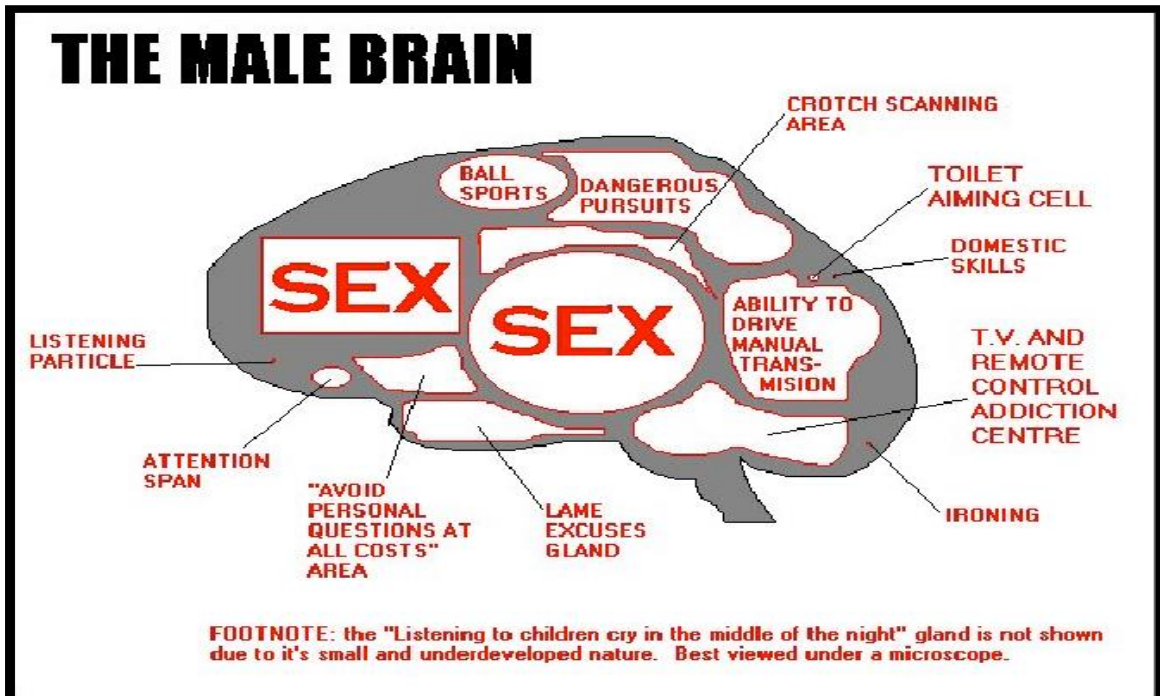
8.

One upon a time, in the brain of a man there lived a sad and lonely neuron. One day, a happy-looking neuron turns up and asks the first neuron:  
- What are you doing here all alone? The sad neuron replies:  
+Well...I've always been myself, I have never seen other neurons like me before.  
The happy neuron replies:  
-Well, of course...come over to the penis, we're all there!

11.



12.



15.

- What's the likeness between a man and a microwave oven?

+At first, you think they're good for everything, but in the end you realize they're only good for warming up.

16.



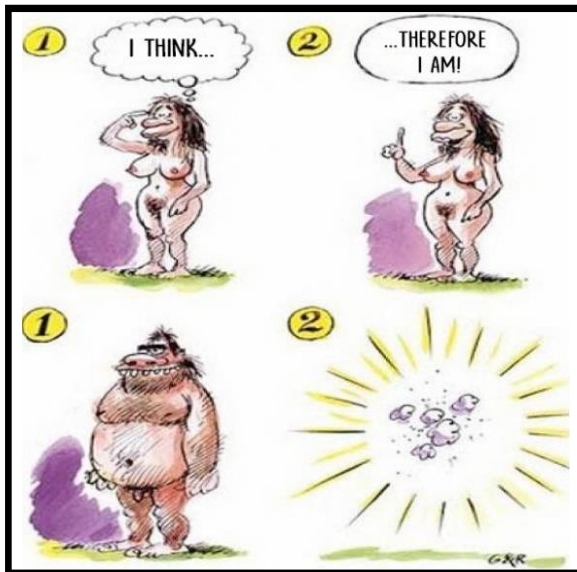
22.

- What's the common point between wedding anniversaries, public toilets and the G-spot baño público y el punto "G"?

