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**COSIFICACIÓN SEXUAL: NUEVAS FORMAS DE VIOLENCIA CONTRA LA  
MUJER**

*Doctoral Dissertation*

**SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION EXPERIENCES: THE MOST SUBTLE WAY  
OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

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## **OVERVIEW**





Women grow and develop in a cultural context invaded by over-sexualised female images (APA, 2007). The Theory of Sexual Objectification provides a theoretical framework that allows us to understand how the presence of sexually objectifying experiences plays a major role in women's mental health (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Gender differences in socialisation mean that women internalize the belief that they have to be sexually admired by men. Through the endorsement of benevolent sexist belief, the use of a woman's own body and her sexuality is employed as an instrument to gain social power, which constitutes the basis of dyadic power characteristic of benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). As a consequence of the integration of this belief by women, they stop perceiving sexual objectification experiences as reducing a woman to a mere sexual object and they instead perceive them as opportunities to increase their power. This perception overshadows the harmful consequences that these experiences have for women's wellbeing (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998).

The psychosocial approach throughout this doctoral thesis aims to study, from a gender perspective, the phenomenon of interpersonal sexual objectification, analysing the influence of cultural and ideological elements on the psychological consequences of sexual objectification for the welfare of women. The overall objective of this project has been to study the experiences of sexual objectification as understood in terms of manifestations of patriarchy at a (interpersonal) micro level, that allow, promote, and legitimize the maintenance of gender inequality.

Considering this from a theoretical perspective, this work aims to integrate the Theory of Sexual Objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996) in order to understand and to analyse the consequences that sexual objectification experiences have for women, depending on their adherence to a traditional gender ideology. Further, this work analyses the role of sexist ideology in the sexual objectification perpetrated by men. In order to analyze this goal, the first two chapters (Chapters I and II) offer a theoretical review of interpersonal sexual objectification, sexism, and the consequences of these experiences from the women's perspective (Chapter I) and from the men's perspective (Chapter II).

The empirical work in this thesis is divided into two blocks of studies that differ from each other in terms of the perspective adopted. The first block aims to study the ambiguity of subtle experiences of sexual objectification, analyzing the impact that those experiences have on benevolent sexist women at a psychosocial level (Chapters III, IV, V, VI, and VII). Four studies (Chapters III, IV, and VI) analyze the relationship between a higher number of reported sexual objectification experiences and higher scores of psychological discomfort, as well as the role of benevolent sexism ideology in that relationship. Study 3 (Chapter V) establishes a comparison between two countries, each with a different sexist ideology, and the differences between the psychosocial consequences that women suffer by being targets of sexual objectification in those countries. This comparison allows us to establish the relevance of the sexist ideology in the sexual objectification phenomenon. Finally, this block contains an experimental series (Chapter VII) that included two studies (Studies 6 and 7). These studies manipulate the exposure to a

subtle sexual objectification experience, and evaluate the feeling of power in women with more benevolent sexism experiences as a consequence of that sexual objectification experience.

The second block of studies adopts the men's perspective as the perpetrator of the sexual objectification experiences. Chapter VIII (Study 8) analyses the ideological and individual variables that predict the perpetration of sexual objectification. Chapter IX analyses the effect of sexual objectification when making decisions in staff selection processes, manipulating the sexualisation of the female candidate (Studies 9 and 10) and evaluating the man's ideology and the judgment given regarding the supposed candidate.

Finally, Chapter X offers a discussion of the general results found in the previous studies included in the ten empirical studies, along with a theoretical explanation of these results.

The studies presented in this thesis have been included in papers to be submitted to scientific journals, which implies that some basic theoretical concepts are repeated throughout the different studies. Further, in accordance with the criteria for obtaining the International PhD, some of the chapters have been written in English

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## **PRÓLOGO**



Las mujeres crecen y se desarrollan en un contexto cultural invadido por imágenes de hipersexualización femenina (APA, 2007). La Teoría de la Cosificación Sexual (Objectification Theory) crea el marco teórico para entender cómo la gran presencia de experiencias de cosificación sexual tiene un papel fundamental en el bienestar psicológico de las mujeres (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). La socialización diferencial de género provoca que las mujeres adquieran la creencia de que han de ser sexualmente admiradas por los hombres, incentivando a través del sexismo benévolo, el uso de la mujer de su propio cuerpo y de su sexualidad como un instrumento para adquirir poder social, lo que constituye la base del poder diádico propio del sexismo benévolo (Glick y Fiske, 1996). Como consecuencia de la asimilación de esta creencia por parte de las propias mujeres, éstas dejan de percibir las experiencias de cosificación sexual como experiencias que reducen a la mujer a meros objetos sexuales y las perciben como oportunidades para aumentar su poder, enmascarando así, las consecuencias dañinas que estas experiencias tienen para el bienestar de las mujeres (Noll y Fredrickson, 1998).

Partiendo de esta premisa, desde un nivel teórico, este trabajo pretende integrar la Teoría de la Cosificación Sexual (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997) y la Teoría del Sexismo Ambivalente (Glick y Fiske, 1996) con el objetivo de comprender y analizar las consecuencias que las experiencias de cosificación sexual tienen para las mujeres en función de su adherencia a una ideología tradicional de género. Además de analizar el papel de la ideología sexista en la cosificación sexual, perpetrada por un hombre. Para ello, en los primeros dos capítulos teóricos (Capítulos I y II) se ha realizado una revisión de la literatura sobre la cosificación sexual interpersonal, el sexismo y las consecuencias de dichas experiencias, desde el punto de vista de la mujer (Capítulo I) y desde el punto de vista del hombre (Capítulo II).

La parte empírica se desarrolla en torno a dos bloques de estudios que se diferencian en la perspectiva adoptada. El primer bloque de estudios tiene como objetivo la ambigüedad de las experiencias más sutiles de cosificación sexual, analizando el impacto que las experiencias de cosificación sexual tiene en las mujeres más sexistas benévolas a nivel psicosocial (Capítulos III, IV, V, VI y VII). En 4 estudios (Capítulos III, IV y VI) se analiza la relación entre informar de mayor número de experiencias de cosificación sexual y mayores índices de malestar psicológico, así como se explora el papel que la ideología sexista benévola tiene en dicha relación. En el Estudio 3 (Capítulo V), a través de una comparación cultural de países con distinta ideología sexista, se analizan las diferencias en las consecuencias psicosociales que las mujeres sufren por ser objeto de cosificación sexual en ambos países, lo que nos permite establecer la importancia de la ideología sexista en el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual. Por último, en este bloque se realiza una serie experimental (Capítulo VII) en la que a través de dos estudios (Estudios 6 y 7) se manipula la exposición a una experiencia sutil de cosificación sexual y se evalúa la sensación de poder que las mujeres más sexistas benévolas experimentan como consecuencia de dicha experiencia propia de cosificación sexual.

El segundo bloque de estudios asume la perspectiva del hombre como perpetrador de las experiencias de cosificación sexual. En el Capítulo VIII (Estudio 8) se estudian las variables ideológicas e individuales que predicen la perpetración de la cosificación sexual. En el capítulo IX se estudia el efecto de

la cosificación sexual en la toma de decisiones en un proceso de selección de personal, manipulando en ambos estudios (Estudios 9 y 10) la sexualización de la candidata y evaluando la ideología del hombre y el juicio que emite sobre la supuesta candidata.

Para terminar, y como modo de conclusión el Capítulo X ofrece una discusión de los resultados encontrados a lo largo de los diez estudios empíricos y una explicación teórica de dichos resultados.

Los estudios presentados en esta tesis han sido escritos para ser enviados a publicación a revistas científicas, lo que conlleva que los conceptos teóricos básicos estén repetidos a lo largo de los trabajos. Además, de acuerdo a los criterios del Doctorado Internacional, algunos de los capítulos han sido escritos en español y otros en inglés.



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*Chapter 1: General introduction*

**SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD FOR  
FEMALE EMPOWERMENT**



### Abstract

There is an open debate regarding the notion of female sexual empowerment. Some feminist authors, headed by third-wave feminism, have supported the idea that sexuality is a way to female empowerment, whereas other authors have considered that this power is part of a sexual objectification phenomenon where women are subjugated to men. The critical point of the debate centers on whether this sense of power felt by women through their sexuality is true or false empowerment. As a consequence, this sense of power can be associated with beneficial variables for wellbeing and women's position in society, or with mental health problems and women's subjugation.

This debate is complex because women are surrounded by a sexualized culture in which they can assume that sexualized behaviors will be rewarded. However, the social rewards given to women when they are sexualized are the essence of benevolent sexist ideology. This ideology obliges women to keep themselves in a subordinate position to men. There is empirical evidence demonstrating how sexuality is a source of ambivalence for women, because the power they feel is rooted in the power to attract the attention and admiration of men. The power felt by women is therefore subjugated to control by men and the male sex's search for its own sexual satisfaction.

Sexual Objectification theory focuses on the consequences for women of being treated as objects and how women are reduced to their sexualized body parts to give sexual pleasure to men. This kind of gender discrimination, that usually goes unnoticed by many women and is even desired by some women, has been demonstrated to be linked to negative outcomes such as depression symptoms or high anxiety levels, amongst other mental health problems.

In this chapter, we will review the characteristics, etiology and consequences of the sense of power felt by women in sexual objectification encounters which combine sexual objectification and ambivalent sexism theories.

*When I got out of the car and went to pay at the parking meter, I sensed how two men about 15 meters away were looking at me and saying something to each other. I could feel their eyes glued to my body. I got coins out of my purse to put into the meter, but I was so nervous that I dropped some of them and when I bent down to pick them up, the men kept staring at me. I felt embarrassed, but at the same time admired and desired. I managed to get the coins into the meter and I left with my head held high, knowing their gaze would follow me until I was out of sight.*

The description of events you have just read is an example of something commonly and routinely experienced by women. It is a form of sexist discrimination but is not identified as such by many women, who actually even enjoy it and get a sense of power from it.

This chapter provides a theoretical review of experiences of sexual objectification and their consequences for women (section I); the ambiguous nature of the phenomenon of sexual objectification: feelings of sexual power obtained through experiences of sexual objectification and enjoyment of sexualization (section II); sexist ideology as an ideology accommodating women's enjoyment of experiences which are discriminatory and relegate them to a subordinate position (section III), and conclusions and practical implications (section IV).

### **Women as sexual objects: psychosocial consequences**

Sexual objectification is one of the components of sexualization. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), sexualization is defined as the assessment of women exclusively on the basis of their physical features, treating them as sexual objects (APA, 2007). There are four components to sexualization: (a) equating a person's value with their sexuality; (b) defining a person's attractiveness as sexuality; (c) sexual objectification, and (d) imposing sexuality on a person; only one of these four components need be present for the event to be qualified as sexualized (APA, 2007).

Specifically, *sexual objectification* is a component of sexualization which reduces a woman to her body or body parts and presents the erroneous perception that she can be represented entirely and exclusively by her body or body parts (Bartky, 1990).

Feminist theories have underlined the importance of social construction in women's development and construction of self-image. This idea was taken up and developed in the Objectification Theory formulated by Fredrickson and Roberts in 1997, which provides an ideal theoretical framework for understanding how the socialization of women and experiences of sexual objectification affect their physical, psychological and social wellbeing (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). According to this theory, there are numerous forms of sexual objectification which can be classified along a continuum ranging from the most subtle (body evaluation) to the more extreme (unwanted explicit sexual advances) (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). *Female body evaluation* is the action of observing and analyzing a woman's body or body

parts, whilst *unwanted explicit sexual advances* are sexual approaches made against a woman's wishes (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007).

The main thrust of this theory highlights the strong presence of female sexual objectification in current society and how it affects women's physical, psychological and social wellbeing (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Sexual objectification events can take place in multiple contexts, for example in the media, in interpersonal interactions, in the workplace, in the educational environment and on the street, to name just a few (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Continuous exposure to situations in which women are sexually objectified leads them to perceive themselves as objects and to internalize the gaze of the external observer. This is termed *self-objectification* and it manifests itself as excessive self-monitoring, understood as the "persistent monitoring of body appearance" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 180).

Both self-objectification and body self-monitoring can lead women to experience negative emotions such as shame, anxiety and reduced awareness of internal bodily states (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Sexual objectification is a more subtle form of sexist discrimination (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995) and as such is more prevalent among women than among men (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). Although it is more prevalent among women, sexual objectification has also been the subject of empirical study among men given that today, demands for the ideal body also extend to the male sex (Leit, Pope, & Gray, 2001) and makes them less satisfied with their body image than they were in the past (Garner, 1997).

Empirical research has shown that men who score higher in self-objectification score lower in body esteem (McKinley, 2006). However, experiences of sexual objectification do not appear to affect men and women in the same way. Empirical evidence shows that there is a link between more reported instances of sexual objectification in interpersonal relationships and higher levels of self-esteem among men, whilst this link has not been observed among women (Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2012). This can be explained by different gender socialization, where women work on their bodies in order to be looked at whilst for men, being evaluated on the basis of their physical appearance is an added value, generating positive feelings in them and improving their self-concept (Spitzack, 1990). Women, however, whose socialization inextricably links their value as a person with their value in terms of physical appearance, have fewer positive feelings about themselves (Cash, Winsten, & Janda, 1986), this body evaluation being perceived as a threat and causing feelings of fear that they might "fail" this evaluation.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the negative consequences of sexual objectification for women's wellbeing. These consequences can be classified into those which affect psychological wellbeing, those which affect cognitive performance and those which act on the social level.

a) Regarding the consequences on psychological wellbeing, Russo (1995) explains the gender differences in specific mental problems as the result of different exposure to acts of sexist discrimination, considering them as gender-specific stressors which affect women more strongly.

Eating disorders are one of the consequences of sexual self-objectification on which there is substantial empirical evidence. We live in a society where women attach a great deal of importance to their weight and body image.

Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn and Thompson (2011) claim that there is sufficient empirical evidence to support applying objectification theory to eating disorders in both clinical and sub-clinical samples. Peat and Muehlenkamp (2011) have found empirical evidence of the relationship between self-objectification and eating disorders, this relationship being mediated by social anxiety and poor interoceptive awareness.

Another consequence of sexual objectification is poor overall and body self-esteem, due fundamentally to sexual objectification experiences leading women to internalize a particular body ideal as an essential element of their self-concept (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). When this takes place and the beauty ideal is perceived as unattainable, this has a negative effect on women's self-esteem (Rodríguez, Goñi & Ruiz de Azúa, 2006). The effect of objectification on self-esteem can be two-pronged: on the one hand, the physical and sexual attractiveness that many women have can increase their self-esteem at a given moment, although in the long term these levels of self-esteem will not be maintained (Breines, Crocker, & García, 2008). On the other, women who do not achieve established ideals of beauty experience feelings of personal failure (Wolf, 1991) which in turn cause feelings of shame harmful to their self-esteem (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001).

Sexist discrimination is one of the main causes of gender differences in symptoms of depression (Klonoff, Landrine, & Campbell, 2000). Such symptoms have been linked both to being the victim of sexist discrimination (Landrine et al., 1995; Swim et al., 2001) and to exposure to experiences of sexual objectification (Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004).

The literature has linked exposure to sexual objectification events with higher levels of anxiety (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Specifically, Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) describe in their theory how the persistent body evaluation that women are subjected to causes increased body monitoring on their part with the resulting higher anxiety (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998).

Sexual objectification has also been linked to sexual dysfunction and problems. Steer and Tiggemann (2008) have shown how self-objectification and body monitoring are associated with body shame, appearance anxiety and self-awareness of body image during sexual intercourse, causing poor sexual function.

b) Regarding the cognitive consequences of sexual objectification, both objectification and self-objectification can have a negative impact on women's performance and lead them to perform below their



potential. Calogero et al. (2011) argue that there may be three possible mechanisms through which self-objectification affects women's performance: one, that an individual who self-objectifies adopts the perspective of the external observer; two, that when an individual self-objectifies they are monitoring their body and comparing its appearance with a culturally prescribed standard, and three, self-objectification is accompanied by negative emotions which may interfere with correct performance.

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) argue that increased self-objectification is related to poorer awareness of flow states. Numerous studies have supported evidence of the link between diminished cognitive performance and self-objectification (Calogero et al., 2011). Considering that flow state is an important indicator of cognitive performance, Tiggemann and Kuring (2004) observe that self-objectification is related indirectly to poorer flow state and that this is explained by body monitoring. Szymanski and Henning (2007) observe a direct and negative relationship between self-objectification and flow state, in addition to an indirect and negative relationship through self-monitoring.

c) Social consequences of sexual objectification. These refer to the time, money and effort invested by women in attempting to improve their appearance, at the expense of investing in activities which could help improve their real skills and enable them to access areas traditionally dominated by men. Acting in this way is instrumental in keeping women relegated to more lowly qualified employment posts and in a subordinate position.

An experimental study by Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio and Pratto (2010) revealed the social consequences of sexual objectification, showing that women who self-objectified participated less in a conversation with men than women who did not self-objectify. According to the authors, women speak less or are less socially participative when they are objectified, because they are attempting to adjust their behavior and appearance to socially expected norms and therefore the cognitive resources required for organizing and expressing their views are directed at regulating elements relating to their appearance, not their discourse (Saguy et al., 2010).

Self-objectification results in women being more concerned with how they are being seen by men than with their performance and real achievements, therefore they are not able to stake their claim to an equal position in society and can even end up legitimizing their position of inferiority.

Sexual objectification is thus a tool for female subjugation. However, for this tool to be effective and sustainable, society must create the mechanisms which make women find enjoyment in interactions where they occupy the role of sexual object, rather than challenging such situations. This comes about as a result of the ambivalent nature of the sexual objectification phenomenon; this ambivalence is due on the one hand to the negative consequences of being victims of persistent sexual objectification, and on the other but at the same time, to the feelings of enjoyment and power that envelope these experiences.

**The ambiguous nature of the sexual objectification phenomenon: feelings of power by women during objectification experiences and enjoyment of sexualization.**

In spite of the negative consequences of sexual objectification for women, some women enjoy sexualization and seek to attract the gaze of men by engaging in self-sexualizing behavior (Nowartzki & Morry, 2009). Such behavior reflects a desire for male attention and indicates that such women feel power and enjoyment during the sexual objectification experience (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011). *Enjoyment of Sexualization* occurs when women find sexual attention based on their appearance pleasing (Liss et al., 2011).

Female sexual empowerment is an area which has received particular interest in the public and academic spheres (Erchull & Liss, 2014). Female empowerment is generally a term used by feminists to refer to the mechanisms through which women accentuate their own power by achieving social changes (Yuval-Davis, 1994).

Differences are inferred between the sexual empowerment felt by women when their bodies are being observed by men and the sexual empowerment felt by women as a social group when they achieve milestones in the gender equality struggle. In order to understand these different types of empowerment, we must look at how the concept has changed in recent decades; a change in which "third-wave feminism" has played a fundamental role.

This feminist movement champions empowerment in individual terms, training the spotlight on the kind of empowerment which leads to taking decisions at the individual level, rather than empowerment at the group level (Shugart, Whaggoner, & Hallstein, 2001). Specifically as regards sexual empowerment, this new feminist current claims that women can feel empowered through freely choosing to sexualize themselves and that these feelings of empowerment are positive, since they indicate that women are taking control of their sexuality (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004).

The expression of sexual empowerment at the individual level can be seen in the numerous media representations of women using their sexuality freely to increase their popularity and climb the social ladder. By means of monitoring and self-objectification, women obtain the attention of men and this makes them feel powerful (Cato, Dillman, & Carpentier, 2010).

The link between power and sexualization is based on the relationship between sexualization and attractiveness (APA, 2007; Liss et al., 2011). In the society we live in today, being attractive is considered good and desirable, and people who conform to the established beauty canons reap social rewards (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991). Physical attractiveness thus becomes a mechanism through which women attempt to win these social rewards. And since there are rewards associated with being attractive, women enjoy being sexualized as they consider it a sign of their attractiveness and an indicator that the social rewards are within their grasp (Liss et al., 2011).

Although some women experience feelings of power and are rewarded for sexualizing themselves, these positive feelings are in stark contrast to the negative consequences of sexualization for girls and women, according to the American Psychological Association (2007) (Cato et al., 2010). This contradiction is the fundamental core of the debate surrounding the real sexual power of women (Lamb & Peterson, 2012). On the one hand, female power felt through sexuality is not considered real because it is not controlled by women, but rather operates in the framework of male sexuality (see for example: Lamb, 2012). On the other, such power may be considered real because women can experience genuine feelings of intrapersonal power whilst simultaneously being disempowered at the interpersonal level (Peterson, 2010).

The point of discord between both positions arises when we consider whether the subjective feeling of empowerment experienced through sexualization is authentic or illusory, and to clarify this we need to examine whether the presence of desire and pleasure can be considered necessary and sufficient signals of sexual empowerment (Peterson, 2010).

Sexualization can be used by women themselves as a strategy for increasing their power and gaining a higher position in the patriarchal hierarchy (Erchull & Liss, 2013). Through this prism, sexualization is considered an empowerment tool and not a harmful and dangerous process which has a negative impact on women (Leum & Dworkin, 2005). Vanwesembeek (2009) considers the importance of sexualization, since deprived of the right to be sexual and sexualize themselves, women cannot attain a healthy sex life.

During their socialization, women learn that they can become stronger through using their “feminine wiles” (Smolak & Murnem, 2011). Girls internalize the message that they can gain power if they manage to enjoy their sexuality and if they behave in a sexualized manner (Griffin et al., 2013). These feelings of power through sexualization itself are considered by some authors as legitimate empowerment (Peterson, 2012).

The significance of exposure to sexualization during women's socialization has been demonstrated by a number of studies, which link greater exposure to sexualized images of females in the media with more sexualized behavior among women and the acceptance of sexualized behavior in other women (Nowatzki & Morry, 2009).

The feelings of power experienced by women during sexual objectification events have been analyzed in diverse empirical studies. These studies show how women experience feelings of empowerment when being looked at by men (Liss et al., 2011).

The positive feelings which come from self-sexualization are linked to the belief that it is a matter of free choice to use the body as a way of gaining individual power, rather than as a way of collectively obtaining social change for women as a group (McRobbie, 2004). That is to say, women who enjoy

experiences of sexual objectification are seeking individual empowerment, rather than social change aimed at achieving the empowerment of women as a collective (Liss & Erchull, 2013).

Women who choose to gain power at the individual level by using their bodies do so in the belief that they are distancing themselves from the collective of oppressed women, but they are still following the guidelines and path marked out by the traditional female role (Liss & Erchull, 2013).

By contrast, some authors state that sexualization cannot be an empowerment strategy given its negative consequences on women's autonomy, wellbeing and psychological health, and on their academic and professional performance (APA, 2007). This argument holds that female empowerment and the enjoyment of female sexualization sit firmly within the framework of a heterosexual schema of sexuality that perpetuates power inequalities, since men are in control of the sexual act and women must carefully control their own sexuality, on occasion even being blamed for “provoking” acts of sexual aggression (Smolak & Murden, 2011).

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) argue that representations which sexualize women are an essential element of objectification, rather than a process of female empowerment. Supporting this claim, Aubrey (2006) highlights the relationship between women's exposure to television programmes which sexualize the female body and higher rates of self-objectification. Saguy et al. (2010) link female objectification to lower participation in social interaction, which can be considered a clear example of loss of power.

If forms of sexual objectification cause loss of power among women, then the feelings of enjoyment and empowerment associated with these experiences should likewise be linked to indicators of disempowerment. Supporting this hypothesis, enjoyment of sexualization is related to traditional beliefs about gender and patriarchal standards which exacerbate the negative effects of self-objectification (Liss et al, 2011). The subjective feeling of empowerment felt by women who enjoy sexualization thus has no relationship with behavior aimed at social change, understood as the wish to improve women's situation in society (Tolman 2012), but rather is only the desire to obtain personal power through sexualization.

Specific instruments have been developed to measure the enjoyment and empowerment felt by women through sexualization. One of these instruments, the “Sex Is Power Scale”, shows that there is a relationship between the aforementioned construct, sexist ideology and increased self-objectification (Erchull & Liss, 2013).

Liss, Erchull and Ramsey (2011) developed the Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS) and found that enjoyment of sexualization is linked to the idea that women need to be cared for and protected by men, and to certain traditional ideas about femininity including the power an attractive woman has in controlling men (Liss et al., 2011).

Objectification is therefore perceived as an instrument of subjugation through which the needs, interests and experiences of persons with less power are subordinate to those with more power (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008). Objectification is defined as the process which leads to viewing people as tools to be used for personal benefit (Bartky, 1990). Narrowing this down to sexual objectification, this is described as evaluation of a person, usually a woman, as regards the usefulness of her sexual parts or sexual functions (Gruenfeld et al., 2008). As stated by Calogero (2013), in a classic heterosexual sexual objectification interaction, the woman's body becomes the possession of the observer.

Thus, and in line with the thoughts of Gavay (2012), the social changes which have taken place for the advancement of gender equality over the course of history have been changes at the societal level which have required impetus by collective action. However, the sexual empowerment felt by women during sexual objectification experiences is associated with a feeling of power arising from individual benefits; this feeling of power cannot be equated with the real power that women can attain when acting as a group.

Undoubtedly, one of the characteristics which sets sexual objectification apart from other types of sexual discrimination is that in the former, women may experience feelings of enjoyment and this leads to their behaving in a way that presents them as sexual objects, even though female self-sexualization entrenches male dominance more than it promotes female empowerment (Infanger, Rudman, & Sczesny, 2013) and prevents women from engaging in collective action for gender equality (Calogero, 2013).

### **The ideology underlying the power felt by women through their sexuality: benevolent sexism.**

Women's bodies are tools that men and women alike can make use of to gain or maintain power in the social hierarchy. The ideology which justifies using the female body as a tool for gaining power is sexist ideology (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Vescio, Schelenker, & Lenex, 2010). In the most traditional notion of sexism, understood as prejudice against women based on their supposed inferiority as a group (Glick & Fiske, 1996), explicit reference is made to the real power that women have through using their sexuality. In this respect, traditional sexism presupposes that women are weaker than men, that they are different and inferior to them and dangerous because of their sexual power, thus causing hostile feelings towards women (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998).

Over the course of time, sexist ideology has transformed itself in order to adjust to current social norms so that it can continue to be used as an ideology for perpetuating inequality between men and women today. Glick and Fiske (1996), looking at the duality of this new sexism, developed the theory of ambivalent sexism where positive feelings towards women coexist with the traditional hostility towards them. One of the main characteristics of ambivalent sexism is the notion that men and women are

complementary and interdependent beings (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). This interdependence is based principally on the sexual power that women have and men desire (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

The function of sexist ideology lies in its role in maintaining and assimilating power inequalities between men and women. Specifically, benevolent sexist ideology, with its more subtle forms of discrimination, is more significant for keeping gender inequalities in place than more overtly hostile forms (Glick & Fiske, 2001). The power inequalities promoted by benevolent sexist ideology would not be possible using more explicit forms of sexist ideology (Glick & Fiske, 2001), since women would reject this (Vescio, Schelenker, & Lennox, 2010). Empirical studies endorse this idea, showing how complementary gender stereotypes, a feature of benevolent sexism, serve as a mechanism for justifying the status quo (Jost & Kay, 2005).

Persons in disadvantaged groups who subscribe to such beliefs tend to stay in their inferior position in exchange for minimizing uncertainty and sharing a social reality with others (Jost et al., 2008). The role of women in keeping inequality in place by assimilating sexist ideology is fundamental and can make them accomplices to their own subordination (see for example: Jackman, 1994).

These beliefs that justify inequality are associated with positive emotions, increased life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Benevolent sexism thus increases women's satisfaction with the social system (Jost & Kay, 2005), although it restricts their participation in collective action to combat sexist discrimination (Becker & Wright, 2011) and diminishes the perception of certain types of behavior as sexist since they are not explicitly hostile (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005).

In the same way as experiences of sexual objectification have negative consequences for women's emotional wellbeing whilst simultaneously producing feelings of enjoyment and empowerment, benevolent sexism leads to greater satisfaction with the system even though it is associated with negative consequences. The consequences of benevolent sexism are evidenced both in the sphere of employment ambitions (Moya, Glick, Expósito, de Lemus, & Hart, 2007) and in interpersonal relationships, leading women to accept sexist discrimination to a greater extent, reinforcing power differences between the sexes (Glick and Fiske, 1996) and even increasing the tolerance of domestic abuse (Expósito, Herrera, Moya, & Glick, 2010) or other kind of gender violence (Herrera, Herrera, & Expósito, 2014).

That women assimilate benevolent sexism has to do with the benefits this ideology provides them (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism provides women with the admiration and protection of men, so gaining sexual attention from men becomes a strategy for women and being successful in this respect gives them feelings of enjoyment.

In this way, by subscribing to benevolent sexism, women justify using their sexuality to gain male attention and thus experience feelings of enjoyment and power (Liss et al., 2011).

Women are exposed to all kinds of sexist events on a daily basis. The literature shows that women are exposed to sexism more than men and experience one to two sexist events each week (Swim et al., 2001). However, we may expect that for women who have assimilated an ideology which leads them to invest large amounts of time and money in adjusting their appearance to what men desire, the experience of being evaluated solely on the basis of their body will not cause them to suffer the same consequences as women who identify such experiences as a form of sexist discrimination. Empirical evidence endorses the relationship between enjoyment of sexualizing oneself and subscribing more closely to sexist ideology (Sáez et al., 2012), and being exposed to greater sexual objectification and developing sexist attitudes (Kalof, 1999; Ward & Friedman, 2006).

Women who have assimilated benevolent sexism more fully make efforts to adjust their appearance to what is desirable by men in an attempt to improve their position in the power hierarchy. This hypothesis is in line with studies showing that women who subscribe more strongly to benevolent sexism use more cosmetic products (Forbes, Doroszewicz, Card, & Adams-Curtis, 2004; Franzoi, 2001), have internalized the slimness canon to a greater extent (Forbes, Collinsworth, Jobe, Braun, & Wise, 2007) and undertake activities designed to manage their physical appearance (Calogero & Jost, 2011).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the relationship between social rewards and physical beauty for women (Davis, 1990; Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991). Physical attractiveness thus becomes a way to obtain certain social advantages more easily (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Unger, 1979), but can also relegate the status of women to a lower level than that of men in the social hierarchy (Jost & Kay, 2005), as women invest more time and effort in making their appearance conform to a culturally prescribed ideal (Calogero, Borroughs, & Thompson 2007).

By contrast and from the perspective of men as the dominant group, sexualized women can be perceived as a threat to the status quo because of the power they can obtain through their sexuality, which can cause increased hostility and male dominance as a reaction to this threat (Infanger, Rudman, & Sabine, 2013). Prejudice against sexualized women feeds ideologically off hostile sexism (Sibley & Willson, 2004), in a similar way to the prejudice aroused by women with successful careers, or feminists (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997). Hostile sexism reflects resistance to female power and aims to punish women who have sexual power and pose a threat to the established gender hierarchy (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Empirical evidence demonstrates the relationship between exposure of men to sexualized women and higher acceptance of rape myths, sexual harassment myths, gender role stereotypes and interpersonal violence (Ward, 2002).

### **Conclusions and practical implications**

Forms of sexual objectification are types of behavior linked to female submission and the assimilation of women's inferiority to men. The literature quoted in this chapter alerts us to the negative impact of sexual objectification on women's psychosocial wellbeing and to the fact that sexist ideology legitimizes objectifying behavior and plays a part in women viewing themselves as sexual objects (Calogero & Jost, 2011).

Women are at a loss as to how to address experiences of sexual objectification and focus exclusively on accepting and internalizing such experiences, increasing their self-objectification. If a sexual objectification experience results in positive evaluation of their appearance, women therefore feel enjoyment and power. But if they receive a negative evaluation of their appearance, women will embark on activities to change their appearance as the only way to obtain the power and control promised by society (Pettersen, Grippo, & Tantleff-Dunn, 2008).

Faced with the expectations of an objectification experience where women expect their body to be evaluated, they can experience self-directed feelings of guilt and attempt to make body changes so that they receive positive evaluation. In order to change these feelings, it is necessary to change the mental schemata which blame women for sexual objectification (Tylka & Augustus-Horvath, 2011). For this, it is important for mental health professionals to focus on reducing the impact of objectification and self-objectification on women's wellbeing and to try to reduce the actual incidence of female sexual objectification at the social level. Research on sexual objectification must be taken into account for the development of preventive and action programmes which aim to palliate the negative effects of the more subtle forms of gender discrimination.

In order to augment true women's empowerment and lessen self-objectification, women should be taught to respond assertively to comments on their appearance instead of responding passively as they usually do (Tylka & Augustus-Horvath, 2011). Programmes must be included which aim to encourage men not to treat women as sexual objects so frequently, and action to change attitudes is the most effective way of changing these types of behavior.

As we have argued in this chapter, sexism is the ideological foundation of female sexual objectification and the patriarchal system works to keep women in a subordinate position by rewarding them for self-objectifying. Working in society to lessen sexist beliefs among both men and women is therefore the effective way to challenge sexual objectification.



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*Chapter 2: General introduction*

**MEN AS THE OBJECTS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL  
OBJECTIFICATION**





Sexual objectification theory was originally developed to provide a framework for understanding the mental health consequences that arise from treating women as objects (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). However, this theory has been broadened in order to explain sexual objectification in men, which has become more common (Moradi & Huang, 2008; Rohlinger, 2002), as well as the role of men as perpetrators of sexual objectification (Gervais, DiLillo, & McChargue, 2014).

### **Men as the target of sexual objectification**

According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) there are two levels of sexual objectification: a social and an interpersonal level. With regard to the social level, we can currently see the use of almost perfect male bodies in the mass media, which are employed merely as a marketing strategy whereby the men are reduced to their physical appearance (Heimerdinger-Edwards, Vogel, & Hammer, 2011). The model developed from sexual objectification theory shows how the exposure of both men and women to sexual objectification experiences can lead to some alterations in body perception, along with the eating disorders associated with such perceptions (Moradi & Huang, 2008). More specifically, the exposure of males in the mass media that sexually objectifies the male body has a number of consequences such as corporal shame, and they tend to see themselves as being less muscular, which can develop into body dysmorphia (Olivardia, 2001).

At the interpersonal level, the sexual objectification experiences that men and women are exposed to have important differences, given that women are more exposed to these experiences than men (Gill, 2008). Further, these experiences are one of the main reasons for psychological discomfort (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998). The sexual objectification interactions to which women are primarily exposed (Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2012) have consequences for both their anxiety levels and body surveillance (Tiggemann & Slater, 2001; Lozano, Valor-Segura, Sáez, & Expósito, 2012), which can in turn affect their social behaviour (Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2010; Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, in press). However, the sexual objectification experiences to which men are exposed are related to positive indicators for psychological wellbeing (Sáez et al., 2012).

### **Men as perpetrators of sexual objectification**

Gervais, Vescio, Förster, Mass, & Suitner (2012) assume that people usually tend to objectify other people. Thus, doctors can objectify their patients, reducing them to their symptoms (Barnard, 2001); the boss can objectify the workers by valuing only the quality of their work (Marx, 1964), and women can be objectified when they are reduced to their body or its parts (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Therefore, the objectification process occurs when a person, parts of the person or their functions are separated from the

person itself and are exploited and treated as if they could represent the person as a whole (Bartky, 1990; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008).

When we focus on female sexual objectification, the traditional notion of masculinity stimulates the sexual objectification process (Tewksbury, 2008), which provokes women to become involved in sexual objectification interactions, on average, one or two times per week (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). In addition, these behaviours serve the purpose of maintaining an unbalanced relationship between men and women given that, when men hold a powerful position, they have a greater tendency to use women for sexual purposes (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008).

Sexist ideology is a crucial variable for maintaining the status quo and legitimising discrimination towards women. More specifically, there is a relation between hostile sexism and different forms of gender violence (Durán, Moya, Megías, & Viki, 2010; Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011). Thus, sexist ideology is considered as the ideology that justifies sexual violence towards women (Begany & Milburn, 2002) and the use of women as sexual objects (Sibley & Wilson, 2004).

Even from the most traditional view of sexism, women are regarded as dangerous due to their sexual power, thus provoking hostile feelings towards them (Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998; Glick & Fiske, 1996). One study by Sibley and Wilson (2004) revealed that men show an increase in hostile sexism and a reduction in benevolent sexism when a woman is described as promiscuous, whilst they decrease hostile sexism towards a woman that is described as sexually pure (Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Similarly, Cikara, Eberhardt and Fiske (2011) showed that when they were exposed to a sexualised woman, those men with a hostile sexist ideology showed less cerebral activity in those areas associated with mental attribution (more specifically in the Medial Prefrontal Cortex, Posterior Cingular Cortex, and Anterior Pole of the Temporal Lobe). This result shows that men with high scores in hostile sexism tend to attribute sexualised women with a lower mental capacity compared with non-sexualised women.

More recent studies have focused on analysing the nature of sexual objectification (e.g. Gervais, Vescio, & Allen, 2011) and the psychological mechanisms that underlie this process (e.g., Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011). Regarding the study of cognitive processing during the sexual objectification of women, Gervais et al., (2011) showed that the continuous perception of women as sexual objects implies a greater emphasis on recognition of their sexual attributes rather than being perceived as a whole person. This study demonstrated an instance of “local” processing, more common when processing objects, rather than “global” processing, which is more common when processing people (Gervais et al., 2012). Further, Gervais, Holland, and Dodd (2013) showed that when people are more driven to focus on the appearance (objectifying looks) rather than on the personality, they are more likely to sexually objectify women, an effect that was even stronger when the women met the cultural ideal of beauty.

With regard to the psychological mechanisms involved in female sexual objectification, this involves exploitation (women as objects or sexual products) and depersonalisation, which deprives them

of their personality and humanity (Vaes et al., 2011). Loughnan et al., (2010) showed that sexual objectification influences dehumanisation, and thus, sexual objectification is related to lower mental attribution, lower moral attribution, and lower competency (Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2010).

### **The effect of sexual objectification on interpersonal relations**

Sexually objectifying women has been related to negative consequences in terms of sexual aggression (Rudman & Mescher, 2012) and in the work environment (Howlett, Pine, Cahill, Orakçioğlu, & Fletcher, 2015), amongst other contexts.

#### a) Implications in the interpersonal area

Female sexual objectification is associated with attitudes that favour violence against women, given that they are considered as a sexual object (Wright & Tokunaga, 2015). In this context, in which women are expected to satisfy sexual desire, if she frustrates the male in any way by blocking his sexual aims, there would be a higher tendency to show sexually aggressive behaviours towards her (Hald, Malamuth & Yuen, 2010). Thus, men that show a strong tendency to objectify women also have a higher tendency to show sexual aggression (Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Sexual objectification also plays an important role in the perception of blame in a sexual aggression incident, increasing the blame given to the victim, along with a decrease in perceived suffering if she is dressed sexually (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013). This lower probability of perceiving a sexually objectified woman as a victim is partially due to the fact that the women are deemed to have a lower level of morality, which permits men to question their victim's status (Loughnan et al., 2013).

#### b) Implications in the work environment

The sexual objectification process has important consequences in the work environment (Gray, Knobe, Sheskin, Bloom, & Barrett, 2011) and it can be one of the variables that contributes to the current problems of gender discrimination (such as vertical segregation), contributing to the lower presence of women in higher status roles (Elson, 2000).

