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"It's funny if the group says so": Group norms moderate disparaging humor appreciation

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Abstract: We tested the hypothesis that group norms would have an effect on humor appreciation, specifically on ingroup disparaging humor. In this study ($N = 195$), participants were exposed to two humor conditions (neutral or ingroup disparaging humor) and to two group norms regarding humor appreciation (favoring or rejecting). Favoring group norm had a direct effect on the funniness scores. Moreover, an interaction effect of group norm and type of humor was found on the humor appreciation. When the group norm was rejecting, appreciation of the two different types of humor was different, whereas in the favoring group norm, no statistically significant differences were observed. Additionally, for the disparaging humor exposure, a favoring group norm promoted a greater acceptation of the stereotypical characteristics presented in the disparaging humor as realistic and representative of the ingroup. These results suggest that group norms act as important contextual information that influences disparaging humor appreciation.

Keywords: humor appreciation, group norms, disparaging humor, ingroup

1 Introduction

Humor expressions are shaped in specific social contexts (Kuipers 2008, 2009) and several studies have shown that both laughter and humor appreciation are socially influenced (Fridlund 1991; Provine 2000; Ruch 2007; Ruch and Ekman 2001; Smoski and Bachorowski 2003). As such, people take into account external social information to interpret humorous material. Specifically, group norms

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influence people's perceptions and behaviors (Bohner, Pina, Viki and Siebler 2010; Fein, Goethals and Kugler 2007; Goldstein, Cialdini and Griskevicius 2008; Olson and Roese 1995).

Past research has examined the effects of canned laughter on increased perception of funniness of humor (e.g., Cialdini 1993; Furnham et al. 2011; Porterfield et al. 1988), but it has not deepened our understanding of what happens when the content of humor is relevant for an ingroup. Also, the context in which humor takes place has shown to be determinant of how disparaging humor (i.e., sexist humor) is interpret and perceived as funny (Gray and Ford 2013). However, the effects of descriptive group norms—how most people behave in a given situation—on the appreciation of ingroup disparaging humor have not been yet studied.

In the present research, we aim to fill this gap by examining whether group descriptive norms have different effects on the appreciation of disparaging humor—a direct and obvious attack on a characteristic of a person or specific group that promotes entertainment through denigration (Ferguson and Ford. 2008; Ford and Ferguson 2004)—for member of the disparaged group. We also investigated whether group norms about how to perceive ingroup disparaging humor affects the degree to which group members endorse stereotypes about their ingroup.

2 Funniness and aversiveness in humor appreciation

When approaching to humor appreciation it is important to identify the properties of an event or stimulus thought to be essential in producing humor (Carretero-Dios et al. 2006; Weber et al. 2014). We consider two main perspectives: (a) a structure and content model (Ruch and Platt 2014) and (b) subjective mindset interpretation (Apter 1982; Wyer and Collins 1992).

2.1 Structure and content model

Ruch and colleagues (Ruch 1992; Ruch and Platt 2014; Ruch and Hehl 2010) proposed a two-mode model of humor appreciation considering a stimulus mode and a response mode in the understanding of humor appreciation.

The stimulus modes corresponds to the structural components that can be referred to: (a) incongruity-resolution humor (INC-RES), (b) nonsense humor

(NON) and (c) sexual humor (SEX). In each category the most important aspects of humor are highlighted. In the first one the incongruity can be completely resolved (McGhee et al. 1990), in the second one no resolution of the incongruity is observed (McGhee et al. 1990: 124), and the third category, SEX humor, may have either structure, but is homogeneous with respect to sexual content.

In the response mode two orthogonal components are distinguished: funniness and aversiveness. Funniness refers to the amusing quality or element in something, meanwhile aversiveness is understood as a personal positioning related to the humor content. A joke can be considered to be very funny and at the same time—because of personal preferences and moral reasons—it can be seen as very aversive (Ruch and Helh 1987; Ruch and Helh 2010). When analyzing the effects associated to humor exposure both components must be taken into account (Carretero-Dios et al. 2009; Weber et al. 2014).