+ Men never get them right.



24.



29.

- What's the common point between UFOs and intelligent men?  
+ Everyone talks about them, but no one has ever seen them.

31.



36.

- In which month do men do less stupid things?  
+In February, because it's only 28 days long.

## 1. Humorous material by type of humor (Study 3).

### 1.1. Subversive humor against sexism.





### 1.1. Neutral humor.

-What are those tablets your´re taking?  
+Memory-enhancing tablets.  
-What are they called?  
+I don´t remember.

- ¿Qué le dice un gusano a otro gusano?  
+ Me voy a dar una vuelta a la manzana.

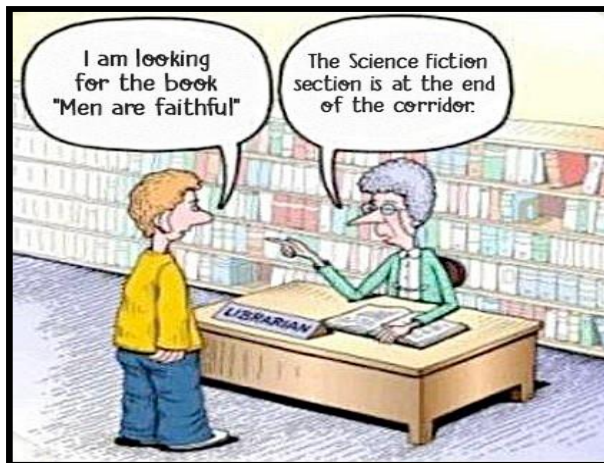
Original Spanish joke. Impossible to translate into English.

In Hollywood, two rats are eating through a film reel. One of them asks the other one:  
- So, how do you like it?  
The other rat replies disdainfully:  
+ I liked the book better.

Two tomatoes are crossing the road and a car runs over one of them. The other tomato comes over and asks:  
- What happened to you?  
+ Ketchup.

- What´s the likeness between a boxer and a telescope?  
+ Both will make you see the stars.

### 2.3 Man disparagement humor.



-What is a torn sheet of paper to a man?

+A puzzle.

- What's the common point between wedding anniversaries, public toilets and the G-spot?

+ Men never get them right.

- What's the likeness between a man and a microwave oven?

+ At first, you think they're good for everything, but in the end you realize they're only good for warming up.

Once upon a time, in the brain of a man there lived a sad and lonely neuron. One day, a happy-looking neuron turns up and asks the first neuron:

What are you doing here all alone? The sad neuron replies:

+Well...I've always been by myself, I have never seen other neurons like me before.

The happy neuron replies:

Well, of course...come over to the penis, we're all there!

**Supplementary material: Studies 1, 2 and 3 (Spanish version)**

**1. Humorous material retained after the content validity study, item analysis and exploratory factor analysis and classified according to type of humor.**

- 1.1. Subversive humor against sexism (11 humorous stimuli)
- 1.2. Neutral humor (10 humorous stimuli)
- 1.3. Man disparagement humor (12 humor stimuli)

**2. Humorous material by type of humor (Study 3)**

- 2.1. Subversive humor against sexism
- 2.2. Neutral humor
- 2.3. Man disparagement humor





**1. Humorous material retained after the content validity study, item analysis and exploratory factor analysis and classified according to type of humor.**

The humorous material retained after the different analyses carried out in Study 1 and Study 2 is presented below. The numbering corresponds to the order in which the humorous stimuli were presented in the booklet of Study 2. Statistics associated with each of the stimuli are shown in tables 1 and 2 of Study 2. Descriptive statistics associated with each humor type and their interrelations are presented in tables 3 and 4 of Study 2. The characteristics of the humorous stimuli retained are: 1) content validity index  $> .80$ ; 2) representative values  $> 3.2$  (response scale ranging between 1 and 4); 3) loadings  $> .30$  on the corresponding factor according to the exploratory factor analysis; 4) secondary loadings lower than those of each humorous stimulus on its corresponding factor; 5) corrected item-total correlation values  $> .30$ ; and 6) standard deviation  $> 1$ .



1.1. Subversive humor against sexism (11 humor stimuli).

5.



6.



10.



13.



20.



23.



28.



30.



32.



35.



37.



## 1.2. Neutral humor (10 humorous stimuli).

7.