There is evidence to suggest that dressing in a provocative way can have a negative impact on the perception of competency in women, particularly in typically masculine work environments (Deaux, Winton, Crowley & Lewis, 1985). This perception, whilst possibly favouring the tendency to hire women in the job selection process, could also lead to the decision being based on sexual attributes rather than professional qualifications (Rudman & Borgida, 1995). For instance, Howlett et al. (2015) showed the negative effect of sexualisation on global judgements (including ratings of intelligence, responsibility etc.) made about women when being hired for positions of high responsibility. However, the sexualisation of women does not appear to have an influence on recruitment decisions for positions of low status (Howlett et al., 2015).

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## **Empirical Studies**





*Chapter 3:*

**THE SPANISH ADAPTATION OF THE INTERPERSONAL  
SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION SCALE**



### Abstract

**Background:** Sexual objectification of women is a subtle manifestation of gender violence. The aim of this study was to adapt the 15-item Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS) into Spanish to obtain a valid instrument to evaluate this construct. **Method:** After its adaptation, the questionnaire was administered to 771 women from the general population. Subsequently, the psychometric properties of the questionnaire were evaluated from both the classical perspective and item response theory. **Results:** The data obtained were very similar to those of the original version. The ISOS showed good internal consistency and a two-factor structure: body evaluation and unwanted explicit sexual advances. In addition, the ISOS showed correlations with benevolent sexism, state-anxiety and self-esteem. **Conclusions:** The Spanish version of the ISOS is a reliable and valid measure of sexual objectification of women in the interpersonal context.

**Keywords:** ISOS, objectification, sexism, Spanish adaptation, graded model

The sexual objectification of women is a common practice in Western countries (Calogero, 2013), where it is believed that being a woman implies being treated as a sexual object or a body to be looked at and evaluated (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998). Sexual objectification refers to the reduction of a woman to her body or body parts, with the misperception that the body or body parts reflect the whole person (Bartkly, 1990).

In our society, women's bodies are often objectified by the media and in social interactions through appearance-related comments, unwanted touching and degrading acts of a sexual nature (Davidson, Gervais, Canivez, & Cole, 2013). Objectification theory, as formulated by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), explains that sexual objectification experiences often occur in different contexts and is one of the most common relationships between men and women. These experiences are classified as follows: body evaluation, which can be defined as an observer's analysis and evaluation of a woman's body; and unwanted explicit sexual advances, which involve a behavior of explicit advances of a sexual nature without a woman's consent, such as sexual harassment (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

The importance of the study of both types of objectification behavior is sufficiently supported by empirical evidence because one in two women will experience some form of sexual harassment during their lifetimes (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009). For example, it has been shown that the evaluation of women's bodies is related to the tendency to assign less-human traits to women (Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2011), which may facilitate severe sexual violence (Rudman & Mescher, 2012). On the other hand, unwanted explicit sexual advances are not themselves sexual harassment behavior, and it has been amply demonstrated that their occurrence has serious psychological, physical and social consequences for the victims (Expósito, Herrera, Valor-Segura, Herrera, & Lozano, 2014; Neall & Tuckey, 2014).

Taken together, the various manifestations of sexual objectification can be considered as manifestations of sexist ideology (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). Specifically, the continuous body evaluation to which women are subjected influences women's own perception of themselves as sexual objects (auto-objectification) promoting sexist ideology in women and perpetuating the *status quo* between men and women (Calogero & Jost, 2011).

The influence of sexual objectification on women's well-being has been extensively studied (Tiggeman, 2011), and those studies have demonstrated the harmful effects of sexual objectification on physical, psychological and social well-being (Newheiser, LaFrance, & Dovidio, 2010). Due to the threat that they pose to women's safety, the most severe sexual objectification experiences, such as explicit sexual advances, may both increase women's state of anxiety and predict lower self-esteem (Calogero, 2004; Choma, Visser, Pozzebon, Bogaert, Busseri, & Sadava, 2010; Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2011).

With the aim of studying sexual objectification in interpersonal relationships, various measures have been developed intended to assess the frequency with which women are facing this type of

experience in their daily lives: the *Schedule of Sexist Events* (SSE) (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995), the sexual objectification subscale of the *Daily Sexist Events Scale* (Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998), and the *Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale* (ISOS), prepared by Kozee, Tylka, August-Horvarth, & Denchik (2007).

The SSE scale (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995) assesses the frequency with which a woman is a victim of sex discrimination such as, *inter alia*, sexist remarks and discriminatory events at work or school.

The sexual objectification subscale pertaining to the *Daily Sexist Events Scale* (Swim et al., 1998) includes comments of a sexual nature (e.g., offensive allusions to specific body parts or clothing and threats of sexual contact) and behavior of a sexual nature (e.g., looks and touches).

Finally, the ISOS (Kozee et al., 2007) aims to evaluate the two forms of interpersonal sexual objectification described in the original theory: *Body Evaluation* and *Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances*.

The advantages of the ISOS over other scales to assess the frequency with which women are victims of interpersonal sexual objectification experiences are numerous: a) it identifies incidents of interpersonal sexual objectification without labeling them as such, preventing resistance from women themselves to being labeled as victims of such discrimination (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2010); b) it assesses the dimensions of sexual objectification as proposed by the authors of the sexual objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997); c) it has a high predictive value of the psychological consequences of sexual objectification (Kooze et al., 2007); d) it has been validated in different populations of women and men (Davidson et al., 2013); and e) the scale does not correlate with social desirability, thus eliminating a potential source of error in the evaluation of the construct (Calogero et al., 2010).

Psychometric data from the ISOS (Kozee et al., 2007) show adequate psychometric properties in the US sample used for the study.

In Spain, there is no instrument to assess female sexual objectification in interpersonal relationships, despite the growing research on the effect of this variable on psychological, physical and social consequences of sexual objectification, which is why it is considered appropriate to adapt and validate the ISOS, given the advantages discussed above.

## Method

### Participants

The sample consists of 771 heterosexual women, of Spanish nationality, with an age range between 18 and 62 years ( $M = 26.15$ ,  $SD = 8.01$ ). Two point two percent (2.2%) of the participants have a basic education, 11% have secondary or vocational training, 6% graduated from high school, and 80.7%

have college degrees. Regarding the distribution of the sample by age, 58.7% are between 18 and 24 years old, 27.9% are between 25 and 34, 9% are between 35 and 44 years old, and the remaining 4% are more than 45 years old.

### Instruments

A booklet was prepared, which included the following questionnaires:

- On the first page, several questions were asked about demographic variables such as: Age, Nationality, Sexual orientation, Education level, and Professional occupation.

- *Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS)*. The resulting Spanish version of the adaptation procedure consists of 15 items (see Table 1). In the US version, the internal consistency for Body Evaluation is .91 and for Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances, it is .78. The inventory, in the US sample, has shown adequate validity evidence based on the relationship with other variables and on internal structure (Kozee et al., 2007).

**Table 1.** Spanish version of the *Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS)* (Kozee, Tylka, August-Horvarth, & Denchik, 2007).

Por favor piense detenidamente acerca de sus experiencias en el ÚLTIMO AÑO y responda a las preguntas de acuerdo con la siguiente escala:

[Please think carefully about your experiences in the PAST YEAR and answer the questions according to the following scale:]

	1	2	3	4	5
	Nunca	Rara vez	Ocasionalmente	Frecuentemente	Siempre
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
* ¿Con qué frecuencia te han silbado mientras caminas por la calle? [How often have you been whistled at while walking down a street?]					1 2 3 4 5
* ¿Con qué frecuencia has notado que alguien te mira los pechos cuando está hablando contigo? [How often have you noticed someone staring at your breasts when you are talking to them?]					1 2 3 4 5
* ¿Con qué frecuencia has sentido que alguien estaba evaluando tu apariencia física? [How often have you felt like or known that someone was evaluating your physical appearance?]					1 2 3 4 5
* ¿Con qué frecuencia has sentido que alguien estaba mirando fijamente tu cuerpo? [How often have you felt that someone was staring at your body?]					1 2 3 4 5
* ¿Con qué frecuencia has notado que alguien mira lascivamente tu cuerpo? [How often have you noticed someone leering at your body?]					1 2 3 4 5

*	¿Con qué frecuencia has escuchado comentarios sexuales groseros sobre tu cuerpo? [How often have you heard a rude, sexual remark made about your body?]	1	2	3	4	5
+	¿Con qué frecuencia te han manoseado contra tu voluntad? [How often have you been touched or groped against your will?]	1	2	3	4	5
+	¿Con qué frecuencia te has sentido acosada sexualmente (en el trabajo, en la escuela, etc.)? [How often have you experienced sexual harassment (on the job, in school, etc.)?]	1	2	3	4	5
*	¿Con qué frecuencia te han pitado mientras estabas caminando por la calle? [How often have you been honked at while walking down the street?]	1	2	3	4	5
*	¿Con qué frecuencia has visto que alguien se fija en algunas partes de tu cuerpo? [How often have you seen someone stare at one or more of your body parts?]	1	2	3	4	5
*	¿Con qué frecuencia has escuchado sin querer, a otros, hacer comentarios sexuales sobre tu cuerpo? [How often have you overheard inappropriate sexual comments made about your body?]	1	2	3	4	5
*	¿Con qué frecuencia has notado que alguien no estaba escuchando lo que dices, sino mirando fijamente algunas partes de tu cuerpo? [How often have you noticed that someone was not listening to what you were saying, but instead gazing at your body or a body part?]	1	2	3	4	5
*	¿Con qué frecuencia has escuchado que alguien hace un comentario sexual o se insinúa mientras está mirando tu cuerpo? [How often have you heard someone make sexual comments or innuendos when noticing your body?]	1	2	3	4	5
+	¿Con qué frecuencia te han agarrado o pellizcado alguna parte íntima de tu cuerpo contra tu voluntad? [How often has someone grabbed or pinched one of your private body areas against your will?]	1	2	3	4	5
+	¿Con qué frecuencia alguien ha hecho gestos sexuales degradantes sobre ti? [How often has someone made a degrading sexual gesture toward you?]	1	2	3	4	5

**Note:** \*: Items belonging to the dimension of Body Evaluation. +: Items belonging to the dimension of Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances

- *State-Trait-Anxiety Inventory (STAI-S)* (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 2002). The Spanish adaptation consists of 20 items with a graded response format of 4 alternatives ranging from “none” to “very much.” The internal consistency of the instrument is .93, similar to that found (.94) in the psychometric update performed by Guillén-Riquelme and Buena-Casal (2011). Likewise, these authors also report evidence of validity based on the internal structure. Examples of items in this scale are: “I am tense” and “I am shocked.”

- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965). The RSES consists of 10 items that assess the degree of satisfaction that a person has with oneself. The response format is graded with four response alternatives ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Internal consistency is .83,

similar to that found by Martín-Albo, Núñez, Navarro, & Grijalvo (2007) of .85, who also report evidence of validity based on the scale's internal structure. Examples of the items in this scale are as follows: "I think I have several good qualities" and "I think I am a person worthy of esteem, at least as much as others."

- *Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)* (Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998). This inventory is composed of 22 items that form two subscales of 11 items each. It evaluates Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS). The response format is a graded scale with six response alternatives ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The internal consistency obtained is .87 for BS and .89 for HS. This is similar to the values obtained by the original authors of the Spanish version (.84 and .87, respectively). These authors show adequate validity evidence related to other variables. Examples of items in the subscale of benevolent sexism include "In case of a disaster, women must be rescued before men" and "Women should be cherished and protected by men"; items in the subscale of hostile sexism include "Women are too easily offended" and "Deep down, feminist women intend for women to have more power than men."

## Procedure

First, for the purpose of translating and adapting the *ISOS* to Spanish culture, the steps proposed by Múñiz Elosúa and Hambleton (2013) were followed:

1. The translation of the items in the *ISOS* into Spanish by a group of experts in the field, following a process of reverse translation. The translation from the source language (English) to the target language (Spanish) was conducted by a bilingual professional. Starting from this version, the reverse translation was carried out by another bilingual person not involved in the above process. The accuracy of the translation was judged by the degree of coincidence with the original version (Hambleton, 2005), making changes to those items for which the results indicated it was necessary to do so.

2. Content validity was determined from the qualitative assessment of the items by expert judgment (Sireci & Faulkner-Bond, 2014). Each expert was given a table of item specifications (Spaan, 2006), showing both the semantic definition of the construct and its components. Subsequently, a list of items designed to assess such components was shown to the judges. The task was to judge each item on understanding and belonging.

The response format of the items was kept as a graded scale of 5 alternatives (Lozano, García-Cueto, & Múñiz, 2008), to evaluate the frequency with which the statements occur.

Second, the procedure used for sample collection was through incidental collection by applying the questionnaire in places with a great influx of people, such as the bus stations in Salamanca, Madrid and Granada. The questionnaire was administered by a single investigator. The study was presented as



an investigation of interpersonal relationships, and the participants were informed that the data collected would be treated as confidential and anonymous.

### **Data Analysis**

Evidence of the content validity of the *ISOS* scale was obtained through the judgments of experts in conducting item evaluation (Sireci & Faulkner-Bond, 2014). These judgments were conducted by six experts (three experts in building scales and three familiar with the construct to be assessed). First to be evaluated was how understandable the item was to the target population. Each expert was asked to rate the wording of the item from 1 (“not understandable”) to 5 (“completely understandable”). When this item did not reach a mean greater than 3, it was revised. With respect to the classification of items in the different theoretical dimensions (*Body Evaluation and Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances*), if the item was not ranked in the same dimension by at least 4 of the 6 judges, the authors checked the questioned item again, analyzed potential problems and proposed an alternative translation that more clearly examined the theoretical dimension. The Spanish version of the *ISOS* derived from the above studies, which will be used for the present study, consists of 15 items. Eleven items comprise the dimension of *Body Evaluation* and four items comprise the dimension of *Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances*.

To check the validity evidence based on the internal structure, the total sample was randomly divided into two subsamples of the same size. The mean age of the first group is 26.02, with a standard deviation of 7.61. The second subsample has a mean age of 26.26, years and a standard deviation of 8.32.

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed with the first subsample. After confirming that the two-dimensional model fit well, the second sample was used to perform cross-validation. Subsequently, the total sample was used to obtain factor coefficients. In these procedures, Mplus 6.12 was used. Later, with the total sample, the ordinal reliability coefficient (Elosúa & Zumbo, 2008) was calculated for each dimension, using the Factor 9.2 program. The next step, to check the validity evidence based on relations with other variables, was to calculate the correlations of *ISOS* dimensions with State-Anxiety, Self-Esteem, Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism, correcting them by attenuation (AERA, APA and NCME, 1999). Finally, from the perspective of item response theory (IRT), the item parameters and the information function of the dimensions were calculated. For this task, the Samejima’s graded response model (1969) was used, implemented in Multilog. The model fit was assessed using the ResidPlot-2 program (Liang, Han, & Hambleton, 2009).

## **Results**

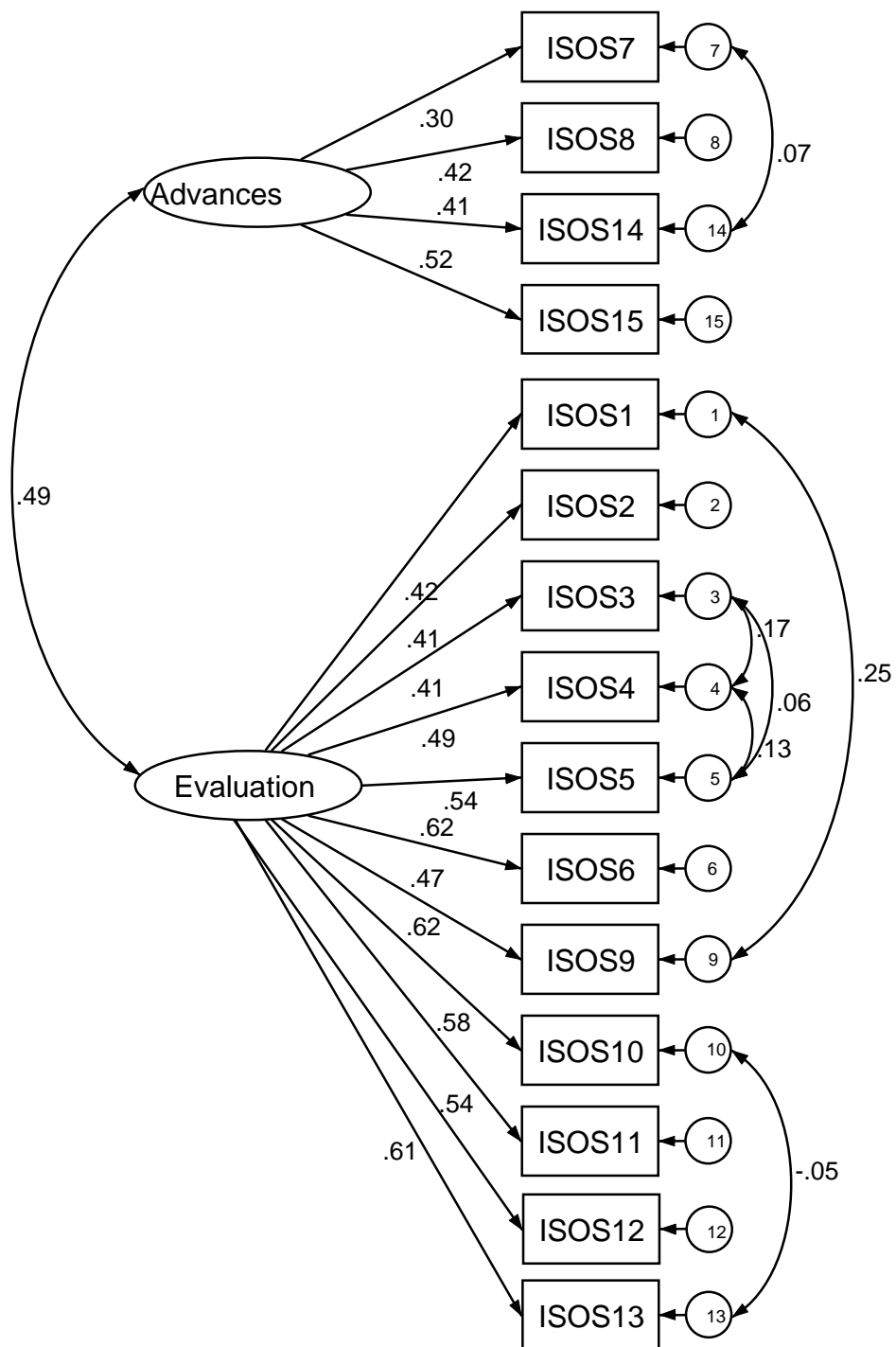
### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

The first subsample was used to check the two-factor structure proposed by the authors in the original version of the *ISOS*. Six measurement errors (Byrne, 2001) and both dimensions were correlated. The estimation method used was weighted least squares means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) because

this method addresses the categorical nature of the items (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). The fit indices obtained were  $\chi^2 (77)=153.587$ ,  $p<.001$ , RMSEA=.055, 90% CI [.042-.067], CFI=.95 and SRMR=.043. With the second subsample, the fit was checked after performing re-specifications in the first sample, with the following fit indices:  $\chi^2 (77)=175.181$ ,  $p<.001$ , RMSEA=.055, 90% CI [.044-.066], CFI=.96 and SRMR=.047. All indices, except for  $\chi^2$ , are indicative of a good model fit (Byrne, 2001).

The fact of correlating different measurement errors must be substantially justified (Joreskog, 1993). The authors believe that these correlations may be indicative of item redundancy because these items cause responses related to the same behavior. Correlated errors pertain to items that have a strong relationship. For example, they refer to the frequency with which women have been whistled at (item 1), the frequency with which women have been honked at from cars (item 9), the frequency with which women have been groped (item 7) and the frequency with which women have been grabbed or pinched against their will (item 14). It is evident that all of the correlated errors belong to items with clear relationships.

After verifying the adequacy of the two-factor structure with the total sample, the analysis was repeated with the entire sample to obtain the estimates (see Figure 1). The fit of the model can be considered adequate  $\chi^2 (77)=239.034$ ,  $p<.001$ , RMSEA=.054, 90% CI [.046-.062], CFI=.96 and SRMR=.041.



**Figure 1.** Factor Structure of the Spanish version of the *ISOS*

### Reliability

The ordinal reliability of each dimension (Elosúa & Zumbo, 2008) was calculated, obtaining  $\alpha=0.89$  for the scale of Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances and  $\alpha=0.87$  for the scale of Body Evaluation.

### Validity Evidence Based on the Relationship with Other Variables

To obtain this type of evidence, the dimension totals of the ISOS were correlated with the dimension totals assessed with the inventory (State-Anxiety, Benevolent Sexism, Hostile Sexism and Self-Esteem). These correlations were corrected by attenuation (to eliminate random measurement error in each score), as seen in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Correlation matrix of the different dimensions studied

	State-Anxiety (M=11.07, SD=5.96)	Benevolent sexism (M=15.54, SD=10.69)	Hostile sexism (M=16.40, SD=10.88)	Self-Esteem (M=32.87, SD=4.78)
Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances (M=5.42, SD=1.87)	.18/.20**	.06/.07	.03/.04	-.11/-.13**
Body Evaluation (M=27.41, SD=6.09)	.07/.07	.18/.20**	.07/.08	.06/.07

**Note:** Each cell contains the Pearson correlation obtained, followed by the correlation corrected by attenuation.

M: mean of the scale; SD=standard deviation of the scale.

\*\*  $p<.001$

As shown in Table 2, the Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances dimension correlates positively with State-Anxiety because an Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advance is an unwanted behavior and thus creates some discomfort in the person receiving it. This same dimension is inversely related to Self-Esteem. The person receiving unwanted sexualized behavior may feel vulnerable and thus, her self-esteem may be negatively affected.

The results, in line with expectations, have also shown positive correlations between the dimensions of Body Evaluation and Benevolent Sexism, so that women who perceive greater body evaluation also have greater beliefs of benevolent sexism. In contrast, body evaluation is neither related to high levels of anxiety nor to lower self-esteem scores, which could be due to the elimination of the previously mentioned negative effects of sexual objectification, with a temporary improvement in mood as the result of positive feedback and compliments about appearance (Fea and Brannon, 2006; Calogero et al., 2009). On the other hand, the lack of relationship between Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances and greater sexist beliefs may be because they are easily recognizable as such interactions, which leads to a rejection of the beliefs associated with these sexist behaviors (Becker & Swim 2011).

### Analysis from the perspective of the IRT

Using the Samejima's graded model (1969), discrimination (parameter  $a$ ) and the thresholds (parameter  $b$ ) were determined for each of the items in the two dimensions of the *ISOS* (see Table 3). All of the items in the dimension of *Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances* have very high discrimination and those comprising the dimension of *Body Evaluation* have medium to very high discrimination, according to the criteria proposed by Baker (2001). With didactic purpose, the item discrimination index, calculated from the perspective of classical test theory, is also included in Table 3. As observed, the minimum required value of .30 is exceeded in all cases (García-Cueto & Fidalgo, 2005).

**Table 3.** Item parameters from the perspective of IRT.

Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances						
ITEM	ID	$a$	$b_1$	$b_2$	$b_3$	$b_4$
7	.585	2.68	0.76	2.16	3.90	8.72
8	.520	1.90	1.18	2.40	3.36	4.19
14	.578	2.30	0.40	1.90	2.77	3.85
15	.538	1.72	0.51	2.25	3.29	4.84

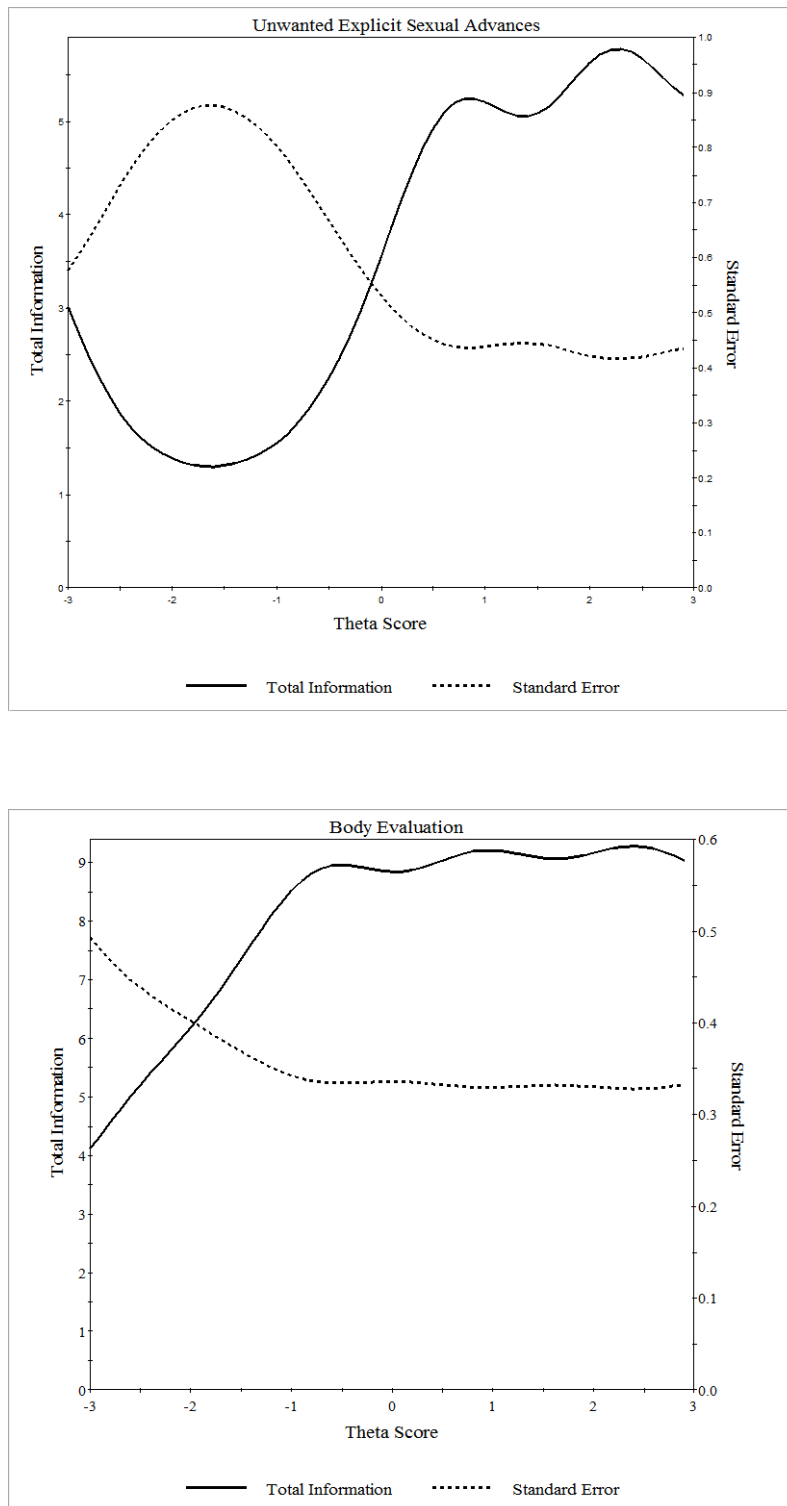
  

Body Evaluation						
ITEM	ID	$a$	$b_1$	$b_2$	$b_3$	$b_4$
1	.493	1.18	-2.41	-0.59	1.74	4.02
2	.434	1.10	-2.61	-0.04	1.75	3.98
3	.503	1.34	-4.27	-1.98	0.12	2.41
4	.614	1.83	-2.74	-0.83	0.97	2.85
5	.657	2.09	-1.49	0.29	1.93	3.27
6	.566	1.64	-0.73	0.95	2.41	3.61
9	.510	1.26	-2.02	-0.20	1.80	4.05
10	.652	2.05	-2.35	-0.59	1.06	2.87
11	.597	1.95	-0.32	1.26	2.48	4.07
12	.590	1.77	-0.98	0.80	2.41	3.99
13	.643	2.12	-0.77	0.73	2.17	3.92

For the Body Evaluation dimension, item difficulty extends to the entire range of scores. By contrast, in the dimension of Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances, the thresholds of the different alternatives are always positive. This might be because the items in this dimension involve behaviors that could be considered a crime, so the frequency with which women perceive/experience them is low.

A good fit of the graded response model to the data was obtained. The percentage of waste within the range considered appropriate ( $\pm 3$  standard deviations) is 93.75% in the dimension of Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances and 97.73% in Body Evaluation.

To assess the accuracy with which the evaluation is made, the information function was calculated for each dimension (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Information function of the dimensions of the ISOS.

As shown in Figure 2 (panel A) the greatest accuracy in the Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances dimension is obtained when people with scores above the mean (from +0.5 to +3) are evaluated. By contrast, in the Body Evaluation dimension (Panel B), the greatest information is obtained in women who have scores ranging from -1 to +3.

## Discussion

The study of sexual objectification to which women are exposed in today's society is important because many psychological, interpersonal and social problems are derived from it (Szymanski et al., 2011).

This study has validated the ISOS (Kooze et al., 2007) in Spanish culture. This is the first instrument validated in Spanish to assess the construct of sexual objectification.

The Spanish version of the ISOS has a factor structure equivalent to the original scale (Kooze et al., 2007). Psychometric tests have shown adequate validity evidence of both the construct and the relationship with other variables, given that different dimensions of the scale are related to the same variables with which they had been linked in the literature on sexual objectification. Thus, Body Evaluation is related to greater adherence to benevolent sexist beliefs, which is consistent with previous studies showing that women exposed to greater sexism have higher levels of beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Calogero & Jost, 2011). Additionally, reporting a greater number of Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances has been associated with higher levels of state-anxiety and low self-esteem (Choma et al., 2010; Szymanski et al., 2011; Whealin, 2002).

The results about discrimination (parameter  $a$ ) of the items comprising each of the dimensions, from the perspective of the IRT, are medium to high, indicating that they are suitable to discriminate people along the continuum studied.

The information function of the two-dimensions of the ISOS shows that scores around and above the mean are more accurately evaluated. More specifically, the ISOS shows adequate reliability when evaluating women with medium and high levels of perceived Body Evaluation and who are above the mean in Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances.

Evaluating with greater accuracy the medium and high levels of Body Evaluation is useful because greater reliability is obtained in the study of women who perceive more intense sexual objectification, which may be associated with increased vulnerability in discrimination scenarios based on sex, such as situations involving sexual abuse and harassment (Heflick et al., 2011; Rudman & Mescher, 2012).

Conversely, the scale has adequate reliability for women who score high on the Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances dimension, allowing a more accurate evaluation for women who have been victims of the most severe behaviors of sexual objectification. It is, therefore, a useful measure for the detection of potential situations of sexual harassment to which women can be exposed throughout their lives.

The primary contribution of this study is the participation of women in the general population, allowing greater generalization of the results than what would be achieved with the original scale, in which the sample was composed exclusively of college women (Kooze et al., 2007).

One of the possible limitations of the study may be the lack of verification of the ISOS's relationship to other measures of objectification. However, to date, there are no other validated measures in Spanish to assess this construct.

Nevertheless, it is useful to have an instrument that serves to assess the frequency with which women are the victims of both the subtle manifestations of sexual objectification (body evaluation) and the most severe (unwanted explicit sexual advances), to either prevent or minimize the potential consequences for the mental health of women who may experience sexual objectification on a daily basis.



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*Chapter 4:*

**IS EMPOWERMENT OR WOMEN'S SUBJUGATION?  
EXPERIENCES OF INTERPERSONAL SEXUAL  
OBJECTIFICATION**



## Resumen

La cosificación sexual interpersonal es la reducción de una mujer a su cuerpo o partes de éste. Este fenómeno puede ser considerado como una forma de discriminación sexista, en la que una mujer es tratada de manera diferente minimizando la importancia de sus atributos internos. Este estudio, en el que se incluyeron 251 participantes de población general, tiene como objetivo analizar el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual interpersonal en hombres y mujeres, y su relación con variables ideológicas (sexismo y poder), autoestima y disfrute de la sexualización. Los resultados mostraron diferencias de género en la cosificación sexual interpersonal, de modo que las mujeres experimentaron en mayor medida experiencias de cosificación en sus relaciones interpersonales. Además, se observó un patrón diferencial de las variables relacionadas con las experiencias de cosificación en función del género. En hombres, la autoestima y el poder fueron variables relacionadas con una mayor percepción de cosificación. En concreto, el poder predice una mayor percepción de cosificación y esta relación estuvo mediada por el disfrute de la sexualización. En las mujeres, es el sexismo benévolo el que lleva a una mayor percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal y esta relación estuvo mediada por el disfrute de la sexualización.

**Palabras clave:** autoestima, cosificación sexual, disfrute de la sexualización, poder, sexismo.

## Abstract

Interpersonal sexual objectification is defined as the act of reducing a woman to her body or body parts. It could be considered as a form of sexist discrimination, in which women have a differential treatment minimizing the importance of their inner qualities. The aim of this study, in which involved 251 participants, was to analyze the perception of interpersonal sexual objectification in men and women. In addition, we examined the relationship between the interpersonal sexual objectification and ideological variables (sexism and power) as well as self-esteem and enjoyment of sexualization. Results showed gender differences in interpersonal sexual objectification. Women experienced more sexual objectification in their interpersonal relationships. Also, results showed the effect of gender in the variables that predicted interpersonal sexual objectification. In men, self-esteem and power were related with more experiences of sexual objectification. Specifically, power predicted the perception of objectification and this effect was mediated by enjoyment of sexualization. However, in women, benevolent sexism predicted the perception of interpersonal sexual objectification and this effect was mediated by enjoyment of sexualization.

**Keywords:** enjoyment of sexualization, power, self-esteem, sexism, sexual objectification.

En los últimos años, el cuidado de la imagen y el culto al cuerpo se ha convertido en uno de los aspectos más importantes en la vida las personas. Este interés por la imagen se ha extendido también entre los hombres. Podríamos decir que el cuerpo y la imagen se han convertido en un bien al alza que mueve muchos intereses y que condiciona las relaciones interpersonales. Los países occidentales han asumido esta cultura de forma generalizada llegando incluso a vivir esclavizados por “el culto al cuerpo”. España, concretamente, es el primer país europeo en operaciones de estética y el cuarto del mundo. El 8% de las operaciones de cirugía estética se realizan en España, encontrándonos por encima de EE.UU. (13%), México (9%) y Argentina (8,5%) (Sociedad Española de Cirugía Plástica, Reparadora y Estética, 2006).

La preocupación por el cuerpo y la imagen ha sido un aspecto íntimamente relacionado con la vida de las mujeres. Desde las teorías sociobiológicas, la imagen de la mujer ha sido central para consolidar sus roles sociales (esposa y madre). El valor de una mujer estaba determinado en parte por su juventud y su belleza, aspectos que se relacionaban positivamente con la percepción de fertilidad y que por tanto convertían en objeto de deseo y muy valorada por los hombres (Sevillano, Rodríguez, Olarte y Lahoz, 2005). No obstante, la relación que la mujer ha mantenido con su cuerpo no siempre ha traído consecuencias positivas. El desarrollo y los cambios sociales que han modificado los principales roles de las mujeres actualmente, no han llevado asociado un menor interés por el aspecto físico de éstas, más bien ha sido al contrario. La relación que las mujeres tienen con su cuerpo, afecta a su vida personal, profesional y política (Wolf, 1991), y esta relación está influida de manera perniciosa por la cosificación sexual, referida al trato que la sociedad da a la mujer como un objeto sexual, incrementado en los últimos años (Kaschak, 1992).

### **Cosificación Sexual Interpersonal**

La *cosificación sexual* es la reducción de una mujer en su cuerpo o partes de éste con la percepción errónea de que su cuerpo o partes del mismo pueden representarla en su totalidad (Bartky, 1990). La cosificación se produce cuando se separan las funciones o partes sexuales de una mujer de su persona, instrumentalizándola o reduciéndola a dichas partes sexuales (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). Desde las teorías feministas se ha puesto énfasis en resaltar la importancia que la construcción social tiene en la imagen que las mujeres desarrollan y construyen de sí mismas. Esta idea ha sido recuperada y desarrollada por la Teoría de la Cosificación (*Objectification Theory*) formulada por Fredrickson y Roberts en 1997. La teoría de la cosificación (TC), subraya la importancia de las experiencias de socialización de género, en concreto, aquellas experiencias que exponen a las mujeres a ser valoradas exclusivamente por su cuerpo. El punto central de esta teoría es la gran presencia de la cosificación sexual de las mujeres en la sociedad y cómo afecta a su bienestar, físico, psicológico y social (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). La continua exposición a situaciones en las que las mujeres son sexualmente cosificadas, hace que éstas se perciban a sí mismas como objetos, interiorizando la mirada de un observador externo. Este fenómeno se denomina



*autocosificación*, y se manifiesta por la autovigilancia entendida como en “un continuo seguimiento de la apariencia corporal” (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997, p. 180).

La autocosificación y la autovigilancia corporal, pueden llevar a las mujeres a experimentar emociones negativas, como la vergüenza, ansiedad y reducción de la conciencia de los estados internos corporales (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). La TC postula que los episodios de cosificación sexual pueden tener lugar en múltiples contextos y adoptar diferentes formas. Así por ejemplo, pueden darse en los medios de comunicación, en las interacciones interpersonales, en el lugar de trabajo, en ámbitos educativos, etc. En cuanto a las formas, las dos maneras específicas de cosificar a las mujeres son: la evaluación corporal y las aproximaciones explícitas no deseadas (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997).

La cosificación sexual interpersonal puede ser considerada una forma de discriminación sexista, en la que una mujer es tratada de manera diferente por el hecho de ser mujer (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997; Landrine, Klonoff, Gibbs, Manning y Lund, 1995), y que tiene como objetivo, minimizar la importancia de los atributos internos de la mujer. La exposición repetida de las mujeres a diferentes niveles de cosificación sexual, tiene una influencia directa en los niveles de autocosificación (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn y Twenge, 1998; Tiggemann y Slater, 2001) e importantes consecuencias para ella. Sin embargo, y pese a su importancia, son escasos los estudios que recogen informes de mujeres sobre su percepción ante los eventos de cosificación a los que la están expuestas. Una posible explicación a esta ausencia de datos, se deba a la escasez de instrumentos de medida. Dado lo reciente del desarrollo de la TC, los instrumentos desarrollados para evaluar la cosificación sexual son aún reducidos, siendo el más adecuado, la *Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale* (Kooze, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath y Denchik, 2007) (en proceso de adaptación a la población española) principalmente por dos razones. En primer lugar, porque permite que la mujer se identifique como cosificada sexualmente, sin requerir una autclasificación previa de dicho evento como sexista (Stangor, Sechrist y Swim, 1999). Moradi, Dirks y Matteson (2005) insisten en que la cosificación sexual sea integrada dentro del marco de la TC, ya que permite un mejor entendimiento del sufrimiento que podría causar a las mujeres estar expuestas a interacciones que las cosifican sexualmente. Y en segundo lugar, porque esta medida contiene las dos formas anteriormente mencionadas en que la mujer puede ser cosificada; por un lado la evaluación corporal y por otro, las aproximaciones explícitas no deseadas.

