DEPARTMENT of PSYCHOLOGY

Endorsement and Condonation of Sexism in Intimate Relationships:
The Role of Humour in Comedy Television Shows

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate potential differences in gender and place of origin on intimate partner violence (IPV) attitudes, self-silencing beliefs, and sexist and feminist measures in a sample of young adults between 18 and 30 years. Furthermore, it examined whether exposure to videos containing either sexist or feminist humour impacted participants' level of IPV attitudes, self-silencing beliefs, sexist and feminist attitudes as compared to neutral humour.

In an online, quasi-experimental design 80 participants were randomly assigned to three conditions (viewed sexist, feminist, or neutral humour) and subsequently presented with questionnaires related to self-silencing beliefs, intimate partner violence attitudes, modern sexism, commitment to social change, and self-identification as a feminist.

Mean comparison tests showed no statistically significant difference between Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian subjects. Gender differences have been found, with women being more likely to identify as feminists ($U = 439$, $p = .002$) and being more committed to social change, $t (78) = -2.206$, $p = .030$. No significant effect of the priming manipulation on either IPV attitudes or self-silencing beliefs was detected using ANOVA and Kruskal Wallis tests. Female subjects scored higher on identification with and commitment to feminist causes than males. Moreover, identification with a feminist label was associated with an increased commitment to feminist action. Short exposure to different types of humour did not have any immediate impact on any outcome measures. The relationship between sexist and IPV attitudes and IPV behaviours is complex and needs to be further investigated.

Keywords: intimate partner violence attitudes, self-silencing, sexist attitudes, feminist attitudes, sexist humour, feminist humour

Despite huge improvements towards gender equality, sexism is still very pervasive in Western society (Lewis, 2018). Sexism, while a widely used term, often lacks a concise definition. Most succinctly, sexism refers to an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, and organisational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative assessments of individuals based upon their gender or support unequal status of women and men (Swim et al., 2010). Although sexism can be directed against men as well, women are overwhelmingly the main target and have historically suffered as a result of it (Becker et al., 2014). Sexist incidents occur on a broad spectrum, ranging from blatant, hostile sexism (an overt antipathy towards women that could lead to e.g. sexual assault or domestic abuse) to more subtle forms (e.g. sexist jokes, derogatory comments, objectification; Lewis, 2018).

According to Ambivalent Sexism Theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), two forms of sexist ideologies exist that arise from the tension between men's societal dominance and the interdependence required for intimate relationships: hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism (HS) encompasses derogatory and antagonistic, even aggressive, attitudes toward women who deviate from traditional gender roles. Benevolent sexism (BS), on the other hand, expresses subjectively positive and caring, yet patronizing attitudes toward women who adopt conventional roles. BS involves feelings of protectiveness for women, but it is based on women's perceived inferiority and inadequacy (Hurst & Beesley, 2013) and works through expression of affection (Hammond & Overall, 2015). BS strongly relies on gender stereotypes that are conveyed in a positive tone, but it is particularly dangerous as it is often overlooked and not perceived as sexism because it does not match the mental prototype of sexism that resembles the definition of HS (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). The positive tone of BS encourages women to adopt benevolent attitudes themselves and is central to the maintenance of gender inequality (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

In the last three decades, a shift in the socio-political climate has led to a decline in overt endorsement of traditional sexism (e.g. Ekehammar et al., 2000; Katz & Hass, 1988; Lewis, 2018) and research now distinguishes between old-fashioned and modern forms of sexism (*modern sexism* - Swim et al., 1995; *neosexism* - Tougas et al., 1995). These more subtle manifestations are characterised by unequal and harmful treatment of women in a clandestine manner: Individuals may publicly endorse equality beliefs but intentionally engage in behaviours that undermine women that often go unnoticed because they are perceived to be normal (Swim & Cohen, 1997). Underlying elements of modern sexism include a denial of continued discrimination, antagonism towards women's demands, and a

lack of support for policies designed to equate women with men (Swim et al., 1995), with men traditionally having higher sexism scores than women (Swim et al., 1995).