- Entra un nuevo profesor a clase y se presenta: ¡Buenos días! Mi nombre es Largo.  
+Un alumno le contesta: ¡No importa, tenemos tiempo!

9.



14.

Una serpiente le pregunta a otra:  
-¿Es cierto que somos venenosas?  
+Sí, ¿Por qué?  
-Porque me acabo de morder  
la lengua.

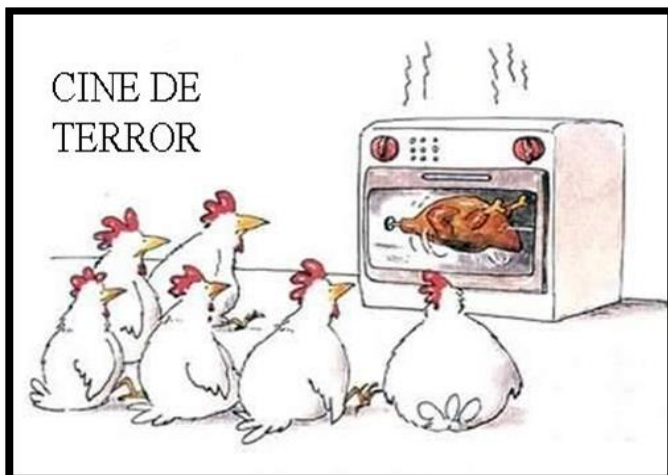
17.

-¿Qué estás tomando?  
+Unas pastillas para la memoria.  
-¿Cómo se llaman?  
+No me acuerdo.

18.

Dos ratas en Hollywood están  
comiendo un rollo de película.  
Una mira a la otra y le pregunta:  
- Y... ¿qué te parece?  
Y la otra contesta con desdén:  
+ Me gustó mucho más el libro.

19.





**21.**

- ¿Qué le dice un gusano a otro gusano?  
+ Me voy a dar una vuelta a la manzana.

**25.**

- ¿En qué se parece un boxeador a un telescopio?  
+ En que los dos hacen ver estrellas.

**26.**

¿Cómo está tu hijo pequeño?  
+ Hace tres meses que anda.  
¡Uy!, pues ya debe estar muy lejos.

**34.**

Un tomatito y una tomatita están cruzando la calle y un coche atropella al tomatito. La tomatita pregunta al tomatito:  
- ¿Qué te hicieron?  
+ Ketchup.

### 1.3. Humor disparagement humor (12 humour stimuli).

1.



4.

-¿Qué es para un hombre un folio partido en dos?  
+Un rompecabezas.

8.

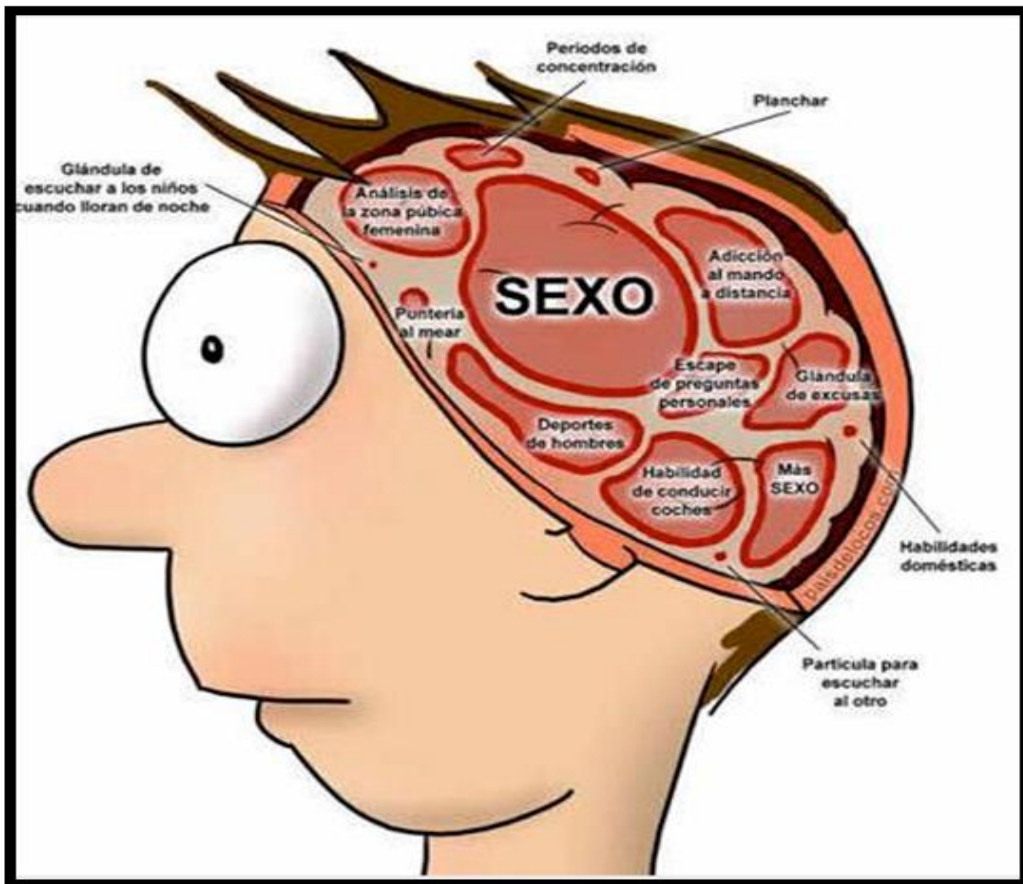
En el cerebro de un hombre había una neurona triste y sola. De repente un día aparece otra neurona con aspecto de felicidad y le pregunta:  
-¿Qué estás haciendo aquí sola?  
La triste contesta:  
+ Bueno, no se... siempre he estado sola, nunca había visto antes a otra como yo.  
La feliz replica:  
-Desde luego... vente al pene que estamos todas allí.