### **Diferencias de género en eventos interpersonales de cosificación sexual**

En su inicio, la TC se formuló como marco de referencia para entender la socialización en un contexto en el que se valora a la mujer como un instrumento para dar placer. Sin embargo, en nuestros días, estas exigencias respecto al cuerpo, también se han extendido a los hombres (Leit, Pope y Gray, 2001), idealizando sus cuerpos, presentándolos como más musculosos e inalcanzables, lo que conlleva que en la actualidad, los hombres estén menos satisfechos con sus cuerpos de lo que lo estaban en el pasado (Garner, 1997). Esta nueva realidad nos lleva a plantearnos la posibilidad de que la TC pueda también servir como marco explicativo de la menor satisfacción con el cuerpo que muestran los hombres hoy día y

que podamos inferir la posibilidad de que ellos también pueden llegar a autocosificarse (Strelan y Hargreaves, 2005). La investigación empírica ha mostrado que los hombres que tienen mayores puntuaciones en autocosificación, obtiene menores puntuaciones en autoestima (McKinley, 2006).

Sin embargo, no podemos olvidar que la cosificación sexual, como una forma más sutil de discriminación sexista (Klonoff y Landrine, 1995), tiene una mayor prevalencia entre mujeres que entre hombres (Swim, Hyers, Cohen y Ferguson, 2001). Desde una perspectiva feminista, esto se explica porque hombres y mujeres construyen socialmente su cuerpo de manera diferente, ya que las mujeres lo construyen para ser mirado (Spitzack, 1990), lo que explica que experimenten menos sentimientos positivos hacia este que los hombres (Cash, Winste y Janda, 1986).

### **Sexismo y Cosificación: importancia del Sexismo Benévolo**

Las mujeres están expuestas cotidianamente a eventos sexistas de todo tipo. La literatura muestra que las mujeres están expuestas a más sexismo que los hombres y que experimentan de uno a dos eventos sexistas semanales (Swim et al., 2001).

La *Teoría del Sexismo Ambivalente* formulada por Glick y Fiske (1996), resalta la idiosincrasia del prejuicio contra las mujeres, debido a los sentimientos positivos que existen hacia ellas y que coexisten con sentimientos negativos, hostiles o de rechazo.

El sexismo benévolo se convierte en una ideología legitimadora del estatus quo incrementando la satisfacción de la mujer con el sistema social (Jost y Kay, 2005), limitando su participación en acciones colectivas en contra de la discriminación sexista (Becker y Wright, 2011), y reduciendo la percepción de determinados comportamientos como sexistas en hombres y mujeres por no tratarse de un comportamiento hostil (Barreto y Ellemers, 2005). Las consecuencias del sexismo benévolo para las mujeres ha sido suficientemente mostrada, tanto en el ámbito de aspiraciones laborales y situaciones de discriminación (Moya, Glick, Expósito, de Lemus y Hart, 2007), como en las relaciones interpersonales, llevándolas a aceptar en mayor medida la discriminación sexista, reforzando las diferencias de poder entre hombres y mujeres (Glick y Fiske, 1996) e incluso aumentando la tolerancia hacia el maltrato (Expósito, Herrera, Moya y Glick, 2010; Lila, García y García, 2010).

El sexismo benévolo aporta a las mujeres determinados beneficios, como son la admiración y la protección por parte de los hombres. Numerosos estudios han mostrado la relación entre recompensas sociales y la belleza física en la mujer (Davis, 1990; Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux y Heilman, 1991). El atractivo físico se convierte de este modo en un aspecto que puede facilitar la consecución de ciertos beneficios sociales (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997), aunque relega el estatus de la mujer a un nivel más bajo respecto a los hombres en la jerarquía social (Jost y Kay, 2005), puesto que la mujer invierte más tiempo y esfuerzo en adecuar su apariencia al ideal cultural (Dion, Dion y Keelan, 1990).

### Cosificación, sexismo y disfrute de la sexualización

Una de las consecuencias que puede tener el sexismo benévolo es la sexualización. La sexualización de la mujer ocurre cuando ésta es tratada como objeto sexual y evaluada en función de sus características físicas (American Psychological Association, 2007). La sexualización tiene cuatro componentes (a) igualar el valor de una persona a su sexualidad (b) la atracción definida como sexualidad (c) la cosificación sexual (d) y la imposición de la sexualidad; siendo necesario uno de estos cuatro aspectos para poder calificar el suceso como sexualizado (American Psychological Association, 2007).

Tradicionalmente se han investigado las consecuencias de la sexualización poniendo el énfasis en lo negativo del proceso (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). Sin embargo, recientemente, la investigación ha mostrado que muchas mujeres disfrutan de ser sexualizadas por los hombres, incluso algunas llegan a sentirse empoderadas al ser apreciadas y admiradas sexualmente por los hombres (Baumgardner y Richards, 2004; Gleeson y Frith, 2004)

El *disfrute de la sexualización* ocurre cuando la mujer encuentra la atención sexual basada en su apariencia como positiva y reforzante (Liss, Erchull y Ramsey, 2011). Numerosos estudios apoyan que la sexualización es una forma de controlar a las mujeres (Gill, 2008), mientras que otros defienden que la sexualización es una manera de empoderamiento que hace que las mujeres asuman el control de su sexualidad (Baumgardner y Richards, 2004). Así, las mujeres atractivas sexualmente podrían experimentar consecuencias subjetivamente positivas, debido a la atención sexual que reciben (Snyder, Tanke y Berscheid, 1977). De este modo, la sexualización se convierte en un mecanismo para la atracción, y una manera de obtener las recompensas que se derivan de ajustarse a los estándares de belleza establecidos (Fiske et al., 1991). Muchas mujeres llevan a cabo conductas que pueden denotar que disfrutan resaltando su cuerpo como por ejemplo llevar camisetas ajustadas, mostrar su pecho o tatuarse el logotipo de “play boy”, entre otras (Levy, 2005). Aunque no siempre, exhibir este tipo de comportamiento suele tener consecuencias positivas para quien las realiza. Así por ejemplo, Glick, Larsen, Johnson y Branstiter (2005) encontraron que los aspirantes a un puesto de trabajo que llevan ropa “provocadora” son valorados como menos competentes que los que llevan ropa más conservadora. Las mujeres que disfrutan sexualizándose intentan mantener la atención sexual masculina a través de diferentes mecanismos, siendo éste uno de ellos. Los comportamientos de sexualización están muy relacionados con la autocosificación (Nowatzki y Morry, 2009).

Las mujeres que disfrutan sexualizándose informan de mayores experiencias de cosificación, y esto puede deberse a varias razones. Por un lado, es posible que puedan participar en comportamientos y situaciones que aumenten la probabilidad de ser cosificadas sexualmente (Liss et al, 2011); y por otra parte, podrían estar más atentas a dicho proceso porque es reforzante para ellas. Sin embargo, la evidencia empírica que relaciona el sexismo y el disfrute de la sexualización en mujeres arroja datos contradictorios. Si bien algunos resultados han mostrado que las mujeres sexistas benévolas disfrutan más siendo sexualizadas (Liss et al, 2011) y hacen un mayor uso de cosméticos (Franzoi, 2001). Sin embargo,

Nowatzki y Morry (2009) encontraron resultados opuestos, señalando que la no relación entre sexismo benévolo y comportamientos de autosexualización, se justifica por la idea ampliamente compartida de que la mujer debe ser pura y virtuosa (idea que contradice la esencia de la sexualización).

### **Cosificación, poder y autoestima**

El poder ha sido muy estudiado en el campo de la Psicología Social. Se define como la capacidad de influir en los demás (Vescio, Gervais, Snyder y Hoover, 2005), y controlar los resultados de los demás (Fiske, 1993).

En el caso de las mujeres, ¿cómo ellas podrían aumentar el poder que tienen sobre los hombres? La literatura ha mostrado que muchas mujeres jóvenes disfrutaban sexualizándose (Lerum y Dworkin, 2009), y esto puede conllevar algún beneficio para ellas. Determinadas perspectivas teóricas señalan el empoderamiento de la mujer a través de la sexualidad denominando a ésta corriente la *tercera ola feminista* (Baumgardner y Richards, 2004). Si bien algunos autores consideran a este efecto como *falso empoderamiento*, es necesario diferenciar entre el sentimiento subjetivo de empoderamiento (Lamb y Peterson, en prensa) y el hecho de ser/estar verdaderamente empoderada, puesto que dicho empoderamiento se da en una estructura social en la que la mujer es valorada meramente por su apariencia y únicamente aceptada si ésta se ajusta a los patrones previamente establecidos (American Psychological Association, 2007). Si bien la cosificación puede aumentar el sentimiento de poder en los hombres, otorgándoles mayor oportunidad de elección y mayores exigencias en sus relaciones interpersonales, en las mujeres, asumir la cosificación las puede limitar a un rol de mayor dependencia sexual de los hombres, en definitiva, consolidando aún más su estatus inferior.

Por último, cabría mencionar algunas de las posibles consecuencias que puede tener la cosificación en las personas, concretamente en su autoestima. La relación entre la cosificación sexual y la autoestima ha quedado suficientemente probada. Las personas que experimentan autocosificación, tienen baja autoestima global y baja autoestima corporal (Strelan, Mehaffey y Tiggemann, 2003). Sin embargo, esta relación es diferente en hombres y en mujeres.

En las mujeres, la relación entre autoestima y exposición a cosificación sexual, presenta una doble interpretación. Por un lado, las mujeres poseen una autoestima frágil ya que su valor está directamente vinculado a su apariencia (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper y Bouvrette, 2003; Crocker y Wolfe, 2001). Pero por otro, el atractivo sexual puede atenuar e incluso invertir la relación entre autoestima y autocosificación (Sinclair y Myers, 2004). Así, las mujeres que se cosifican y se sienten atractivas, podrían aumentar temporalmente su autoestima aunque a largo plazo, los niveles de autoestima no se mantienen altos.

Entre los hombres, esta relación dual no se da al no estar expuestos a tantos eventos de cosificación sexual interpersonal (Frith y Gerson, 2004). A ellos no se les socializa equiparando su valor al

de su apariencia física, por lo que prestan menos atención a su físico, vigilando su apariencia en menor medida que las mujeres.

Como ya se ha recogido en párrafos anteriores, la sexualización podría funcionar como un mecanismo de control sobre las mujeres, otorgándoles beneficios por su apariencia a corto plazo, que tiene como consecuencia el que permanezcan en su estatus quo, y colocándolas en situación de mayor vulnerabilidad.

En definitiva, los principales objetivos de este estudio son los siguientes:

1. Analizar el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual interpersonal en una muestra española.
2. Estudiar el efecto del género en la percepción de experiencias de cosificación sexual interpersonal, en sus dos dimensiones: evaluación corporal e insinuaciones explícitas no deseadas.
3. Analizar la relación entre la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal con variables ideológicas como son el sexismo benévolo y la sensación de poder así como con autoestima y disfrute de la sexualización.
4. Analizar la influencia de la autoestima y el disfrute de la sexualización en la experiencia de cosificación interpersonal en hombres y en mujeres.

## Método

### Participantes

La muestra estuvo compuesta por 251 participantes de población general (153 mujeres y 98 hombres), con edades comprendidas entre 18 y 63 años y una media de 27.59 ( $DT = 10.47$ ). El mayor porcentaje de participantes habían realizado estudios Universitarios (69.3%), el 9.6% habían cursado Bachillerato, un 8.4% Formación Profesional, el 6.4% Secundaria, el 5.6% tenían estudios primarios y tan sólo el 0.4% no tenían estudios.

### Procedimiento y Diseño

La muestra fue recogida mediante un muestreo incidental llevado a cabo en las ciudades de Granada y Salamanca. Dos investigadores previamente entrenados solicitaban a los participantes su colaboración informándoles del anonimato de sus respuestas y garantizándoles confidencialidad. El presente estudio es de tipo correlacional de acuerdo con la clasificación propuesta por Montero y León (2007).

## Instrumentos

Se construyó un cuestionario que incluía las siguientes medidas:

- *Características sociodemográficas*. Se recogieron datos relativos al sexo, edad, nivel de estudios realizados, situación laboral, nacionalidad y orientación sexual de los participantes.

- *Escala de Cosificación Sexual Interpersonal (Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale, ISOS)* (Kooze et al., 2007) (en proceso de adaptación a muestra española). Consta de 15 ítems que evalúan la cosificación sexual interpersonal y está compuesta por dos dimensiones: la *evaluación del cuerpo* (11 ítems) (e.g. “¿Con qué frecuencia has sentido que alguien estaba mirando fijamente tu cuerpo?”) y *avances sexuales explícitos no deseados* (4 ítems) (e.g. “¿Con qué frecuencia te han manoseado contra tu voluntad?”). El formato de respuesta es tipo Likert de 5 alternativas que oscila entre 1 (Nunca) a 5 (Casi siempre). Los primeros datos psicométricos en población española muestran una buena fiabilidad con un coeficiente alfa de Cronbach de la escala total igual a .89 y de .90 y .74 para las subescalas de evaluación del cuerpo y de avances sexuales explícitos no deseados, respectivamente. Estos coeficientes fueron similares a los obtenidos por Kooze et al., (2007) que fue de .92 en la escala total, .91 en la subescala evaluación del cuerpo y de .78 en la subescala avances explícitos no deseados.

- *Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg (EAR)* (Rosenberg, 1965). Es un autoinforme que consta de 10 ítems que evalúan el grado de satisfacción que tiene una persona consigo misma. El formato de respuesta es tipo Likert de 1 (Totalmente en desacuerdo) a 4 (Totalmente de acuerdo). La consistencia interna de la versión original oscila entre .76 y .87, mostrando en el presente estudio un coeficiente alfa de Cronbach igual a .84.

- *Sensación de Poder (Sense of Power Scale)* (Anderson y Galinski, 2006). Escala de 8 ítems que miden las creencias generalizadas sobre el poder que las personas tienen con los demás. El formato de respuesta es tipo Likert de 1 (Totalmente en desacuerdo) a 7 (Totalmente de acuerdo). El coeficiente alfa de Cronbach es igual a .77 ligeramente más bajo al obtenido por los autores de la escala original (Anderson y Galinski, 2006).

- *Escala de Disfrute de la Sexualización (Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale, ESS)* (Liss et al., 2011) (en proceso de adaptación a muestra española). Es una escala de 8 ítems que evalúa el disfrute de la sexualización en un contexto interpersonal (e.g. “Me gusta sentirme sexy”). El formato de respuesta es tipo Likert de 1 (Totalmente en desacuerdo) a 6 (Totalmente de acuerdo). La consistencia interna en el presente estudio fue de .89, similar a la obtenida por Liss et al., (2011) que fue igual a .85.

- *Inventario sobre Sexismo Ambivalente* (Glick y Fiske, 1996; adaptada al castellano por Expósito, Moya y Glick, 1998). Consta de 22 ítems con un formato de respuesta tipo Likert de 0 (Totalmente en desacuerdo) a 5 (Totalmente de acuerdo). El inventario mide dos tipos de sexismo: Sexismo Hostil, compuesto por 11 ítems (e.g., “las mujeres se ofenden muy fácilmente”) y Sexismo Benévolo compuesto por otros 11 ítems (e.g., “las mujeres deben ser queridas y protegidas por los hombres”). Es una medida

con una amplia evidencia acerca de la bondad de sus características psicométricas. En el presente trabajo se obtuvo un coeficiente *alpha* para la escala total igual a .92, y de .91 y .85 para la subescala de sexismo hostil y de sexismo benévolo respectivamente.

### Resultados

Con el objetivo de analizar si existen diferencias entre hombres y mujeres en la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal, se realizó una *t* de student para muestras independientes (véase Tabla 1).

**Tabla 1.** Diferencias de género en la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal

	Mujer	Hombre	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
ISOS	2.18	1.86	4.54	.000
Evaluación Cuerpo	2.49	2.00	5.99	.000
Avances explícitos no Deseados	1.33	1.48	-2.09	.037

Los resultados muestran diferencias significativas en todas las medidas analizadas en función del género. Las mujeres obtienen mayores puntuaciones en la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal (*ISOS*) así como mayores puntuaciones en la dimensión de *Evaluación del Cuerpo*. Sin embargo, en la dimensión *Avances Explícitos no Deseados* las mujeres obtienen puntuaciones significativamente inferiores que la muestra de hombres (1.33 vs. 1.48).

#### **Relación entre la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal y variables ideológicas (poder y sexismo), autoestima y disfrute de la sexualización.**

Tal y como se observa en la Tabla 2, las puntuaciones en la cosificación sexual interpersonal (*ISOS*) correlacionaron positiva y significativamente con el poder, tanto en mujeres ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ) como en hombres ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ), de tal forma que los participantes que percibían más situaciones de cosificación sexual interpersonal se sentían con más poder. Las puntuaciones en la *ISOS* también correlacionaron positiva y significativamente con el disfrute de la sexualización, de modo que los participantes que se sentían más cosificados sexualmente disfrutaban más sexualizándose (mujeres:  $r = .40, p < .001$ ; hombres:  $r = .35, p < .001$ ).

**Tabla 2.** Correlaciones bivariadas entre las diferentes variables

	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>
1. <i>ISOS</i>	---	---										
2. <i>SH</i>	.12	-.05	---	---								
3. <i>SB</i>	.20**	.13	.56***	.48***	---	---						
4. <i>Poder</i>	.17*	.35***	-.24**	.12	-.13	-.01	---	---				
5. <i>EAR</i>	.04	.24*	-.30***	.02	-.21**	-.01	.61***	.35***	---	---		
6. <i>ESS</i>	.40***	.35***	-.01	.15	.27***	.15	.11	.38***	.03	.18	---	---

**Nota:** ISOS: Cosificación interpersonal; SH: Sexismo Hostil; SB: Sexismo benévolo; Poder: Sensación de poder; EAR: Autoestima; ESS: Disfrute de la sexualización

\* $p \leq 0,05$  \*\* $p \leq 0,01$  \*\*\* $p \leq 0,001$

Entre las mujeres, la ISOS obtuvo una correlación positiva y significativa con el sexismo benévolo ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ), de tal forma que aquellas que mayor cosificación sexual interpersonal percibían obtenían mayores puntuaciones en sexismo benévolo. En los hombres, la ISOS correlacionó positiva y significativamente con la autoestima. Los hombres que se sentían más cosificados, presentaban una mayor autoestima ( $r = .24, p < .05$ ).

### Efecto del Sexo y el Poder en la cosificación sexual interpersonal.

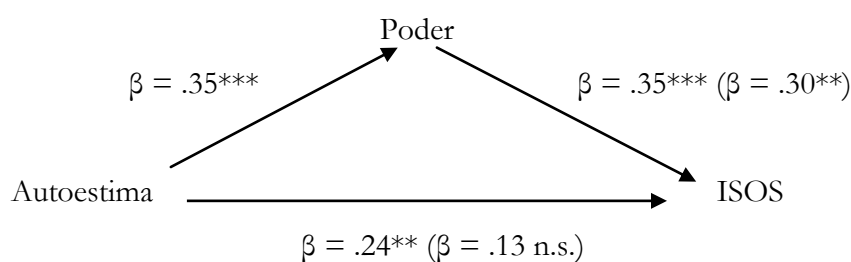
En orden a explorar el efecto del sexo del participante y el poder en la cosificación sexual interpersonal, se realizó un análisis de regresión jerárquica. La variable criterio fue la puntuación en la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal y como variables predictoras fueron introducidas en el paso 1, el sexo del participante y la puntuación en poder, y en paso 2 la interacción entre el sexo y el poder. Los resultados mostraron efectos principales del Sexo  $t(248) = -4.93, \beta = -.29, p < .001$  y del Poder  $t(248) = 3.85, \beta = .23, p < .001$ . Respecto al sexo, las mujeres obtuvieron mayores puntuaciones en percepción de cosificación interpersonal que los hombres. En relación con el poder, una mayor sensación de poder estuvo relacionada con una mayor percepción de cosificación, tal y como han mostrado los



resultados anteriores. A su vez, se ha observado una interacción entre el Sexo y el Poder en la percepción de cosificación  $t(248) = 2.10$ ,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $p = .037$ . En los hombres, cuanto mayor es la percepción de cosificación más altas son las puntuaciones en poder  $t(95) = 3.66$ ,  $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < 0,001$ . En mujeres, si bien el poder también predice la percepción de cosificación interpersonal  $t(149) = 2.14$ ,  $\beta = .39$ ,  $p = .037$  esta relación no es tan acusada como en los hombres.

### El efecto mediador del poder entre la autoestima y la cosificación sexual interpersonal en hombres

Para analizar el posible papel mediador del poder entre la autoestima y la cosificación sexual interpersonal, se siguieron las recomendaciones de Baron y Kenny (1986). Según los autores, se deben cumplir tres condiciones para mostrar mediación. En primer lugar, que la variable independiente (autoestima) influya en la variable mediadora (poder). Segundo, que la variable mediadora se relacione con la variable dependiente (cosificación sexual interpersonal). Y, en tercer lugar, que exista una relación significativa entre la variable independiente y la dependiente, que una vez introducida la variable mediadora pierda, parcial o totalmente, su efecto. Se comprobaron estos requisitos mediante diversos análisis de regresión. Tal y como se aprecia en la Figura 1, los resultados indican que la autoestima influye significativamente en la cosificación sexual interpersonal ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p = .017$ ). Igualmente, mediante un análisis de regresión independiente, se observó una relación significativa entre la autoestima y el poder ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Además, en el paso tres de la regresión, la autoestima pierde su efecto sobre la cosificación sexual interpersonal cuando se introduce el poder. El test de Sobel (Sobel, 1982) mostró que la mediación fue significativa ( $z = 2.28$ ,  $p < .05$ ), por lo que podemos afirmar que el poder media completamente la relación entre la autoestima y la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal.

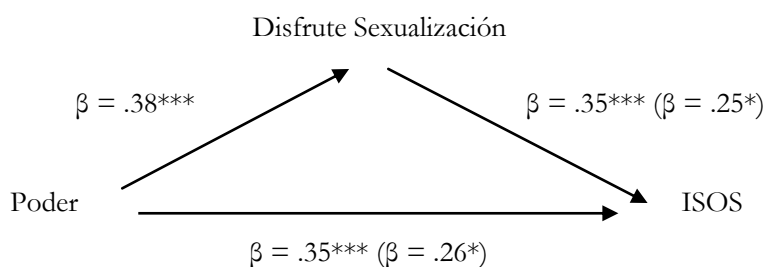


**Nota:** \*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0,001$

**Figura 1.** El papel mediador del poder en la cosificación sexual interpersonal y autoestima en hombres

### El Disfrute de la Sexualización como mediador entre el poder y la cosificación sexual interpersonal en hombres.

Para analizar el posible papel mediador del disfrute de la sexualización entre el poder percibido y la cosificación sexual interpersonal se siguieron las recomendaciones de Baron y Kenny (1986) anteriormente mencionadas. Tal y como se observa en la Figura 2, los resultados mostraron que la variable poder influye significativamente en la cosificación sexual interpersonal ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ). Igualmente, se observó una relación significativa entre el poder y el disfrute de la sexualización ( $\beta = .38, p < .001$ ). Además, en el paso tres de la regresión, se observa que el poder pierde parcialmente su efecto sobre la cosificación sexual interpersonal cuando se introduce la variable disfrute de la sexualización. Para examinar si la reducción del efecto del poder sobre la variable dependiente era significativa se realizó el test de Sobel (Sobel, 1982) que indicó que el descenso de la predicción del poder sobre la cosificación interpersonal fue significativo ( $z = 2.04, p < .05$ ). Por lo tanto, de los análisis se desprende que el disfrute de la sexualización media parcialmente la relación entre el poder y la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal.

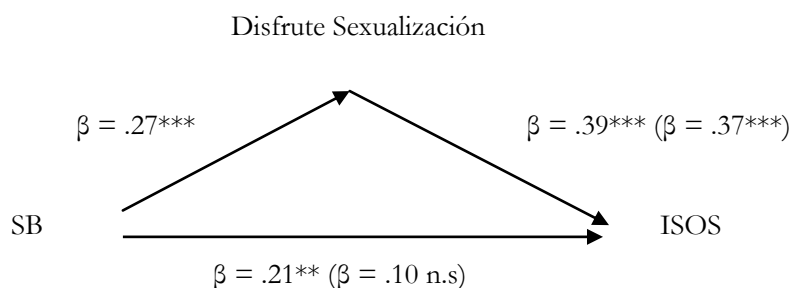


**Nota:** \*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0,001$

**Figura 2.** El papel mediador del disfrute de la sexualización en el poder y en la cosificación sexual interpersonal en hombres

### El Disfrute de la Sexualización como mediador entre el sexismo benévolo y la cosificación sexual interpersonal en mujeres.

Otro de los objetivos del estudio consistió en analizar el posible efecto mediador del disfrute de la sexualización entre el sexismo benévolo y la cosificación sexual interpersonal. Para ello, se procedió de acuerdo al procedimiento anteriormente descrito. Como se puede apreciar en la Figura 3, los resultados mostraron que el sexismo benévolo influye significativamente en la cosificación sexual interpersonal ( $\beta = .21, p = .01$ ). Igualmente, se observó una relación significativa entre el sexismo benévolo y el disfrute de la sexualización ( $\beta = .27, p < .001$ ), así como que el sexismo benévolo pierde su efecto sobre la cosificación sexual interpersonal cuando se introduce en la regresión la variable disfrute de la sexualización. El test de Sobel (Sobel, 1982) mostró que la mediación fue significativa ( $z = 2.04, p < .05$ ), de lo que se desprende que el disfrute de la sexualización media completamente la relación entre sexismo benévolo y la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal.



**Nota:** \*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0,001$

**Figura 3.** El papel mediador del disfrute de la sexualización en el sexismo benévolo y en la cosificación sexual interpersonal en mujeres

### Discusión

El mundo en el que vivimos es un mundo de hombres, mayormente heterosexual, que potencialmente cosifica el cuerpo de la mujer (Vaes, Paladino y Puvia, 2011), por ello este estudio intenta indagar el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual interpersonal y las variables que operan en el mismo.

Uno de los objetivos principales del estudio consistió en analizar el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual interpersonal en hombres y en mujeres. Los resultados han mostrado que las mujeres perciben una mayor cosificación sexual en sus relaciones interpersonales. Este dato queda avalado por estudios previos que demuestran que las mujeres experimentan más cosificación sexual que los hombres (Plous y Neptune, 1997). En concreto, se ha demostrado que las mujeres experimentan el doble de eventos sexistas semanales que los hombres (Swim et al., 2001).

Si se analizan las dos dimensiones de la escala de experiencias de cosificación sexual interpersonal (ISOS), las mujeres obtienen mayores puntuaciones en la dimensión de evaluación corporal pero obtienen una puntuación menor en la evaluación de avances explícitos no deseados. Este resultado, sorprendente, puede ser debido a varias razones, una posible, puede ser las mujeres no son conscientes de muchos actos sexistas a los que están expuestas, otra, el que hayan llegado incluso a normalizar muchas de esas situaciones y una tercera, puede estar relacionada con el desconocimiento de la intención del perpetrador (Swim, Scott, Sechrist, Campbell y Stangor, 2003). Según Becker y Swim (2011) aumentar la conciencia de los eventos sexistas más sutiles en las mujeres, puede resultar en una manera de intervención eficaz para reducir el sexismo del que son objeto.

El segundo de los objetivos perseguidos consistió en explorar la relación entre variables ideológicas, autoestima y disfrute de la sexualización. Los resultados mostraron relaciones significativas entre determinadas variables ideológicas y la percepción de cosificación sexual, y además se observaron diferencias de género en la relación entre las variables. Concretamente, una de las variables ideológicas analizadas, el poder, se relacionó con una mayor percepción de cosificación, pero ésta relación fue más

acusada en hombres que en mujeres. Este dato es consistente con investigaciones previas, que afirman que el poder mantiene una relación directa con la cosificación (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor y Strack, 1995) y de un modo más específico que las diferencias de poder intervienen en la cosificación de las personas, lo que podría explicar un uso diferencial de la cosificación por ambos sexos (Brewer, 1982),

Pese a la instrumentalización que sufren las mujeres cuando se sienten cosificadas sexualmente, muchas de ellas se sienten empoderadas, aunque se trate de un falso empoderamiento (Lerum y Dworkin, 2009), en la medida en que otorga a las mujeres un sentido ilusorio de autonomía mientras que a su vez siguen inmersas en una estructura social patriarcal en el que las mujeres siguen siendo valoradas por su apariencia (American Psychological Association, 2007).

Otra de las variables de interés fue la autoestima y su relación con la cosificación. Los resultados han mostrado la relación entre la autoestima y las experiencias de cosificación sexual en hombres, pero no en mujeres. Como era de esperar, las mujeres no ven reforzada su autoestima al ser consideradas sujetos cosificados sexualmente. Este resultado es congruente con la noción de “descontento normativo” (Rodin, Silberstein y Striegel-Moore, 1985). Puesto que las mujeres sienten una insatisfacción corporal generalizada debido al hecho de haber interiorizado el ideal corporal femenino como parte esencial de su autoconcepto (Crocker y Wolfe, 2001), cuando éste ideal corporal se percibe inalcanzable, la discrepancia entre el ideal y la realidad, provoca malestar y repercute en su autoconcepto y autoestima. Tal como demuestran Rodríguez, Goñi y Azúa (2006), hay relación entre autoconcepto, vida saludable y bienestar psicológico, por lo que podemos considerar la importancia para la vida de las mujeres de tener un autoconcepto positivo.

Sin embargo en hombres, resultó interesante el efecto mediador del poder entre la autoestima y la percepción de cosificación sexual interpersonal. Como se menciona en el párrafo anterior, la autoestima de las mujeres no aumenta al ser percibidas como objetos sexuales, ya que se trata de un falso empoderamiento (Lamb y Peterson, en prensa) y la sexualización femenina, una forma de control. Sin embargo, la sexualización masculina no tiene el mismo fin, no se aumenta el valor de la apariencia física masculina para mantenerlos sometidos a una posición subordinada. En el caso de los hombres, la sensación de poder que sienten al ser sexualizados y cosificados, es contingente con su poder real y por lo tanto, tiene efectos positivos en su autoestima.

Respecto al sexismo benévolo, los resultados corroboran investigaciones previas en el sentido de que las mujeres que tienen mayores puntuaciones en sexismo benévolo experimentan mayores experiencias de cosificación. El sexismo benévolo se erige de nuevo como un arma de subordinación eficaz porque las mujeres están expuestas en mayor medida y son menos capaces de reconocerlo, y por tanto, de luchar contra él (Jackman, 1994). Los resultados encontrados en este estudio son coherentes con los hallados por otros autores en cuanto a que de alguna manera, mayores puntuaciones en sexismo benévolo se relaciona con un mayor uso de cosméticos (Franzoi, 2001) y una mayor interiorización del ideal de delgadez (Forbes, Collinsworth, Jobe, Braun y Wise, 2007), aspectos ambos esenciales que

podrían favorecer experiencias de cosificación, y que contribuyen a que las mujeres que asumen esta ideología sexista la perpetúe intentando asumir cualidades típicamente femeninas (Glick y Fiske, 1996)

Por último, uno de los objetivos más relevantes para la investigación consistió en analizar el efecto del disfrute de la sexualización en la percepción de cosificación sexual. Los resultados mostraron que tanto en hombres como en mujeres, un mayor disfrute de la sexualización estaba relacionado con mayores experiencias de cosificación sexual (Liss y Erchull, 2010). Sin embargo, el disfrute de la sexualización tiene un efecto mediador diferencial en función del género. En hombres, el disfrute de la sexualización media la relación entre el poder y la cosificación sexual. De modo que, sentirse poderoso se relaciona con un mayor disfrute de la sexualización, lo que se traduce en una mayor percepción de cosificación sexual. En mujeres, el sexismo benévolo de las participantes activa el disfrute de la sexualización, lo que se traduce en una mayor percepción de experiencias de cosificación (Liss et al., 2011). Disfrutar sexualizándose es compatible con mantener actitudes sexistas que incluyan valorar a la mujer por su apariencia física y por su sexualidad. Las mujeres que disfrutan sexualizándose son aquellas que tienen puntuaciones más altas en sexismo benévolo, y que por lo tanto considera que las mujeres han de ser veneradas y protegidas por los hombres, por lo que cuando un hombre las admira, se sienten alagadas y disfrutan con ello. Estos resultados tienen gran importancia, puesto que conocer que el disfrute de la sexualización es activado por una ideología sexista benévola en las mujeres, nos revela que el disfrute y el empoderamiento que puede llegar a sentir la mujer siendo sexualizada, no es real, sino una falsa sensación de poder que camufla la subordinación de la mujer a una posición de inferioridad respecto al hombre y que le permite obtener beneficios efímeros.

A modo de conclusión, los resultados nos hacen reflexionar sobre el fin diferencial de la cosificación sexual femenina y masculina. Todo parece señalar que la cosificación masculina podría producir las mismas consecuencias que la femenina a largo plazo (McKinley, 2006), debido a imposición de los estándares de belleza, pero esconden realidades distintas. En el caso de los hombres, ajustarse a dichos estándares conlleva recompensas sociales inmediatas y reales (aumenta su autoestima y su poder), mientras que las recompensas sociales que otorga la sociedad a las mujeres por cosificarse y ajustarse a los patrones establecidos socialmente, hace que mantengan ideas de subordinación femenina, debilitando la acción colectiva de las mujeres contra el patriarcado.

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*Chapter 5:*

**SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION IN SPAIN AND CUBA: THE ROLE  
OF CULTURE IN THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE  
PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING OF WOMEN**



### Abstract

Sexual objectification and its consequences for the psychosocial wellbeing of women have been widely studied in occidental women. This study aims to show that cultural factors, as well as other forms of sex discrimination, play a determinant role in the consequences of sexual objectification. We therefore studied a sample of 160 women from Cuba and 159 women from Spain. For all the participants, we evaluated several variables related to the objectification phenomenon and the psychosocial consequences traditionally related to exposure and sexual objectification. Our results show differences in frequency and internalization of sexual objectification as well as in levels of appearance anxiety suffered by women in both countries. Further, the results show how the participant's country of origin can moderate the consequences of objectification experiences in terms of psychological wellbeing, where a sexist ideology plays a relevant explanatory role in these social and psychological consequences. This study shows that the consequences of sexual objectification are more negative when they occur in combination with high levels of sexism.

**Key words:** Sexual Objectification, cultural comparison, benevolent sexism, self-silencing

Throughout history, women have been treated as sexual objects to be viewed and evaluated according to their physical appearance, without regard for their needs and wishes (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The interactions between a man and a woman in which he considers her body as a sexual object are discriminatory, and are a clear demonstration of gender inequality given that during such interactions, the woman's body becomes a possession of the observer (Calogero, 2013). The American Psychological Association (APA) has paid special attention to the issue of sexual objectification over the last decade, regarding this as a risk factor for the psychological health of women (APA, 2007).

### **Sexual Objectification**

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) proposed the Objectification Theory as a framework to explain how gender socialization and sexual objectification experiences affect the physical, psychological, and social wellbeing of women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). A central part of this theory is that sexual objectification events are present in the daily life of women. According to this theory, there are various manifestations of sexual objectification that could be classified along a continuum, from the subtle (body evaluation) to the most severe (unwanted explicit sexual advances) (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Body evaluation refers to observing and evaluating a woman's body or body parts, whereas unwanted explicit sexual advances consist of sexual behaviours or propositions that go against a woman's wishes (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007).

### **Sexual objectification in Cuba and Spain**

Sexual objectification theory has been widely confirmed by empirical studies conducted primarily in America (e.g. Szymanski & Feltman, 2014), Europe (e.g. Calogero, Pina, & Sutton, 2013) and Oceania (e.g. Holland & Haslam, 2013). These studies demonstrate how sexual objectification experiences have important consequences for the wellbeing of both European and American women. Although several studies have been carried out to explore the issue of sexual objectification in Afro-American (Watson, Ancis, White, & Nazari, 2013), Muslim (Tolaymat & Moradi, 2011) and Latin women (Velez, Campos, & Moradi, 2015), they have only used participants that were resident in the United States. This sample characteristic means that these women have only been exposed to the sexual objectification experiences that are prevalent in their country of residence, rather than in their country of origin. A number of studies, however, have confirmed the role of cultural factors in sexual objectification. For instance, Loughnan et al. (2015) analysed cultural differences in sexual objectification and showed that levels of internalisation of the sexual objectification experiences are somewhat higher in Occidentalised countries (where this phenomenon has been more traditionally studied than in Asian countries).

Results found in Spain are consistent with other studies carried out in Europe, Australia, and America. For instance, an empirical study using a Spanish sample demonstrated the relationship between sexual objectification and sexist benevolent ideology, as well as a higher enjoyment of sexualisation (Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2012). Further, Lozano, Valor-Segura, Sáez, and Expósito (2015) showed that Spanish women who reported a higher number of sexual objectification experiences showed higher levels of anxiety.

However, there are relatively few studies of sexual objectification in the Latin population. Rivadeneyra (2011) analysed Latin soap operas and their findings suggested that the primary focus for female characters in these series was in terms of their physical appearance, portraying them as sexual objects. However, the only study that has analysed the consequences of sexual objectification using a Latin population sample was conducted by Velez et al. (2015), with Latin women that were residing in the United States. This study confirmed the importance of the role of sexist discrimination in the sexual objectification of these women. The quest to achieve the ideal of beauty concerns a great number of women in almost all societies, and each culture has its own ideal concept of beauty that women seek to attain. For instance, whilst it might be thought that a curvy female body is more accepted in Latin cultures than European and American countries (where extreme thinness is more valued), some studies suggest that Latin women prefer thinner bodies than the ones they have (Viladrich, Yeh, Bruning & Weiss, 2009).

In a study related to these issues, Rodriguez and Cruz (2008) compared Spanish women and Latin-American women residing in Spain. They found that Latin-American teenagers had internalised socio-cultural beauty standards more than Spanish teenagers (Rodríguez & Cruz, 2008). Frederick, Forbes, Grigorian, and Jarcho, (2007) found that American university students with a Hispanic background showed less body satisfaction than students with a Caucasian background. However, when Body Mass Index was taken into account, these differences in satisfaction disappeared (Frederick et al., 2007; Unger, 1979).

## **Sexist Ideology**

Sexism refers to the attitude towards people depending on their biological sex (Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998). A particularly interesting theory related to this is the Ambivalent Sexism Theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). According to this theory, the ambivalence of prejudice towards women is due to the coexistence of both positive and hostile feelings towards women, and the dislike of women as a group. Ambivalent sexism is a combination of traditional sexism (hostile sexism) and positive sexism (benevolent sexism) (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The benevolent side of sexism has aided the perpetuation of sexism in society, as it is perceived as a punishment and reward system. The adherence of women to the sexist ideology is explained in terms of the rewards that benevolent sexism gives to those that adjust to what is socially expected (Glick & Fiske, 1996). One of the aspects that women are rewarded for is physical

appearance, and physical beauty has become a tool that can provide women with a number of social benefits (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Unger, 1979).