2.2 Subjective mindset interpretation

A second approach to the study of humor appreciation is to locate the essential parts of humor in a person's subjective interpretation of an event or stimulus (e.g., Apter 1982; Wyer and Collins 1992). This position stresses the importance of understanding social information in terms of previously acquired concepts and general knowledge to perceive something as humorous. Apter's (1982) conceptualization of humor elicitation is one component of the more general theory of personality and motivation, and it takes into account both motivational and cognitive factors. Reversal theory states that the hedonic tone associated with different levels of arousal depends on the "metamotivational state" that an individual has at a specific moment. Different metamotivational states are proposed, but the pair most relevant to humor are the *telic* and *paratelic*. A person in a telic state is goal oriented and serious minded, whereas in a paratelic state one is focused on ongoing activity and is more playful.

Humor experiences involve both an increase in arousal and a reversal from the telic to the paratelic mode of functioning. This state of reversal is accomplished by means of playful, illogical, and incongruous juxtapositions of ideas, and individuals will seek out more pleasurable arousal and generally enjoy more humorous activity (Martin 1998). This has found support in Ruch's (1994) work indicating that individuals with a greater sense of humor tend more often to be in the paratelic state.

These theories provide a context for thinking about the importance and relevance of the responses to humor: funniness and aversiveness and positive or negative arousal. However, besides considering the stimuli and the responses,

it is also necessary to be aware of social norms in order to exhibit a coherent response to humor. According to Warren and McGraw (2016), appreciating something as humorous produces at least one of three responses: behavioral (e.g., laughing), cognitive (judging something as "funny"), or emotional (experiencing the positive emotion of amusement). Contextual information gives feedback about how to express behavioral, cognitive, and emotional responses. Specifically, judging something as funny or aversive depends not only of the stimulus itself but also to the social setting in which the humorous experience is taking place. Therefore, social norms are a key element when analyzing the effects of disparaging humor.

3 The role of social norms in humor appreciation

Norms are considered to guide action in direct and meaningful ways (Aarts and Dijksterhuis 2003; Bohner and Schlüter 2014; Rimal and Real 2005) and become particularly influential on behavior when these norms are relevant at the time a behavioral judgment is made (Cialdini et al. 1990; McDonald and Crandall 2015; Nolan et al. 2008).

The social context affects responses to a humor event by providing norms that guide our subjective reactions to a humor event. Gray and Ford (2013) found evidence that some contexts can facilitate the tolerance of disparaging humor, whereas others do not. A context informs an individual as to what behavior is expected or acceptable and it generates social norms. Social norms are shared standards that guide or constrain behavior (Cialdini and Trost 1998) and also an expectation of appropriate behavior that occurs in a group context (McDonald and Crandall 2015). Norms can be injunctive norms, which prescribe or prohibit certain behaviors, or descriptive norms, which contain information about how other people judge or act in a particular situation (Cialdini et al. 1991). Research has shown that communicating a descriptive norm via written information can induce conformity to the communicated behavior (Bohner, Siebler and Schmelcher, 2006; Crozier and Spink 2016; Fornara et al. 2011; Goldstein et al. 2008; Parks et al. 2001; Schultz 1999).

Additionally, Terry and Hogg (1996) proposed a model of normative influence that stressed the importance of ingroup norms. According to this theory, group norms should primarily affect behavior if the specified norms originate from a group that is a relevant source of social identity for an individual. Several studies have supported this view and highlighted that these effects are especially strong when people identified with the reference group (Terry and Hogg

1996; Terry et al. 1999), when people's group membership had been made salient (Wellen et al. 1998), or when the information comes from a close group (Bohner et al. 2010; Goldstein et al. 2008).

Specifically in humor research, the manipulation of norms has mostly been done regarding funniness of the stimulus. Experiments have found that the use of canned laughter influences an audience's responses to humor, such that when others' laughter is present there is a tendency to evaluate material as funnier (Fuller and Sheehy-Skeffigton 1974; Gruner 1993; Martin and Gray 1996; Platow et al. 2005).

Moreover, research on social influence and persuasion suggests that the information source is often an important determinant of its success (e.g., Petty and Cacioppo 1981; Turner 1991). In this sense, Platow et al. (2005) manipulated the presence or absence of canned laughter in a potentially humorous recording and also participants beliefs about who was laughing (ingroup or out-group members, or no laughter). They found that participants rated humorous material more favorably when they believed an ingroup was laughing rather than an out-group or heard no laughter at all. However, in this research, humorous material had identical—and ingroup irrelevant—content in all conditions. In this paper, we examined the effects of social norms on a type of humor with a specific content: disparaging humor.