11.



12.

### CEREBRO MASCULINO



15.

- ¿En qué se parece un hombre a un microondas?

+ En que al principio piensas que vale para todo y al final sólo sirve para calentar.

16.



22.

- ¿Qué tienen en común los aniversarios de boda, un baño público y el punto "G"?

+ En que los hombres no aciertan en ninguno.

24.



29.

- ¿Qué tienen en común los  
OVNIS y los hombres  
inteligentes?  
+ Que todo el mundo habla de  
ellos pero nadie los ha visto.

31.



36.

- ¿En qué mes los hombres cometen menos estupideces?  
+En febrero, porque sólo tiene 28 días.

## 2. Humorous material by type of humor (Study 3).

### 2.1. Subversive humor against sexism.







### 1.1. Neutral humor.

-¿Qué estás tomando?  
+Unas pastillas para la memoria.  
-¿Cómo se llaman?  
+No me acuerdo.

- ¿Qué le dice un gusano a otro gusano?  
+ Me voy a dar una vuelta a la manzana.



Un tomatito y una tomatita están cruzando la calle y un coche atropella al tomatito. La tomatita pregunta al tomatito:  
- ¿Qué te hicieron?  
+ Ketchup.

- ¿En qué se parece un boxeador a un telescopio?  
+ En que los dos hacen ver estrellas.

Dos ratas en Hollywood están comiendo un rollo de película. Una mira a la otra y le pregunta:  
- Y... ¿qué te parece?  
Y la otra contesta con desdén:  
+ Me gustó mucho más el libro.

### 1.1. Man disparagement humor.



-¿Qué es para un hombre un folio partido en dos?  
+Un rompecabezas.

- ¿En qué se parece un hombre a un microondas?  
+ En que al principio piensas que vale para todo y al final sólo sirve para calentar.

En el cerebro de un hombre había una neurona triste y sola. De repente un día aparece otra neurona con aspecto de felicidad y le pregunta:

¿Qué estás haciendo aquí sola? La triste contesta:

+ Bueno, no se... siempre he estado sola, nunca había visto antes a otra como yo.

La feliz replica:

Desde luego... vente al pene que estamos todas allí.

- ¿Qué tienen en común los aniversarios de boda, un baño público y el punto "G"?  
+ En que los hombres no aciertan en ninguno.

## Supplementary Material: Study 4 and 5 (English version)

### Sexist humor

1.

*Why was the woman happy to complete a 4-piece jigsaw in 6 months?*

*Because on the box it said 2 to 3 years.*

2.