Sexual objectification experiences are situations in which women feel evaluated for their bodies, and this affects their body esteem. Some studies using participants from the United States have shown that concern about their appearance and the behaviours put in place to modify it are related to sexist ideology (Forbes, Collinsworth, Jobe, Braun, & Weiss, 2007; Franzoi, 2001). If sexist ideology is a crucial ideological variable for understanding the impact of sexual objectification on women (Calogero & Jost, 2011), we should expect to find different prevalence rates and consequences of sexual objectification in countries with different levels of adherence to sexism. Transcultural studies have found cultural variations in levels of sexism in both men and women. For instance, Glick et al. (2000) showed that Cuba is the country with the highest level of sexism of all the countries that were analysed. In addition, a more recent study found that women in Cuba had higher scores on benevolent and hostile sexism than women in Spain, amongst other ideological variables that legitimise the status quo (beliefs in a fair world and honour codes) (Valor-Segura, Expósito, Moya, & López, 2014).

### **Negative consequences of sexual objectification**

One of the main consequences of sexual objectification for women is that they internalise this objectification. According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) the cultural practise of sexual objectification leads some women to self-objectify, and this is related to lower levels of psychological wellbeing. Self-objectification is the process of internalising the observer's perspective about their own body, and is expressed by constant body surveillance, that is, frequent monitoring of the body, focusing on its external appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), which can provoke several psychological problems.

Thus, sexual objectification theory identifies appearance anxiety as a consequence of body surveillance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Indeed, the link between body surveillance and anxiety has been widely confirmed. For instance, Noll and Fredrickson (1998) found that, in sample of American female university students, constant exposure to sexual objectification led to higher body surveillance and, as a result, they showed higher levels of anxiety. Similarly, Tiggemann and Slater (2001) conducted a study with a sample of 50 dancers and found that self-objectification was associated with body surveillance, which was also linked with appearance anxiety, a result that was also confirmed by Szymanski and Henning (2006), using a sample of female university students from the American general population. In addition, Roberts and Gettman (2004), using an experimental design, created different situations that promoted self-objectification in American female university students; they also found empirical evidence for the relationship between self-objectification and appearance anxiety.



The self-surveillance of the body that is encouraged by the internalisation of sexual objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) involves a constant comparison between the woman's own body with that of a culturally established standard. The notion that this constant comparison between the woman's body and the cultural ideal is to produce admiration and desire in men is a key element to understanding the way in which some women do not confront sexist discriminatory situations such as sexual objectification (Jack, 2011). Empirical evidence shows that many women do not respond to sexist incidents that occur almost on a daily basis (Swim, Eysell, Murdoch, & Ferguson, 2010). During the socialisation process, women learn the importance of maintaining relationships with men. Thus, during negative or discriminatory situations they implement strategies of "disconnection" to preserve such relationships (Jordan, 2010). By using one of the strategies of disconnection known as *self-silencing*, women silence their own feelings and thoughts and, instead of expressing their interests, they censor themselves in order to maintain their relationship with a man (Jack, 1991). It is well known that self-silencing in the face of sexist discrimination is highly modulated by the cultural context in which the women have been socialised. Gratch, Bassett and Attra (1995) showed that there were significant differences in self-silencing depending on the ethnicity of the participants, with Asian women showing higher scores on self-silencing than Caucasian or Hispanic women. However, there were no differences in the level of self-silencing between Hispanic and Caucasian women.

### **Enjoyment of sexualisation**

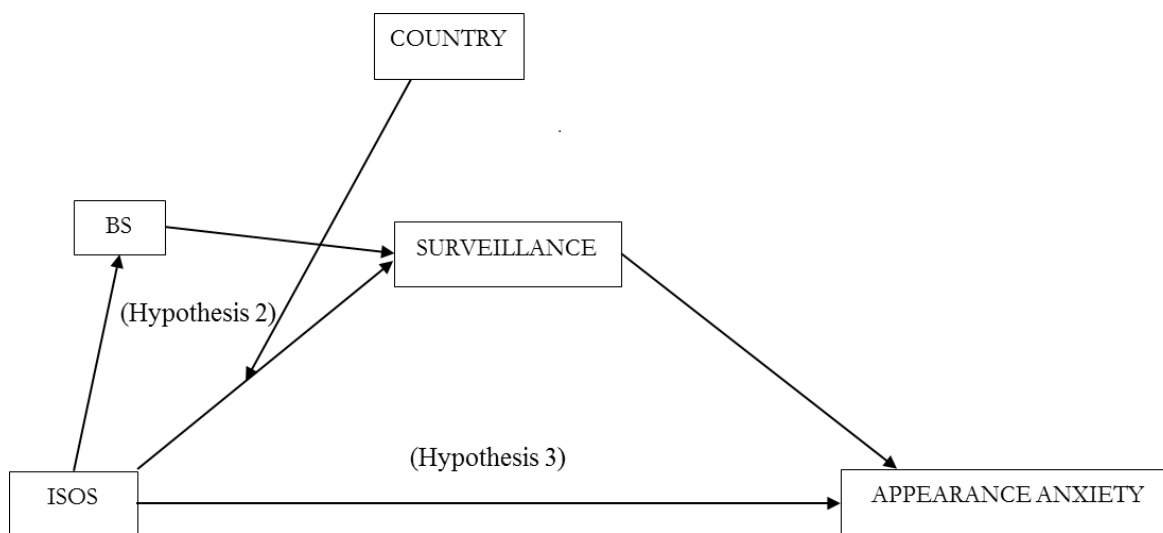
Sexual objectification interactions, known as sexism demonstrations, consist of scenarios that provoke ambivalent feelings in women given that, despite the negative consequences that they have for their health, also provide some social benefits (Glick & Fiske, 1996), transforming these discriminatory events into pleasant events (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011). The enjoyment of sexualisation occurs when a woman perceives sexual attention based on her appearance as a pleasant event (Liss et al., 2011). Thus, a woman's enjoyment of body sexualisation by men would be expected to determine the extent to which she reacts to the sexist events of sexual objectification.

In order to address this issue, Liss et al. (2011) analysed a sample of American university students. They found that the enjoyment of sexualisation was related to a higher adherence to a benevolent sexist ideology, that is, women that enjoyed being sexualised were more easily influenced by the rewards of benevolent sexism. It follows that if a direct and positive relationship exists between an adherence to sexist ideology and the enjoyment of sexualisation, we would expect that women would enjoy sexualisation more in those countries where they are found to display a higher adherence to a benevolent sexist ideology.

This paper reports a comparative analysis of the mechanisms of sexual objectification in Cuba and Spain. On the basis of the findings previously described, we would expect to find both a higher prevalence

of sexual objectification and enjoyment of sexualisation in Cuba, which has a stronger adherence to sexist ideology. In addition we would expect to find more severe consequences of sexual objectification among women from Cuba than women from Spain. The first objective of this study was to explore the differences between the variables depending on the country of origin. First, we expected Cuban women to show a higher level of benevolent sexism and hostile sexism than Spanish women (Glick et al., 2000) (Hypothesis 1a). Second, we expected to find that Cuban women would report a higher number of sexual objectification experiences than Spanish women (Hypothesis 1b) and would score higher on psychological discomfort indicators as a consequence of higher exposure to these experiences (anxiety and surveillance) (Hypothesis 1c). Third, we expected that Cuban women (versus Spanish women) would show higher enjoyment of sexualisation and therefore we would observe higher levels of self-silencing amongst these women (Hypothesis 1d).

Similarly, we expected to find amongst Cuban (versus Spanish women) women a significant direct relationship between exposure to experiences of sexual objectification and internalization of sexual objectification experiences (surveillance), and that this relationship could be explained by benevolent sexist ideology. Additionally, we expected to find that the relationship between the exposure to sexual objectification experiences and higher levels of appearance anxiety could be explained by the higher body surveillance that Cuban women experience but non by the surveillance that Spanish women experience (Hypothesis 3).



**Note:** BS: Benevolent sexism; ISOS: Interpersonal objectification

**Figure 1.** Hypothesized Model 1 and 2.

Finally, we aimed to confirm that the objectification experiences are more related to self-silencing for the Cuban sample than for the Spanish sample (Hypothesis 4a), a relationship that is modulated by the adherence to a benevolent sexist ideology (Hypothesis 4b).

## Method

### Participants

The sample included 159 women from Spain and 160 women from Cuba, selected from the general population (319 women in total). The age range was between 18 and 64 years for the Cuban sample with a mean age of 32.28 ( $SD = 12.18$ ). The Spanish sample was aged between 18 and 54 years, with a mean age of 25.34 ( $SD = 7.57$ ). For the Spanish sample, 87.40 % identified themselves as heterosexual (5.5% as homosexual and 3.8% as bisexual), whereas this value for the Cuban sample was 93.8 % (5.5% as homosexual and 3.8% as bisexual).

### Procedure and Design

We conducted an incidental sampling procedure in Granada (Spain) and in Habana (Cuba). Two trained researchers from each country went to crowded areas and asked the participants if they wanted to collaborate. They informed the participants that they would remain anonymous and that all the responses would be confidential.

### *Instruments*

We constructed a questionnaire that included the following measures:

*Socio-demographic characteristics:* We obtained data related to gender, age, and sexual orientation from the participants.

- *Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS)* (Lozano et al., 2015). This consists of 15 items that evaluate interpersonal sexual objectification and includes two dimensions: body evaluation (11 items) (e.g. How frequently have you felt that someone was directly looking at your body?) and unwanted explicit sexual approaches (4 items) (e.g. How frequently has someone touched you against your will?). The questionnaire had a Likert response format with 5 alternatives ranging between 1 (Never) and 5 (Almost always). The Cronbach alpha for the total scale was .86 both for the Cuban and the Spanish samples. Regarding the body evaluation dimension, the scale showed an alpha of Cronbach coefficient of .84 for the Spanish sample and .86 for the Cuban sample. The unwanted explicit sexual approaches dimension showed a Cronbach alpha value of .76 for the Spanish sample and .63 for the Cuban sample.

- *Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS)* (Liss et al., 2011). To adapt it to Spanish, the original scale was translated and back-translated. It contains 8 items evaluating enjoyment of sexualization in an interpersonal context (e.g., “I like to feel sexy”). The answer format is a Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). This scale showed a Cronbach alpha of .86 for the Spanish sample and .84 for the Cuban sample.

- *Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)* (Expósito et al., 1998). This consists of 22 items with a Likert response scale ranging from 0 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree). For the current study we evaluated benevolent sexism by including 11 items (e.g. “Women should be loved and protected by men”). This scale showed a Cronbach alpha of .86 for the Spanish sample and .93 for the Cuban sample.

- *Social Physical Anxiety Scale (SPAS)* (Hart, Leary, & Rejeski, 1989). This scale was adapted to the Spanish language using translation and backward translation. It consists of 12 items, with 5 Likert response scale options that show the level of agreement with the item (from 1 – totally agree, to 5 – totally disagree). The scores for this scale could range between 12 and 60 points. For this study we obtained a Cronbach alpha of .75 for the Spanish sample and .86 for the Cuban sample.

- *Body Surveillance*: This scale is a self-reporting questionnaire including 8 items that evaluate the degree of body self-monitoring. This scale is part of the OBCS (Objectifies Body Consciousness Scale) (McKinley & Hyde, 1996) and the Spanish version of the scale was employed here (Moya-Garofano, Megias, Rodriguez-Bailon y Moya, in press). This questionnaire includes a Likert response scale ranging from 1 to 7 including a non-applicable option. The internal consistency of the scale for this study showed a Cronbach alpha of .58 for the Spanish sample and .71 for the Cuban sample.

- *The Silencing the Self Scale (STSS)* (Jack & Dill, 1992). This questionnaire was adapted to the Spanish language for the current study using the back translation method. It included 31 items (e.g. “I tend to judge myself for how I think other people see me”, “I don’t speak about my feelings in an intimate relationship when I know they are going to cause disagreement”, “ I think that it is more difficult be myself when I am in a close relationship than when I am on my own”). It also employed a Likert response scale ranging from 1 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree). The internal consistency for this scale in the study yielded a Cronbach alpha of .81 for the Spanish sample and .88 for the Cuban sample, similar to that obtained by Hurst and Beesley (2012).

## Results

### Preliminary Results

In order to test Hypothesis 1 and to analyse if there were any differences between the participants on their scores for the variables interpersonal sexual objectification experiences, ideological variables, as well as consequences of sexual objectification, we ran a Student's t-test for independent samples.

**Table 1.** Mean scores of the participants from Cuba and Spain for the variables.

	<i>Spain</i>		<i>Cuba</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1. ISOS	2.25	0.47	2.66	0.53	-7.36	<.001
2. Body Evaluation	2.55	0.53	3.06	0.62	-7.85	<.001
3. Unwanted Sexual Advances	1.41	0.51	1.57	0.53	-2.75	.01
4. BS	1.64	1.00	2.59	1.24	-7.50	<.001
5. ESS	3.36	0.99	4.12	1.10	-6.45	<.001
6. SPAS	2.88	0.61	3.12	0.76	-3.04	.003
8. Surveillance	34.17	8.31	35.61	8.13	-1.53	.13
9. Self-silencing	73.40	15.88	73.68	17.07	-1.42	.89

**Note:** ISOS: Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale; BS: Benevolent sexism; SPAS: Social Appearance Anxiety Scale; ESS: Enjoyment of Sexualisation Scale.

Table 1 displays the results of the Student's t-test. This analysis yielded significant differences between both samples for almost all the variables studied. The Cuban participants showed higher scores on benevolent sexism [ $t(311) = -7.50, p < .001$ ], on enjoyment of sexualisation (ESS) [ $t(317) = -6.45, p < .001$ ], on appearance anxiety (SPAS) [ $t(298) = -3.04, p = .003$ ], and on the number of sexual objectification experiences reported in daily life (ISOS) both in the subtle version (body evaluation) [ $t(317) = -7.85, p < .001$ ] and in unwanted explicit sexual advances [ $t(317) = -2.75, p = .006$ ]. However, we did not find any significant differences in body surveillance [ $t(303) = -1.53, p = .13$ ], or self-silencing [ $t(295) = -0.14, p = .89$ ], in relation to the country of origin.

In addition, Table 2 shows that reporting a higher number of sexual objectification experiences over the previous 12 months was related to both higher levels of appearance anxiety ( $r = .24, p = .002$ ) and a higher internalisation of the sexual objectification expressed by body surveillance scores ( $r = .41, p = .001$ ) but only for the Cuban participants. The sexual objectification experiences are significantly and positively related to the enjoyment of sexualisation both for Spanish and Cuban participants (Spain:  $r = .22, p = .006$  and Cuba:  $r = .29, p < .001$ ).

**Table 2.** Bivariate correlations between the different variables depending on the country of residence.

	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Cuba</i>
1. ISOS	---	---												
2. Body evaluation	.97***	.97***	---	---										
3. Unwanted Sexual advances	.68***	.63***	.47***	.43***	--	---								
4. BS	.16*	.35***	.18*	.32***	.04	.29***	--	--						
5. ESS	.22**	.29***	.27***	.31***	-.03	.08	.23**	.26***	--	--				
6. SPAS	.07	.24**	.07	.26**	.05	.08	.07	.36***	.01	-.06	---	---		
7. Surveillance	-.08	.41***	-.01	.46***	-.28**	.04	.15	.39***	.32***	.28***	.15	.28***	---	---
8. Self-silencing	.18*	.27***	.15	.23**	.21*	.28***	.41***	.53***	.18*	.07	.18*	.40***	-.01	.15*

**Note:** ISOS: Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale; BS: Benevolent sexism; SPAS: Appearance anxiety Scale; ESS: Enjoyment of sexualisation Scale. \* $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

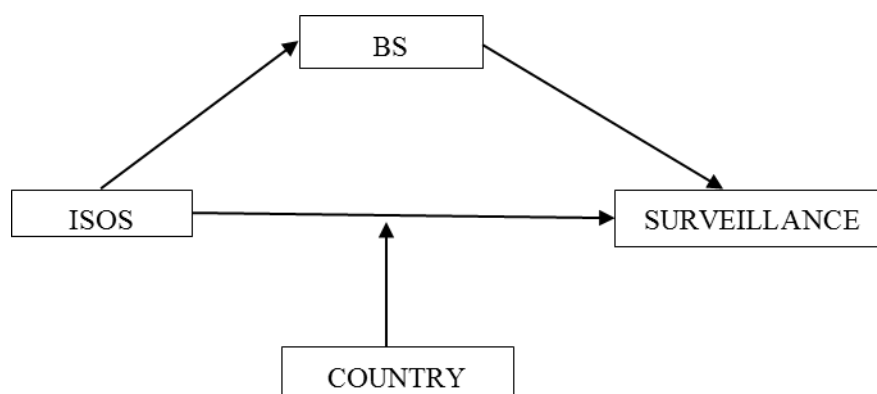
To test Hypothesis 2, we conducted a moderated mediation to test the effect of sexual objectification interaction in surveillance among both countries (Figure 2, Model 5, Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). We generated 95% bootstrap bias-corrected confidence intervals (Bc CIs) for the indirect effect conditioned by the participant's country on the basis of 5000 bootstrap samples. The results showed conditional direct effect of the country on the relationship between sexual objectification and (ISOS) and surveillance. Specifically, for participants from Cuba, high sexual objectification was associated with higher body surveillance ( $LLCI= 2.79$ ,  $ULCI= 6.95$ ), but the relationship between sexual objectification and body surveillance was not significant among participants from Spain ( $LLCI= -4.67$ ,  $ULCI= .76$ ) (See Table 3; Model 5, Hayes 2013). Lastly, we predicted that sexual objectification experiences would be related to surveillance through benevolent sexist ideology. In line with our expectations, the results demonstrated that the indirect effect of sexual objectification on body surveillance through benevolent sexism was significant ( $LLCI = .78$ ,  $ULCI = 2.35$ ), this supports Hypothesis 2.

**Table 3.** Regression coefficient, typical errors, and information about the model for moderated mediation described in Figure 1.

Antecedent	Benevolent sexism				Surveillance			
	Coeff.	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Coeff.	SE	LLCI	ULCI
<b>Constant</b>	-0.02	0.31	-0.62	0.58	35.87	3.05	29.87	41.87
<b>ISOS</b>	0.87	0.12	0.63	1.12	-1.96	1.38	-4.67	0.76
<b>BS</b>	--	--	--	--	1.66	0.39	0.89	2.44
<b>Country</b>	--	--	--	--	-17.53	3.98	-25.35	-9.70
<b>ISOS x Country</b>	--	--	--	--	6.82	1.70	3.48	10.17
	$F(1, 303) = 49.51, p < .001$ $R^2 = .15$				$F(4, 300) = 15.53, p < .001$ $R^2 = .14$			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Direct effects</b>		Boot SE		Boot LLCI		Boot ULC	
Spain	-1.96		1.38		-4.67		.76	
<b>Cuba</b>	<b>4.87</b>		<b>1.06</b>		<b>2.79</b>		<b>6.95</b>	

**Note:** The regression coefficients not standardised are presented in Table 3. Bootstrap size: 5000. The indirect effect is significant where the intervals of confidence do not have zero value. LLCI: level lower than 95% of the interval of confidence for bootstrap percentile. SE: Standard error; ULCI: Level higher than 95% of the interval of confidence in bootstrap percentile. ISOS: Interpersonal Sexual Objectification; BS: Benevolent sexism.





**Note:** BS: Benevolent sexism; ISOS: Interpersonal objectification.

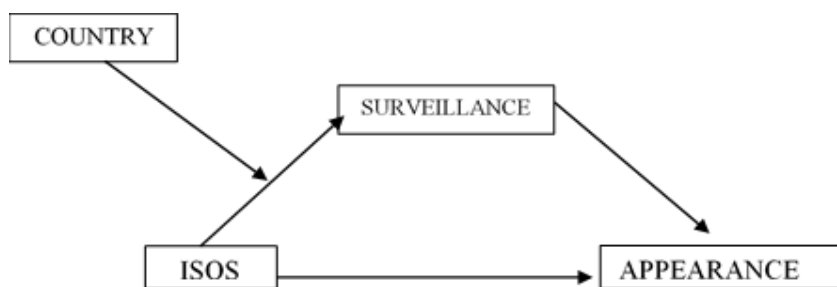
**Figure 2.** The mediating role of benevolent sexism in the relationship between sexual objectification and body surveillance in women Cuban women.

To test Hypothesis 3, we also used Model 7 of the PROCESS tool (Hayes, 2013), which allowed us to test the indirect effect of sexual objectification on appearance anxiety through benevolent sexism moderated by country (Figure 3). We generated 95% bootstrap for the indirect effect conditioned by the participant's country on the basis of 5,000 bootstrap samples. The results are presented in Table 4. Our analysis revealed a conditional indirect effect of sexual objectification on appearance anxiety through body surveillance was significant among women from Cuba ( $LLCI = 0.03$ ,  $ULCI = 0.19$ ) but not those from Spain ( $LLCI = -0.08$ ,  $ULCI = 0.01$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 3.

**Table 4.** Regression coefficient, typical errors, and information about the model for moderated mediation described in Figure 2.

Antecedents	Surveillance				Appearance anxiety			
	Coeff.	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Coeff.	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	37.90	2.95	32.10	43.71	1.82	0.24	1.35	2.30
ISOS	-1.52	1.36	-4.19	1.14	0.24	0.08	0.09	0.39
Surveillance	--	--	--	--	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03
País	-18.84	4.11	-26.92	-10.76				
ISOS x País	7.74	1.73	4.33	11.15				
	$F(3, 295) = 11.53, p < .001$ $R^2 = .10$				$F(2, 296) = 13.22, p < .001$ $R^2 = .09$			
Country	Indirect effects		Boot SE		Boot LLCI		Boot ULC	
Spain	-0.03		0.02		-0.08		0.01	
Cuba	<b>0.11</b>		<b>0.04</b>		<b>0.03</b>		<b>0.19</b>	

**Note:** ISOS: Interpersonal objectification.



**Note:** ISOS: Interpersonal objectification.

**Figure 3.** The mediating role of body surveillance in the relationship between sexual objectification and appearance anxiety in the Cuban sample.

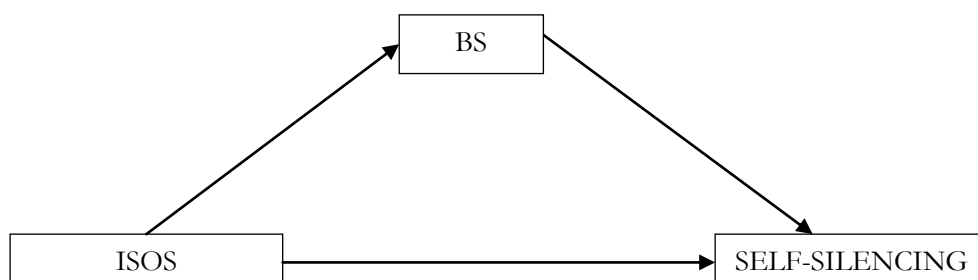
To test our Hypothesis 4a, which predicted a higher level of sexual objectification in self-silencing for the Cuban sample than for the Spanish sample, we used model 1 of the PROCESS software described by Hayes (2013). We generated a confidence interval of 95% over the base of the *bootstrapping* method, with 5000 repetitions for the indirect effect conditioned by the country of origin of the participant. These values include zero in the confidence interval ( $LLCI = -5.40$ ,  $ULCI = 10.09$ ), therefore there was no interaction between the sexual objectification experiences and the country of origin.

To verify the modulating role of benevolent sexism in the relationship between body sexual objectification and self-silencing (Hypothesis 4b), the recommendations of MacKinnon et al. (2004) were followed, and the same procedure used (Hayes, 2013; Model 4). The analyses showed (see Table 5). We generated a confidence interval of 95% over the base of the *bootstrapping* method, with 5000 repetitions for the indirect effect conditioned by the country of origin of the participant. Since these values do not include zero in the confidence interval ( $LLCI = 3.15$ ,  $ULCI = 7.20$ ), the findings suggest that the indirect effect of benevolent sexism was significant, indicating a mediation by benevolent sexism in the relationship between body evaluation and self-silencing (Figure 4).

**Table 5.** Regression coefficient, typical errors, and information about the model for mediation described in Figure 3.

Antecedents	Consequent				Consequent		
	M (Benevolent sexism)				Y (Self-silencing)		
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	-0.01	.32	.972	i	57.26	4.30	<.001
X (ISOS)	.87	.13	<.001	C	1.69	1.72	.33
M(Benevolent sexism)	--	--	--	b <sub>1</sub>	5.66	.78	<.001
	R <sup>2</sup> = .15				R <sup>2</sup> = .20		
	F(1, 295)= 46.53, <i>p</i> < .001				F(2, 294)= 29.34, <i>p</i> < .001		

**Note:** ISOS: Interpersonal objectification.



*Note:* ISOS: Interpersonal objectification.

**Figure 4.** The mediating role of sexist ideology in the relationship between sexual objectification and Self-silencing.

## Discussion

To our knowledge, this study is the first of its kind to compare the phenomenon of sexual objectification between Latin and European women by collecting data directly from women that are residents in their countries of origin, rather than gathering data from immigrant women. The main aim of this study was to explore the various consequences of sexual objectification for the mental and social health of women in both Spain and Cuba. We also analysed the role played by culture in the sexual objectification phenomenon (Loughnan et al., 2015). The results of this study show some differences in the sexual objectification phenomenon between Spain and Cuba. In particular, our results demonstrate that in Cuba, women reported a higher prevalence of sexual objectification, both for body evaluation and unwanted explicit sexual advances. Further, Cuban women reported more enjoyment of experiences in which their bodies are sexualised. As in previous studies, in terms of both the internalisation of sexual objectification (Loughnan et al., 2015) and the adherence to sexist ideology (Glick et al., 2000; Valor-Segura et al., 2014), culture plays an important role, that is, the levels of body surveillance and benevolent sexism are higher in Cuba than in Spain.

Regarding the consequences of sexual objectification for a woman's mental health, the authors of Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) suggested that self-objectification is the first consequence of sexual objectification. This self-objectification refers to higher body surveillance that is also associated with higher levels of anxiety in women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Moradi & Huang, 2008). The results of this study confirm the relationship described in Objectification Theory, that is, a positive relationship between sexual objectification and body surveillance, but only for women in Cuba.

The lack of a link between sexual objectification experiences and body surveillance in Spain was also found by Engeln-Maddox, Miller and Doyle (2011) in a study using a homosexual sample. Further, the surprising negative relationship between unwanted explicit sexual advances and the internalisation of sexual objectification in Spain is similar to the results found by Miles-McLean et al. (2014) in a study with women that had been exposed to traumatic experiences. Although these results appear to run counter to objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), they could be explained in terms of a low sexist ideology of the participants from Spain. Given the relevant role of sexist ideology in the internalisation of sexual objectification (Calogero & Jost, 2011), low levels of benevolent sexism could prevent women from internalising sexual objectification experiences that occur in daily life. Adherence to a sexist ideology is also the variable that best explains the positive relationship between the number of sexual objectification experiences and internalisation of sexual objectification for the Cuban sample.

Similarly, our results show that reporting a higher number of sexual objectification experiences is related to higher appearance anxiety due to the increase of body surveillance shown by Cuban women. However, this mediational effect was not observed for Spanish women. This difference could be due to the appearance anxiety that Cuban women suffer as a consequence of sexual objectification experiences, which could be explained in terms of their concern about how and when their body would be evaluated

(Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), given that appearance anxiety is higher in Cuba than in Spain (Frederick et al., 2007).

Further, whilst in Cuba women show significantly greater enjoyment of their sexualisation than women in Spain, in both countries enjoying sexualisation is related to being exposed to and internalising a higher number of sexual objectification experiences. This could be due to the possibility that enjoyment of sexualisation prevents women from confronting objectification experiences given that they perceive them to be something positive (Liss et al., 2011). Further, they internalise those experiences and monitor their appearance more in order to be socially accepted.

Alternatively, the consequences of sexual objectification at an interpersonal level are similar in both countries, that is, reporting a higher number of sexual objectification experiences is positively and directly related to self-censorship of thoughts and feelings. Further, there were no significant differences between the countries in terms of self-silencing. Although this result is contrary to what we expected, it is consistent with previous studies that have failed to find differences in self-silencing between Hispanic women and Caucasian women (Gratch et al., 1995). This could be due to the fact that there is gender inequality in both countries, and that cultural factors determine the degree of self-silencing (Jack & Dill, 1992). Additionally, the results show that the relationship between being a target of sexual objectification and the tendency to censor one's own thoughts and feelings is modulated by a benevolent sexist ideology.

Taken together, the results of this comparative study show that culture is a key factor for understanding the impact of the sexual objectification phenomenon in women (Loughnan et al., 2015). Thus, in countries with a stronger sexist ideology (Glick et al., 2000) where women have internalised the benefits of benevolent sexism, the experiences of sexual objectification are related to a higher incidence of body surveillance, which leads to higher appearance anxiety. However, no differences were found between sexual objectification experiences and the degree to which women silence their thoughts and feelings, this pattern of results being similar in both Cuba and Spain. A deeper analysis of the social impact (work, relationships, etc.) of sexual objectification on women should be the focus of future research. For instance, it would be interesting to study possible differences between countries in terms of the degree to which women intervene in those social interactions where they are sexually objectified, by, for instance, measuring their tendency to verbally increase their social presence in relation to men (Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2010).

### **Limitations**

Although both samples come from the general population and were chosen using similar procedures, we found some differences between them that could have affected the results. In particular, the Spanish sample had a mean age of 25 years, whereas the women from Cuba had a mean age of 32.

This difference between the samples could have an effect on the consequences of sexual objectification experiences (McKinley, 2011). Further, we found differences in the level of education of the participants between the two samples. Whereas in Spain 67 % of the participants reported having studied at a university, in Cuba less than 29 % reported having had a university education. Although it is unclear as to whether educational level could affect the consequences of sexual objectification experiences in these women, it is important to be aware of this limitation in the present study.

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*Chapter 6:*

**INTERPERSONAL SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION EXPERIENCES:  
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING CONSEQUENCES  
FOR WOMEN**



### **Abstract**

Sexual objectification as a form of sexist discrimination accounts for the higher prevalence of psychological problems among women. More specifically, sexual objectification manifests itself in different ways with different intensities, in turn affecting women's psychological wellbeing differently. On the one hand, experiences of body evaluation are more subtle and work by perpetuating sexist attitudes among women themselves. On the other, more explicit forms of sexual objectification (unwanted explicit sexual advances) are linked to higher levels of anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem. The first study, on a sample of 343 Spanish women, aims to analyse the consequences of different forms of sexual objectification on women's psychological wellbeing, and the effect of sexism and enjoyment of objectification on these consequences. The second study, on a sample of 144 Spanish women, focuses on analysing the ideological variables which have an effect on response to acts of sexist discrimination. Both studies reveal the significance of the more subtle experiences of sexual objectification as a mechanism which plays a part in keeping women in a subordinate position, where they end up feeling that this process is positive or pleasing.

Although we tend to think that sexist discrimination is a thing of the past, empirical evidence shows that women today continue to be the object of constant discrimination on a daily basis (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). One of the most widespread forms of discrimination against women is treating them as mere sexual objects to be looked at and evaluated on the basis of their physical appearance, ignoring their needs and wishes (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It is a discriminatory interaction and a clear example of gender inequality when, in an interpersonal context, the interaction between a man and a woman is based on treating her as a sexual object, even going so far as to consider her body as the possession of the observer (Calogero, 2013).

These types of discriminatory interactions are termed *sexual objectification experiences*, and are understood as the act of separating the sexual parts from the rest of the woman's body and personality, turning her into a tool and reducing her to these sexual parts (Bartky, 1990). Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) posit the Objectification Theory as the theory framework for understanding how gender socialization and sexual objectification experiences affect women's physical, psychological and social wellbeing, establishing as pivotal in this theory the huge presence of sexual objectification events in women's everyday lives. According to this theory, there are different forms of sexual objectification which can be classified along a continuum, ranging from the more subtle (body evaluation) to the more extreme (unwanted explicit sexual advances) (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). *Body evaluation* is the action of observing and analysing a woman's body or body parts, whilst *unwanted explicit sexual advances* are sexual approaches made against a woman's wishes (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007).

The distinction between both forms of sexual objectification is extremely relevant from both theoretical and applied perspectives. Unwanted explicit sexual advances are closely linked to certain types of sexual harassment (e.g., unwanted sexual attention, sexual assault or sexual coercion) described in the literature, highly prevalent in society (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009) and with serious psychological consequences on the women who suffer them (Flack et al., 2015). And furthermore, continuous female body evaluation leading to assessment of women purely on the basis of their physical appearance makes it difficult for women to receive fair and equal treatment, since a different set of capabilities and skills are taken into account for women than for men (Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2011). The consequences of sexual objectification can be grouped into the ideological (e.g., benevolent sexism and enjoyment of sexualization), which are associated with women's legitimizing or rejecting these types of conduct and which affect interpersonal relationships; and the psychological (e.g., anxiety and self-esteem) which clearly have an effect on women's wellbeing.

**Key words:** sexual objectification, enjoyment of sexualization, benevolent sexism, selfsilencing, sexuality.

## Ideological Correlates of Sexual Objectification: Benevolent Sexism and Enjoyment of Sexualization

Sexist ideology is closely linked to the phenomenon of sexual objectification (Riemer, Chaudoir, & Earnshaw, 2014). Sexism is understood as an attitude towards persons formed on the basis of their biological sex (Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998). The importance of the sexist ideology is due to the link between negative attitudes toward women and violence against them (Beck, Boys, Rose, & Beck, 2012). With regard to sexism, a theory of particular relevance is the *Theory of Ambivalent Sexism* (Glick & Fiske, 1996), which states that ambivalence in prejudice against women is due to positive feelings towards women coexisting with hostile dislike of women. Ambivalent sexism is therefore the combination of the more traditional type of sexism (hostile sexism) and sexism with a markedly positive bent (benevolent sexism; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism essentially refers to the traditional sexism. However, benevolent sexism is described as a set of interrelated attitudes towards women that are sexist in that they regard women in a stereotypical way, yet with a tone of positive affect (for the perceiver). Benevolent sexism tends to inspire in the perceiver behaviors which are typically categorized as prosocial (e.g., help) or the quest for intimacy (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

Women's responses toward a male perpetrator depend on the sexist ideology attributed to him (Durán, Moya, & Megías, 2014) and on their own sexist ideology assimilation. That women themselves subscribe to sexist ideology can be explained by the social rewards benevolent sexism offers to women who conform to socially expected norms and who do not pose a threat to the male status quo (Glick & Fiske, 1996). One of the principal areas in which women are rewarded is in relation to physical appearance; so physical attractiveness becomes a tool which women can use to obtain certain social advantages (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991). The body evaluation inherent in sexual objectification experiences has a bearing on women's preoccupation with how they look. This preoccupation is associated with seeking social rewards which are fostered by sexist ideology. Specifically, Franzoi (2001) demonstrates the existence of the link between stronger subscription to sexist ideology and greater preoccupation with appearance.

The fact that women receive social rewards for their physical appearance means that in certain situations, some women enjoy sexual objectification experiences and do not perceive them as something negative (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011). Enjoyment of sexualization occurs when a woman finds sexual attention based on her appearance to be pleasing. There is empirical evidence of the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and more benevolent sexist ideology (Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2012), which results in women who enjoy sexual self-objectification being more influenced by the rewards of benevolent sexism.

### **Consequences on Psychological Wellbeing: Higher Levels of Anxiety and Lower Levels of Self-esteem**

Regarding the psychological consequences, repeated exposure to sexual objectification experiences is linked to low self-esteem and high levels of anxiety which affect women's psychological wellbeing (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). Miles-McLean et al. (2015) describe the link between sexual objectification experiences and trauma symptoms.

The impact of sexual objectification experiences on self-esteem can depend on the extremeness of such experiences (Moffitt & Szymanski, 2011). More subtle experiences of objectification, the kind which evaluate women's bodies and physical attractiveness could, in the short term, increase the self-esteem of women who assess objectification experiences more positively, although in the long term these levels of self-esteem will not be maintained (Breines, Crocker, & García, 2008). By contrast, more extreme experiences of sexual objectification such as unwanted explicit sexual advances can be invasive enough to have a direct impact on women's self-esteem, damaging them deeply and permanently (Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer, & Kilmartin, 2001).

Exposure to acts of sexual objectification is also linked to higher levels of anxiety (Lozano, Valor-Segura, Sáez, & Expósito, 2015). More extreme experiences of sexual objectification, such as unwanted explicit sexual advances, could increase the anxiety felt by the woman concerned as she perceives it as a threat to her safety (Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2011). Similarly, Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) describe how the continuous exposure to sexual objectification to which women are subjected causes them to exercise greater body monitoring, with the resultant increase in anxiety levels (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998).

### **Response to Sexual Objectification Experiences: Self-silencing**

Body evaluation refers to the evaluation of a woman's physique that can lead her to internalise this external evaluation and make it her own, which has come to be termed *self-objectification* (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It triggers a process of self-monitoring which leads to the comparison of the result of this evaluation with a beauty canon which is sometimes unattainable. This continuous comparison with a culturally prescribed beauty norm is a key element for understanding why some women do not speak out against acts of sexist discrimination such as objectification (Jack, 2011). Women who, as a consequence of these comparisons, feel inferior, tend to silence their feelings and suffer increased levels of depression (Flett, Besser, Hewitt, & Davis, 2007), associated with these women's lower confrontational response to acts of sexist discrimination. By contrast, women who do conform to social norms and receive the social rewards offered for their physical appearance enjoy experiences of sexual objectification, and since they do not perceive them as something negative (Liss et al., 2011), nor do they confront the act of sexist discrimination of which they are the object.



Although it is healthier actively to confront any act of discrimination, the empirical evidence suggests that many women do not object to the sexist incidents they face almost every day of their lives (Swim, Eysell, Murdoch, & Ferguson, 2010). The Relational-Cultural Theory set out by Miller (1986a) provides the theory framework for explaining why women censure their thoughts and feelings when faced with an act of sexist discrimination. Miller (1986b) claims that humans develop through establishing and maintaining social relationships. During their socialization process, women in particular learn the importance of maintaining relationships with men and so, when faced with negative or discriminatory situations, they deploy tactics termed “disconnection” strategies in order to preserve these relationships (Jordan, 2010).

Self-silencing is one such disconnection strategy used to maintain relationships which are important for people (Jack, 1999). Self-silencing of thoughts and feelings represents the degree to which a person keeps their thoughts and opinions about something to themselves, instead of expressing their views. Individual opinion is self-censored in the interest of maintaining the relationship (Jack, 1991). The difference in gender socialization plays an important role in self-silencing when facing acts of sexual discrimination; women are socialized to adapt their behaviour to what is expected of them and keep their thoughts, feelings and opinions to themselves in order to nurture and maintain their relationships with men (Jack, 2011).

On the basis of the above considerations, sexual objectification interactions are scenarios which cause ambivalent feelings among women, since although these types of behaviour constitute sexist discrimination, they also provide social advantages and turn sexist acts which should be repulsive into something pleasing (Liss et al., 2011). Enjoyment of how men sexualize women's bodies could determine how women respond to acts of sexual objectification.

As it has been said above, forms of sexual objectification vary in their intensity (Kozee et al., 2007) and predictably in their impact on women's psychological wellbeing. By means of two studies, this research carries out differential analysis of different types of sexual objectification experiences in order to determine the psychological consequences of different forms of sexual objectification more exhaustively, analysing the impact of sexist ideology on these consequences and determining the factors which have an effect on confronting situations of sexist discrimination. The aim of the first study is to analyse the consequences of different forms of sexual objectification on psychological wellbeing among women (anxiety and self-esteem) and the effect of sexist ideology and enjoyment of sexualization on these consequences. The second study focuses on the effect of benevolent sexist ideology and enjoyment of sexualization on women's response to more subtle acts of sexist discrimination (experiences of body evaluation).