Disparaging humor tends to be associated to more negative reactions (i.e., aversiveness or offensiveness) and is therefore more sensitive to changes in social norms than neutral humor (Ford and Ferguson 2004; Ford et al. 2008). Research has stated that when humor serves as a means by which groups can be denigrated, norms about a targeted group will determine which jokes offend and which delight (Crandall et al. 2002; Ford et al. 2013). Additionally, it has been pointed out that the conditions that facilitate normative influence are mainly those emphasizing the norm salience (Cialdini et al. 1991) and relevance of the group that the norm emanates from (Terry and Hogg 1996). In this sense, individuals report stronger intentions to engage in behaviors when group norms are made salient to show that the behavior is endorsed by and engaged in by other group members (Hogg and Smith 2007; Smith and Louis 2009).

So, how do norms affect our perceptions of a humor event? Norms give us implicit rules for how we should interpret a humor event; whether we should adopt a serious "telic" mindset or a non-serious "paratelic" mindset (e.g., Apter 1982; Berlyne 1972) and from that posture evaluate in which degree we considered a humor event to be funny and aversive. It important to bear in mind that people internalize beliefs about how things should be, and precisely disparaging humor include threats to those beliefs by questioning things that seem wrong or bad according to a social, linguistic, communication, or logic norm. Following

the benign violation theory (McGraw and Warren 2010), three conditions precede humor: (a) something must be appraised as a violation, (b) something must be appraised as benign, and (c) the appraisals must be simultaneously juxtaposed (McGraw and Warren 2010; McGraw, Warren, Williams and Leonard 2012; Veatch 1998; Warren and McGraw 2016).This theory proposes that humor occurs only when the violation is simultaneously appraised as being benign and there is nothing to worry about because the violation is harmless (McGraw and Warren 2010). Therefore, the violation should not be so strong or funniness will be lost, but at the same time it requires some arousal. Individuals must perceived ingroup disparaging humor as a benign violation in order to adopt a playful mindset to interpret the humor.

Disparaging humor changes external sources of self-regulation (Ford et al. 2015) and activates negative stereotypes leading to biases in social judgment (Ford 1997). Descriptive social norms (others' reactions to the humor) provide a relevant cue for people to perceive ingroup disparaging humor as benign or not. Therefore, social norms can have a powerful influence on ingroup relevant information such as disparaging humor but not in neutral humor in which group norm information is not as relevant.

4 The present study: Hypothesis and overview

This study was designed to examine the effects of making salient group norms (i.e., favoring/rejecting humor) on the appreciation of ingroup disparaging humor. Group norms were manipulated to give information about what the ingroup believes about ingroup disparaging humor. Additionally, given that most studies that have analyzed the effects of disparaging humor toward the ingroup have used sexist humor (e.g., Abrams and Bippus 2011; Ford 2000; Kochersberger et al. 2014), we decided to expand the study of disparaging humor exposure using a different ingroup: university students.

We hypothesized that group norms will affect humor appreciation, acting as an important cue to modulates one's responses to humor. Participants will tend to have a differentiated humor appreciation when group norms favor or reject the humor. In this sense, we expected that favoring group norms will increase perceived funniness of the humor stimuli (Hypothesis 1).

Normative approval of ingroup disparaging humor could signal that the ingroup disparagement (a violation) is actually benign or harmless. The perception of the disparagement as a benign violation induces us to think about the disparagement in a playful, non-serious mindset and thus perceive it as funnier

and less aversive. We expected an interaction effect between group norms and type of humor on humor appreciation: due to their group-related content, group norms will have a stronger effect on the appreciation of disparaging humor than on neutral humor (Hypothesis 2).

By rendering the ingroup disparagement as a benign violation, the normative approval of ingroup disparaging humor communicates that the underlying negative stereotypes are harmless and non-threatening (at least in that immediate context). Thus, people show greater acceptance of stereotypes. We hypothesized that in the favoring group norm, participants will perceive the characteristics to be more realistic than in the rejecting group norm (Hypothesis 3).

5 Method

5.1 Participants and design

One hundred and ninety-five undergraduate students participated voluntarily in this study. The sample consisted of 94 females, 100 males, and one participant who did not report his or her sex. The students were aged between 17 and 31 years old ($M = 19.79$; $SD = 1.90$). Professors from several faculties were informed about the study, in the case they acceded to collaborate their students were invited to the study before their classes began.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions in a 2×2 design analyzing humor (ingroup disparaging vs. neutral) and group norms (favoring vs. rejecting.