Across time periods and in most cultures, women have been restricted to social roles with less status and power than men (Tavris & Wade, 1984). This gender imbalance with men's assumed superiority over women implies a right for men to exhibit power and force over women. While violence against women has always existed, it has only recently been highlighted, systematically defined, and addressed as a form of human rights abuse (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA], 2014). The United Nations, for instance, listed gender equality as one of the Sustainable Development Goals on their Agenda 2030 (United Nations, 2019), exemplifying the importance of it on a global matter. Despite the importance of and raised awareness around gender equality, women are still in a disadvantaged position and face sexism frequently in various forms (e.g. Lewis, 2018).

The Nordic countries (Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark) are the most gender equal countries in the world (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2019; World Economic Forum, 2018). At the same time, these countries have a high prevalence of gender-based discrimination against women (Gracia & Merlo, 2016). These contradictory findings are termed the 'Nordic Paradox' and are still subject to research today due to lack of studies investigating the mechanisms of emergence and maintenance of this phenomenon (Gracia & Merlo, 2016; Gracia et al., 2019). Sweden, for instance, is the most gender equal country in the European Union (EU) with a Gender Equality Index of 83.6 out of 100 points (EU average 67.4; EIGE, 2019). This index is a composite indicator that measures the complex concept of gender equality based on six core domains (work, money, time, knowledge, power, health). The score for 'Violence against Women', however, is not included in the calculation of the index score (EIGE, 2019). While maintaining its first rank on gender equality since 2005 (EIGE, 2019), Sweden also scores higher (28%) than the EU average (22%) on physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women (FRA, 2014). In an anonymous survey in 2018, 38,4% of Swedish women between the ages of 16 and 24 reported experiencing some form of gender-based criminal offense against them, compared to 6.5% of men in that age range (Nationella Trygghetsundersökningen, 2019).

The most common form of violence suffered by women is intimate partner violence (IPV), with a global prevalence of 30% (Gracia & Merlo, 2016). According to a definition by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in the USA, intimate partner violence is described as actual or threatened physical or sexual violence, or psychological and emotional abuse, directed toward a current or former partner (CDC, 2019). In Sweden, for instance,

10.500 cases of intimate partner abuse have been reported to Swedish authorities in 2019 (Nationella Trygghetsundersökningen, 2019). While traditionally phrased as a woman-only problem, recent research is highlighting the bidirectionality of IPV and investigations have begun into female perpetration and male victimisation (e.g. Allen et al., 2009). IPV is a substantial health problem for those who are victimised by it. Research has recorded a wide range of detrimental effects of IPV on physical (Bonomi et al., 2006; Coker et al., 2000; Coker et al., 2007), mental (Teitelman et al., 2011), sexual and reproductive outcomes (Miller et al., 2014), even leading to homicide as a source of premature mortality (Stöckl et al., 2013). IPV victimisation is also associated with increased use of health care services (Kazmerski et al., 2015) and elevated healthcare costs (Bonomi et al., 2009).

Endorsing Sexism: Intimate Partner Violence Attitudes

While there are many causes and risk factors for intimate partner violence, gender inequality and sexist attitudes have been considered one crucial factor contributing to these high rates of IPV and one of the reasons for their perseverance even in highly egalitarian countries (García-Moreno et al., 2014, Gracia et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013b). IPV has been traditionally defined as a heterosexual woman's issue and the general belief about IPV has been historically gender asymmetrical (Little, 2020). It is typically framed as caused by the patriarchal construction of society and men's domination over women (Hines & Douglas, 2010). However, both men and women perpetuate and are victimised in their relationships with intimate partners in most Western countries (Allen et al., 2009; Archer, 2006) and men experience many of the same negative effects as female victims (Carlyle et al., 2014). According to gender symmetry theory, the rates of perpetration and victimisation are similar among men and women (Archer, 2000; Dutton et al., 2005) and gender differences in crime statistics could be due to reporting biases rather than actual differences in IPV victimisation. Nonetheless, much of the research surrounding IPV focuses on male-on-female-violence and an association has been established between men's hostile sexism and aggression toward female partners (e.g., Cross et al., 2018). Men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are more accepting of violent behaviour and verbal aggression within close relationships (Forbes et al., 2004, Forbes et al., 2005; Glick et al., 2002; Hammond & Overall, 2013b; Yamawaki et al., 2009), exhibit greater hostility during conflict with their partner (Overall et al., 2011), perceive their partner's behaviour as more negative than was justified by their partner's report (Hammond & Overall, 2013a), experience heightened dissatisfaction when facing problems (Hammond & Overall, 2013a), and are more afraid of