## Study 1

The first hypothesis predicts that there will be a positive relationship between unwanted explicit sexual advances and higher anxiety, and a negative relationship with self-esteem (Hypothesis 1). By contrast, the second hypothesis predicts that among women who subscribe to benevolent sexism, there will be a negative relationship between body evaluation and anxiety levels (Hypothesis 2). The third hypothesis predicts that among women who enjoy sexualization, there will be a positive relationship between reporting more experiences of sexual objectification and higher levels of self-esteem (Hypothesis 3).

### Method

#### Participants

The sample comprises a total of 343 women recruited from the general population, with ages ranging from 18 to 62 years old and a mean age of 24.17 years old ( $SD = 7.99$ ). Inclusion criteria for the final sample were being Spanish and of heterosexual orientation. Two point three percent (2.3%) of the participants have a basic education, 5.8% have secondary or vocational training, 4.1% graduated from high school, and 87.2% have college degrees, additionally 0.3% of the participants reported have not basic education, other 0.3% of the participants did not answer this question. The distribution of the sample by age showed that, 77.6 % of the participants are between 18 and 24 years old, 12.2% are between 25 and 34, 5.5% are between 35 and 46 years old, and the remaining 4.7% are older.

#### Procedure and Design

Participants were recruited by means of convenience sampling carried out in the city of Granada (Spain). Two previously trained researchers asked participants to take part, informing them that their replies would be kept anonymous and guaranteeing their confidentiality. The study design is correlational, as per the classification set out by Montero and León (2007).

#### Instruments

A questionnaire was constructed and included the following measures:

*Socio demographic characteristics.* Data were collected on participant sex, age, nationality and sexual orientation.

*Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS)* (Lozano et al., 2015). This contains 15 items which evaluate interpersonal sexual objectification and comprises two dimensions: *body evaluation* (11 items) (e.g., “How often have you felt that someone is staring at your body?”) and *unwanted explicit sexual advances* (4 items) (e.g., “How often have you been groped?”). The answer format is a Likert scale of 5 answer options

ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). The scale has good reliability in this sample, with a Cronbach's alpha of .87 and .76 for the sub-scales of body evaluation and unwanted explicit sexual advances, respectively.

*Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS)* (Liss et al., 2011). To adapt it to Spanish, the original scale was translated and back-translated. It contains 8 items evaluating enjoyment of sexualization in an interpersonal context (e.g., “I like to feel sexy”). The answer format is a Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). The internal consistency in this sample was .86, similar to that obtained by Liss et al., (2011) which was .87.

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)* (Rosenberg, 1965). This is a self-esteem measure with 10 items evaluating a person's degree of satisfaction with themselves (e.g., “I am able to do things as well as anybody else”). The answer format is a Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 4 (totally agree). Internal consistency of the original scale is between .76 and .87, showing a Cronbach's alpha coefficient in this study of .83.

*State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)* (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1982). In accordance with the research objectives, the state-trait anxiety scale from this questionnaire was used. The scale has 20 items and a 4-point Likert answer scale (e.g., “I feel uneasy”) and an internal consistency for the sample of .91.

*Ambivalent Sexism Inventory* (Expósito et al., 1998). This has 22 items and a Likert answer format ranging from 0 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). This study used the benevolent sexism sub-scale containing 11 items (e.g., “women must be loved and protected by men”). In this study, the benevolent sexism sub-scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86.

## Results

### Preliminary results

As can be observed in Table 1, scores for the body evaluation dimension correlated positively with benevolent sexist ideology ( $r = .16, p = .003$ ) and enjoyment of sexualization ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ), whilst more extreme experiences of objectification related positively with levels of anxiety ( $r = .13, p = .018$ ) and greater enjoyment of sexualization ( $r = .20, p < .001$ ).

**Table 1.** Mean scores, standard deviation and correlations between variables (Study 1).

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>1. Body evaluation</b>	2.49	0.57	1-5	--				
<b>2. Unwanted sexual advances</b>	1.34	0.47	1-5	.47***	--			
<b>3. Enjoyment of sexualization</b>	3.35	0.99	1-7	.42***	.20***	--		
<b>4. Benevolent sexism</b>	1.41	0.91	0-5	.16**	.06	.26***	--	
<b>5. Self-esteem</b>	32,78	4.72	10-40	.07	-.07	.03	.11*	--
<b>6. Anxiety</b>	16,84	9.37	0-60	-.02	.13*	.07	.14**	-.50***

Note: \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$

### The effect of sexual objectification, enjoyment of sexualization and benevolent sexism on psychological consequences (anxiety and self-esteem)

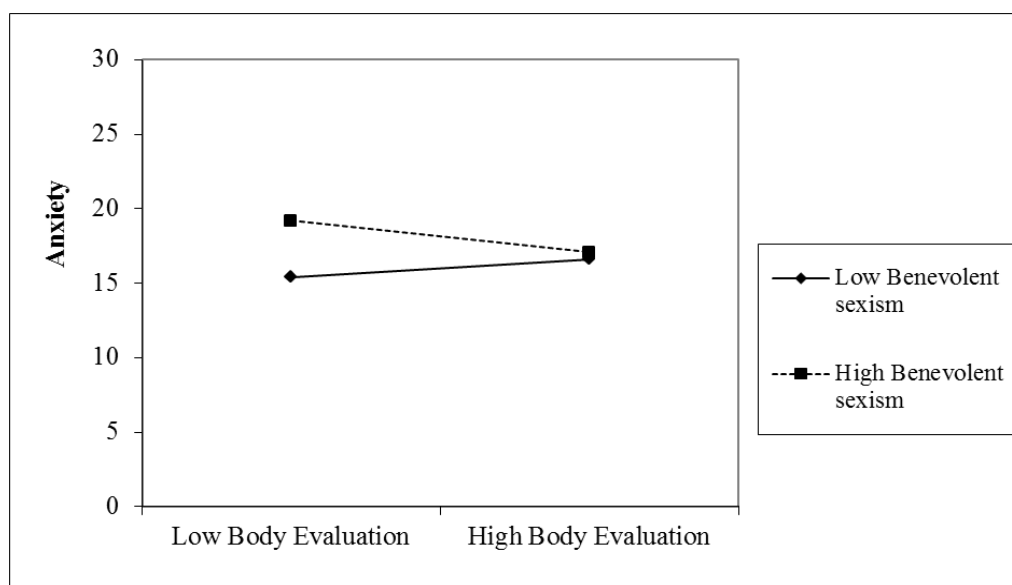
Independent regression analyses were performed in order to analyse the effect of different types of sexual objectification experiences (body evaluation and unwanted explicit sexual advances) on women's wellbeing (anxiety and self-esteem). The results revealed that more extreme experiences of sexual objectification (unwanted explicit sexual advances) predicted the level of anxiety felt by women ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p = .02$ ), although the negative impact that sexual advances had on self-esteem was not significant ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $p = .20$ ). From this we might conclude that the first hypothesis is partially fulfilled.

In order to test the second hypothesis regarding the effect of benevolent sexism and body evaluation on anxiety levels among women, hierarchical regression analysis was performed taking the anxiety score as criterion variable, and as predictor variables, benevolent sexism of participants and body evaluation were introduced in step 1 and the interaction between both variables in step 2. As can be observed in Table 2, results revealed the main effect of benevolent sexism on anxiety  $t(342) = 2.79$ ,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $p = .006$ , benevolent sexism thus predicting higher anxiety levels. In turn, results revealed significant interaction between body evaluation and benevolent sexism,  $t(342) = -3.12$ ,  $\beta = -.17$ ,  $p = .002$  (see Figure 1). That is to say, among participants who scored highly in benevolent sexism, reporting low body evaluation was related to higher levels of anxiety. Among women who do not subscribe strongly to benevolent sexist ideology, no relationship was observed between body evaluation and levels of anxiety.

**Table 2.** The effect of sexual objectification (body evaluation) and benevolent sexism on anxiety (Study 1).

	<i>Variables</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Step 1	ISOS(Eva)	-.05	-.875	.38
	Benevolent sexism	.15	2.79	.006
	$R^2$	.02		
Step 2	ISOS(Eva)X Benevolent sexism	-.17	-3.12	.002
	$\Delta R^2$	.05		

**Note:** ISOS (Eva) = Body evaluation

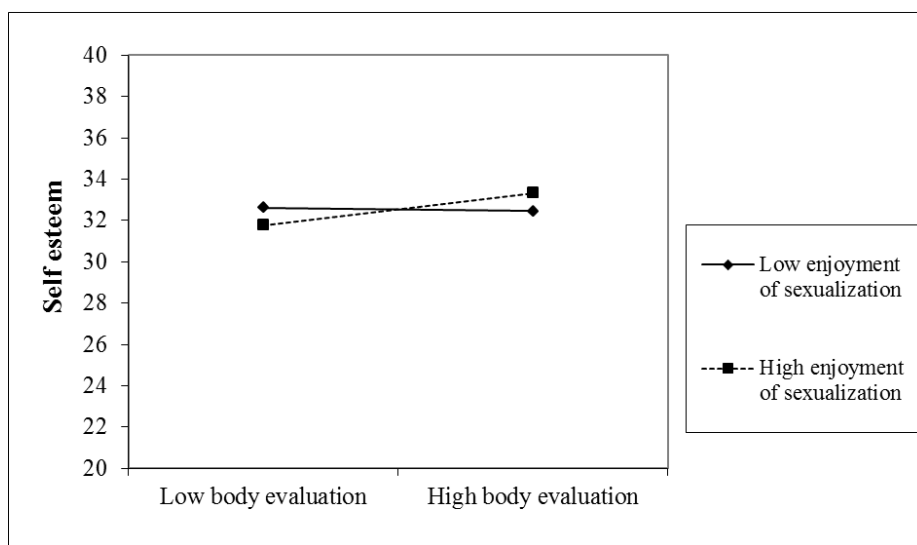
**Figure 1.** Interaction between body evaluation and benevolent sexism in anxiety (Study 1)

In order to test the prediction that the effect of enjoyment of sexualization and body evaluation on self-esteem levels (Hypothesis 3), hierarchical regression analysis was performed. Self-esteem was taken as criterion variable, and body evaluation and enjoyment of sexualization as predictor variables were introduced in step 1, and the interaction between body evaluation and enjoyment of sexualization in step 2. Results did not reveal main effects either of body evaluation or of enjoyment of sexualization on levels of self-esteem. However, as Figure 2 shows, there is a marginally significant interaction between body evaluation and enjoyment of sexualization in self-esteem  $t(342) = 1.86$ ,  $\beta = .10$ ,  $p = .06$  (see table 3). That is to say, only among women who scored highly in enjoyment of sexualization high body evaluation was related to higher self-esteem. Among women with low enjoyment of sexualization, this effect was not significant.

**Table 3.** The effect of sexual objectification (body evaluation) and enjoyment of sexualization on self-esteem (Study 1).

	<i>Variables</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Step 1	ISOS(Eva)	.07	1.23	.22
	Enjoyment of sexualisation	-.001	-.02	.99
	$R^2$	.005		
Step 2	ISOS(Eva)X Enjoyment of sexualisation	.10	1.86	.06
	$\Delta R^2$	.015		

**Note:** ISOS (Eva) = Body evaluation.

**Figure 2.** Interaction between enjoyment of sexualization and benevolent sexism in self-esteem (Study 1).

In sum, the results of this study showed the relationship between exposure to extreme sexual objectification (unwanted explicit sexual advances) and higher levels of anxiety. In spite of the negative impact that more extreme experiences of sexual objectification have on anxiety among women, the results revealed that women scored highly in benevolent sexism had higher levels of anxiety if their experiences of body evaluation were fewer. Moreover, among women who enjoy of their own sexualization, it was found that the more subtle experiences of sexual objectification had a positive impact on their self-esteem.

## Study 2

The results of the first study showed that experiences of sexual objectification had a psychological impact on women and that in the more subtle forms of sexual objectification, benevolent sexist ideology and enjoyment of sexualization played a more significant role.

The aim of the second study was therefore to verify the role that sexist ideology plays in women's response to sexist discrimination. Specifically, benevolent sexism was predicted to explain the link between women reporting a higher number of body evaluation experiences and more self-silencing when faced with sexist discrimination (Hypothesis 4). Benevolent sexism was also predicted to explain the link between enjoyment of sexualization and self-silencing when facing sexist discrimination (Hypothesis 5).

## Method

### Participants

The sample comprises a total of 144 women recruited from the general population, with ages ranging from 18 to 54 years old and a mean age of 25.14 years old ( $SD = 7.7$ ). Inclusion criteria for the final sample were being Spanish and of heterosexual orientation. One point four percent of the participants have a basic education, other 1.4% reported have not basic education, 20.2% have secondary or vocational training, 10.4% graduated from high school, and 66 % have college degrees. Additionally 1 woman did not answer their educational degree. Regarding the distribution of the sample by age, 62.5 % are between 18 and 24 years old, 26.4% are between 25 and 34 year old 5.6% are between 35 and 44 years old, and the remaining 4.9% are more than 45 years old. Additionally one woman did not answer their age.

### Procedure and Design

Participants were recruited by means of convenience sampling carried out in the city of Granada (Spain). A previously trained researcher went to the bus station and asked participants to take part, informing them that their replies would be kept anonymous and guaranteeing their confidentiality. The study design was correlational, as per the classification set out by Montero and León (2007).

### Instruments

*Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS)* (Lozano et al., 2015). It has been described in study 1, in this study reliability was demonstrated with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .83 and .77 for the subscales of body evaluation and unwanted explicit sexual advances, respectively.

*Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS)* (Liss et al., 2011). The internal consistency in this study was .86.

*Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)* (Expósito et al., 1998). The benevolent sexism dimension was used in this study and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86 was obtained.

*The Silencing the Self Scale (STSS)* (Jack & Dill, 1992). Adapted to Spanish for this study by translation and back-translation. It contains 31 items (e.g., “I tend to judge myself in terms of how I think other people see me” “I don't talk about my feelings in a relationship when I know they will cause disagreement”). The answer format was a Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). Internal consistency of the scale for this sample was .82, similar to that obtained by Hurst and Beesley (2013).

## Results

**Table 4.** Mean scores, standard deviation and correlations between variables (Study 2).

	Mean	SD	Range	1	2	3
1. Body evaluation	2.52	0.51	1-5	---		
2. Enjoyment of sexualization	3.39	1.00	1-7	.34***	---	
3. Benevolent sexism	1.71	1.00	0-5	.26**	.23**	---
4. Self-silencing	74.18	17.20	31-155	.16†	.20*	.44***

**Note:** †  $p = .07$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

As can be seen in Table 4, scores in body evaluation marginally correlated significantly and positively with self-silencing (STSS), so that participants who perceive more body evaluation in their everyday lives were more self-silencing as regards their thoughts and feelings ( $r = .16$ ,  $p = .07$ ). STSS scores also correlated positively and significantly with enjoyment of sexualization (ESS) ( $r = .20$ ,  $p = .02$ ), so that participants who enjoy sexualization were more self-silencing as regards their thoughts and feelings. Moreover, self-silencing (STSS) related positively and significantly to benevolent sexism ( $r = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ), so that the women who subscribe to a more benevolent sexist ideology were more prone to keep their thoughts to themselves in a sexualized context.



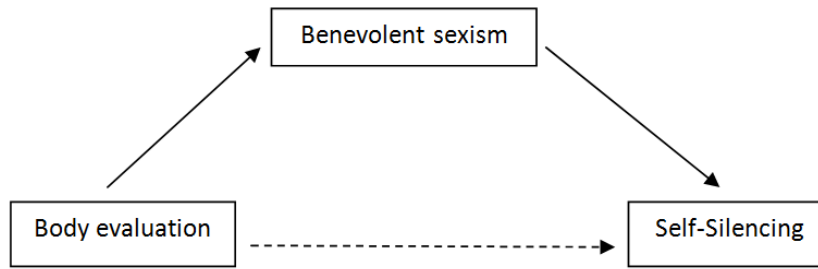
***Benevolent sexism as mediator in the relationship between body evaluation and self-silencing***

To verify the mediating effect of benevolent sexism in the relationship between body evaluation and self-silencing (Hypothesis 4), a mediation analysis was carried out using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). In the proposed model the effect of body evaluation (ISOS Eva) is the predictor variable (X), self-silencing is the criteria variable (Y) and benevolent sexism the mediator (M). Using the recommendations of MacKinnon, Lockwood and Williams (2004) non-parametric bootstrapping with 5000 repetitions to calculate the 95% confidence intervals (CI) was used. Bootstrapping determines whether the indirect effect of mediators differs significantly from zero. If the confidence interval of the indirect effect does not include 0, the indirect effect is significant and, therefore, mediation can be said to exist. To do this, the SPSS macro provided by Preacher and Hayes (2014) was used.

As can be seen in Table 5, the analysis showed that the indirect effect of the ISOS Eva on the self-silencing through benevolent sexism was 3.76, 95% CI = [1.02-7.47]. Since these intervals do not include zero, the findings suggested that the indirect effect of benevolent sexism was significant, indicating mediation of benevolent sexism in the relationship between body evaluation and self-silencing (Figure 3).

**Table 5.** Regression coefficients, standard errors and summary of information in mediation model in Figure 3 (Study 2).

Antecedent		Consequent						
		M <sub>1</sub> (Benevolent sexism)			Y (Self-silencing)			
		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
X (Body evaluation)	a <sub>1</sub>	0.53	0.17	.002	C	1.40	2.69	.60
M <sub>1</sub> (Benevolent sexism)	--	--	--	--	b <sub>1</sub>	7.16	1.493	<.001
Constant	iM <sub>1</sub>	0.40	0.42	.35	I	58.04	6.67	<.001
		R <sup>2</sup> =.08				R <sup>2</sup> =.20		
		F(1,121)=10.11, <i>p</i> =.002				F(2,120)= 14.61, <i>p</i> <.001		



**Figure 3.** The mediating effect of benevolent sexism in the relationship between body evaluation and self-silencing (Study 2)

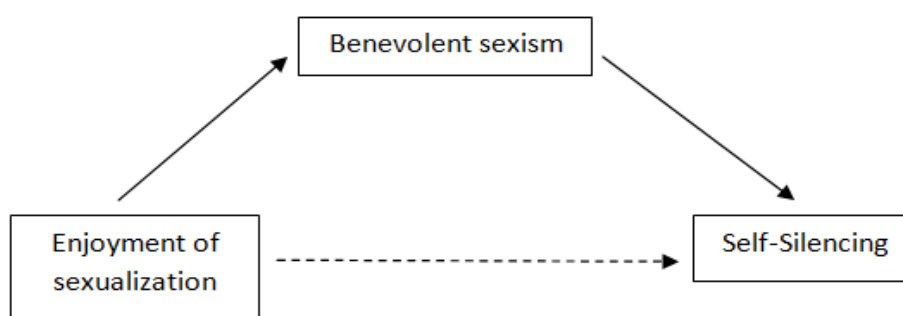
***Benevolent sexism as mediator in the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and self-silencing***

To verify the mediating effect of benevolent sexism in the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and self-silencing (Hypothesis 5), a mediation analysis was carried out using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). In the proposed model the effect of enjoyment of sexualization (ESS) is the predictor variable (X), self-silencing is the criteria variable (Y) and benevolent sexism the mediator (M). To analyse benevolent sexism mediation, the recommendations of MacKinnon et al. (2004) mentioned above were followed, and the same procedure used (Preacher & Hayes, 2014).

As can be observed in Table 6, the analysis showed that the indirect effect of the enjoyment of sexualization on the self-silencing through benevolent sexism was 1.40, 95% LC (0.39-2.93). Since these intervals do not include zero, the findings suggested that the indirect effect of benevolent sexism was significant, indicating mediation of benevolent sexism in the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and self-silencing (Figure 4).

**Table 6.** Regression coefficients, standard errors and summary of information in mediation model in Figure 4 (Study 2).

Antecedent		Consequent				Consequent		
		M <sub>1</sub> (Benevolent sexism)				Y (Self-silencing)		
		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
X (Enjoyment of sexualization)	a <sub>1</sub>	0.20	0.09	.022	C	1.89	1.35	.16
M <sub>1</sub> (Benevolent sexism)	--	--	--	--	b <sub>1</sub>	6.96	1.35	<.001
Constant	iM <sub>1</sub>	1.04	0.31	<.001	i	55.49	4.88	<.001
		R <sup>2</sup> =.04				R <sup>2</sup> =.21		
		F(1,121)= 5.39, <i>p</i> =.02				F(2,120)= 15.66, <i>p</i> <.001		



**Figure 4.** The mediating effect of benevolent sexism in the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and self-silencing (Study 2).

The results of Study 2 revealed the relationship between higher exposure to body evaluation, higher subscription to benevolent sexist ideology, higher enjoyment of sexualization and higher censure of themselves in sexist discrimination. The first mediation analysis showed how benevolent sexism totally mediated the relationship between more experiences of body evaluation and self-silencing when faced with sexist discrimination. The second mediation analysis showed how benevolent sexism also accounted for the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and women keeping their thoughts and feelings to themselves.

In line with these results, it is the more subtle forms of sexual objectification, which some women enjoy, that have a bearing on these women being less proactive and more self-silencing in their social relationships with men (Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2010), and this appears to be due to their subscribing more strongly to the benevolent sexist ideology which justifies and legitimizes gender inequality.

### General discussion

We live in a heteronormative society (e.g., a society which promotes heterosexuality as the “normal” or preferred orientation) where the practice of female body objectification is omnipresent (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). There are many forms of sexual objectification which differ in their extremity and in their repercussions on women's wellbeing.

The consequences on female psychological wellbeing of the most extreme forms of sexual objectification (unwanted explicit sexual advances) are similar to those of other forms of sexism (Klonoff, Landrine, & Campbell, 2000). By contrast, some women find discrimination in the guise of the more subtle forms of sexual objectification (female body evaluation) desirable in their interaction with men (Murnen & Smolak, 2012). The results of this study showed that although body evaluation is not linked to indicators of psychological distress, it is linked to the ideology which legitimizes the perpetuation of this type of behaviour. The significance of sexist ideology is such that women with higher benevolent sexism scores experience lower anxiety levels when exposed to a higher number of body evaluation experiences; similarly women who enjoy sexualization find their self-esteem is boosted the more experiences of body evaluation they report. Notwithstanding the results obtained, more exhaustive analysis is required of the apparently positive impact of the more subtle experiences of sexual objectification on self-image and anxiety among certain women. The empirical evidence warns that the enjoyment of objectifying experiences cannot be considered a protective factor against the harmful psychological consequences of sexual objectification (Liss et al., 2011).

Regarding the impact of the objectification phenomenon on women's social relationships, benevolent sexism also plays a decisive role. The significance of benevolent sexism as a variable accounting for self-silencing in acts of discrimination and enjoyment of sexualization can be explained by how women themselves interpret different experiences of sexual objectification as a form of sexist discrimination, justifying them and considering them as something empowering, which leads them not to confront such situations (Becker & Wright, 2011). This process distils the essence of sexist benevolent ideology, in the sense that women are admired and desired by men and this gives them feelings of pleasure, causing them to keep their thoughts and feelings to themselves in order not to jeopardize the social relationships they value (Jack, 2011). Benevolent sexism has been closely related to the level of gender inequality (Glick et al., 2000). It has to be considered that the samples of the studies have been recollected in Spain. This country has a .095 score in the GII (Gender Inequality Index) and it is ranked in the 16th position of the countries with more gender equality around the world (Jahan, 2015).

The results of both studies taken together demonstrate the complex and ambivalent nature of female sexual objectification and in particular highlight ideological variables such as benevolent sexism and enjoyment of sexualization, which are closely linked to each other. Regarding enjoyment of sexualization, on the one hand it might be considered an empowerment strategy deployed by women through using their sexuality (Baumgardner & Richards, 2004). But on the other hand, this enjoyment is

associated with more strongly subscribing to a benevolent sexist ideology which perpetuates the position of women as inferior to and dependent upon men, so it is more a manifestation of false, not true, empowerment (Levy, 2005), leading women to practise self-silencing to a greater degree and happily accept their subordinate position.

Although the present work provides evidence for the psychological and social consequences of sexual objectification, it is important to consider the role of individual characteristics and cultural context in the sexual objectification phenomenon (Loughman et al., 2015). Culture is central to sexual objectification, because the *“bodies exist within social and cultural contexts, and hence are also constructed through sociocultural practices and discourses”* (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). The samples of the current studies were composed by western women, being that sexual objectification is more prevalent in this culture and could be associated with more personal and social consequences of objectification for women than non-western culture (Loughman et al., 2015). On the other hand, the age of the woman is a key individual variable in the study of the consequences of sexual objectification experiences (McKinley, 2011). The different biological stages of a woman’s life may create a differential risk of higher sexual objectification (McKinley, 2011). It must be considered that the sample of the present studies corresponds to the period from puberty to early adulthood when women fully manifest an objectified view of themselves (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley, 2011). Therefore, for futures studies, it may be important to include women from different ages and different cultures.

### **Practical implications**

The aim of these studies had been to contribute to a better understanding of how the more subtle forms of sexual objectification operate. The more explicit forms of sexist discrimination are easy to identify and reject, but it is in the more subtle forms of sexist discrimination (looking at women's bodies, compliments on appearance) where women find themselves having to negotiate their way through a labyrinth of social rewards in exchange for not confronting sexist discrimination. Thus, once women have learnt to silence their thoughts and feelings in return for having their beauty valued by men, it is difficult to tackle something more serious, like explicit sexual harassment, effectively. The results of these studies are extremely useful for promoting mental health and in early action programmes with girls and young women, where they need to be taught to recognize body evaluation experiences as acts of sexist discrimination and prevent them from associating this kind of discrimination with gaining social rewards, so that they learn actively to confront it.

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*Chapter 7:*

**SEXUAL OBJECTIFYING INTERACTIONS AS SOURCE OF A  
SENSE OF POWER AMONG SEXIST WOMEN**



**Abstract**

Two studies examined why sexual objectification, which reduces women to mere body parts, may paradoxically confer a sense of power for some women. In samples of 95 American internet users and 148 Spanish undergraduate women, recalling experiences of sexual objectification increased women's sense of power, but only among those high in benevolent sexism. Sexist ideology encourages women to perceive physical appearance as a means of attracting male attention and, through it, social rewards. Thus, it can lead to paradoxical feelings of empowerment after experiences of objectification.

**Keywords:** Sexual empowerment, Sexism, Sexual objectification.

*Sexual objectification* refers to the reduction of a woman to her body or body parts and the erroneous perception that she is represented entirely and exclusively by her body or body parts (Bartky, 1990). Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) provides a framework for understanding how the socialization of women and experiences of sexual objectification affect their wellbeing. Adverse effects of sexual objectification on women's psychological wellbeing have been documented extensively in the literature (Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2011). For example, sexual objectification experiences are related to trauma symptoms (Miles-McLean et al., 2014), low self-esteem, high levels of anxiety and body shame (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998). Nevertheless, Breines, Crocker, and Garcia (2008) have shown that not all women experience sexual objectification as negative. That is, experiencing objectification could be associated with higher self-esteem in women who use their body as a mean to obtain social rewards. In this paper, we examine whether sexually objectifying interactions may paradoxically cause women to feel empowered, despite their well-known negative consequences.

### **Obtaining Power through Sexual Objectification**

Some scholars have theorized that women are empowered by their sexuality. This notion, referred to as female sexual empowerment has received strong interest in the public and academic spheres (Erchull & Liss, 2014). Empowerment is defined as the connection between a sense of personal competence, a desire for, and a willingness to take action in the public domain (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). During socialization, girls learn that physical attractiveness may represent a social gain. They might consider being sexualized as an indicator of attractiveness and thus, they might enjoy sexualization and the sense of power over men (Erchull & Liss, 2013; Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991; Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011). Subsequently, empowerment through sexualization would thus serve as a tool to counteract the patriarchal hierarchy at the individual level. Women who choose to gain power at the individual level by using their bodies do so to distance themselves from the collective of “oppressed women”.

Although the notion of sexual empowerment is the subject of current feminist debates (Lamb & Peterson, 2012), it explains why some women engage in self-sexualizing behavior (Nowatzki & Morry, 2009), despite its negative consequences (e.g., Noll & Fredrickson, 1998). Such behavior reflects a desire for male attention (Liss et al., 2011) and it could be explained by the link between sexuality and attractiveness (APA, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007; Liss et al., 2011), reinforcing the association between power and sexuality (Erchull & Liss, 2013; Zurbriggen, 2000). However, at the same time, researchers have shown that sexual objectification is not empowering for girls and women. It amounts to a kind of adherence to the path marked out by the traditional female role (Erchull & Liss, 2013) and it has been linked with many disempowering consequences which can be explained by objectification theory (APA, 2007; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hide, 1996). It is important then, to distinguish between the *subjective experience* of being empowered from the objective consequences of objectification, which tend to be disempowering.

## **Benevolent Sexist Ideology**

It is unlikely that all women self-sexualize or experience objectification as empowering. Further, it is not likely that individual differences such as personality traits are responsible for this experience, since sexual objectification and its consequences are shaped by culture and ideology. Previous research suggests that benevolent sexist (BS) ideology may be especially important (e.g., Calogero & Jost, 2011; Glick & Fiske, 1996). BS is “a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver) and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as prosocial or intimacy seeking” (Glick & Fiske, 1996 p. 491). It casts women as desirable and necessary for men’s happiness, and in need of male patronage and protection. Thus, it both reminds women of their subordinate social position and suggests that it may be compensated by male attention and affection (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This provides the ideological basis for women to self-objectify, seek female empowerment, and, we propose, to interpret sexual objectification as empowering.

Many empirical studies demonstrate the link between female sexual objectification and benevolent sexist ideology (Riemer, Chaudoir, & Earnshaw, 2014; Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2012). Women who were exposed to benevolent sexist stereotypes responded with higher levels of self-objectification (Calogero & Jost, 2011). Other studies have shown that women who subscribe more strongly to benevolent sexism use more cosmetic products (Forbes, Doroszewicz, Card & Adams-Curtis, 2004), have internalized the thinness ideal to a greater extent (Forbes, Collinsworth, Jobe, Braun, & Wise, 2007) and accomplish activities designed to manage their physical appearance (Calogero & Jost, 2011).

## **Research Overview**

On the basis of the above considerations, the present research was designed to further investigate the sense of power after an interaction that involves sexual objectification and the important role of sexist attitudes in this sense of power.

Two experiments tested the effect of sexual objectification in the form of body evaluation on women’s sense of power. We hypothesized that sexual objectification would increase women’s sense of power and that this effect would be greater among women who endorse sexist ideology. Specifically, we examined whether sexual objectification would increase the power felt in benevolent sexist women (Studies 1, 2) and hostile sexist women (Study 2). In Study 1 we focused on intergroup power (over men generally), in the Study 2 we focused on interpersonal power (over the objectifying man).

## Study 1

In the first study we aimed to explore the sense of power felt by benevolent sexist women through sexual objectification salience. Specifically, we hypothesized that recalling a sexual objectification interaction (making sexual objectification salient) would increase the power felt by benevolent sexist women compared to the power felt after recalling a neutral situation (Hypothesis 1).

### Method

#### Participants

A total of 105 women were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011), considering that online data collection has proven to be quite reliable (Ramsey, Thompson, McKenzie, & Rosenbaum, 2016). Since culture (Loughnan et al., 2015) or sexual orientation (Hill & Fisher, 2008) can shape the effect that sexual objectification has on women, we excluded 11 participants who had different orientation than heterosexual, and six participants who reported a nationality different from American. The final sample was 88 women between 19 and 65 ( $M = 36.15$ ;  $SD = 11.58$ ).

#### Procedure

The study was presented as a study about interpersonal relationships. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: 44 participants were exposed to a control condition and 44 to the experimental condition, respectively. In the sexual objectification condition, participants had to answer the adapted *Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS)* (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath & Denchik, 2007). The original scale contains 15 items measuring interpersonal sexual objectification. We used an adapted version changing the answer format to a dichotomous response format, in order to make sexual objectification salient (e.g., “Have you ever been whistled at in the street?”), then participants had to recall a scene a situation where they saw someone staring at one or more of their body parts. Participants in the control condition were simply asked to recall a landscape that they had observed recently. This control task has been used in previous studies (Ashley, O'Connor, & Jones, 2011; Lovell, Moss, & Wetherell, 2015).

### Measures

*Sense of Power Scale* (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012). We used the version focused in the relation of men as group featuring 8 items (e.g. “I can get men to listen to what I say”, 1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree,  $\alpha = .92$ ).

*Benevolent Sexism Subscale*. This scale has 11 items (e.g. “women must be loved and protected by men”, 0 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree ( $\alpha = .90$ )).



## Results

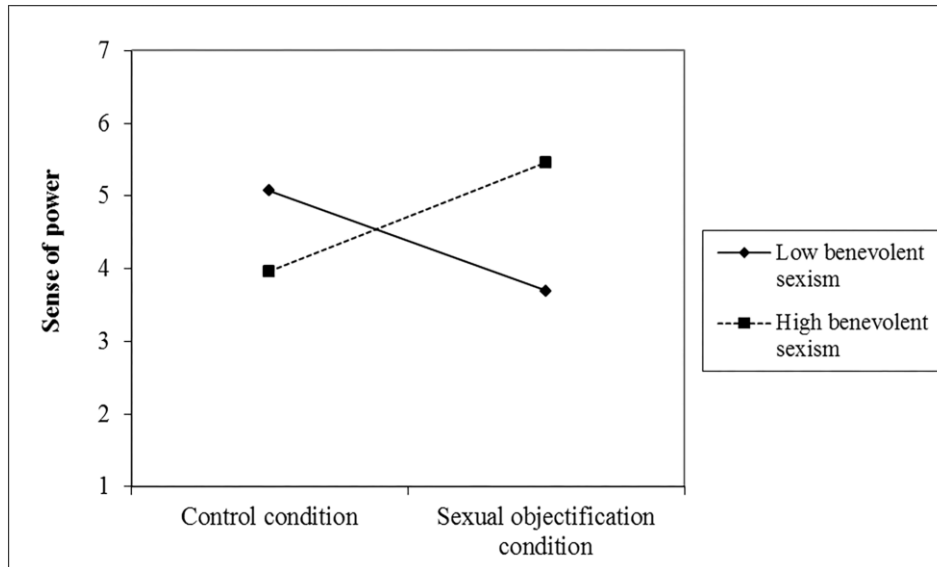
Following Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) using the Process tool, we tested a regression model in which centered BS, condition (dummy coded: 0= control condition, 1= manipulation condition), and the centered BS  $\times$  condition interaction term predicted women's sense of power (Model 1). As shown in the top half of Table 1, there was no main effect for condition on sense of power [ $B = .02$  (95%  $CI = -.46, .51$ ),  $SE = .24$   $t(86) = .09$ ,  $p = .928$ ]. Furthermore, BS did not predict the sense of power [ $B = .13$  (95%  $CI = -.19, .46$ ),  $SE = .16$   $t(86) = .82$ ,  $p = .416$ ] either. Importantly, though, as indicated by the significant interaction term, the effect of condition on sense of power was significantly moderated by benevolent sexism [ $B = .68$  (95%  $CI = .02, 1.33$ ),  $SE = .33$   $t(86) = 2.06$ ,  $p = .042$ ] (see Figure 1).

To probe this interaction, we used Johnson-Neyman technique (Johnson & Neyman, 1936; Preacher, Curran & Bauer, 2006). This procedure determines the value of the moderator at which the predictor no longer has a significant relationship with the criterion. The inspection of Johnson-Neyman regions of significance (Hayes, 2013) revealed that the positive effect of sexual objectification condition on the sense of power was significant for BS higher than 3.97 (1.32  $SD$ ).

**Table 1.** Results of the Moderation Analyses Testing for an Interaction Effect of the Objectification and Benevolent Sexism on the Sense of Power (Model 1, PROCESS 2013) (Study 1).

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Condition (sexual objectification vs. control)	0.02	.24	-0.46	0.51	0.09	.928
Benevolent sexism	0.13	.16	-0.19	0.46	0.82	.416
Condition X Benevolent sexism	0.68	.33	0.02	1.33	2.06	.042

**Note:** B: coefficient; SE: standard error; LLCI: lower level of confidence interval; ULCI: upper level of confidence interval.



**Figure 1.** Interaction Effect between Condition and Benevolent Sexism on the Sense of Power (Study 1)

## Discussion

Results of Study 1 showed that benevolent sexist American women felt more power over men as a group when they were sexually objectified compared to the power felt over men when they were not sexual objectified. This finding could be explained on base of women’s goal of restablising the male structural power through the female dyadic power (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Dyadic power is a key component of the men’s dependence on women, in the pursuit of the intimate heterosexuality, typical from the benevolent sexist ideology (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

## Study 2

Recalling a sexual objectification interaction increase the sense of power over men in benevolent sexist women (Study 1). However, the power gained through the use of one’s body as a tool is closely linked with hostile sexism. Women high in hostile sexism believe women try to control men using their feminine wiles (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Specifically important, heterosexual hostility supports the belief that “women may use sexual attraction to gain power over the men” (Glick & Fiske 1997, p. 122). This is because, it is necessary to control the importance of the role of the hostile sexism in the sense of power felt by BS women. Study 2 aimed to explore the sense of power felt by women over a specific man who is the perpetrator of this sexual objectified interaction, instead of the power over the man as a group (Study 1), as well as to control the role of hostile sexist ideology in this specific sense of power. Specifically, we hypothesized that imagining sexual objectification interaction would have an effect on the power felt by

benevolent sexist women over the man who sexually objectifies them even if the level of hostile ideology is controlled (Hypothesis 1).

## Method

### Participants

A total of 148 undergraduate women participated in Study 2. Based on the argument given in the Study 1, we decided to exclude from our final sample those who have different orientation than heterosexual (10 participants), and those participants that reported to be to other nationality different from Spanish (2 participants). The final sample of 136 female education students aged between 19 and 55 ( $M = 23.74$ ;  $SD = 4.14$ ).

### Procedure

Participants were recruited in lectures and received course credit for their participation. They believed to take part in a study on interpersonal relationships.

#### *Objectified interaction's manipulation*

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (66 participants in control condition; 70 participants in objectification condition). In the sexual objectification condition, participants were asked to imagine the following scenario as vividly as they could: “*You are studying in the library; In front of you there is a guy who stares at your neckline. He looks you up down when you get up and go to the bathroom*”. In the control condition, they were asked to imagine the following scenario as vividly as they could: “*You are studying in the library, In front of you there is a guy. He asks you what time the library closes when you get up and go to the bathroom.*”

### Measures

*Sense of Power Scale.* We used the Spanish version (Willis, Carretero-Dios, Rodríguez-Bailón, & Petkanopoulou, in press), oriented in the relation with a specific person (Anderson et al., 2012). We focused in the harsh power dimension (Willis et al., in press). (e.g. “Where the man is concerned, I get to make the decisions, if I want to”). This subscale has 3 items and each item was rated on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1, completely disagree, to 7, completely agree, ( $\alpha = .58$ ).