5.2 Procedure

5.2.1 Stimulus material pretesting

The purpose of the pilot study was to obtain a joke data set that comprised both ingroup disparaging and neutral jokes perceived as equally funny. In this pilot study, $N = 102$ participants evaluated 32 jokes selected under the criterion that they collect specific content that disparages university students (16 jokes) or neutral humor (16 jokes). In the disparaging humor condition, all the jokes presented at least one negative stereotype of the group; namely, they portrayed university students as: (a) party oriented, revelers, or frequent alcohol drinkers or (b) lazy, devil may care, or disinterested. One example of these jokes is:

> What's the last thing a university student does before taking an exam? Take something for the hangover![1]

Neutral jokes were defined as those that did not make any reference to specific attributes of an individual or group (see Carretero-Dios et al. 2010). For example:

> A waiter says to a customer, "We have a menu of nine euros and six euros." So the customer asks, "And what's the difference?" And the waiter says, "Three euros."

The internal structure of all humorous stimuli was an incongruity-resolution structure. Additionally, both factors included items with different formats (jokes and cartoons) and extensions, discarding a factorial solution due to formal rather than conceptual aspects. Five jokes were selected from each humor type, making sure there were no statistically significant differences between the jokes' funniness scores (disparaging humor: $M = 1.36$; $SD = 0.90$; neutral humor: $M = 1.46$; $SD = 0.97$; $t_{(101)} = -1.15$, $p = 0.251$). These funniness means are similar to those found in other humor studies using disparaging humor (Kochersberger et al. 2014; Romero-Sánchez et al. 2010). For complete information about the process of gathering the humorous material please see Argüello, Carretero-Dios, Willis and Moya (2016).

5.2.2 Experiment 1

Once we had humorous material with the adequate psychometric proprieties, we ran our main study $N = 195$. The booklet was administrated before classes in different faculties by the person responsible for conducting this research. The participants were told that the booklets were part of an opinion survey about different topics published in the university's online newspaper. Booklets corresponding to the four experimental conditions were randomly distributed to those who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The average time to fill out the booklets was 10 minutes. After finishing the survey, students were thanked and they received a brief description of the study aims.

The booklets of the present study contained five jokes (ingroup disparaging vs. neutral) that were said to be part of a large study in which university students showed their opinions about the jokes. Our manipulation consisted of

1 All the jokes were originally in Spanish so their English translation may have not the same sense or any sense at all.

presenting two different outcomes of the students' opinions about the jokes; either favoring or rejecting them.

In the favoring group norm condition, participants read that the jokes that they were going to see were considered very funny and with low aversiveness by a large sample of university students. Meanwhile, in the rejecting group norm condition, participants read that the jokes that they were going to see were considered not very funny and highly aversive by a large sample of university students.

Participants rated each joke on two unipolar 5-point scales for funniness and aversiveness (from 0 = *not funny/aversive at all* to 4 = *very funny/aversive*). Also, after the presentation of the five jokes, participants answered the following questions: "To what extend did you like the jokes?" (Likability), and "How disparaging do you consider the jokes?" (Denigration). Responses were made on 11-point rating scales from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very much*).

Only for disparaging humor condition were participants asked to indicate to which extent the jokes presented real characteristics of students using a scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much*).

Finally, participants answered a short demographic questionnaire on which they indicated their age, sex, academic major, and nationality. Also, some variables not directly related to our study were measured.[2]

In order to check whether our manipulation was adequate, participants were asked to write down their evaluations of the jokes, as requested in their questionnaires. The manipulation check was considered correct only when participants gave an answer that matched the group norm to which they were assigned.

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2 Other measures not related to the hypothesis of our research were applied. To see the complete list of measures please see below:

Identification with the in-group. Degree of identification with university students (in-group) was measured using a scale from 0 = *I do not identify at all* to 10 = *I identify completely*. This measure was presented after the jokes, at the end of the booklet.

Ingroup evaluation. The measure used for this purpose was the feeling thermometer, which was used to analyze how exposure to humor affects the way members of the targeted in-group feel about university students. This measure has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of social attitudes (Alwin 1997; Kinder and Drake 2009). Participants expressed the way they felt about students in general using a scale ranging from 0 = *very unfavorable feelings* to 10 = *very favorable feelings*.

Ingroup Stereotyping. Also, we presented the students with a task partially based on Esses and Zanna (1995), which was used in a previous study on humor (Argüello et al. 2012). Participants were asked to write down four characteristics that they considered typical of university students.