A newly-married couple are talking:

*- Tell me, darling, but please, be honest, do you men prefer talkative women or other kinds?*

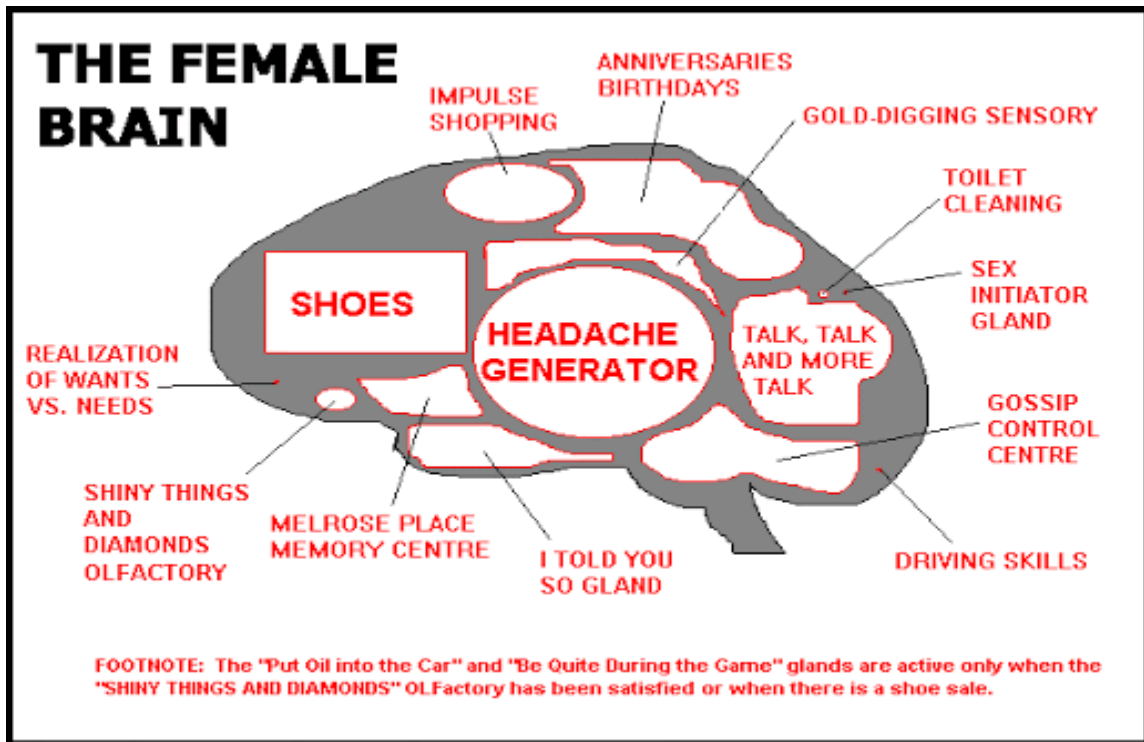
*+ What other kinds?*

3.

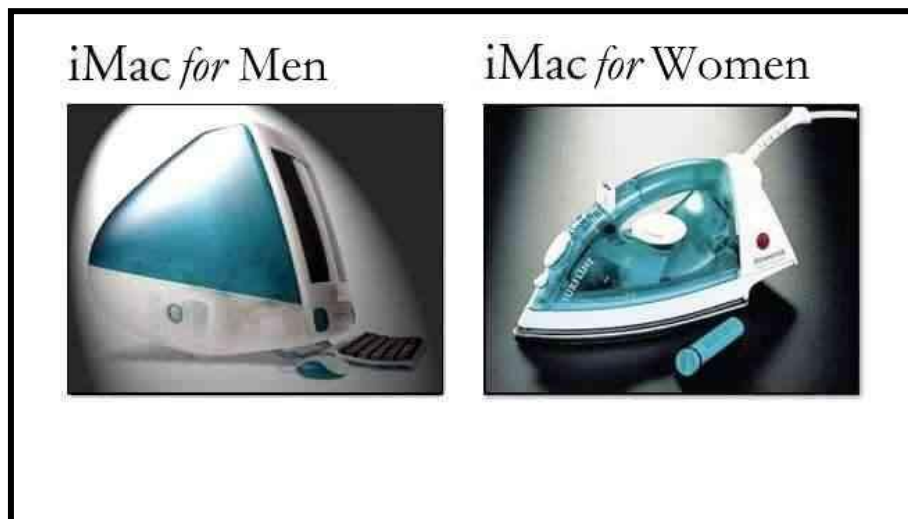
*Do you know what the longest part of a woman's body is?.....*

*The mop handle!*

4.