intimacy (Yakushko, 2005). Both hostile and benevolent sexism were found to positively correlate with attitudes that legitimized partner abuse (Glick et al. 2002). Bilateral situational violence – in which violence is exhibited by both partners reciprocally - has been found to be more frequent than unilateral IPV perpetration (Kelly & Johnson, 2008) and men are shown to be more likely than women to initiate violence to which their female partners then react with violence (Allen et al., 2009). Literature on female perpetrators, on the other hand, is scarce (Dutton et al., 2005).

While conclusions are based on meta-analyses of available evidence, research on IPV is heavily biased toward the US (Archer, 2006) and might not be applicable in a Swedish context. When investigating classical and modern sexist attitudes in a Swedish sample, Ekehammar, Akrami, and Araya (2000) found that these two constructs were highly correlated but still distinguishable from each other. Similar to findings in the US (Swim et al., 1995), Swedish men in the study of Ekehammar and colleagues (2000) scored higher than women on both classical and modern sexism scales. In a recent study, Gracia and colleagues (2019) compared prevalence of IPV against women (IPVAW) in a Spanish and Swedish sample. They found higher levels of both physical and sexual IPVAW in Sweden than Spain and concluded that they reflect actual differences in IPVAW prevalence and are not the result of measurement bias, supporting the idea of the Nordic paradox.

However, behaviours are not the sole component to consider when investigating IPV. Attitudes are particularly relevant because they might predict both perpetration and receipt of such behaviours (Smith et al., 2005), as argued by the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, 1988). This theory holds that attitudes towards a specific behaviour impact performance of the behaviour via intentions. Previous research has suggested that certain beliefs condoning or accepting physical, sexual, and psychological violence in relationships are key risk factors for IPV perpetration (McDermott & Lopez, 2013). Investigations of IPV attitudes have shown that accepting or condoning beliefs are significantly correlated with violence in the most recent or current intimate relationship (Deal & Wampler, 1986; Fincham et al., 2008; Price et al., 1999). For instance, a moderate effect size has been found for the association between perpetration of physical abuse and traditional sex-role ideology as a risk factor of IPV (Stith et al., 2004). While not exploring a causal association, these findings still indicate that holding these beliefs pose a risk to IPV perpetration.

Media, Sexism, and Impact on Intimate Partner Violence

Undoubtedly, shows and movies consumed in different media outlets have an extensive impact on an individual's development and perception of the world (Wright et al., 2017) as media messages influence viewers' perceptions of reality in a systematic manner (Eschholz et al., 2002). A large part of popular media culture heavily relies on the use of stereotypes and clichés that can be harmful to the depicted group. These overgeneralisations, most often made by the socially dominant group about socially oppressed groups, have been prevalent for many years (Gorham, 1999) and are incorporated into the knowledge base of the audience. Repeated exposure to these overgeneralisations can perpetuate prejudice on a larger scale as stereotypes are strengthened and reinforced in an individual's set of beliefs (Wright et al., 2017).

Media with all its different outlets (e.g., television, radio, social media) is an effective tool to spread sexist sentiments (Eschholz et al., 2002; Filipova, 2017). For example, the representation of women and their romantic relationships in Western television is tainted with misogyny and sexism (Eschholz et al., 2002). For many years, a trend has been prevalent in which women are systematically excluded from leading roles or relegated to secondary roles, implying that women occupy no significant social space in both the professional and private environment (Eschholz et al., 2002). Often, their portrayals are overly consistent with traditional stereotypes and their existence is relevant solely in relation to male characters (Filipova, 2017). Presenting misogyny and sexism as commonplace, however, can expand the boundaries of behaviour that is considered appropriate (Ford et al., 2000) and contributes to the social construction of reality as it creates a prejudiced norm that pervades society in everyday life (Wright et al., 2017).