6 Results

6.1 Preliminary analysis

Seven participants did not correctly answer our manipulation check and therefore were not included in the sample nor the analysis.

As expected, disparaging humor was considered to be more denigrating to participants than neutral humor ($t_{(193)} = 11.43$, $p < 0.001$; $M = 4.72$, $SD = 3.15$; $M = 0.55$; $SD = 1.19$, respectively). Likability of the jokes was higher in the neutral condition than in the disparaging humor condition ($t_{(193)} = 3.05$, $p < 0.001$; $M = 4.30$, $SD = 2.54$; $M = 3.22$; $SD = 2.35$, respectively).

6.2 Humor appreciation

We predicted that our manipulation of group norms (favoring vs. rejecting) would have differential effects on humor appreciation. To test this we ran two-way ANOVAs using funniness and then aversiveness scores as dependent variables and group norms and type of humor as independent variables.

We found that group norms had a main effect on funniness responses, $F_{(1,191)} = 4.95$, $p = 0.027$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.046$. In this sense, independently of humor type, jokes are perceived as funnier when the ingroup norm is favoring than when the ingroup norm is rejecting ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.80$; $M = 1.32$; $SD = 0.86$, respectively), supporting Hypothesis 1.

Then, the interaction effect of group norm and humor type on the funniness and aversiveness scores was analyzed with a two-way ANOVA for testing Hypothesis 2. A marginal interaction effect of the type of humor and group norm on the funniness mean scores was found ($F_{(1,191)} = 2.96$, $p = 0.087$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.015$). Even though these jokes were equal in funniness in a pilot study, when analyzing the data according to type of humor our manipulation of group norms produced differential effects: when humor was ingroup disparaging, funniness scores were statistically different in the favoring group norm condition ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 0.79$) and the rejecting group norm condition ($M = 1.14$, $SD = 0.81$, $t_{(110)} = 3.06$, $p = 0.003$,). However, for the neutral humor condition, group norms did not promote statistically significant differences in funniness scores ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 0.80$; $M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.784$, $t_{(81)} = 0.33$, $p = 0.745$, favoring and rejecting groups' norms, respectively).

Also, the same analyses were done using aversiveness as the dependent variable. No significant main effects of group norms or interaction effect

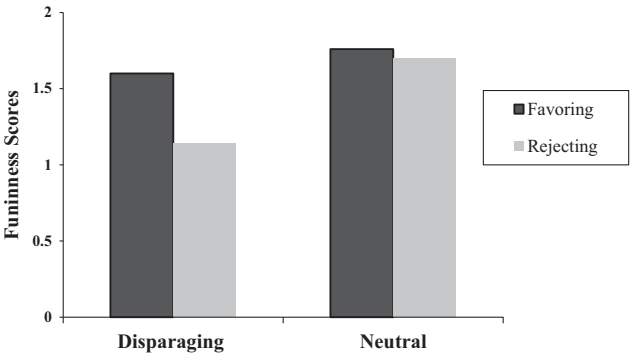

Figure 1: Effect of group norms on funniness according to type of humor.

between group norms and type of humor were observed on the aversiveness scores, $Fs < 1$, *n.s.*

6.3 Acceptance of ingroup stereotypes

Additionally, we wanted to explore whether group norms influence the acceptance of the characteristics presented in the disparaging jokes. Hence, only the participants in the disparaging humor condition were selected ($n = 111$) because this question was not asked for the neutral humor condition. We ran a *t*-test analyzing the perceived realism of characteristics presented in the jokes according to group norm. In the favoring group norm condition, participants perceived the characteristics of the students portrayed in the jokes as more realistic when compared to the rejecting group norm ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 2.23$; $M = 4.03$, $SD = 2.23$; $t_{(109)} = 3.93$, $p < 0.001$).

7 General discussion

Social norms can induce conformity to communicated behavior and can shape the way people perceive the adequate form of response in a given situation (Sanna and Berel 2001; Von Borgstede et al. 1999; Aarts and Dijksterhuis 2003; Bohner and Schlüter 2014; Rimal and Real 2005). The present study examined the way in which group norms affect humor appreciation at an ingroup level. Specifically, this study investigated the influence of group norms in the ingroup disparaging humor exposure effects. Our results indicated that group norms