*Ambivalent Sexism.* We used the Spanish version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory to assess hostile and benevolent sexism (Expósito, Glick & Moya, 1998; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexist attitudes towards women were assessed using BS subscale (e.g., “women must be loved and protected by

men”) ( $\alpha=.87$ ). Traditional sexist attitudes towards women were assessed using the hostile sexism subscale (e.g. “women must be loved and protected by men”) ( $\alpha=.91$ ). Each subscale comprises of 11 items and each one was rated on a 6-point response scale ranging from 0, completely disagree, to 5, completely agree.

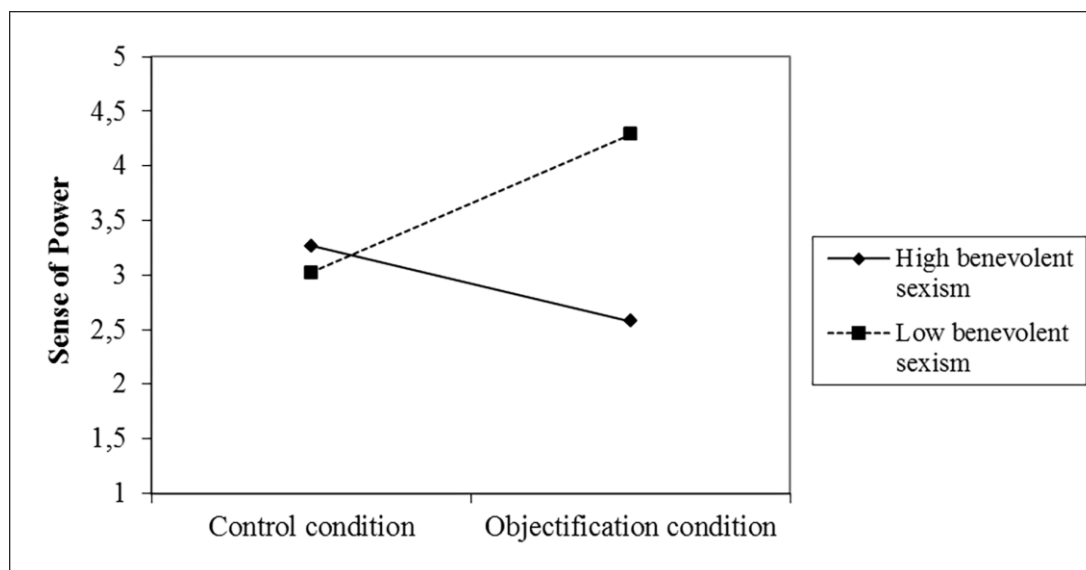
## Results

We predicted that benevolent sexist women would feel power over the perpetrator of objectification (Hypothesis 1). To test this hypothesis, we used the Process tool (Preacher et al., 2007). First, we tested a regression model in which centered BS, condition (dummy coded: 0= control condition, 1= manipulation condition), and the centered BS  $\times$  condition interaction term predicted sense of power (Model 1). We also added participants’ hostile sexism as a covariate in the model. As it is showed in the top half of Table 2, neither the hostile sexism has effect on the sense of power [ $B= -.05$  (95%  $CI= -.30, .20$ ),  $SE= .13$ ,  $t(135)= -0.39$ ,  $p < .698$ ], nor the condition has main effect on sense of power [ $B= .15$  (95%  $CI= -.23, .52$ ),  $SE= .19$ ,  $t(135)=0.77$ ,  $p= .441$ ], BS predicted sense of power [ $B= .39$  (95%  $CI= .11, .66$ ),  $SE= .14$ ,  $t(135)= 2.80$ ,  $p = .006$ ]. Importantly, as indicated by the significant interaction term, the effect of condition on sense of power was significantly moderated by benevolent sexism [ $B= .50$  (95%  $CI= .09, .93$ ),  $SE = .21$ ,  $t(135) = 2.42$ ,  $p = .017$ ] (see Figure 2). Using Johnson-Neyman technique (Johnson & Neyman, 1936; Preacher et al., 2006), as we described in the Study 1, we can determine moderator values where the predictor has a significant effect in the criterion variable. The inspection of Johnson-Neyman regions of significance (Hayes, 2013) for this analysis revealed that the positive effect of sexual objectification condition on the sense of power over the man was significant for BS higher than 2.00 (0.61  $SD$ ).

**Table 2.** Results of the Moderation Analyses Testing for an Interaction Effect of the Objectification and Benevolent Sexism on the Sense of Power (Model 1, PROCESS 2013) (Study 2)

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
Hostile sexism	-0.05	.13	-0.30	0.20	-0.39	.698
Condition	0.15	.19	-0.23	0.52	0.77	.441
Benevolent sexism	0.39	.14	0.11	0.66	2.80	.006
Condition X Benevolent sexism	0.51	.21	0.09	0.93	2.42	.017

**Note:** B: coefficient; SE: standard error; LLCI: lower level of confidence interval; ULCI: upper level of confidence interval.



**Figure 2.** Interaction Effect between Condition and Benevolent Sexism on the Sense of Power (Study 2).

### Discussion

Results of Study 2 showed that, even controlling by hostile sexism, benevolent sexist Spanish women felt more power over the man who sexually objectified them compared to the power felt over a man who did not engage in such behaviour them. The moderating role of the benevolent sexism in the sense of power could be explained by the sexual component of the benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The male sexual desire roused during a sexual objectification interaction lead to benevolent sexist women feel rewarded for fitting into cultural beauty standard, increasing their sense of power over the men.

### General Discussion

Research has shown that BS is correlated with appearance anxiety (Forbes et al., 2004; Franzoi, 2001) and can cause women to self-objectify (Calogero & Jost, 2011). Theoretically, these findings suggest that “because benevolent sexism praises women for their warmth and purity but simultaneously implies that they are inferior to men and dependent upon them for protection, women may direct their attention to areas that bring them the most immediate social rewards and validation to counteract the implications of incompetence and vulnerability” (Calogero & Jost, 2011, p. 213).

Thus, theory suggests that benevolent sexism causes women to focus on their physical beauty, which is linked to tangible social rewards and validation (Englen-Maddox, 2006; Fiske et al., 1991), and in particular demands the attraction of male attention (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Unger, 1979). A previously untested implication is that benevolent sexist ideology may change the experience of being objectified for women. Among women high in benevolent sexism, it may be interpreted as a sign of

empowerment, since it signifies that they are likely to receive the rewards and validation that are associated in their minds with physical beauty and male attention.

Support for these hypotheses was obtained in two studies, one of American and one of Spanish women. In both studies, benevolent sexism moderated the effects of an imagined objectification experience on felt power. Among those high in benevolent sexism, objectification made women feel more powerful over men. Additionally, in the second study controlling by hostile sexist ideology, objectification made benevolent sexist women felt more powerful over man who sexual objectify them

Despite the novel findings, the present research has some limitations. Firstly, it is limited by the low reliability of the sense of power scale of the second study. Secondly, in spite of we used women from two countries, the participants were largely white and heterosexual, which hamper the generalization of our study. Although the previous research lead us to select heterosexual women, it would be interesting to explore if women of other sexual orientations increase their sense of power through a sexual objectified interaction.

While most research on sexual objectification has focused largely on the negative consequences (e.g., Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998), the present research shows that benevolent sexist women reported feeling of power being sexually objectified. This subjective positive effect makes necessary to distinguish between actual and subjective consequences of being target of sexual objectification. Whereas these experiences contribute to mental health problems (e.g., eating problems, depression, anxiety) (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) some women increase their subjective wellbeing owing to the feeling of power. This difference could explain why women engaged in self-sexualizing behaviors, it makes them enjoy of their own sexualization (Liss et al., 2011), while at the same time prevents them from reaching their full potential in gender-based social activism (Calogero, 2013).

In conclusion, this research broadens the women's consequences of being treated as a sex object. This study has shown that some women can actually experience subjective positive consequences for sexual objectification encounters, if they internalize benevolent sexist ideology. Thus, the present research has theoretical as well as practical implications for understanding the objectification phenomenon and its occurrence and maintenance throughout time.

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*Chapter 8:*

**PERPETRACIÓN DE LA COSIFICACIÓN SEXUAL  
INTERPERSONAL: EFECTO DE LA EMPATÍA, DEL SEXISMO Y  
DE LOS MITOS HACIA EL ACOSO SEXUAL**



### Resumen

Cosificar sexualmente a las mujeres consiste en valorar a las mujeres por su cuerpo o por el placer que sus cuerpos pueden dar. El presente estudio en el que participaron 98 hombres heterosexuales constituye una aproximación al fenómeno de la perpetración de la cosificación sexual femenina en una muestra española. Los participantes fueron evaluados en su nivel de empatía, sexismo, mitos hacia el acoso y en su perpetración de cosificación sexual a través de la escala de cosificación sexual interpersonal en su versión perpetrador (ISOS-P). Los resultados mostraron que el componente cognitivo de la empatía (toma de perspectiva) es una variable individual con gran capacidad predictiva sobre el comportamiento cosificador de los hombres. Además los resultados muestran cómo las variables ideológicas (sexismo benévolo, sexismo hostil y mitos hacia el acoso sexual) contribuyen significativamente a explicar la relación entre una menor capacidad empática e informar de mayor número de conductas propias de cosificación sexual.

**Palabras Clave:** Cosificación sexual, Discriminación laboral, Sexismo hostil y Sexualización.

La cosificación sexual femenina tiene lugar cuando se separa a la mujer de su cuerpo o de sus atributos sexuales, reduciéndola a una mera función sexual y valorándola sólo por el placer que puede dar a los hombres (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). La teoría de la cosificación sexual fue creada para entender las consecuencias que las experiencias de cosificación sexual tienen en el bienestar psicológico de las mujeres (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997), pero en la actualidad se ha extendido para abarcar, entre otros, el punto de vista de la perpetración de la cosificación sexual (Gervais, DiLillo y McChargue, 2014; Vaes, Paladino y Puvia, 2011). Existen distintos tipos de conductas propias de cosificación sexual y que pueden situarse en un continuo, que van desde aquellas más sutiles como miradas o comentarios sobre el cuerpo de una mujer (evaluación corporal) a formas más explícitas y próximas al acoso sexual (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados) (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). Su distinción es importante ya que las formas más sutiles de cosificación sexual predicen las formas más severas (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados), como el acoso sexual (Gervais et al., 2014), pudiendo ser consideradas así, las formas más sutiles de cosificación sexual (evaluación corporal) como el preámbulo de los avances sexuales explícitos no deseados.

La importancia de la perpetración de la cosificación sexual radica en su relación con algunas formas de violencia hacia la mujer, como es el acoso sexual o las agresiones sexuales. En concreto, Rudman y Mescher (2001) mostraron que cosificar sexualmente a una mujer aumentaba la predisposición a la agresión y al acoso sexual. Además, el trato de una mujer como objeto sexual puede alterar la percepción de culpabilidad y de sufrimiento de la víctima en casos de agresión sexual (Loghnan, Pina, Vasquez y Puvia, 2013), atribuyéndole una menor moralidad a la misma y cuestionando su estatus como víctima (Loghnan et al., 2013). La falta de atribución de sufrimiento está relacionada con una menor capacidad empática por parte del perceptor, lo que se asocia con una tendencia a percibir al otro como superficial y emocionalmente empobrecido (Haslam, 2006). La literatura psicosocial enfatiza que la falta de empatía es un requisito para negar humanidad (Halpern y Weinstein, 2004), así como que la atribución de capacidad mental constituye un requisito para empatizar con un grupo (Fiske, 2009). Específicamente, la relación entre cosificación sexual y falta de empatía ha sido demostrada por estudios en los que se ha mostrado que la exposición a películas en las que se cosifica sexualmente a las mujeres afecta negativamente a la empatía hacia una víctima de agresión sexual (Linz, Donnerstein y Penrod, 1988). A su vez, otros estudios han revelado una relación entre menores niveles de empatía y una mayor proclividad al acoso sexual (Bartling y Eisenman, 1993).

Los comportamientos más sutiles de cosificación sexual (como comentarios sexuales sobre el cuerpo de una mujer) son comportamientos ambiguos que pueden llegar a ser deseados por las propias mujeres (Liss, Erchull y Ramsey, 2011). Este tipo de comportamientos pueden ser realizados por los hombres como una manifestación de la admiración y deseo hacia las mujeres, siendo dicha veneración hacia las mujeres propia de la ideología sexista benévola (Glick y Fiske, 1996). Sin embargo, la ideología que justifica el uso de las mujeres como objetos sexuales es el sexismo hostil (Sibley y Wilson, 2004), ya que desde la concepción más tradicional del sexismo, un elemento clave de la hostilidad hacia las mujeres

es el poder que las mujeres tienen a través de su sexualidad (Glick y Fiske, 1996; Expósito, Moya y Glick, 1998). La relación entre la cosificación sexual y el sexismo hostil ha quedado avalada por estudios que muestran cómo los hombres incrementan el sexismo hostil ante una mujer sexualizada (Sibley y Wilson, 2004), además un importante estudio realizado por Cikara, Eberhardt y Fiske, (2011) encontró en los hombres sexistas hostiles una menor activación en la zona cerebral relacionada con la atribución de capacidad mental ante la exposición de una mujer sexualizada (Cikara, Eberhardt y Fiske, 2011).

Así mismo, las experiencias más severas y explícitas de cosificación sexual, como son los avances sexuales explícitos no deseados, están estrechamente relacionados con el acoso sexual, y se encuentran sustentados por una ideología sexista hostil y por mitos hacia el acoso sexual que justifican la creencia de que las propias mujeres provocan dichas situaciones de acoso (Sakalli-Uğurlu, Salman y Turgut, 2010) y por tanto, legitiman la realización de dichos comportamientos.

En el presente estudio pretendemos analizar las variables individuales e ideológicas que predisponen a una mayor perpetración de la cosificación sexual femenina. De manera específica, en relación con las variables ideológicas, esperamos que las experiencias de cosificación sexual más sutiles (evaluación corporal) se relacionen con una mayor adherencia a la ideología sexista hostil (Hipótesis 1a) e ideología sexista benévola (Hipótesis 1b). Se espera que las experiencias de cosificación sexual más extremas (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados) se relacionen con la ideología sexista hostil (pero no con la benévola) (Hipótesis 2) y con mayores mitos hacia el acoso sexual (Hipótesis 3).

En cuanto a las variables individuales, esperamos que una menor capacidad empática, esté relacionado tanto con evaluación corporal como con avances sexuales explícitos no deseados (Hipótesis 4). Además, esperamos que la relación negativa entre la empatía y la evaluación corporal esté mediada por la ideología hostil (Hipótesis 5). Por último, se espera que la relación entre las formas de cosificación sexual más severas avances sexuales explícitos no deseados y la empatía, se encuentre mediada por mayores mitos hacia el acoso sexual (Hipótesis 6).

## Método

Un total de 105 hombres, como criterio de inclusión se estableció la orientación heterosexual, excluyendo de los análisis a 7 hombres con orientación sexual distinta a la heterosexual. La muestra final estuvo compuesta por 98 hombres de edad comprendida entre los 18 y los 42 años, con una media de 22.41 y una desactivación típica de 4.40. Un 85.7 % informaron tener estudios universitarios, y el 14.3 % restante informaron tener el bachillerato o haber cursado formación profesional.

### *Medidas*

*Escala de Cosificación Sexual Interpersonal versión perpetrador (ISOS-P)* (Gervais et al., 2014). Consta de 15 ítems que evalúan la cosificación sexual interpersonal y está compuesta por dos dimensiones: la *evaluación corporal* (11 ítems) (ej. ¿Con qué frecuencia ha silbado a una mujer mientras estaba

caminando por la calle?”) y *avances sexuales explícitos no deseados* (4 ítems) (ej. “¿Con qué frecuencia ha tocado o manoseado a una mujer en contra de su voluntad?”). El formato de respuesta es tipo Likert de 5 alternativas que oscila entre 1 (Nunca) a 5 (Casi siempre). En esta muestra la escala mostró una fiabilidad adecuada, con un coeficiente alfa de Cronbach de .88 en la dimensión de evaluación corporal y un alpha de .88 en avances sexuales explícitos no deseados.

*Inventario sobre Sexismo Ambivalente* (Expósito, Moya y Glick, 1998). Consta de 22 ítems con un formato de respuesta tipo Likert de 0 (Totalmente en desacuerdo) a 5 (Totalmente de acuerdo). Esta escala consta de dos dimensiones, el Sexismo Benévolo compuesto por 11 ítems (ej., “las mujeres deben ser queridas y protegidas por los hombres”) y del Sexismo Hostil compuesto por 11 ítems (ej., “las mujeres se ofenden muy fácilmente”). En el presente trabajo se obtuvo un coeficiente alfa de .89 y de .93 para el sexismo benévolo y el sexismo hostil respectivamente.

*Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)* (Davis, 1983), en su versión española (Pérez-Albéniz et al., 2003). La medida está compuesta por 4 dimensiones: la toma de perspectiva, la fantasía, la preocupación empática y la aflicción. Para el propósito del estudio, se ha utilizado una dimensión cognitiva específica, la toma de perspectiva (ej., “antes de criticar a nadie intento imaginar cómo me sentiría si me pusiera en su lugar”). Esta dimensión está compuesta por 7 ítems que tiene un formato de respuesta tipo likert con cinco puntos de respuesta (1= no me describe a mí en absoluto, 5= me describe totalmente). La escala utilizada obtuvo un coeficiente alfa de .74

*Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance (ISHMA)* (Expósito, Herrera, Valor-Segura, Herrera y Lozano, 2014). La escala está compuesta por 20 ítems y un formato de respuesta tipo Likert con 7 opciones de respuesta que oscilan de 1 (totalmente en desacuerdo) a 7 (totalmente de acuerdo). La escala evalúa las creencias persistentes que justifican el acoso sexual hacia la mujer (ej., Las mujeres que son descubiertas teniendo una aventura con su jefe, en ocasiones denuncian que fue acoso sexual). En el presente trabajo se obtuvo un coeficiente alfa de .93.

## Resultados

Para comprobar las hipótesis planteadas, se realizó una análisis de correlación (tabla 1), los resultados muestran que hay una relación positiva entre evaluación corporal y la ideología sexista hostil ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ), y la adherencia a la ideología sexista benévola ( $r = .31, p = .002$ ) (Hipótesis 1a y 1b). Además tal como se predecía, hay una relación positiva entre avances sexuales explícitos no deseados y mayor ideología sexista hostil ( $r = .30, p = .002$ ), pero no hay relación con la ideología sexista benévola (Hipótesis 2). Además encontramos una relación entre mayor número de avances sexuales y mayores mitos hacia el acoso sexual ( $r = .44, p < .001$ ) (Hipótesis 3). En contra de lo esperado, las formas más sutiles de cosificación sexual también se relacionan con mayores mitos hacia el acoso sexual ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ). En relación a la empatía, tanto las experiencias de cosificación sexual más sutiles ( $r = -.27, p = .009$ ) cómo las



más severas ( $r = -.36$   $p < .001$ ), se encuentra una relación negativa y significativamente entre estas variables y una menor empatía (Hipótesis 4).

**Tabla 1.** Correlaciones entre las distintas variables.

Variable	M	SD	Rango	1	2	3	4	5
1.ISOS evaluación corporal	2.82	.71	1-5	--				
2.ISOS avances sexuales	1.23	0.61	1-5	.46***	--			
3.SB	218	1.10	0-5	.31**	.18	--		
4.SH	2.34	1.16	0-5	.46***	.30**	.65***	--	
5. Empatía cognitiva	24.98	4.46	7-35	-.27**	-.36***	-.29**	-.40***	--
6. ISHMA	2.82	1.02	1-7	.42***	.44***	.55***	.70***	-.34***

\*Nota: ISHMA: Mitos hacia el acoso sexual, ISOS: Cosificación sexual interpersonal; SH: Sexismo hostil, SB: Sexismo Benévolo

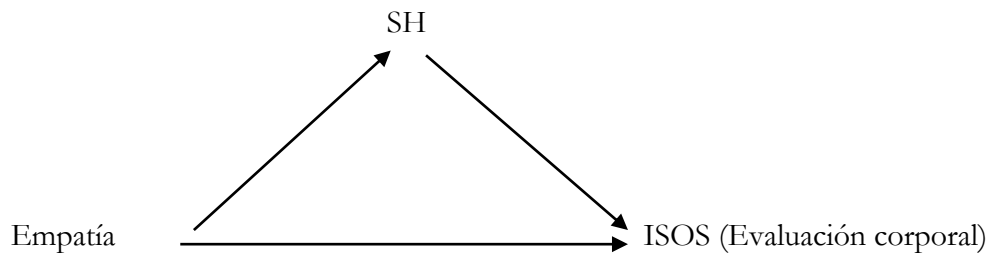
*El Sexismo Hostil como mediador de la relación entre la empatía y la evaluación corporal.*

Para comprobar el efecto mediador del sexismo hostil en la relación entre una mayor evaluación corporal y una menor empatía (Hipótesis 5, Figura 1) se siguieron las recomendaciones de MacKinnon, Lockwood y Williams (2004) usando el procedimiento *bootstrapping* no paramétrico con 5000 repeticiones para estimar los intervalos de confianza del 95%. El procedimiento *bootstrapping* determina si el efecto indirecto de los mediadores es significativamente diferente de cero. Si el intervalo de confianza del efecto indirecto no incluye el 0, entonces el efecto indirecto es significativo y, por tanto, se puede afirmar que la mediación existe. Utilizando el modelo 4 de la macro de SPSS proporcionada por Preacher y Hayes (2014), se obtuvo un intervalo de confianza del efecto indirecto del sexismo hostil entre -.044 y -.014, como dichos valores no incluyen el cero, podemos concluir que existe una mediación de la ideología (sexismo hostil) en la relación entre la evaluación corporal femenina y una menor empatía (Tabla 2).

**Tabla 2.** Efecto mediador de la ideología sexista en la relación entre las formas más sutiles de cosificar sexualmente a las mujeres (evaluación corporal) y la empatía.

	SH			Evaluación corporal		
	Coeff.	SE	P	Coeff.	SE	p
Empatía cognitive	-.10	.02	<.001	-.016	.02	.33
SH	--	--	--	.25	.06	<.001
Constante	4.96	.62	<.001	2.62	.47	<.001
	R <sup>2</sup> = .16			R <sup>2</sup> = .21		
	F(1,95)= 18.45, p< .001			F(2,94)= 12.87, p< .001		

\*Nota: HS: Sexismo Hostil



\*Nota: ISOS: Cosificación sexual interpersonal; SH: Sexismo Hostil

**Figura 1.** Mediación del sexismo hostil en la relación a la empatía cognitiva y las experiencias de cosificación sexual (evaluación corporal).

*Efecto mediador de los mitos hacia el acoso sexual en la relación entre la empatía y los avances sexuales no deseados.*

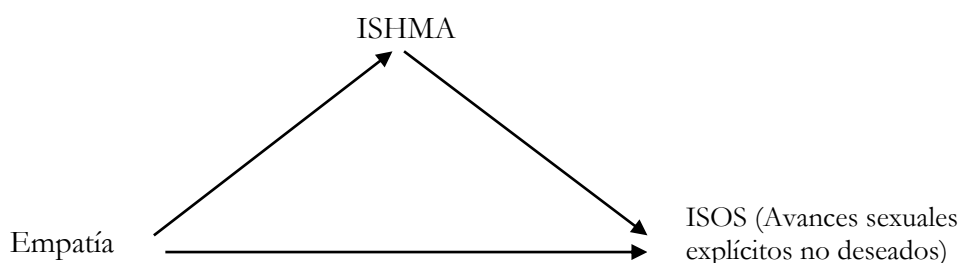
Para comprobar el efecto mediador de los mitos sobre el acoso sexual en la relación entre una menor empatía y un mayor número de avances sexuales (Hipótesis 6, Figura 2), se siguieron las recomendaciones de MacKinnon et al. (2004) usando el procedimiento *bootstrapping* no paramétrico con 5000 repeticiones para estimar los intervalos de confianza del 95%. Utilizando, de nuevo, el modelo 4 de la macro PROCESS del SPSS (Preacher y Hayes, 2014) se encontró que el efecto indirecto de los mitos sobre el acoso sexual se encontraba en un intervalo de confianza entre -.049 y -.004 y cómo dichos valores no incluyen el cero, los hallazgos sugieren que el efecto indirecto a través de los mitos hacia el acoso sexual fue significativo, indicando la una mediación de la ideología (mitos hacia el acoso sexual) en la relación de los avances sexuales y una menor empatía (Tabla 3).

**Tabla 3.** Efecto mediador de la ideología sexista en la relación entre las formas más sutiles de cosificar sexualmente a las mujeres (evaluación corporal) y la empatía.

	ISHMA			ISOS (Avances sexuales explícitos)		
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>coeff</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Empatía cognitiva	-.08	.02	<.001	-.03	.01	.015
ISHMA	--	--	--	.22	.06	<.001
Constant	4.76	.57	<.001	1.43	.42	<.001

$R^2 = .11$   $R^2 = .25$   
 $F(1,95) = 12.06, p < .001$   $F(2,94) = 15.31, p < .001$

\*Nota: ISOS: Cosificación sexual interpersonal; ISHMA: Mitos hacia el acoso sexual



\*Nota: ISOS: Cosificación sexual interpersonal; ISHMA: Mitos hacia el acoso sexual

**Figura 2.** Mediación del sexismo hostil en la relación de la empatía cognitiva y las experiencias de cosificación sexual (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados).

## Discusión

La teoría desarrollada por Fredrickson y Roberts (1997) defiende que el fenómeno de cosificación sexual femenina tiene su origen en la socialización diferencial de género que bombardea a las mujeres con continuos mensajes sobre su apariencia (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997) y a los hombres mostrándoles modelos de relación en los que las mujeres sirven meramente para dar placer sexual (Wright y Tokunaga, 2015), llevándoles a una interiorización de esta creencia sexista sobre la mujer.

En este estudio se pretendía explorar las variables ideológicas e individuales asociadas a una mayor perpetración de la cosificación sexual, que pueda explicar las diferencias individuales en la realización de conductas propias de cosificación sexual. Tal como esperábamos, los resultados han mostrado que tener una menor capacidad de asumir la perspectiva del otro, está asociado con informar de mayor perpetración de cosificación sexual en el último año. Este efecto se podría deber, en parte, al hecho de que una menor empatía hacia los miembros del exogrupo se relaciona con una menor atribución mental hacia el mismo (Fiske, 2009), lo que ha sido previamente relacionado con la cosificación sexual femenina (Vaes et al., 2011).

Además, los resultados de este estudio avalan la relación entre la perpetración de cosificación sexual femenina y una mayor ideología sexista hostil (Cikara et al., 2011). Por un lado, la evaluación corporal que se hace sobre el cuerpo femenino se relaciona tanto con la ideología sexista benévola, basada fundamentalmente en la admiración de los valores femeninos como complementarios y el deseo sexual de los hombres por las mujeres (Fiske y Glick, 1996), como con la ideología sexista hostil, que despierta sentimientos negativos hacia aquellas mujeres que usan su cuerpo y armas sexuales para controlar a los hombres (Sibley y Wilson, 2004). Por otro lado, las formas más severas de cosificación sexual (avances explícitos no deseados) se relacionan con las expresiones más hostiles de sexismo, creencia que sirve como mecanismo ideológico para justificar la violencia contra la mujer (Begany y Milburn, 2002).

En este sentido, y tal como se había hipotetizado, la ideología más hostil hacia las mujeres (sexismo hostil y mitos hacia el acoso sexual) explica la relación entre, una menor capacidad empática y una mayor perpetración de la cosificación sexual femenina. De manera específica, los resultados muestran que la ideología que justifica el uso de la mujer como objeto sexual, contribuye a explicar por qué los hombres con menos empatía son los que participan en mayor medida en conductas como miradas y comentarios acerca del cuerpo femenino (evaluación corporal). Así como que, mayores creencias erróneas o mitos hacia el acoso sexual, explican en parte la relación entre, una menor capacidad empática de los hombres, y la mayor tendencia de éstos a acosar sexualmente a las mujeres (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados). En general, los resultados tomados en su conjunto, son un importante hallazgo que avala la importancia de variables ideológicas e individuales en procesos sutiles de discriminación sexual, como es el caso de la cosificación sexual femenina.

Pese a la importancia de los resultados hallados en este estudio, el trabajo tiene importantes limitaciones, siendo la principal el diseño correlacional del mismo, que impide la posibilidad de establecer causación entre una menor capacidad de toma de perspectiva y la mayor perpetración de la cosificación sexual, además, la gran mayoría de los participantes informaron tener estudios universitarios, lo que dificulta la extrapolación de los resultados a la población general. En futuras investigaciones, se diseñaran estudios experimentales encaminados a explorar además de la empatía, otras variables individuales que puedan predecir la cosificación sexual así como otras formas de violencia sexual, con el objetivo de poder construir un modelo que no solo pueda contribuir a explicar el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual femenina, sino que también sea útil para prevenirla.

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*Chapter 9:*

**EFFECTO DE LA COSIFICACIÓN SEXUAL FEMENINA EN UN  
PROCESO DE SELECCIÓN DE PERSONAL**





### Resumen

Este trabajo se ha centrado en analizar las consecuencias que la cosificación sexual femenina tiene en el proceso de selección de personal. Para ello, se han diseñado dos estudios en los que, tras manipular la sexualización de los/as candidatos/as, se estudia su efecto en el juicio emitido sobre ellos/as. El primer estudio, compuesto por 92 hombres heterosexuales, analiza el efecto que la foto del perfil de una supuesta candidata en una red social tiene en la toma de decisión en un proceso de selección de personal. El segundo estudio (n= 60 hombres heterosexuales), pretende analizar el efecto que la sexualización tiene en un proceso de contratación de personal para trabajos con ambientes que promueven el uso de mujeres cómo objetos sexuales versus trabajos con ambientes laborales que no lo promueven. Los resultados de ambos estudios, muestran la importancia de la ideología sexista hostil, así como el efecto de la sexualización femenina en la asignación de competencia e intención de contratación.

**Palabras Clave:** Cosificación sexual, Discriminación laboral, Sexismo hostil y Sexualización.

En la vida diaria nos encontramos con distintas situaciones en las que las personas son cosificadas (Barnard, 2001; Gervais, Vescio, Föster, Maass y Suitner, 2012). Una persona es cosificada cuando es tratada como un instrumento para conseguir un objetivo, se le niega agencia y autodeterminación, se permite dañarla o destruirla, no se tiene en cuenta sus sentimientos y experiencias, y/o cuando es posible su intercambiabilidad (Nussbaum, 1999). En el proceso de cosificación sexual femenina, no solo se reduce a las mujeres a sus características sexuales, sino que se asocia con una menor atribución mental (Loughnan et al., 2010), lo cual, tiene importantes consecuencias en su bienestar psicológico (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997).

La ideología que justifica el uso de las mujeres como objetos sexuales es el sexismo hostil, viéndose activado ante la mera presencia de una mujer sexualizada (Sibley y Wilson, 2004). La relación entre cosificación y sexismo parte de la concepción más tradicional de éste, en la que la sexualidad de las mujeres es considerada un elemento clave para entender los sentimientos de hostilidad hacia ellas (Expósito, Moya y Glick, 1998; Glick y Fiske, 1996). Cikara, Eberhardt y Fiske (2011) mostraron que los hombres con una mayor ideología sexista hostil presentan una menor activación de las áreas cerebrales asociadas a la atribución mental (Cortex Prefrontal Medial, el Cortex Cingular Posterior, y el Polo anterior del lóbulo Temporal), por lo que tienden a atribuir una menor capacidad mental a las mujeres sexualizadas. Una de las variables asociadas a la cosificación sexual femenina es el modo en que la mujer va vestida. Vestir de manera sexualizada hace que se considere a las mujeres más insinuantes, sexis, seductivas y promiscuas (Abbey, 1987). Además, se les considera menos inteligentes y menos cualificadas (Gurung y Chrouser, 2007), considerando que están utilizando sus atributos sexuales para conseguir algún tipo de beneficio (Cahoon y Edmonds, 1989). El efecto de la ropa puede llegar incluso a aumentar la intención de agredir sexualmente a una mujer, de manera que ir vestida de manera sexualizada aumenta la proclividad de agresión sexual de un 3.6% a un 38.8% (Cahoon y Edmonds, 1989).

### **Cosificación sexual en el ámbito laboral**

La cosificación sexual está relacionada con la tendencia a atribuir una menor capacidad intelectual a las mujeres (Loughnan et al., 2010), así como con una menor percepción de competencia (Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper y Puvia, 2011). Estos resultados adquieren una gran relevancia por su implicación en el ámbito laboral (Gray, Knobe, Sheskin, Bloom y Barrett, 2011), y puede ser una de las variables explicativas de la actual discriminación de género en forma de segregación vertical, como muestra la escasa presencia de la mujer en los trabajos de mayor estatus (Elson, 2000). Además, vestir de manera sexualizada afecta negativamente a la percepción de competencia de estas mujeres en contextos laborales típicamente masculinos (Deaux, Winton, Crowley y Lewis, 1985). Una simple manipulación en la ropa de trabajo que presentaban las mujeres, mostrándose ligeramente más sexualizada, se vio que afectaba negativamente al juicio que se hacía sobre ellas cuando desempeñan trabajos de alto estatus (Howlett, Pine, Cahill, Orakçioğlu y Fletcher, 2015), considerándolas menos competentes (Glick, Larsen, Johnson y Branstiter, 2005). En relación a las motivaciones que llevan a cosificar sexualmente a las mujeres y cómo esto influye en el comportamiento, la literatura establece que la motivación sexual es un factor determinante en la

cosificación sexual y que se asocia con conductas aproximativas (Vaes, Paladino y Puvia, 2011). Así, la atracción sexual que los hombres pueden sentir hacia una mujer, hace que ellos se centren en sus características físicas, instrumentalizándola y atribuyéndole menos rasgos humanos, ya que es considerada como un objeto que sirve para satisfacer las necesidades sexuales masculinas (Vaes et al., 2011).

Adicionalmente, el ambiente de trabajo es un elemento crucial a la hora de considerar las consecuencias que la cosificación sexual tiene en este contexto. La inclusión de elementos ambientales que incentivan la autocosificación (ej. espejos, imágenes de mujeres sexualizadas, etc.) es suficiente para exacerbar las consecuencias negativas que la cosificación sexual tiene en el bienestar psicológico de las mujeres (Tiggemann y Boundy, 2008). Szymanski, Moffitt y Carr (2010) identifican los elementos que determinan que un ambiente sea más propenso a producir cosificación sexual femenina. Según los autores, un ambiente laboral puede incentivar la cosificación sexual cuando: (a) las relaciones laborales entre hombres y mujeres se guían por los roles tradicionales de género; (b) exista una mayor proporción de hombres y un mayor contacto entre hombres y mujeres que lleve a mayor incidencia de acoso sexual (Gruber, 1988); (c) se relegue a la mujer a puestos de trabajo de poco poder; (d) exista la exigencia de llevar uniformes o atuendos que acentúe la atención en el cuerpo de la mujer y por último; (e) se acepte la mirada del cuerpo de la mujer como normalizado.

En este trabajo se pretende abordar el efecto de la cosificación sexual en un proceso de selección de personal. Para ello, en el Estudio 1, manipulando la sexualización de una candidata a un puesto de trabajo, se prueba el efecto que la cosificación sexual tiene en el proceso de selección y el papel que la ideología sexista tiene en dicha decisión. En el Estudio 2, nos centraremos en la importancia de los ambientes laborales para los que se decide contratar a un/a candidato/a sexualizado/a versus no sexualizado/a y la importancia de la ideología sexista en el proceso de selección.

### **Estudio 1**

En este estudio se pretende explorar el efecto que la sexualización de una candidata tiene en la atribución de competencia y atribución mental y la intención de contratarla, así como analizar el efecto del sexismo hostil y la motivación sexual hacia la mujer en el proceso de selección de la candidata.

Específicamente, por un lado se espera un efecto de la sexualización de la candidata en la competencia y en la atribución mental que se le asigna (Hipótesis 1). Por otro lado, se espera que el sexismo hostil tenga un papel moderador en la competencia y atribución mental que se le asigna a la candidata sexualizada (Hipótesis 2). Además, se espera que haya una relación positiva entre la competencia que se le atribuye a la candidata sexualizada y la intención de contratarla, así como que esta relación esté mediada por la atribución mental que se hace sobre ella (Hipótesis 3). Por último, se espera una relación negativa entre la atribución de competencia y la motivación sexual hacia una candidata sexualizada, y que esta relación esté mediada por el sexismo hostil de los participantes (Hipótesis 4).

### **Método**

Con el objetivo de seleccionar a una mujer que apareciera de manera sexualizada y no sexualizada se buscó en una web de acceso libre (utilizada previamente por Loughman et al., 2013), de la que se seleccionaron 10 modelos que cumplieran los criterios de tener una foto en la que aparecieran sexualizadas y otra foto en la que aparecieran de manera no sexualizada. Mediante un juicio de expertos compuesto por 3 investigadoras, se analizó a las 10 modelos con el objetivo de seleccionar a aquellas que aparecieran con una postura similar en ambas fotos y aquella que fuera similar a una posible mujer universitaria española. Con las fotos de la modelo seleccionada, se realizaron dos perfiles falsos en Facebook para poder llevar a cabo la manipulación (Anexo 1).

### **Participantes**

Participaron un total de 92 hombres heterosexuales universitarios, de edades comprendidas entre los 18 y los 37 años ( $M = 20.33$ ,  $DT = 2.89$ ), a cambio de un crédito como recompensa por la participación experimental. Se informó a los participantes que iban a participar en un estudio sobre selección personal, teniendo que decidir sobre una candidata, asignada al azar, de la que se facilitaba su currículum y la foto de perfil de una red social (Facebook) que había sido encontrada en una búsqueda en internet. A todos los participantes se les entregó el mismo currículum de una supuesta candidata, de manera que el currículum era acorde (Licenciada en Económicas) al trabajo al que aspiraba (Auxiliar Administrativa), y a continuación, se les facilitó la supuesta foto de perfil que ésta tenía en su red social. La manipulación se realizó a través de la foto de perfil: 46 participantes fueron expuestos a una candidata totalmente vestida (condición no sexualizada) y 46 participantes a la foto de perfil de la misma candidata en traje de baño (condición sexualizada) (véase Anexo 1).

### **Instrumentos**

- *Manipulation check*. ¿Cómo de sexualizada considera a la candidata en su foto de perfil de Facebook? Con una escala de respuesta tipo Likert que oscila entre 1 “nada en absoluto” a 7 “totalmente”.
- *Competencia*. Se presentan 5 atributos que evalúan competencia: cualificada, eficiente, inteligente, hábil y responsable (Rollero y Tartaglia, 2013). El formato de respuesta fue tipo Likert que oscila entre 1 (nada en absoluto) a 7 (mucho). Los ítems mostraron una buena consistencia interna ( $\alpha = .91$ ).
- *Atribución mental*. Se utilizó una medida utilizada por Loughnan et al. (2013) con la que se pregunta a los participantes la frecuencia con la que consideran que la candidata realiza las siguientes siete actividades mentales: anhelar, planificar, razonar, emocionarse, pensar lógicamente, apasionarse, sentir y pensar abstractamente. La medida presenta una adecuada fiabilidad medida con el coeficiente alfa ( $\alpha = .88$ ).
- *Intención de contratar a la candidata*. Se les preguntó a los participantes: ¿En qué medida contratarías a la candidata para un puesto de auxiliar administrativo? Con una escala de respuesta tipo Likert que oscila entre 1 “nada en absoluto” a 7 “totalmente”.