The media take advantage of overly stereotypical portrayals of society's subgroups, such as women (Filipova, 2017). In Western media, with its monopoly located in the US, the representation of feminists - if represented at all - is often reduced to negative stereotypes and feminists are branded with a villainous connotation, referred to as "man-haters", "feminazis", "hairy radicals", or "sexually deviant" (Beck, 1998; Creedon, 1993b; Jones 1992; Lind & Salo, 2002). The word feminism is almost treated as a dirty word and a negative image is continuously perpetuated through various media outlets (Beck, 1998). With regard to media's extensive power on public opinion, it is particularly relevant how mass media frame feminism and sexism, both the topics on a larger scale as well as individuals functioning as archetypes.

As mass media are important sources of information (Conway & Rubin, 1991; Katz et al., 199) the media also play an important role in determining the public's perceptions of IPV (Kozol, 1995; Maxwell et al., 2002). For instance, with news reports focusing on extreme cases of partner assault, the role of IPV as a public health issue is downplayed (Sotirovic, 2003). But news coverage is not the only factor impacting attitudes towards IPV. Depictions of abuse – both perpetration and victimisation – in entertainment media influence public opinion as media images form individuals' understanding of relationship dynamics and lay ground rules for behaviour that is considered acceptable (Carlyle et al., 2014). Repeated exposure to portrayals of violence within relationships in the media can cause far-reaching changes in affective, cognitive, and behavioural processes and shape the public understanding of what counts as abusive behaviour (Bemiller & Schneider, 2010; Carter, 2003). As a result, the perception of domestic violence is altered and the public's eye is desensitised to abusive behaviour (Kohlmann et al., 2014). For example, some may not consider themselves victims or perpetrators of IPV as they had not defined the abusive behaviour as IPV but instead "normal", stereotypically gendered, heteronormative behaviour (Little, 2020).

Sexist Humour

While sexism is very common in all forms of media, particularly humour and comedy in television shows and movies contribute to the problem of social desensitisation (Kohlmann et al., 2014). Sexist humour demeans, insults, stereotypes, victimises, and/or objectifies a person based on their sex and gender expression (LaFrance & Woodzicka, 1998; Zillmann, 1983), with women predominantly being the target of it (Cantor & Zillmann, 1973). Comedic portrayal of IPV jokes present women as inferior to men through the means of nonchalance (Bemiller & Schneider, 2010). Offensive, sexist humour can take on various forms (e.g. devaluation of women and their personal characteristics, aggression and violence against women, sexual objectification, backlash against feminism, belittlement of women and their relationships) that function as a legitimation of prejudice against the female gender (Bemiller & Schneider, 2010; Kohlmann et al., 2014).

This manifestation of gender prejudice is termed disparagement humour and has detrimental social consequences (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010) as it is disguised as benign amusement but still holds the reality of prejudice (LaFrance & Woodzicka, 1998). This type of humour is thought to reinforce negative stereotypes, prejudice, and hostility toward the targeted group, and functions as processes of social separation and maintenance of social dominance (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). Disparaging humour downplays the seriousness of

prejudiced jokes and changes the way in which a communicated message is interpreted, indicating that it is not to be taken seriously or examined in a critical manner, and creates a context in which it is tolerated to laugh at the victimisation of women (Ford et al., 2000, Ford et al., 2008). The occurrence and acceptance of sexist humour contributes to the structural inequality between the sexes in modern society and creates norms that pervade society in everyday life (Sev'er & Ungar, 1997; Wright et al., 2017).

According to Zillmann & Cantor's (1976) disposition theory of humour, individuals enjoy sexist humour insofar as they endorse sexist attitudes themselves. Previous research has demonstrated that people who prefer sexist humour over non-sexist humour have higher measures of sexism, particularly hostile sexism (Drucker et al., 2014; Eyssel & Bohner, 2007; Moore et al., 1987; Thomas & Esses, 2004), and that exposure to sexist content increases sexist attitudes in both men and women (Ford & Ferguson, 2004). Ryan & Kanjorski (1998), for example, found that men who enjoyed sexist humour were also more likely to endorse rape myth acceptance, adversarial sexual beliefs, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and the self-reported likelihood of forcing sex. Sexist jokes are also shown to increase the tolerance for sexist behaviour in the workplace for participants high in hostile sexism (Ford, 2000). Weston and Thomsen (1993) found that participants made more stereotypical evaluations of men and women after watching sexist comedy skits than after watching neutral comedy skits, suggesting that exposure to sexist humour activates gender stereotypes and functions as a releaser of prejudice (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010).