5.

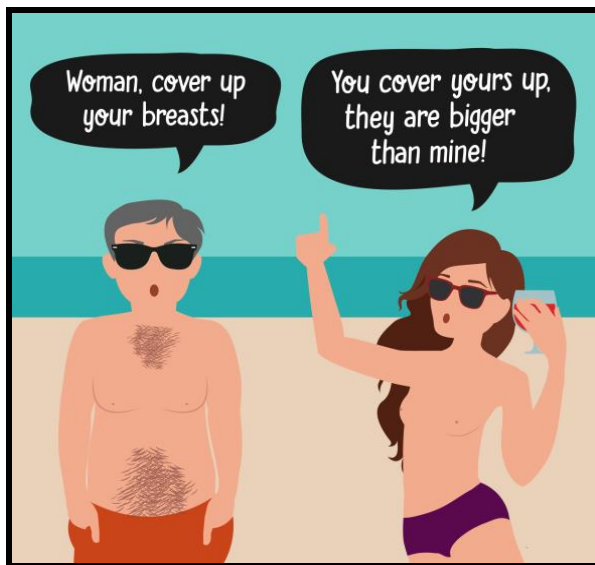


## Subversive humor against sexism

1.



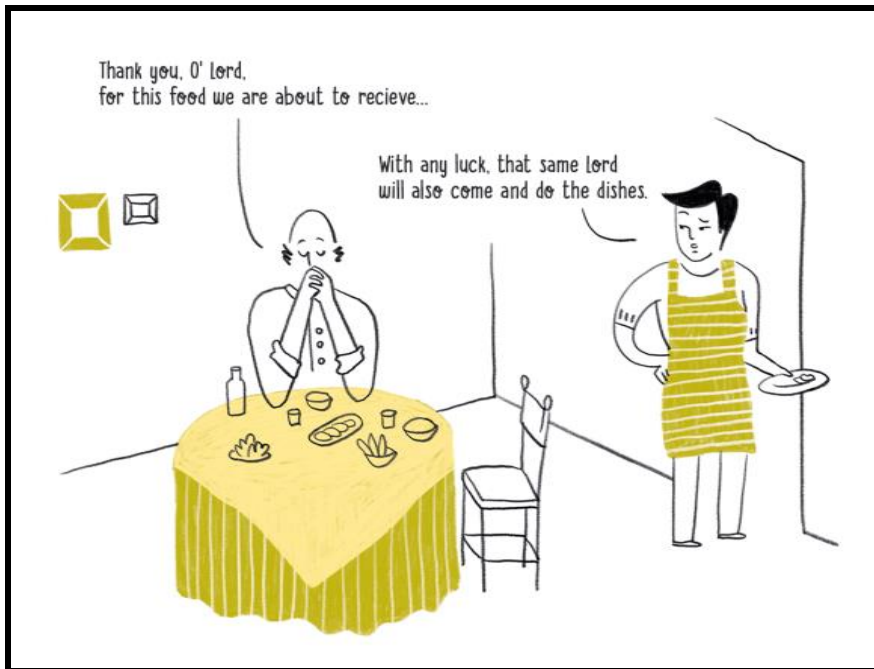
2.



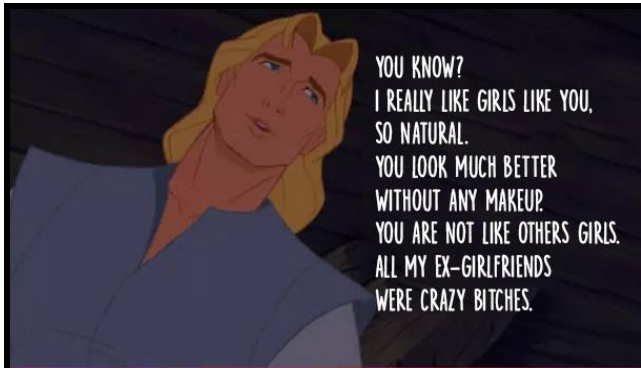
3.



4.



5.







Supplementary Material: Studies 4 and 5 (Spanish version)

Subversive humor against sexism (5 humorous stimuli)

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



### Sexist humor (5 humorous stimuli)

1.

*¿Por qué una mujer se alegra al acabar en 6 meses un puzle de 4 piezas?*

*Porque en la caja ponía de 2 a 3 años.*

2.