- *Motivación sexual*. Se les preguntó a los participantes *¿En qué medida les gustaría tener una relación sexual con la candidata?* Con una escala de respuesta tipo Likert que oscila entre 1 “nada en absoluto” a 7 “totalmente”.
- *Inventario sobre Sexismo Ambivalente* (Expósito et al., 1998). Para el presente trabajo se utilizó la escala de sexismo hostil que consta de 11 ítems con un formato de respuesta tipo Likert que oscila de 0 (totalmente en desacuerdo) a 5 (totalmente de acuerdo). En el presente trabajo se obtuvo un coeficiente alfa total de .93.

## Resultados

En primer lugar para comprobar la efectividad de la manipulación experimental, se realizó una prueba *t* de student comparando la candidata sexualizada versus no sexualizada para el ítem *¿Cómo de sexualizada considera a la candidata en su foto de perfil de Facebook?* Los resultados mostraron un efecto de la manipulación ( $t(90) = -2.37, p = .02$ ). De manera que los participantes en la condición en la que fueron expuestos a la candidata sexualizada consideraron que estaba más sexualizada ( $M = 5.00, DT = 1.19$ ) que aquellos candidatos que fueron expuestos a la candidata no sexualizada ( $M = 4.35, DT = 1.43$ ).

Los análisis de correlación en las dos condiciones presentados en la Tabla 1, muestran la relación entre la atribución mental y la intención de contratar en la condición sexualizada como en la no sexualizada. Además los resultados muestran una relación positiva entre la competencia y la intención de contratar a la candidata en ambas condiciones (sexualizada y no sexualizada), así como de una relación entre competencia y atribución mental, también, en las dos condiciones (sexualizada y no sexualizada). Por último, los resultados muestran una relación positiva entre el sexismo hostil y la motivación sexual hacia la candidata ambas condiciones.

**Tabla 1.** Correlaciones entre las distintas variables en las dos condiciones experimentales.

	1. <i>Intención de Contratar</i>	2. <i>Atribución mental</i>	3. <i>Motivación Sexual.</i>	4. <i>Competencia</i>	5. <i>SH</i>
	Candidata sexualizada				
1. <i>Intención de Contratar</i>	--	.65***	-.08	.59***	-.23
2. <i>Atribución mental</i>	.46***	--	.08	.53***	-.01
3. <i>Motivación sexual</i>	.08	-0.01	--	-.22	.40**
4. <i>Competencia</i>	.45**	.37*	-.36*	--	-.05
5. <i>SH</i>	-.32*	-.14	.57***	-.48***	--
	Candidata no sexualizada				

**Nota:** SH: Sexismo hostil, \*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

Para contrastar la Hipótesis 1 que hace referencia al efecto de la condición (sexualizada versus no sexualizada) en la atribución de competencia y en la atribución mental, se realizó una prueba  $t$  de student, y tal como se esperaba, a la candidata sexualizada se le asigna una menor competencia ( $t(89) = 2.42$ ,  $p = .02$ ) en comparación con la candidata no sexualizada. Sin embargo, los resultados no mostraron diferencias significativas en la atribución mental en función de la sexualización de la candidata ( $t(89) = 1.11$ ,  $p = .27$ ) (Tabla 2).

**Tabla 2.** Diferencias en la atribución mental y competencia asignada a la candidata en función de la condición experimental (sexualizada versus no sexualizada).

	NO SEXUALIZADA		SEXUALIZADA			
	<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Atribución mental</i>	5.05	0.79	4.83	1.04	1.11	.27
<i>Competencia</i>	5.11	0.97	4.51	1.37	2.42	.02

### Efecto de la sexualización y del sexismo hostil en la atribución de competencia y atribución mental

Para comprobar la Hipótesis 2, que consiste en el efecto de la condición y el sexismo hostil del participante en la competencia y atribución mental asignada a la candidata, se realizaron análisis independientes para cada variable. Así mediante el modelo 1 de la macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) y

siguiendo las recomendaciones de MacKinnon, Lockwood y Williams (2004), usando el procedimiento *bootstrapping* no paramétrico con 5000 repeticiones para estimar los intervalos de confianza del 95%, se introdujo como variable independiente la condición, como moderadora el sexismo hostil y como variable dependiente se introdujeron la competencia y la atribución mental. En relación a la atribución de competencia, los resultados mostraron que hay efecto del sexismo hostil ( $t(90) = -2.74, p = .01$ ) y de la sexualización en la competencia atribuida a la candidata ( $t(90) = -2.65, p = .01$ ), de modo que tanto la sexualización de la candidata como el sexismo hostil de los participantes se relaciona con una menor atribución de competencia de la candidata. Sin embargo, no hay efecto de la interacción entre la sexualización y el sexismo hostil en la competencia atribuida a la candidata ( $t(90) = 1.67, p = .10$ ). En relación a la atribución mental asignada a la candidata, los resultados no mostraron efecto de la condición ( $t(90) = -0.99, p = .32$ ), ni del sexismo hostil ( $t(90) = -.81, p = .42$ ) ni efecto de interacción ( $t(90) = 0.54, p = .59$ ).

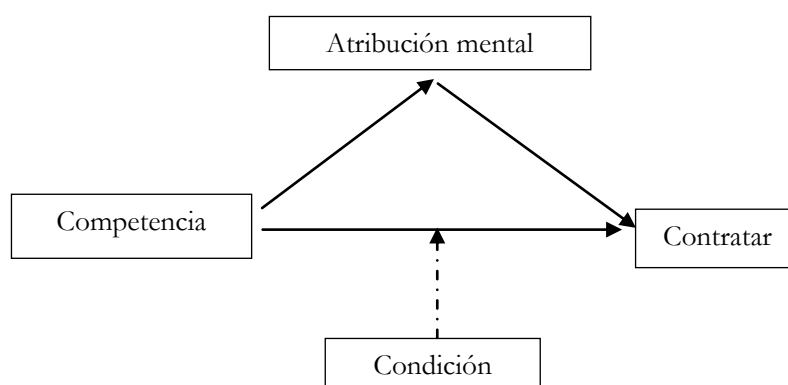
#### **Efecto mediador de la atribución mental en la relación entre competencia e intención de contratar**

Para comprobar la Hipótesis 3 que predice una relación positiva entre la competencia que se le atribuye a la candidata y la intención de contratarla, así como que ésta relación esté mediada por la atribución mental que se hace sobre ella y moderada por la condición (sexualizada vs no sexualizada), se utilizó el modelo 5 de la macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). Este modelo permite probar el efecto indirecto de la competencia atribuida a la candidata en la intención de contratarla, por la atribución mental y moderado por la sexualización de la candidata (Figura 1). Se siguieron las recomendaciones de MacKinnon et al. (2004), usando el procedimiento *bootstrapping* no paramétrico con 5000 repeticiones para estimar los intervalos de confianza del 95%. Tal como se muestra en la Tabla 3, los resultados muestran que hay efecto de la competencia en la atribución mental ( $t(90) = 5.17, p < .001, CI = 0.23, 0.51$ ) y de la atribución mental en la intención de contratarla ( $t(90) = 4.48, p < .001, CI = 0.31, 0.81$ ). Sin embargo, no hay efecto de la interacción entre condición y la competencia atribuida a la candidata en la intención de contratarla ( $t(90) = -.05, p = .96, CI = -0.37, 0.35$ ). Además, los resultados muestran que el efecto indirecto de la competencia en la intención de contratarla a través de la atribución mental ( $CI = 0.09, 0.38$ ), independientemente de la condición, apoyando así parcialmente la Hipótesis 3.

**Tabla 3.** Coeficientes de regresión no estandarizados, errores típicos e información del resumen del modelo 5 para la mediación moderada.

Antecedentes	Atribución mental				Contratar			
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constante	3.17	0.35	9.01	<.001	0.72	0.88	0.82	.41
Competencia	0.37	0.07	5.17	<.001	0.36	0.15	2.36	.02
Atribución mental					0.56	0.12	4.48	<.001
Condición					0.16	0.91	0.18	.86
Competencia X Condición					-0.01	0.18	-0.05	.96
	R <sup>2</sup> = .23				R <sup>2</sup> = .45			
Condición	Efectos directos		Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI			
<b>No sexualizada</b>	<b>.36</b>		<b>.15</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>.66</b>			
<b>Sexualizada</b>	<b>.34</b>		<b>.12</b>	<b>.11</b>	<b>.58</b>			

**Nota:** SE: error estándar; LLCI: valor superior del intervalo de confianza; ULCI: valor superior del intervalo de confianza.

**Figura 1.** El papel de la atribución mental en la relación entre la competencia y la intención de contratarla en función de la sexualización.

Por último, para probar la Hipótesis 4, que afirma que hay una relación negativa entre la competencia que se le asigna a la candidata y la motivación sexual del participante, y que esta relación se encuentra mediada por el sexismo hostil del participante y moderada por la condición (sexualizada vs. no sexualizada), se utilizó el modelo 5 de la macro PROCESS y se generó un intervalo del confianza del 95% sobre la base del método *bootstrapping*, con 5000 repeticiones para el efecto indirecto condicionado por la sexualización de la candidata. Tal como se muestra en la Tabla 4, los resultados muestran que hay efecto de la competencia en el sexismo hostil ( $t(90) = -2.05, p = .04, CI = -0.42, -0.01$ ) y del sexismo hostil en la motivación sexual ( $t(90) = 4.38, p < .001, CI = 0.42, 1.11$ ). Sin embargo, no hay efecto de la interacción

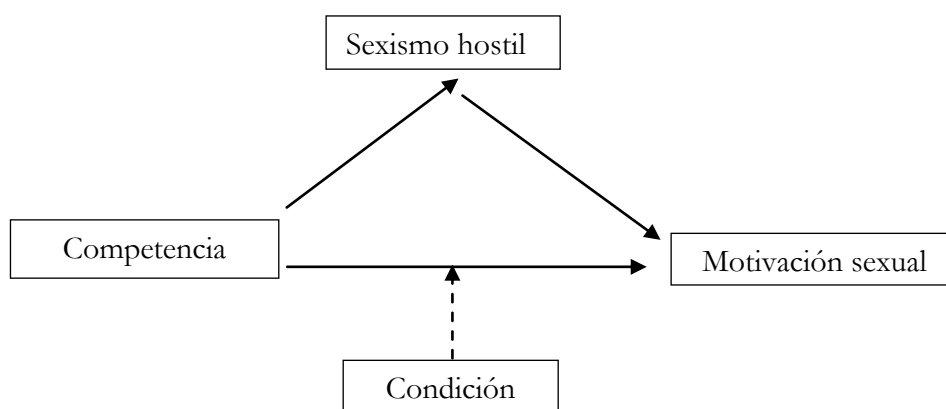


entre condición y la competencia atribuida a la candidata en la motivación sexual ( $t(90) = 0.08, p = .93, CI = -0.71, 0.77$ ). Además, los resultados muestran que el efecto indirecto de la competencia en la motivación sexual través del sexismo hostil es significativo ( $CI = -0.39, -0.02$ ) independientemente de la condición, apoyando parcialmente la Hipótesis 4.

**Tabla 3.** Coeficientes de regresión no estandarizados, errores típicos e información del resumen del modelo para la mediación moderada.

Antecedentes	Sexismo hostil				Motivación sexual			
	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Constante	3.41	0.52	6.57	<.001	4.55	1.79	2.54	.01
Competencia	-0.21	0.10	-2.05	.04	-0.34	0.31	-1.11	.27
Sexismo hostil					0.76	0.17	4.37	<.001
Condición					0.23	1.88	0.12	.90
Competencia X condición					0.03	0.37	0.08	.93
	R <sup>2</sup> = .05				R <sup>2</sup> = .27			
Condición	Efectos directos		Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI			
No sexualizada	-0.34		.31	-0.96	0.27			
Sexualizada	-0.31		.21	-0.73	0.11			

**Nota:** SE: error estándar; LLCI: valor superior del intervalo de confianza; ULCI: valor superior del intervalo de confianza.



**Figura 2.** El papel del sexismo hostil en la relación entre la competencia y la motivación sexual en función de la sexualización.

## Discusión

En primer lugar, los resultados de este primer estudio mostraron cómo la imagen de una candidata en una red social puede tener efecto en el juicio que se emite sobre ella en un proceso de selección de personal (en su competencia). Este resultado parece deberse a que la sexualización de la candidata puede afectar negativamente a los juicios sobre su competencia (Heflick y Goldenberg, 2009).

En segundo lugar, los resultados muestran que la competencia que se le atribuye a la candidata se relaciona con la atribución mental que se le asigna, y en consecuencia, determina la intención de contratar a la candidata, independientemente de si se trata de una candidata sexualizada o no sexualizada. Esto es, la falta de atribución mental a una mujer, constituye una variable crucial en las decisiones que se van a tomar sobre ella en un proceso de selección de personal, independientemente de cómo esté vestida. Este hallazgo es complementado con otro resultado obtenido en esta investigación que demuestra la relación indirecta a través del sexismo hostil entre la competencia y la motivación sexual que se tiene sobre la candidata, sin que influya, tampoco, como va vestida la candidata.

En el segundo estudio, se pretende comprobar si una manipulación más sutil en la vestimenta de un candidato o una candidata podría afectar al juicio de competencia e influir en un proceso de selección de personal para distintos puestos de trabajo. Además, se pretende examinar el papel que los distintos ambientes de cosificación sexual tienen en la intención de contratación al candidato/a, así como comprobar que el efecto de la cosificación en la toma de decisión en un proceso de selección afecta de manera negativa a las mujeres, pero no así a los hombres.

De manera específica, se espera que la manipulación sutil de la ropa, tenga efecto en la competencia otorgada a la candidata pero no así al candidato (Hipótesis 1). Respecto a la intención de contratar para trabajos con distintos ambientes de cosificación sexual, se espera que tengan mayor intención de contratar para trabajos con ambientes que promuevan la cosificación sexual femenina a candidatas sexualizadas (vs mujeres no sexualizadas) aquellos participantes con alta ideología sexista hostil (Hipótesis 2). Además, se espera que haya una menor intención de contratar para trabajos con ambientes laborales que no promueven la cosificación sexual a candidatas sexualizadas (vs no sexualizadas), especialmente aquellos participantes con alto sexismo hostil (Hipótesis 3)

Para probar estas hipótesis se llevaron a cabo, en primer lugar, dos estudios pilotos con el objetivo de encontrar: a) modelos masculinos y femeninos que no difirieran en la inteligencia, competencia o atractivo, así como encontrar b) dos grupos de profesiones que difirieran en lo característico que su ambiente de trabajo promueve la cosificación sexual, pero que no difieran en el estatus o en lo femeninas o masculinas que son consideradas.

### Estudio piloto 1

El primer estudio piloto tuvo como objetivo la elección de un candidato y una candidata que no difirieran significativamente en inteligencia, competencia y atractivo entre ellos. Para ello, se reclutaron un total de 17 participantes de población general interesados en participar de manera voluntaria en el estudio. El criterio de inclusión para participar en el estudio fue tener entre 25 y 30 años y ser español, del total de los 17 participantes 8 candidatos (4 mujeres y 4 hombres) cumplían dichos requisitos por lo que se les solicitó una foto tipo carnet con una camiseta blanca y fondo blanco. Las fotografías de los 8 candidatos fueron evaluados por 23 participantes universitarios (11 hombres y 12 mujeres) con una edad comprendida entre los 17 y los 40 años ( $M = 21.6$ ,  $DT = 4.82$ ) que fueron reclutados en bibliotecas del campus universitario. Todos los participantes tuvieron que evaluar las fotografías de los 8 modelos en atractivo, competencia e inteligencia (*¿cómo de atractiva/competente/inteligente le parecen las personas de las siguientes fotografías?*) en una escala tipo Likert de 7 opciones de respuesta (comprendida de 1: nada en absoluto a 7: totalmente). Tras analizar las evaluaciones realizadas, mediante un análisis de medidas repetidas, se eligió la fotografía masculina y femenina que no diferían significativamente en el nivel de atractivo ( $t = -1.82$ ,  $p = .08$ ), ni en la competencia ( $t = -1.99$ ,  $p = .06$ ) ni en la inteligencia asignada ( $t = -.89$ ,  $p = .38$ ). Los modelos seleccionados fueron el modelo femenino número 4 y el modelo masculino número 4 (véase Tabla 6).

**Tabla 6.** Media y desviaciones típicas de las puntuaciones obtenidas por modelos en las distintas variables analizadas.

		<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>		<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>	
Modelo femenino 1	Atractivo	4.70	1.22	Modelo masculino 1	Atractivo	2.48	1.34
	Competente	5.09	1.24		Competente	3.74	1.51
	Inteligente	5.27	1.16		Inteligente	3.59	1.47
Modelo femenino 2	Atractiva	2.48	1.41	Modelo masculino 2	Atractivo	3.96	1.67
	Competente	4.87	1.33		Competente	4.74	0.96
	Inteligente	5.18	1.37		Inteligente	4.55	1.44
Modelo femenino 3	Atractiva	4.22	1.48	Modelo masculino 3	Atractivo	1.70	0.97
	Competente	4.61	1.23		Competente	3.65	1.50
	Inteligente	4.64	1.62		Inteligente	3.77	1.63
Modelo femenino 4	Atractiva	5.26	1.21	Modelo masculino 4	Atractivo	4.61	1.62
	Competente	4.91	1.04		Competente	4.52	1.12
	Inteligente	4.91	1.27		Inteligente	4.68	1.09

### Estudio piloto 2

En el segundo estudio piloto, se analizaron 30 profesiones extraídas de la clasificación internacional de ocupaciones (CIUO-88), y fueron evaluadas por 22 estudiantes españoles (13 mujeres y 9 hombres) que fueron reclutados en bibliotecas del campus universitario. La edad de los participantes estaba comprendida entre los 18 y los 27 años ( $M = 22$ ,  $DT = 2.14$ ).

Se solicitó a todos los participantes que evaluaran las 30 profesiones (Tabla 7) en lo masculinas o femeninas que les parecía cada profesión, en su prestigio y en la medida que consideraban su ambiente de trabajo como propio de un ambiente de cosificación sexual (habiéndoles descrito con anterioridad qué caracteriza un ambiente de cosificación sexual siguiendo la definición de Szymanski et al., 2010), en una escala tipo Likert de 7 opciones de respuesta (comprendida de 1: totalmente en desacuerdo a 7: totalmente de acuerdo). Posteriormente, se realizaron agrupaciones de profesiones, hasta encontrar dos grupos de profesiones que difirieran significativamente en el ambiente de cosificación sexual pero no en su nivel de prestigio (estatus) y en lo femenina o masculina que fueron consideradas. Tras realizar análisis de medidas repetidas entre las distintas agrupaciones de profesiones, se encontró un grupo de 5 profesiones que

tenían ambientes laborales considerados propios de cosificación sexual (modelos de moda y publicidad, relaciones públicas, azafato/a, entrenador personal y camarero/a ) y un grupo de 4 profesiones con ambientes laborales no característicos de cosificación sexual (basurero/a, cartero/a, operario en una fábrica de alimentos y empleado/a de biblioteca), que diferían significativamente en lo característico que su ambiente laboral es un ambiente de cosificación sexual ( $t = 13.20, p < .001$ ) y no diferían en lo femeninas o masculinas ( $t = -1.27, p = .22$ ) o en el estatus asignado ( $t = -1.06, p = .30$ ).

**Tabla 7.** Media y desviaciones típicas de las puntuaciones obtenidas en las profesiones en las distintas variables analizadas.

	Propias de Cosificación sexual		Femeninas- masculinas		Estatus	
	M	DT	M	DT	M	DT
Camarero/camarera	4.18	2.24	3.95	0.38	3.20	1.40
Entrenador/a personal	4.41	1.97	5.00	1.07	4.35	1.31
Relaciones públicas	5.86	1.39	3.36	1.29	2.90	1.68
Azafato/a de promociones	5.00	1.88	3.18	1.50	3.05	1.57
Cajero/a	2.36	1.33	3.64	0.58	3.50	1.36
Taquillero/a	2.32	1.59	3.77	1.02	3.10	1.48
Empleado/a de bibliotecas.	1.55	1.30	3.73	0.77	4.20	1.58
Cartero/a	1.59	1.30	4.18	1.18	3.45	1.43
Empleado/a de servicios de información a la clientela.	2.82	1.87	3.59	0.85	3.45	1.43
Auxiliar contable y financiero.	1.90	1.14	4.41	0.80	5.20	1.28
Trabajador/a en servicios de seguridad.	2.09	1.38	4.86	1.42	4.60	1.57
Personal al servicio de los pasajeros.	3.62	1.69	3.45	0.96	4.45	1.23
Modelos de modas y publicidad.	6.27	1.08	3.18	1.50	3.90	1.74
Vendedores y demostradores de tiendas y almacenes.	3.86	2.08	3.41	1.26	3.75	1.16
Agricultores	1.09	0.29	5.14	1.55	3.60	1.70
Criadores y trabajadores de la cría de animales	1.14	0.35	5.05	1.29	3.60	1.70
Pintor/a.	1.36	0.58	5.23	1.15	3.45	1.61
Limpiador/a de fachadas	1.27	0.46	5.36	1.22	3.00	1.56
Operario/a de imprenta. encuadernación	1.68	1.04	4.27	1.16	3.60	1.35
Operario en una fábrica para la realización de productos textiles	1.59	1.01	3.59	1.09	3.45	1.23
Operario en una fábrica para la elaboración de alimentos	1.32	0.78	3.77	0.81	3.55	1.23
Personal doméstico	2.64	1.50	2.68	1.46	3.25	1.62
Conserje	1.95	1.00	4.55	1.34	3.30	1.22
Lavador/a de ventanas	1.50	0.96	4.50	1.50	2.85	1.50
Mensajero/a	1.73	0.83	4.41	1.10	3.55	1.10
Basurero/a	1.45	0.96	4.95	1.62	2.95	1.47
Portero/a	2.00	1.31	5.14	1.75	3.05	1.45
Peón de la agricultura	1.50	1.01	5.41	1.33	2.80	1.51
Peón de construcción.	2.05	1.86	5.82	1.44	2.90	1.45
Peones del transporte.	1.86	1.32	4.86	1.36	3.40	1.43

## Estudio 2

### Método

#### Procedimiento y participantes.

Un total de 60 hombres heterosexuales participaron en el experimento a cambio de una pequeña cantidad de dinero (5 euros). Los participantes fueron reclutados alrededor del campus universitario y fueron invitados al laboratorio con el objetivo de participar en un experimento sobre “toma de decisiones en un proceso de selección de personal”. Los participantes tenían una edad comprendida entre los 18 y 35 años con una  $M = 21.85$  y  $DT = 3.78$ . Todos fueron asignados de forma aleatoria a las cuatro condiciones experimentales: currículum de una candidata sexualizada/ currículum de una candidata no sexualizada/ currículum de un candidato sexualizado/ currículum de un candidato no sexualizado. La única diferencia entre los currículum fue la fotografía y nombre de los candidatos presentada en el currículum.

Las cuatro fotografías se tomaron en el laboratorio, con un fondo blanco, con el objetivo de controlar todas las variables extrañas. Los/as modelos iban vestidos con una camisa blanca. La modelo femenina llevaba el pelo recogido y con maquillaje natural. La única diferencia entre las fotografías eran los últimos 3 botones de la camisa, en una de las fotos tanto el/la modelo llevaban todos los botones abrochados (condición no sexualizada), en la otra fotografía ambos modelos llevaban los últimos tres botones desabrochados (condición sexualizada). La expresión facial fue la misma en todas las fotografías (véase Anexo 2).

- *Manipulation Check*: ¿En qué medida crees que el candidato destaca su cuerpo en la fotografía del currículum? Con una escala de respuesta tipo Likert que oscila entre 1 “nada en absoluto” a 7 “totalmente”.
- *Intención de contratar para las profesiones sexualizadas y no sexualizadas*: Se evaluó preguntando a los participantes la intención de contratar al candidato o candidata para determinadas profesiones: Modelo, camarero/a, azafato/a, relaciones públicas y entrenador personal (profesiones sexualizadas) y: empleado/a en una biblioteca, operario/a en una fábrica de alimentos, basurero/a y cartero/a (profesiones no sexualizadas).
- *Competencia*: Se presentan atributos que evalúan competencia: competente, eficiente, inteligente, hábil, responsable, inepta e irresponsable (Glick et al., 2005). El formato de respuesta fue tipo Likert que oscila entre 1 (nada en absoluto) a 7 (mucho). Los ítems mostraron una buena consistencia interna ( $\alpha = .82$ ).
- *Inventario sobre Sexismo Ambivalente* (Expósito et al., 1998). Se utilizó únicamente la dimensión del sexismo hostil que contiene 11 ítems con un formato de respuesta tipo Likert que oscila desde el 0 (totalmente en desacuerdo) al 7 (totalmente de acuerdo). En el presente trabajo se obtuvo un coeficiente alfa total de .84.

## Resultados

En primer lugar para comprobar la efectividad de la manipulación experimental (sexualizado/a vs no sexualizado/a), se realizó una prueba *t* de student comparando la condición sexualizado/a versus no sexualizado/a para el ítem *¿En qué medida crees que el candidato destaca su cuerpo en la fotografía del currículum?* Los resultados mostraron un efecto de la manipulación ( $t(58) = -3.09, p = .003$ ). De manera que los participantes en la condición sexualizado/a consideraron que el/la candidato/a destaca su cuerpo en la fotografía del currículum ( $M = 5.00, DT = 1.19$ ) que aquellos participantes que fueron expuestos a la condición no sexualizado/a ( $M = 4.35, DT = 1.43$ ).

Un análisis de correlación en las distintas condiciones nos informa de que hay una relación negativa entre sexismo hostil y competencia atribuida a la candidata únicamente en la condición de la candidata sexualizada, así como una relación negativa en el caso del candidato sexualizado entre lo competente que es considerado y la intención de contratarlo para un trabajo con un ambiente que no promueve la cosificación sexual. Por último solo en la condición de candidato sexualizado hay una relación entre la intención de contratarlo para un trabajo que promueve la cosificación sexual y la intención de contratarlo para un trabajo que no la promueve (ver Tabla 8).

**Tabla 8.** Correlaciones entre las distintas variables en las distintas condiciones (Estudio 2).

		Candidata Mujer			
		Candidata sexualizada			
		Contratar SOE	Contratar no SOE	Competente	SH
Candiata no sexualizada	Contratar SOE	--	.10	.02	.37
	Contratar no SOE	.37	--	.56*	-.42
	Competente	-.28	-.05	--	-.60*
	Sexismo Hostil	.17	.37	.003	--
		Candidato Hombre			
		Candidato sexualizado			
		Contratar SOE	Contratar no SOE	Competente	SH
Candiato no sexualizado	Contratar SOE	--	.81***	-.50*	-.21
	Contratar no SOE	.24	--	-.66**	-.29
	Competente	.33	-.24	--	.46
	Sexismo Hostil	.12	.27	-.32	--

**Nota.** Contratar SOE: Contratar para trabajos característicos de cosificación sexual; Contratar NO SOE: Contratar para trabajos no característicos de cosificación sexual; HS: Sexismo Hostil. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Para contrastar la Hipótesis 1, que hace referencia al efecto de manipulación de la sexualización tendría en la candidata (pero no en el candidato) se realizó una *t* de student. Tal como se puede ver en la Tabla 9, y en contra de lo esperado, no se hallaron diferencias significativas en la atribución de



competencia, o en la intención de contratar en función de la condición cuando la candidata es una mujer ni cuando el candidato es un hombre (Tabla 9), por lo que no se puede confirmar la Hipótesis 1.

**Tabla 9.** Puntuaciones medias (DT) de las participantes en las distintas variables (Estudio 2).

	<i>Candidata</i>				<i>Candidato</i>							
	<i>No Sexualizada</i>		<i>Sexualizada</i>		<i>No Sexualizado</i>		<i>Sexualizado</i>		<i>No Sexualizado</i>		<i>Sexualizado</i>	
	<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>Media</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. <i>Contratar SOE</i>	3.90	0.52	4.14	1.22	-0.71	.49	4.13	0.86	4.10	1.09	0.08	.94
2. <i>Contratar NO SOE</i>	3.71	1.10	3.56	0.86	0.42	.68	3.61	1.10	3.05	1.27	1.29	.21
3. <i>Competencia</i>	4.71	0.84	4.98	0.87	-.84	.41	4.32	0.83	4.41	0.96	-0.29	.78

**Nota.** Contratar SOE: Contratar para trabajos característicos de cosificación sexual; Contratar NO SOE: Contratar para trabajos no característicos de cosificación sexual; HS: Sexismo Hostil.

Para poner a prueba la Hipótesis 2, que predice haya una mayor intención de contratar para trabajos con ambientes que promuevan la cosificación sexual femenina a candidatas sexualizadas (vs mujeres no sexualizadas) entre aquellos participantes con alta ideología sexista hostil, se utilizó el modelo 1 de la macro PROCESS, generando un intervalo de confianza del 95% sobre la base del método *bootstrapping*, con 5000 repeticiones. Se introdujo como variable criterio la intención de contratar a la candidata para trabajos sexualizados, como variable predictora la condición (la candidata sexualizada vs. la candidata no sexualizada) y como variable moderadora el sexismo hostil del participante. Los resultados no mostraron efecto principal del sexismo hostil ( $t = .34, p = .73$ ), ni de la condición ( $t = -.79, p = .44$ ), ni de la interacción en la intención de contratarla para un trabajo sexualizado [ $B = .41$  (95%  $CI = -.32, 1.13$ ),  $SE = .35$   $t(29) = -1.16, p = .26$ ], por lo que no se puede confirmar la Hipótesis 2.

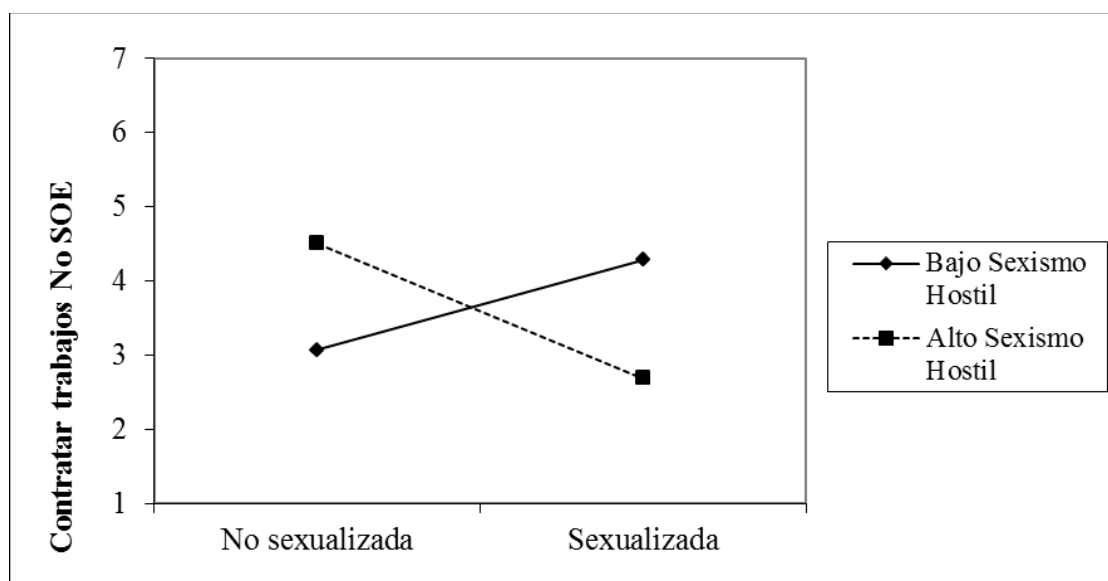
Para poner a prueba la Hipótesis 3 en la se espera que haya una menor intención de contratar para trabajos con ambientes laborales que no promueven la cosificación sexual a candidatas sexualizadas (vs no sexualizadas), especialmente aquellos participantes con alto sexismo hostil, se utilizó el modelo 1 de la macro PROCESS. Siguiendo el procedimiento anteriormente descrito, y tomando como variable criterio la intención de contratar a la candidata para trabajos no sexualizados y como variables predictora la condición (la candidata sexualizada vs. la candidata no sexualizada) y como variable moderadora el sexismo hostil del participante, los resultados mostraron que pese a que no hay efecto principal de la manipulación ( $t = 1.75, p = .09$ ) ni del sexismo hostil ( $t = 1.55, p = .13$ ), pero sí hay efecto de la interacción en la intención de contratarla para un trabajo no sexualizado [ $B = -.76$  (95%  $CI = -1.48, -0.031$ ),  $SE = .35$   $t(29) = -2.14, p = .04$ ]. Para analizar la interacción se utilizó la técnica Johnson-Neyman y los resultados muestran que hay una relación negativa entre la sexualización y contratación para trabajos no sexualizados, de manera que los participantes con una puntuación en ideología sexista hostil superior a 3.64 (en un

rango de puntuación de 0 a 5), contratarían en menor medida a una mujer sexualizada para un trabajo no sexualizado, en comparación con una mujer no sexualizada (Véase Figura 3)

**Tabla 9.** Coeficientes de regresión no estandarizados, errores típicos e información del resumen del modelo para la moderación entre la sexualización de la candidata y la condición en la cualificación asignada para trabajos no sexualizados (Estudio 2).

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95%CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Condición	1.43	.81	-0.25, 3.10	1.75	.091
SH	.36	.23	-0.12, 0.84	1.55	.132
Condición x SH	-.76	.35	-1.48, -0.03	-2.14	.042

**Nota:** SH: Sexismo Hostil; CI: Intervalos de confianza



**Figura 3.** Interacción entre la condición y el sexismo hostil de los participantes en la intención de contratar para trabajos sin ambientes que promueven la cosificación sexual.

## Discusión

Pese a que Howlett et al. (2015) encontraron que una manipulación muy sutil en la ropa de trabajo es suficiente para influir en el juicio que se hace de una mujer en el ámbito laboral, este estudio no encontró efecto directo del cambio sutil de la ropa de los candidatos en los juicios que se hacen de ellos. La falta de efecto se puede deber a que las participantes del estudio de Howlett et al (2015) fueron mujeres mientras que en presente estudio fueron hombres. Por otro lado, a la hora de elegir a la candidata para

trabajos sexualizados, la manipulación sutil en el escote no es suficiente para que los hombres con una mayor ideología sexista hostil tengan una mayor intención de contratarla, esto puede deberse a que es necesario una sexualización de la candidata más explícita para activar “el uso de la mujer cómo objeto sexual” para un trabajo sexualizado en hombres con alta ideología sexista. Sin embargo, este estudio ha servido para mostrar que una manipulación más sutil de la sexualización de una candidata, tiene efecto negativo en los participantes con mayor ideología sexista hostil. De manera que, aquellos participantes con mayores creencias sexistas hostiles hacia las mujeres, tienen una menor intención de contratar a la candidata sexualizada para trabajos donde no se ponga el foco de atención en el cuerpo.

### **Discusión General**

Las mujeres son contratadas en menor medida para trabajos típicamente masculinos y además los contratos a los que acceden son de menor duración, lo que provoca que haya una discrepancia entre los trabajos a los que aspiran las mujeres por su preparación y los trabajos para los que son contratadas (Uhlmann y Siberzahn, 2014). Esta discriminación laboral refuerza la desigualdad de género y mantiene el estatus quo de hombres y mujeres a nivel social. Este estudio se ha centrado en analizar la discriminación en el proceso de decisión de contratación a través del fenómeno de cosificación sexual. Por ello, se ha analizado la importancia de factores tradicionalmente relacionados con la cosificación sexual, como la ropa que lleva la candidata, el tipo de trabajo al que aspira, la motivación sexual del seleccionador hacia la candidata, o la ideología sexista del mismo, en la intención de contratar a una candidata.

Los resultados este trabajo, tomados en su conjunto, muestran que la intención de contratar a una candidata depende de la competencia que se le atribuya, debido a la atribución mental que se le asigna, independientemente cómo de sexualizada se presente ésta (Estudio 1). Así como, la importancia del sexismo hostil en la relación negativa entre competencia y motivación sexual, independientemente de cómo la candidata vaya vestida (Estudio 1). Por otro lado, los resultados muestran, el importante papel de la ideología sexista hostil en la decisión de contratar a una mujer para un trabajo no sexualizado (Estudio 2). Por lo que, la ideología hostil hacia las mujeres, hace que se pueda penalizar a la candidata sexualizada con una menor intención de contratarla para trabajos no sexualizados, a la vez que hace que se pueda instrumentalizar a las mujeres en general, asignándoles una menor competencia, y aumentando el deseo de tener una relación sexual con ellas.

En relación a la influencia que la ropa tiene en el proceso de selección de personal, en ambos estudios, se ha explorado la importancia que vestir de manera sexualizada (versus no sexualizada) tiene en dicho proceso. Los resultados del primer estudio mostraron que vestir de manera sexualizada va a afectar negativamente a la competencia asignada a dicha candidata. Sin embargo, la manipulación más sutil en la ropa de la candidata no fue suficiente para generar los estereotipos sobre la competencia de una mujer en un contexto laboral (Estudio 2). Por otro lado, centrándonos en el análisis de los ambientes laborales que rodean a cada profesión (sexualizados o no), y cómo el juicio sobre una candidata va a depender del tipo de trabajo al que esté aspirando, los resultados de este estudio muestran cómo al presentar a una mujer

sexualizada podría ser penalizada en un proceso de selección ya que podría haber una menor intención de contratarla en trabajos cuyos contextos no incentivan el uso del cuerpo de la mujer (Estudio 2).

Una de las principales limitaciones del presente estudio es el tipo de población utilizada, toda ella universitaria. Consideramos necesario replicar el estudio con población general para poder generalizar los resultados de esta investigación. Además sería necesario incluir preguntas destinadas a evaluar la deseabilidad social de los participantes, ya que para muchos de ellos, los comportamientos más explícitos de cosificación sexual no son deseados socialmente, pudiendo sesgar los resultados obtenidos. Por último, futuros estudios deben ir encaminados a mejorar la manipulación en el atuendo que presenta el/la candidata/a, de manera que active los estereotipos encontrados a través de la manipulación más explícita y utilizar medidas implícitas que evalúen la cosificación sexual.