In a recent study, Wright and colleagues (2017) presented more than 1500 undergraduate students with a 10-minute clip containing either sexist or neutral humour taken from popular comedy tv shows. Afterwards, subjects had to fill in questionnaires related to sexism and femininity ideology. Being exposed to as little as 10 minutes significantly impacted subjects' level of sexism and femininity ideology, with subjects exposed to sexist humour scoring higher on all outcome measures than participants faced with videos containing neutral humour or no videos at all.

Condoning Sexism: Self-Silencing

Responses to sexist jokes are important (Bemiller & Schneider, 2010) as they function as social feedback signalling approval or disapproval of the preceding behaviour and can be simplified into two categories: confronting or self-silencing. Confrontational responses to sexism are defined as overt behaviours aimed at letting perpetrators of sexism and/or others know that the behaviour or incident that has occurred is sexist and that the listener objects to

this treatment (Kaiser & Miller, 2001). Not publicly reporting that a behaviour was perceived as offensive even though an individual might want to say something is defined as self-silencing (Swim et al., 2010).

Research has shown that confronting a sexist perpetrator can potentially reduce sexism by either educating the perpetrator to prevent future discriminatory encounters (Hyers, 2007), bringing attention to the prevalence of daily sexist encounters and, subsequently, evoking a stronger rejection of sexist beliefs (Becker & Swim, 2011) or more broadly through changing social norms (Blanchard et al., 1994). However, people do not confront as much as their self-reported intentions suggest they would (Ashburn-Nardo & Karim, 2019). Even though women think they will confront perpetrators regardless of social costs, they are less likely to speak up to male perpetrators in high social cost situations (Shelton & Stewart, 2004). In a study by Swim & Hyers (1999), only 15% of women confronted a sexist verbally while 45% of subjects reacted with displeasure of some sort (e.g., humour, sarcasm, surprised exclamation). In a more recent study by Mallet, Ford, and Woodzicka (2016) less than half of the participants confronted a male confederate making a sexist statement, with the rate being even lower when the statement was delivered in form of a joke. This lack of behavioural response to sexist behaviours complicates determining if women favour these sexist attitudes themselves or simply choose not to react; it is a fine line between endorsing these beliefs themselves or simply behaving in line with gender-role stereotypes.

Speaking up and confronting a sexist perpetrator is linked to tremendous social costs (Kaiser & Miller, 2004; Swim et al., 2010): Female confronters are at risk of being perceived as overreacting, whiny, oversensitive troublemakers, interpersonally cold, impolite or even aggressive, self-interested and egoistic, and fearful of retaliation (Becker et al., 2011; Becker et al., 2014; Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dodd et al., 2001; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Kaiser & Miller, 2001, 2003). All of these traits are incongruent with stereotypical female characteristics; women's gender-role consistent beliefs about how they should behave in interpersonal interactions restrict their response to everyday sexism and other forms of interpersonal difficulties (Swim et al., 2010).

Many women choose to self-silence even though they regard the precedent behaviour to be inappropriate (Swim & Hyers, 1999; Mallet et al., 2016). Jack (1991) introduced the Silencing the Self-theory when investigating depression in women and argued that it explained the gender gap in the prevalence of psychological disorders. Captured in the silencing the self-scale (STS; Jack & Dill, 1992) are cognitive schemas, derived from culture, that guide women's interpersonal behaviours and self-judgment. These items reflect how

sexism and gender inequality impact everyday interactions and cognition as they carry imperatives about how women are expected to act in intimate relationships (Jack & Dill, 1992). The STS measures and expresses manifestations of internalised behavioural scripts that are largely influenced by stereotypical beliefs and gender roles. Condoning sexist behaviours takes place in many ways, regardless of women's awareness of the sexist nature of the preceding behaviour. A lack of response to discriminating actions, however, can excuse and perpetuate sexist practices.