*Una pareja de novios hablando:*

*-Dime cariño, pero por favor, sé sincero, ¿a ustedes los hombres cómo os gustan más las mujeres, habladoras o de las otras?*

*+¿Qué otras?*

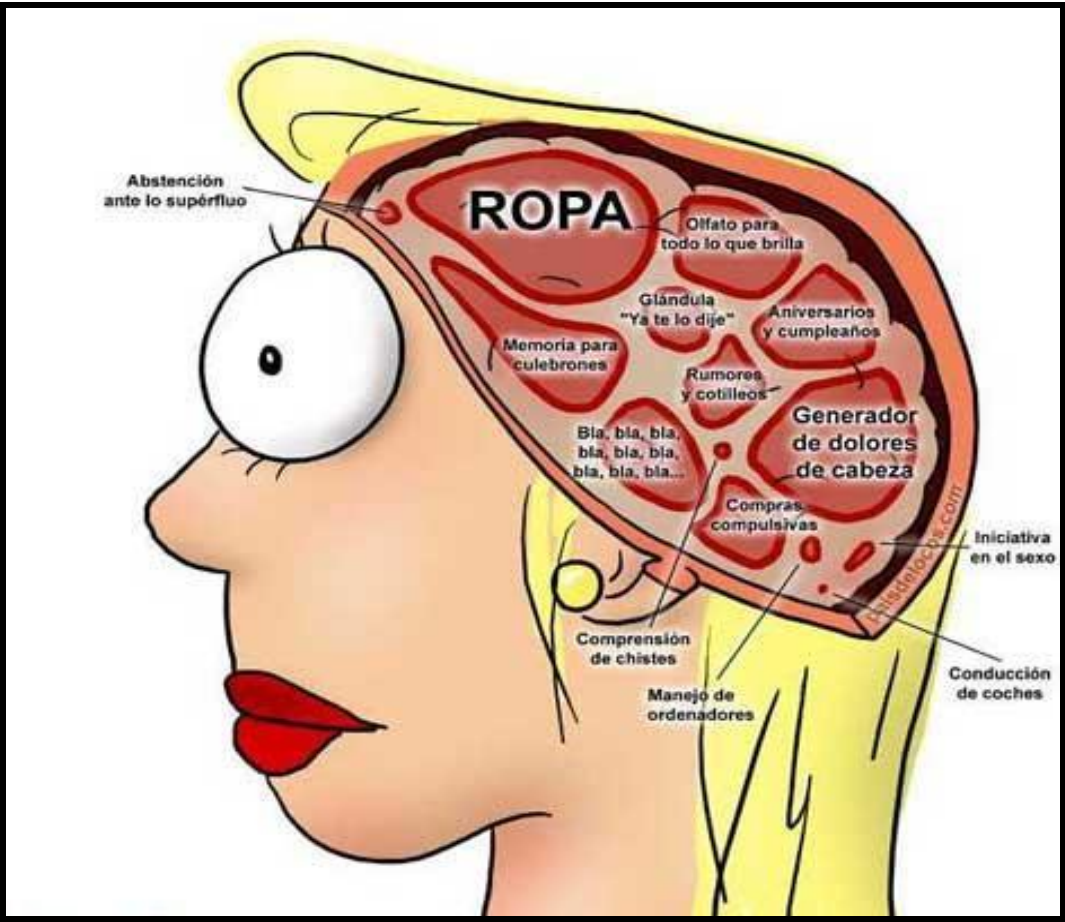
3.



4.

¿Saben cuál es el miembro más largo del cuerpo de la mujer?.....  
¡El palo de la fregona!

5.