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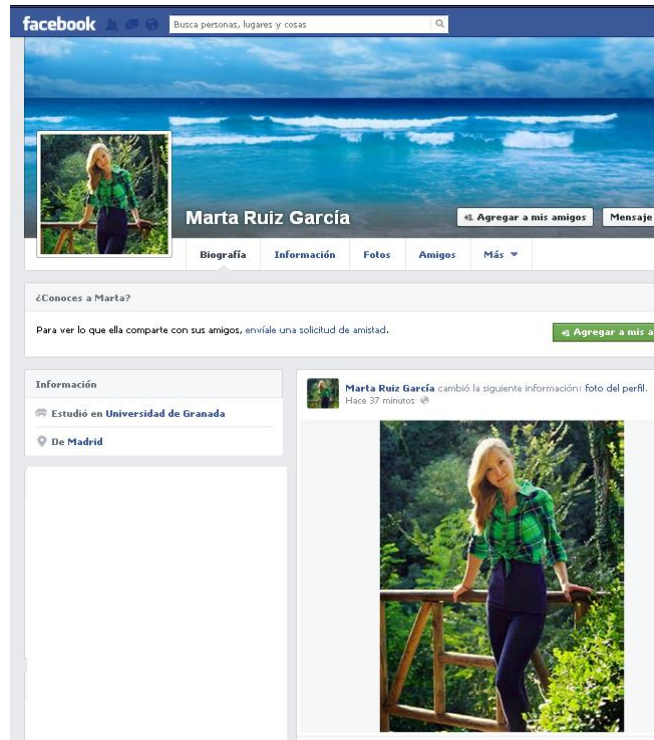
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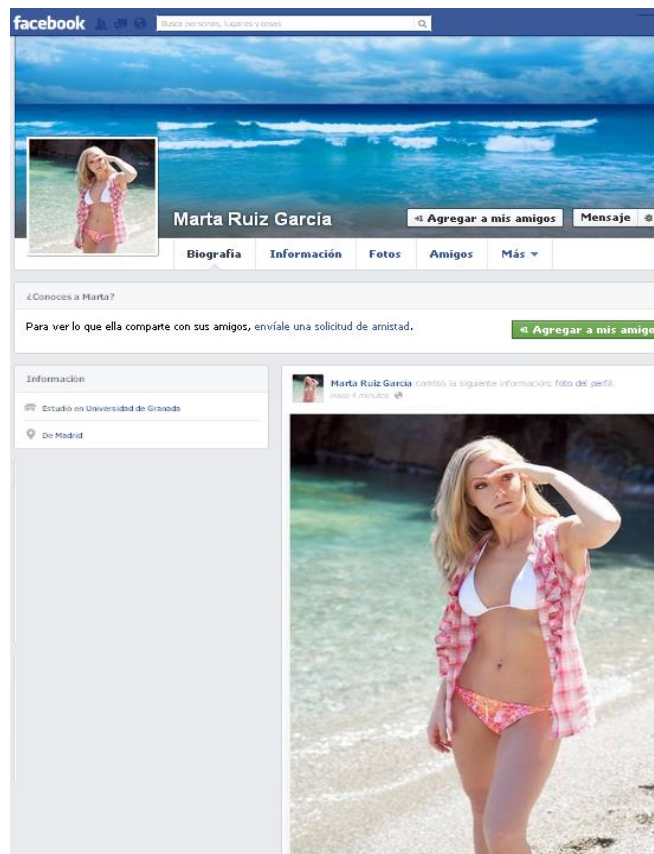


Anexo1: Material utilizado en el Estudio 1

Condición no sexualizada:



Condición sexualizada:





Anexo 2: Material utilizado en el Estudio 2

Candidata mujer:

Candidata no sexualizada:

Candidata sexualizada



Candidato hombre:

Candidato no sexualizado:

Candidato sexualizado:





*Chapter 10:*

**DISCUSSION**



The psychosocial approach throughout this doctoral thesis aims to study, from a gender perspective, the phenomenon of interpersonal sexual objectification, analysing the influence of cultural and ideological elements on the psychological consequences of sexual objectification for the welfare of women. The overall objective of this project has been to study the experiences of sexual objectification as understood in terms of manifestations of patriarchy at a (interpersonal) micro level, that allow, promote, and legitimize the maintenance of gender inequality. To this end, 2 theoretical chapters (Chapters I and II) and 7 empirical chapters, have analysed the interactions of sexual objectification from, firstly, the point of view of women as objects of sexual objectification (Chapters IV, V, VI and VII) and, secondly, from the point of view of men as both objects and perpetrators of such experiences (Chapters VIII and IX).

To address the objectives of this work, it is necessary, first, to have valid measures that are adapted to the Spanish cultural context. Thus, **Chapter III** (Study 1) aimed to adapt and validate a measure to evaluate the experiences of sexual objectification in the lives of women, to thus have a valid and reliable instrument in Spain. Psychometric testing of the scale of Interpersonal Sexual Objectification (ISOS) has demonstrated adequate validity of the constructs proposed by the authors of the original scale (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007), and the relationship with expected variables (benevolent sexism, anxiety and self-esteem). The ISOS scale has two dimensions: Body evaluation and explicit unwanted sexual advances. Both dimensions refer to manifestations of sexual objectification experiences of varying severity and allow us to analyze the differential impact of different types of experiences on the welfare of women. Based on these considerations, the first empirical chapter of this thesis has provided the first instrument adapted and validated in Spain (Lozano, Valor-Segura, Sáez, & Expósito, 2015) to assess interpersonal sexual objectification, and its psychometric properties, providing methodological support for the studies presented in this thesis.

As discussed above, the gender perspective adopted throughout the development of this thesis leads us to consider the experiences of sexual objectification as manifestations of gender discrimination, and therefore, whilst they can be applied to both men and women, will affect each of them differentially. From this perspective, **Chapter IV** (Study 2) allows us to conclude that sexual objectification is not equal for men and women, in terms of either the experiences of objectification when both are the object, or the consequences that this phenomenon has for each gender. First, women report being subject to a greater number of experiences of sexual objectification in their interpersonal relationships (Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2012), and even report having been exposed to twice the number of sexist events than men (Swim Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). Second, the results of this second study have shown that a significant difference between men and women regarding sexual objectification is the role that the enjoyment of these experiences plays for both genders. As shown by the results of this study, enjoyment of the experience of sexual objectification causes men to increase their sense of power, whilst when women enjoy experiences of sexual objectification, it leads to greater assimilation of benevolent sexism (Sáez et al., 2012). In this second study, in which both the frequency of sexual objectification experiences and the consequences of these for both men and women were compared, we can begin to see the importance of sexist ideology in the phenomenon of female sexual objectification. The role of benevolent

sexism in the phenomenon of sexual objectification is closely related to the benefits that this ideology gives the women themselves (Glick & Fiske, 1996), so that sexual attention from males can become an indicator for women to gain certain benefits (Lisss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011). Therefore, the object of Chapters V, VI and VII has been to provide a deeper understanding of the role played by benevolent sexism in the consequences of sexual objectification experiences.

In order to explore in more depth the role of benevolent sexism in sexual objectification and to analyze whether there are cultural differences in this phenomenon, **Chapter V** (Study 3) aimed to conduct a cross-cultural study comparing Cuba and Spain. Empirical evidence highlights Cuba as a country with great adherence to sexist ideology and beliefs that legitimize gender inequality (Glick et al., 2000; Valor-Segura, Expósito, Moya, & Lopez, 2014). Therefore, Study 3 began from the hypothesis that in countries where there are higher levels of sexism and inequality, there will be greater sexual objectification, and the consequences will be more severe compared with countries where levels of sexism are lower. As expected, the results of this cross-cultural study have shown that there is a positive relationship between reporting more experiences of sexual objectification and greater internalisation of the objectification, and that this relationship is moderated by country of origin, so that this effect was found only in the most sexist country (Cuba). In addition, the results showed that this relationship is explained by benevolent sexism, demonstrating once again the importance of this ideology in understanding this phenomenon. Similarly, the results of Study 3 showed that the internalization of sexual objectification of Cuban women explains the relationship between increased exposure to experiences of sexual objectification and the greater appearance of anxiety. In relation to another major objective of this cultural comparison, there was an attempt to study the relationship between being subject to sexual objectification experiences and self-silencing in both countries. The results demonstrate that sexual objectification experiences are, in both countries, linked to greater self-censorship, as well as the influence of benevolent sexism in this relationship. Thus, the experiences of sexual objectification cause women to become inhibited when expressing their thoughts (self-silencing) through the assimilation of traditional gender roles, regardless of country of origin. Taken together, the results of Study 3 allow us to suggest that the cultural context and the very sexist ideology in that context are key to understanding the impact of the phenomenon of sexual objectification on women (Glick et al., 2000; Loughnan et al., 2015).

The experiences of sexual objectification are explanatory variables of the fact that women experience psychological distress (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). However, it should be considered that the experiences of gender discrimination may vary in intensity, which undoubtedly influences the ability of women to identify them, and how they impact on their psychological well-being. As a result of the social changes that have promoted equality between men and women, the latter are today better able to identify the most explicit forms of sexism (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). However, interactions of sexual objectification are types of situations that do not fit the prototype of sexist situations to use, and that causes women to not identify them as such (Riemer, Chaudoir, & Earnshaw, 2014). Like other forms of sexism, manifestations of sexual objectification run along a continuum, from the more subtle (body



evaluation) to the most explicit (unwanted explicit sexual advances) (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The aim of **Chapter VI** (Studies 4 and 5), was to analyze the effects of the different types of sexual objectification experiences on the psychological well-being of women, and determine the role of sexist ideology in this process. The results of Study 4 show, on the one hand, how the most extreme forms of sexual objectification (unwanted explicit sexual advances) have a negative impact on the anxiety levels of women. On the other hand, the more subtle forms of sexual objectification (body evaluation) have a positive impact on anxiety levels for women that accept benevolent sexism (Sáez, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, in press). In addition, the results have shown that women who enjoy sexualization to a greater extent come to increase their self-esteem when they are subject to more of these experiences (Sáez et al., in press). This apparent positive effect of more subtle experiences of sexual objectification and enjoyment thereof, can not be considered a factor that is protective against the adverse psychological consequences that such experiences have on the health of women (Liss et al., 2011). Specifically, the positive effect of the experiences of sexual objectification on self-esteem is due to the rewards of a benevolent sexism ideology, which causes women who adhere to this ideology to remain in a position of inferiority in the hope of receiving such rewards.

The results of Study 5 are able to show the indirect effect of benevolent sexism on the relationship between sexual objectification and the self-censorship of thoughts and feelings, showing that self-censorship derived from the experiences of sexual objectification to which women are subjected can be explained by adherence to the benevolent sexism that justifies the suppression of thoughts and feelings in order to maintain the relationship with the man. The results of this Chapter VI, as a whole, suggest that being subjected to sexual objectification experiences is related to: a) positive subjective effects in women (Breines, Crocker, & Garcia, 2008); b) a reduced ability to express feelings and thoughts in an interpersonal relationship, which can ultimately be linked to more psychological distress (Hurst & Beesley, 2013). Like sexism, the ambivalence of the phenomenon of sexual objectification is reflected in the fact that enjoyment of sexualization is linked to an increased level of self-silencing (Sáez et al., in press), which allows us to again conclude that the enjoyment of sexual objectification experiences can not be considered as a preventive or positive element, but rather an element that maintains or contributes to keeping women in a submissive role in their interpersonal relationships (Liss et al., 2011).

As described above, the results of Chapter VI indicate that positive feelings associated with experiences of more subtle sexual objectification (less anxiety, enhanced self-esteem, and enjoyment of sexualization), and the results of Chapter V inform us of the important role of benevolent sexism. Investigation into the idea that female sexual objectification is a form of discrimination and violence against women, despite causing them feelings that could be construed as positive or pleasurable, was carried out in **Chapter VII** (Studies 6 and 7) with the aim of analyzing the influence of benevolent sexism on the relationship between sexual objectification and the power experienced by women. The results of both studies have shown that women with higher benevolent sexism, come to experience an increased sense of power, both towards men in general (Study 6) and the man with which they interact (Study 7),

following a sexual objectification experience. This result is consistent with previous results, and can be taken to reflect an increase in the welfare of benevolent sexist women as a result of exposure to sexual objectification. The sense of power experienced by benevolent sexist women, has its origin in the dyadic power that women privately possess in their relationships with men (Glick & Fiske, 1996), although in the public sphere women continue to be relegated to second place, as shown by the social subordination that they suffer as a result of sexual objectification (Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2010). The results of Chapter VII (Studies 6 and 7) provide empirical evidence concerning the authenticity of power experienced by women through sexualization, which is the axis of the current feminist debate on sexuality and power (Lamb & Peterson, 2012).

To conclude the first block of empirical chapters, the results from seven studies using samples of different origins and characteristics, allow us to confirm the complexity of the phenomenon of sexual objectification. Sometimes women can find themselves in an ongoing conflict between the short-term benefits to be gained from being treated as sex objects, allowing women who have accepted male admiration to experience reduced anxiety, enhanced self-concept and a greater sense of power following a sexual objectification experience. However, in the long term, women who are subjected to sexual objectification are at risk of mental health problems (Szymanski, Carr, & Moffitt, 2011) preventing them from expressing their views, and maintaining them in a situation of social inequality (Calogero, 2013).

Finally, in Chapters VIII and IX of the thesis, the perspective of the man was adopted to analyse the variables that predict the perpetration of sexual objectification and the implications of sexually objectifying women. **Chapter VIII** (Study 8) analyzed the individual and ideological variables associated with increased perpetration of sexual objectification. The results of Study 8 have shown that lower empathy produces a predisposition towards the sexual objectification of women. As has been discussed throughout this thesis, there are two forms of sexual objectification that differ in their severity. While myths regarding sexual harassment show great explanatory value between less empathy and more perpetration of the most extreme forms of sexual objectification (unwanted explicit sexual advances), hostile sexism showed great explanatory power in the relationship between lower empathy and more subtle manifestations of sexual objectification (body evaluation). In conclusion, this eighth study highlights the importance of individual variables (empathy) and the most hostile beliefs towards women (hostile sexism and myths of sexual harassment) in using them as sex objects. A lack of empathy, in this case, is a variable with high predictive value for the lower attribution of humanity towards members of an outgroup (Fiske, 2009), particularly to women, who, through the assimilation of hostile beliefs about them as a group legitimizes discriminatory treatment towards them.

But, what effect does sexually objectifying women have from the viewpoint of alleged gender equality? This was the research question with which this thesis closed, and in order to investigate this, we moved towards a work context. The reason that this context was chosen is because the workplace is an area historically dominated by the male gender and is one that reinforces gender inequality (Gorman,

2005), having been the subject of particular interest for experts in the fight against discrimination (eg. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of USA). To study the role of sexual objectification in gender inequality in the workplace, **Chapter IX** (Studies 9 and 10) focused on analyzing the effect of the sexualization of women (defined as the accentuation of their sexuality), and the ideology of man on making a decision on an alleged candidate in a personnel selection process. The results of Study 9 demonstrated the negative impact of sexualization on the judgment made about the candidate (ascribing less competence). In addition, the results showed that there is an indirect relationship through mental attribution, between the competence attributed to the candidate and the intention to hire her, and this effect appears both when it comes to a sexualized candidate and when a candidate appears to be non-sexualized that is, the lower levels of mental attribution to a woman play an important role in the decision to hire her, regardless of her level of sexualization. Finally, the results of this study show how sexual motivation is an important element that relates to sexual objectification (Vaes et al., 2011). Thus, lower competence assigned to the candidate is associated with greater sexual desire towards her, regardless of how she is dressed (sexualized or not), which is explained by hostile beliefs towards women.

Study 10 has shown how a more subtle manipulation of the sexualization of a candidate (one shirt buttoned or not) has a negative effect on participants more hostile sexist ideology. Thus, those participants with higher hostile sexist beliefs towards women have less intention of hiring a sexualized candidate (versus non-sexualized) for jobs that do not usually lend themselves to sexual objectification (eg. Library assistant or postwoman).

This series of studies has focused on analyzing employment discrimination in recruitment through the phenomenon of sexual objectification, concluding that the way women dress, the job to which they aspire, and the sexual motivation and sexist ideology of the interviewer can influence decision-making in a recruitment process. Chapters VIII and IX, taken together, show how hostile sexist ideology plays a key role, both as a predictor of the perpetration of sexual objectification, and as a variable that moderates the impact of sexual objectification on women. A sexually objectified woman, could activate in hostile sexist men the negative feminine stereotype of *femme fatale* (Sibley & Wilson, 2004), which is associated with negative behaviors towards her, protected in the hostile belief that women want to take advantage of men by using their feminine wiles and sexuality (Glick & Fiske, 1997). However, the results show that, more important than how women dress, is the ideology held by the man who assesses them for a particular job.

## CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The work collected over 7 chapters (a total of 10 studies) show the importance of ideological variables in the phenomenon of sexual objectification. The justification of the system plays an important role in the relationship between benevolent sexism and sexual objectification (Calogero & Jost, 2011), as this theory applied to gender relations explains how the ideology that justifies inequality between men and women comes to affect the behavior and attitudes of women themselves, leading them to accept, without disrupting the status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Therefore, positive emotions and sensations (reduced anxiety, increased self-esteem and sense of power) experienced by benevolent sexist women following the experiences of sexual objectification, are the result of the efforts of women to accept their situation (Jost, Pelham, & Caravallo, 2002) even though this relegates them to a position of inferiority (Saguy et al., 2010) and renders them less able to express their feelings and thoughts (Saez et al., in press).

In addition, there is a relationship between greater assimilation of justification of gender inequality and the perception of the interactions of sexual objectification as benign (Saunders, Scaturro, Buarino, & Kelly, 2016), which also relates to greater internalization of sexual objectification (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008) and can weaken women when dealing with gender discrimination. Confronting the experiences of sexual objectification, like any other experience of discrimination, is a process that involves expressing dissatisfaction with the discriminatory treatment that a person is exercising (Kaiser & Miller, 2004). The way that women have to face the experiences of sexual objectification depends on the assessment made of these experiences, and is strongly conditioned by the sexist ideology that women possess, which also determines the consequences that these sexual objectification experiences can have for their mental health (Faichild & Rudman, 2008). An assertive response by women to comments about their appearance, rather than the passive response that they often give (Tylka & Augustus-Horvath, 2011), can increase the real power of women, mitigating the negative psychological consequences of sexual objectification.

All of the results presented in this study allow us to conclude that the reducing the treatment of women as sex objects will inevitably occur by reducing the sexist ideology that justifies and legitimizes such behavior. At the same time, we should work on an intervention focused on changing the emotions associated with experiences of sexual objectification, and changing the mindsets that lead to the blaming of women for sexual objectification (Tylka & Augustus-Horvath, 2011). Social policies should include programs aimed at reducing the frequency with which men treat women as sex objects, as well as interventions aimed at changing attitudes, as the most effective way to change this behavior. Therefore, research and intervention focused on the more subtle forms of violence against women is needed by researchers and mental health experts, with the aim of achieving a more egalitarian society in which the value of people is simply the same.

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## **DISCUSIÓN**



El enfoque psicosocial adoptado a lo largo de esta tesis doctoral ha pretendido, desde una perspectiva de género, el estudio del fenómeno de la cosificación sexual interpersonal, analizando la influencia de elementos culturales e ideológicos en las consecuencias psicológicas que la cosificación sexual tiene en el bienestar de las mujeres. El objetivo general de este proyecto ha sido el estudio de las experiencias de cosificación sexual entendidas como manifestaciones del patriarcado, a nivel microsocio (interpersonal), que permiten, promueven y legitiman el mantenimiento de la desigualdad de género. Para ello, a lo largo de 2 capítulos teóricos (Capítulos I y II) y 7 capítulos empíricos, se han analizado las interacciones de cosificación sexual desde, en primer lugar, el punto de vista de la mujer como objeto de la cosificación sexual (Capítulos IV, V, VI y VII) y, en segundo lugar, desde el punto de vista del hombre como objeto y como perpetrador de dichas experiencias (Capítulos VIII y IX).

Para abordar los objetivos propuestos en este trabajo, es necesario, en primer lugar, contar con medidas adaptadas y validadas en el contexto cultural español. Así, el **Capítulo III** (Estudio 1) ha tenido como objetivo adaptar y validar una medida que evalúe las experiencias de cosificación sexual en la vida de las mujeres, y contar así con un instrumento válido y fiable en España. Las pruebas psicométricas de la escala de Cosificación Sexual Interpersonal (ISOS) han demostrado una adecuada validez de los constructos propuestos por los autores de la escala original (Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath y Denchik, 2007), y de la relación con variables esperadas (sexismo benévolo, ansiedad y autoestima). La escala ISOS tiene dos dimensiones: evaluación corporal y avances sexuales explícitos no deseados. Ambas dimensiones, hacen referencia a manifestaciones de distinta severidad de las experiencias de cosificación sexual, y nos permiten analizar el impacto diferencial de los distintos tipos de experiencias en el bienestar de las mujeres. Por todo esto, el primer capítulo empírico de esta tesis ha aportado el primer instrumento adaptado y validado en España (Lozano, Valor-Segura, Sáez y Expósito, 2015) para evaluar cosificación sexual interpersonal, y sus propiedades psicométricas constituyen un apoyo metodológico para los estudios presentados en esta tesis doctoral.

Como se ha comentado anteriormente, la perspectiva de género adoptada a lo largo del desarrollo de la tesis, nos lleva a considerar las experiencias de cosificación sexual como manifestaciones de discriminación de género, y por lo tanto, si bien pueden aplicarse a hombres y mujeres, afectarán de manera diferencial a unos y otros. Desde este prisma, el

**Capítulo IV** (Estudio 2) permite concluir que la cosificación sexual no es igual para hombres que para mujeres, ni en las experiencias de cosificación de la que ambos son objeto, ni en las consecuencias que dicho fenómeno tiene para cada género. En primer lugar, las mujeres informan de ser objeto de un mayor número de experiencias de cosificación sexual en sus relaciones interpersonales (Sáez, Valor-Segura y Expósito, 2012), llegando incluso, a manifestar el doble de eventos sexistas que los hombres (Swim, Hyers, Cohen y Ferguson, 2001). En segundo lugar, los resultados de este segundo estudio han mostrado que, una diferencia importante entre hombres y mujeres en relación a la cosificación sexual, es el papel que el disfrute de estas experiencias tiene para ambos géneros. Tal como muestran los resultados de este estudio, disfrutar de las experiencias de cosificación sexual hace que los hombres aumente su sensación de poder, mientras que en las mujeres, disfrutar de experiencias de cosificación sexual, lleva a una mayor asimilación de ideología sexista benévola (Sáez et al., 2012). En este segundo estudio, en el que se compararon tanto la frecuencia de experiencias de cosificación sexual como las consecuencias derivadas de las mismas en hombres y mujeres, ya se vislumbra la importancia de la ideología sexista en el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual femenina. El papel del sexismo benévolo en el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual tiene una estrecha relación con los beneficios que esta ideología les aporta a las propias mujeres (Glick y Fiske, 1996), de manera que, la atención sexual masculina puede llegar a convertirse en un indicador para las mujeres, de la consecución de ciertos beneficios (Liss, Erchull y Ramsey, 2011). Por ello, el objeto de los Capítulos V, VI y VII ha sido profundizar en el rol que el sexismo benévolo tiene en las consecuencias de las experiencias de cosificación sexual.

Con el objetivo de seguir profundizando en el papel que el sexismo benévolo tiene en la cosificación sexual y analizar si existen diferencias culturales ante este fenómeno, el **Capítulo V** (Estudio 3) ha tenido como objetivo realizar un estudio transcultural comparando Cuba y España. La evidencia empírica destaca Cuba como un país con gran adherencia a la ideología sexista y a las creencias que legitiman la desigualdad de género (Glick et al., 2000; Valor-Segura, Expósito, Moya y López, 2014). Por lo tanto, el Estudio 3 ha partido de la hipótesis que en países donde haya mayores niveles de sexismo y desigualdad, habrá mayor cosificación sexual, y las consecuencias serán más graves, en comparación con países donde los niveles de sexismo sean menores. Tal como se esperaba, los resultados de este estudio transcultural han mostrado que hay una relación positiva entre informar de mayor número de experiencias de cosificación sexual y una mayor

interiorización de la cosificación, y que dicha relación estaba moderada por el país de origen, de manera que dicho efecto se encontró sólo en el país más sexista (Cuba). Además, los resultados mostraron que dicha relación se encuentra explicada por el sexismo benévolo, lo que demuestra una vez más, la importancia de dicha ideología en la comprensión de este fenómeno. Así mismo, los resultados del Estudio 3 han mostrado que, la interiorización de la cosificación sexual de las mujeres cubanas, explica la relación entre mayor exposición a experiencias de cosificación sexual y una mayor ansiedad de apariencia. En relación a otro de los grandes objetivos de esta comparación cultural, se pretendía estudiar la relación entre ser objeto de experiencias de cosificación sexual y el autosilencio en ambos países. Los resultados han mostrado que las experiencias de cosificación sexual se relacionan en ambos países con mayor autocensura, así como la influencia de la ideología sexista benévola en dicha relación. Así, las experiencias de cosificación sexual hacen que las mujeres se inhiban de expresar sus pensamientos (autosilencio) a través de la asimilación de los roles de género tradicionales, independientemente del país de origen. Tomados en su conjunto, los resultados del Estudio 3 nos permiten señalar que el contexto cultural y la ideología sexista propia de dicho contexto, son un elemento fundamental para entender el impacto que, el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual, tiene en las mujeres (Glick et al., 2000; Loughnan et al., 2015).

Las experiencias de cosificación sexual son variables explicativas del hecho de que las mujeres experimenten malestar psicológico (McKinley y Hyde, 1996). Sin embargo, hay que considerar que las experiencias de discriminación sexistas pueden variar en su intensidad, lo que sin duda influye tanto en la capacidad de las mujeres para identificarlas, cómo en el impacto que éstas tienen en su bienestar psicológico. Como consecuencia de los cambios sociales que promueven la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres, éstas últimas hoy día, son más capaces de identificar las formas más explícitas de sexismo (Barreto y Ellemers, 2005). Sin embargo, las interacciones de cosificación sexual son un tipo de situaciones que no encajan en el prototipo de situaciones sexistas al uso, y que provoca que las mujeres no las identifiquen como tales (Riemer, Chaudoir y Earnshaw, 2014). Al igual que otras formas de sexismo, las manifestaciones de cosificación sexual se sitúan en un continuo, desde aquellas más sutiles (evaluación corporal) a las más explícitas (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados) (Fredrickson y Roberts, 1997). El objetivo del **Capítulo VI** (Estudios 4 y 5), ha sido el análisis que los distintos tipos de experiencias de cosificación sexual tienen en el bienestar psicológico de las mujeres, y determinar el rol de la ideología sexista en dicho proceso. Los resultados del Estudio 4 muestran, por un lado, cómo las

formas más extremas de cosificación sexual (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados) tienen un impacto negativo en los niveles de ansiedad de las mujeres. Por otro lado, las formas más sutiles de cosificación sexual (evaluación corporal) tienen un impacto positivo en los niveles de ansiedad de las mujeres más sexistas benévolas (Sáez, Valor-Segura y Expósito, en prensa). Además, los resultados han mostrado que las mujeres que disfrutan, en mayor medida, de la sexualización, ven aumentado su autoconcepto al ser objeto de mayor número de estas experiencias (Sáez et al., en prensa). Este aparente efecto positivo de las experiencias más sutiles de cosificación sexual y el disfrute de las mismas, no puede ser considerado un factor protector de las consecuencias psicológicas adversas que tales experiencias tienen en la salud de las mujeres (Liss et al., 2011). Específicamente, el efecto positivo de las experiencias de cosificación sexual en el autoconcepto, se debe a las recompensas propias de la ideología sexista benévola, y que hace, que las mujeres que se adhieren a dicha ideología, se mantengan en una posición de inferioridad, con la esperanza de recibir dichas recompensas.

Los resultados del Estudio 5 muestran el efecto indirecto del sexismo benévolo en la relación entre la cosificación sexual y la autocensura de los propios pensamientos y sentimientos, mostrando que la autocensura derivada de las experiencias de cosificación sexual a las que las mujeres están sometidas, se explica por la adherencia a la ideología sexista benévola, que justifica la supresión de pensamientos y sentimientos con el objetivo de mantener la relación con el hombre. Los resultados de este Capítulo VI, en su conjunto, reflejan que ser objeto de experiencias de cosificación sexual está relacionado con: a) consecuencias subjetivas positivas en las mujeres (Breines, Crocker y Garcia, 2008); b) una menor capacidad de expresar los sentimientos y pensamientos en una relación interpersonal, lo que se ha relacionado en última instancia, con mayor malestar psicológico (Hurst y Beesley, 2013). Al igual que el sexismo, la ambivalencia del fenómeno de la cosificación sexual se refleja en el hecho de que disfrutar de la sexualización se relaciona con un mayor autosilencio (Sáez et al., en prensa), lo que nos permite concluir de nuevo, que el disfrute de las experiencias de cosificación sexual no puede ser considerado como un elemento preventivo o positivo, sino un elemento que mantiene o contribuye a mantener a las mujeres en el papel de sumisión en sus relaciones interpersonales (Liss et al., 2011).

Los resultados del Capítulo VI han advertido de sensaciones positivas asociadas a experiencias de cosificación sexual más sutiles (menor ansiedad, autoestima más reforzada y disfrute de la sexualización), y los resultados del Capítulo V nos informan del importante

rol del sexismo benévolo. Pues bien, ahondando en la idea de que la cosificación sexual femenina es una forma de discriminación y violencia contra las mujeres, pese a que cause en ellas sensaciones que podrían entenderse como positivas o placenteras, se llevó a cabo el **Capítulo VII** (Estudios 6 y 7) con el objetivo de analizar la influencia del sexismo benévolo en la relación entre la cosificación sexual y el poder experimentado por las mujeres. Los resultados de ambos estudios han mostrado que, las mujeres con una mayor ideología sexista benévola, ven aumentada su sensación de poder, tanto hacia los hombres en general (Estudio 6) cómo hacia el hombre con el que interactúan (Estudio 7), tras una experiencia de cosificación sexual. Este resultado, es acorde con los resultados previos, y reflejan un aumento del bienestar en las mujeres sexistas benévolas como consecuencia de la exposición a la cosificación sexual. La sensación de poder experimentada por las mujeres sexistas benévolas, tiene su origen en el poder diádico que las mujeres poseen a nivel privado, en sus relaciones interpersonales con los hombres (Glick y Fiske, 1996), aunque en la esfera pública, las mujeres siguen relegadas en un segundo lugar, reflejándose en la subordinación social que éstas sufren como consecuencia de la cosificación sexual (Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio y Pratto, 2010). Los resultados del Capítulo VII (Estudios 6 y 7) aportan evidencia empírica sobre la autenticidad del poder que experimentan las mujeres a través de la sexualización, y que constituye el eje del debate feminista actual sobre sexualidad y poder (Lamb y Peterson, 2012).

Como conclusión del primer bloque de capítulos empíricos, los resultados de los siete estudios realizados con muestras de distinta procedencia y características, nos permiten concluir la complejidad del fenómeno de la cosificación sexual. En ocasiones, las mujeres pueden encontrarse en un continuo conflicto entre los beneficios que a corto plazo pueden obtener por ser tratadas como objetos sexuales, llevando a aquellas mujeres que han aceptado la admiración masculina, a reducir su ansiedad, aumentar su autoconcepto y tener una mayor sensación de poder tras una interacción de cosificación sexual. Sin embargo, a largo plazo, las mujeres que son objeto de cosificación sexual, están en riesgo de sufrir problemas mentales (Szymanski, Carr y Moffitt, 2011) y les impide expresar sus puntos de vista, manteniéndolas en una situación de desigualdad social (Calogero, 2013).

Por último, en los **Capítulos VIII y IX** de la tesis se adoptó la perspectiva del hombre, para analizar las variables que predicen la perpetración de la cosificación sexual, así como las implicaciones que tiene cosificar sexualmente a una mujer. En el **Capítulo VIII** (Estudio 8) se analizaron las variables individuales e ideológicas que se asocian con una

mayor perpetración de la cosificación sexual. Los resultados del Estudio 8, han mostrado que una menor empatía predispone a cosificar sexualmente a las mujeres. Tal como se ha discutido a lo largo de esta tesis, hay dos formas de cosificar sexualmente y que se diferencian por su severidad. Mientras que los mitos hacia el acoso sexual mostraron un gran valor explicativo entre una menor empatía y mayor perpetración de las formas más extremas de cosificación sexual (avances sexuales explícitos no deseados), el sexismo hostil mostró un gran valor explicativo en la relación entre una menor empatía y mayor número de manifestaciones sutiles de cosificación sexual (evaluación corporal). Como conclusión, este octavo estudio pone de manifiesto la importancia de variables individuales (empatía) y las creencias más hostiles hacia las mujeres (sexismo hostil y mitos hacia el acoso sexual) en la utilización de éstas como objetos sexuales. La falta de empatía, en este caso, es una variable con gran valor predictivo en la menor atribución de humanidad a los miembros del exogrupo (Fiske, 2009), concretamente a las mujeres, que a través de la asimilación de creencias hostiles sobre ellas como grupo, legitima un trato discriminatorio hacia ellas.

Pero, ¿qué efecto tiene cosificar sexualmente a las mujeres en un panorama de supuesta igualdad de género? Esta fue la pregunta de investigación con la que se cierra esta tesis doctoral, y para ello nos trasladamos a un contexto laboral. La razón por la que se eligió éste contexto, es porque el ámbito laboral, constituye un ámbito históricamente dominado por el género masculino y que refuerza la desigualdad de género (Gorman, 2005), habiendo sido objeto de especial interés por expertos en la lucha contra la discriminación (ej. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of U.S.A.). Para estudiar el papel de la cosificación sexual en la desigualdad de género en el ámbito laboral, el **Capítulo IX** (Estudios 9 y 10) se ha centrado en analizar el efecto que la sexualización de la mujer, definida como la acentuación de su sexualidad, y la ideología del hombre, tiene en la toma de decisión sobre una supuesta candidata en un proceso de selección de personal. Los resultados del Estudio 9 mostraron el efecto negativo de la sexualización en el juicio que se hace sobre la candidata (atribuyéndole menor competencia). Además, los resultados mostraron que hay una relación indirecta a través de atribución mental entre la competencia que se le asigna a la candidata y la intención de contratarla, y este efecto aparece tanto cuando se trata de una candidata sexualizada como cuando aparece una candidata no sexualizada. Es decir, la menor atribución mental que se atribuye a una mujer tiene un papel importante en la decisión de contratarla, independientemente de lo sexualizada que ésta esté. Por último, los resultados de este estudio muestran cómo la motivación sexual es un elemento importante que se relaciona con la cosificación sexual (Vaes et al., 2011). De



manera que una menor competencia asignada a la candidata lleva asociada un mayor deseo sexual hacia ella, independientemente de cómo vaya vestida (sexualizada o no), lo cual se explica por las creencias hostiles hacia las mujeres.

El Estudio 10 ha mostrado cómo una manipulación más sutil de la sexualización de una candidata (un botón de la camisa abrochado o no) tiene un efecto negativo en los participantes con mayor ideología sexista hostil. De manera que, aquellos participantes con mayores creencias sexistas hostiles hacia las mujeres, tienen una menor intención de contratar a una candidata sexualizada (versus no sexualizada) para trabajos no característicos de cosificación sexual (ej. ayudante de biblioteca o carterá).

Esta serie de estudios se ha centrado en analizar la discriminación laboral en la contratación de personal a través del fenómeno de cosificación sexual, concluyendo que la manera vestir de las mujeres, el trabajo al que aspiran, la motivación sexual e ideología sexista del entrevistador, pueden influir en la toma de decisiones en un proceso de selección de personal. Los Capítulos VIII y IX, en su conjunto, muestran cómo la ideología sexista hostil juega un papel fundamental, tanto como variable predictora de la perpetración de la cosificación sexual, y como variable que modera el impacto que cosificar sexualmente tiene en las mujeres. Una mujer sexualmente cosificada, podría activar en los hombres sexistas hostiles el estereotipo negativo femenino de mujer fatal (Sibley y Wilson, 2004), lo que lleva asociado comportamientos negativos hacia ella, amparado en la creencia hostil de que la mujer quiere aprovecharse de los hombres mediante el uso de sus armas de mujer y su sexualidad (Glick y Fiske, 1997). Sin embargo, los resultados muestran que más importante que el cómo la mujer vaya vestida, es la ideología que posea el hombre que va a juzgarla para un determinado puesto de trabajo.

## **CONCLUSIONES E IMPLICACIONES PRÁCTICAS**

Los trabajos recogidos a lo largo de los 7 Capítulos (un total de 10 Estudios), muestran la importancia de las variables ideológicas en el fenómeno de la cosificación sexual. La justificación del sistema juega un papel importante en la relación entre el sexismo benévolo y la cosificación sexual (Calogero y Jost, 2011), ya que esta teoría aplicada a las relaciones de género, explica cómo la ideología que justifica la desigualdad entre hombres y mujeres, llega a afectar al comportamiento y actitudes de las propias mujeres, llevándolas a aceptar, sin revelarse, el estatus quo (Jost y Banaji, 1994). Por ello, las emociones y

sensaciones positivas (reducción de la ansiedad, mayor autoestima y sensación de poder) que experimentan las mujeres sexistas benévolas tras las experiencias de cosificación sexual, son el resultado del esfuerzo femenino por aceptar su situación (Jost, Pelham y Caravallo, 2002) pese a que las relega a una posición de inferioridad (Saguy et al., 2010) y merma su capacidad para expresar sus sentimientos y pensamientos (Sáez et al., en prensa).

Además, existe una relación entre una mayor asimilación de justificación de la desigualdad de género y la percepción de las interacciones de cosificación sexual como benignas (Saunders, Scaturro, Buarino y Kelly, 2016), lo que se relaciona a su vez, con mayor interiorización de la cosificación sexual (Fairchild y Rudman, 2008) y que puede debilitar a la mujer a la hora de enfrentarse a la discriminación sexista. Confrontar las experiencias de cosificación sexual, como cualquier otra experiencia de discriminación, es un proceso que conlleva expresar la insatisfacción con el trato discriminatorio que una persona está ejerciendo (Kaiser y Miller, 2004). La manera que las mujeres tienen de enfrentarse a las experiencias de cosificación sexual depende de la evaluación que se haga de dichas experiencias, y está fuertemente condicionado por la ideología sexista que las mujeres posean, determinando, a su vez, las consecuencias que dichas experiencias de cosificación sexual tengan en su salud mental (Fairchild y Rudman, 2008). Una respuesta asertiva de las mujeres a los comentarios sobre su apariencia, en lugar de la respuesta pasiva que éstas suelen dar (Tylka y Augustus-Horvarth, 2011), aumentaría el poder real de las mujeres, mitigando las consecuencias psicológicas negativas de la cosificación sexual.

Todos los resultados expuestos en este trabajo, nos permiten concluir que la reducción del trato a la mujer como objeto sexual pasa inevitablemente, por la reducción de la ideología sexista que justifica y legitima dichos comportamientos. A la vez, habría que trabajar en una intervención centrada en el cambio de las emociones asociadas a las experiencias de cosificación sexual, modificando los esquemas mentales que llevan a culpar a las mujeres de la cosificación sexual (Tylka y Augustus-Horvarth, 2011). Es necesario incluir, en las políticas sociales, programas destinados a reducir la frecuencia con la que los hombres tratan a las mujeres como objetos sexuales, así como la intervención en cambio de actitudes como la forma más efectiva para cambiar dichos comportamientos. Por ello, investigación e intervención focalizada en las formas más sutiles de violencia contra la mujer es necesaria por parte de investigadores y expertos en salud mental, con el objetivo de conseguir una sociedad más igualitaria en la que el valor de las personas sea, simplemente el mismo.

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