affect the way in which humorous stimuli are perceived and that norms have differential effects according to type of humor. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that people orient their actions according to the information provided by other group members (Cialdini et al. 1991; Goldstein, Cialdini and Griskevicius, 2008; Bohner et al. 2006). The study showed that group norms had an effect on humor appreciation such that participants tended to perceive humor as funnier when the group norm was favoring than when was it was rejecting (Hypothesis 1). When exposed to disparaging humor (but not neutral humor) and favoring group norm, participants considered ingroup disparaging humor to be funnier than when presented with a rejecting group norm (Hypothesis 2). Additionally, besides changes on humor appreciation, group norms also influence the way in which group members perceive stereotypes regarding their own group. Following this idea, participants more favorably accepted the negative characteristics presented in the disparaging jokes as more realistic when group norm was favoring that when it was rejecting (Hypothesis 3). In this sense, a rejecting group norm acts as relevant information for shaping ingroup disparaging humor exposure.

Also, it is important to say that little research has considered other groups that are not based on gender for ingroup disparaging humor research (Abrams and Bippus 2011; Kochersberger et al. 2014). Our research first selected adequate stimuli and then specifically addressed this issue with a different ingroup, showing more evidence of the negative potential of disparaging humor on an ingroup's evaluation. Furthermore, a group's norms act as regulatory information about the way humor is perceived. Specifically, our research points out that when taking into account the content of humor, in this case disparaging ingroup humor, group norms play a role in orienting how group members should react to humor in terms of perceived funniness.

These results suggest that (at least when it comes to ingroup disparaging humor) group norms play a key role in stabilizing a standard of funniness perception and orienting the way in which group members perceive and appreciate humor that disparages their group. Similar results have been found in canned laughter research (Martin and Gray 1996; Platow et al. 2005); nevertheless, in this case the presented humorous material has no ingroup-related content. In our study, the manipulation of group norms affected primarily disparaging humor, suggesting that when a joke's content is sensible to an ingroup's image, group norms are revealed to be an important factor in humor appreciation.

In general, our results lend support to the benign violation theory (Warren and McGraw 2016; McGraw and Warren 2010), which argues that humor is socially constructed and relies on the violation of social norms (Lynch 2002;

McGraw and Warren 2010). In this regard, humor can be used to challenge a societal norm while remaining relatively non-threatening. In the case of ingroup disparaging humor, when a group norm accepting humor is made salient, stereotypes are also more accepted and funniness of the material is shared.

Examining the group effects of disparaging humor is important because even though most of the time humor can influence people to act in a prosocial way by expressing empathy, friendliness, or politeness, (Kuiper, Kirsh and Leite 2010; Provine 2000; Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2001; Ziv 2010), it may also serve as a means of reinforcing social norms of hierarchy, expressing control, power and hostility toward others, and maintaining division between groups (Kuipers 2011; Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2001; Sayre 2001).

Our research argues than when it comes to ingroup disparaging humor, group norms are involved as a relevant factor. In this sense, further research might explore the potential role of group norms in changing ingroup beliefs about some forms of disparaging humor as sexist humor or racist humor, which research has pointed out groups are less prone to confront (Woodzicka, Mallett, Shelbi and Pruitt 2015). Group norm salience could modify the perceived appropriateness of these responses and empower group members to counter argue that disparaging humor is offensive or discriminatory.

This study has certain limitations worth recognizing. One is that in the present research participants were exposed to descriptive norms in a written form. Even though research has found support for the effectiveness of this manipulation (Sanna and Berel 2001; Von Borgstede et al. 1999), this makes us cautious about the generalizability of the present findings. In the future, it will be therefore important to replicate the present results using others forms of manipulating group norms (i.e., specific verbal instructions or prerecorded laughter).

A second limitation is the nature of the stimuli we used. It is also important to consider that material's format was presented also in a written way. It would be interesting to analyze what would happen if different disparaging humor forms were used (e.g., videos or social interaction) or if the material had been presented in different contexts (e.g., university classroom or cafeteria) or in the presence of out-group members (e.g., university professors or concierge staff).

Future research can examine whether the marginally significant interaction that we found can be stronger with other disparaging humor types (e.g., sexist or anti-gay humor). Additionally, considering other important factors in humor appreciation (e.g. group identification or source of the joke) would be relevant to corroborate these results.

All in all, this study presents a fresh line of research: the relationship between group norms and disparaging humor exposure. It constitutes a first step in the study of how group norms can modify perceived funniness of ingroup disparaging humor.

Additionally, group norms shape the effects of ingroup disparaging humor on the perception of stereotypical characteristics of the ingroup and contribute to maintaining a biased and stereotyped vision of the ingroup.

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