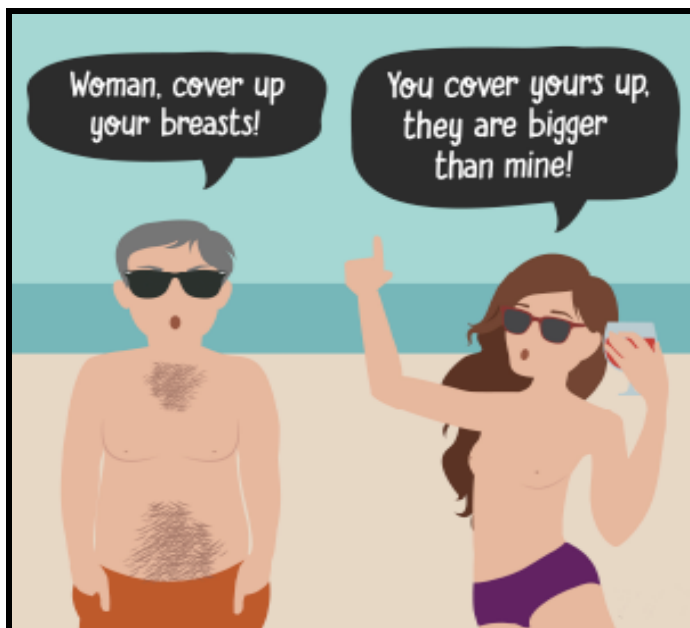
Supplementary Material: Studies 6 and 7 (English version)

Subversive humor against sexism (5 humorous stimuli)

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



Neutral humor (5 humorous stimuli)

1.



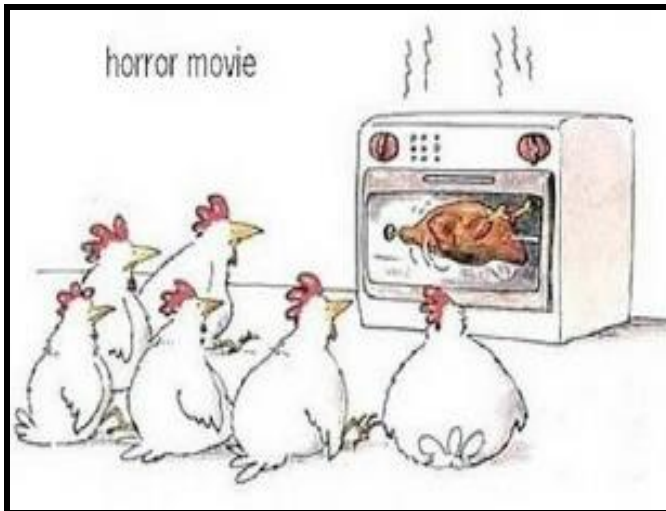
Original Spanish  
joke. Impossible to  
translate into  
English.

2.

-What's the likeness between a boxer and a telescope?

+ Both will make you see the stars.

3.



4.

-What are those tablets you're taking?

+Memory-enhancing tablets.

-What are they called?

+I don't remember.

5.

In Hollywood, two rats are eating through a film reel. One of them asks the other one:

-So, how do you like it?

The other rat replies disdainfully:

+I liked the book better.



Supplementary Material: Studies 6 and 7 (Spanish version)

Neutral humor (5 humorous stimuli)

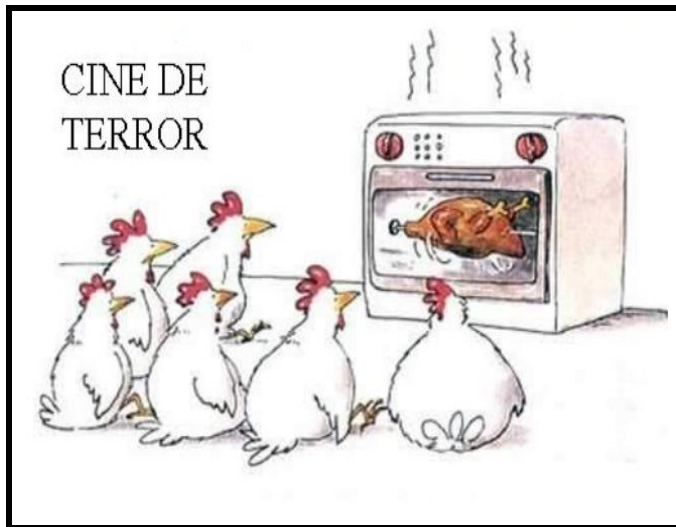
1.



2.

-¿En qué se parece un boxeador a un telescopio?  
+En que los dos hacen ver estrellas

3.



4.

-¿Qué estás tomando?  
+Unas pastillas para la memoria.  
-¿Cómo se llaman?  
+No me acuerdo.

5.

Dos ratas en Hollywood están comiendo un rollo de película. Una mira a la otra y le pregunta:

-Y... ¿qué te parece?

Y la otra contesta con desdén:

+Me gustó mucho más el libro.

Subversive humor against sexism (5 humorous stimuli)

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