Gender-Role Attitudes

Across time periods and in most cultures, women have been restricted to social roles with less status and power than those of men (Tavris & Wade, 1984). According to social role theory (Eagly et al., 2000) people's beliefs about gender characteristics emerge when observing male and female behaviour and inferring social roles bound to the corresponding sex (Eagly & Wood, 2016). Core dimensions used to characterise gender stereotypes can be separated into agency and communion. Communal traits (i.e. femininity) focus on interpersonal relations (being caring, nurturing, emotional) while agentic traits are associated with masculine behaviour (being assertive, independent, decisive, acting as a leader; Haines et al., 2016). Gender stereotypes are not fixed but instead dynamic in nature and adjust to changes in society. Over the last three decades, a steady increase among women's self-reported agency has been recorded (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Haines et al., 2016; Twenge, 1997b; Wilde & Diekman, 2005) while men were only slightly increasing (Twenge, 1997b) or stable in self-reported gender role perception (Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2019; Wilde & Diekman, 2005). As gender equality has increased, the sex difference in IPV moved in the direction of comparatively lesser female victimisation and greater male victimisation (Archer, 2006). The use of aggression is traditionally part of an agentic set of behaviours (Archer, 2006) which could have led to heightened female perpetration with regards to increased female agency.

In a recent study, Gustafsson Sendén and colleagues (2019) investigated dynamic gender stereotypes in Sweden. Swedish subjects were instructed to rate an average Swedish man or woman of three time points: the past (1950), the present (2017), and the future (2090). Results showed that the female Swedish stereotype increased in agentic traits whereas the male stereotype showed no change in either agentic or communal traits. Swedish women were also rated higher than men on communion / femininity across all time points (Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2019).

The pressure for women to comply with female gender roles (e.g., communal traits such as women's focus on the relational domain; Hammond & Overall, 2013a) can be communicated through everyday sexism, emphasizing the relationship beliefs that prescribe silence in women. Similarly, sexist messages on television can be a means of communicating men's social power over women and may strengthen disempowering beliefs (Swim et al., 2010). This can lead to women engaging in self-silencing, or inhibiting one's self-expression (Jack, 1991) and as well as promoting self-sacrificing, or putting needs of others before the self (Jack & Dill, 1992). Internalised sexist beliefs inhibit women from fully expressing themselves (Swim et al., 2010) as they accept a discrepancy between one's personal and public self, or divided self (Jack & Dill, 1992) and judge one's behaviours by external standards, or external self-perception (Jack, 1991; Jack & Dill, 1992). This tendency of self-negation is performed to align actions with strict schemas directing feminine social behaviour (Maji & Dixit, 2019).

The more women endorse these self-silencing beliefs, the less likely they are to respond to sexist incidents (Swim et al., 2010). However, repeatedly silencing the self has a major impact on women's health and has been connected to a higher vulnerability to somatic and psychological diseases (see Maji & Dixit, 2019 for a review). Holding feminist attitudes, on the other hand, has been shown to function as a buffer against the effects of sexism, notably in health domains (Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010).

Feminist Label and Identity

In a survey of 38 countries, the majority of participants reported endorsement of gender equality beliefs (Zainulbhai, 2016), with the strongest support for women having the same rights as men found in Europe. In Sweden, gender equality is considered a particularly important topic: In a 2014 survey, almost half of the Swedish subjects interviewed identified with a feminist label (SvD/Sifo, 2014), with the rate among women aged 15 – 29 being even higher (72%). Even in domestic and foreign politics, feminist beliefs are acted out as Sweden has the first openly declared feminist government in the world (Regeringen, 2019).

Although gender equality is the central belief of feminism, holding equality beliefs alone does not necessarily result in willingness to call oneself a feminist. A significant number of women endorse feminist attitudes yet reject a feminist identity (Fitz et al., 2012). In research, being a feminist has been operationalised as the willingness to endorse the label, holding egalitarian beliefs, and the combination of the two, with the latter being associated with activism against gender-based inequality. It is therefore crucial to self-label for

enhanced feminist action (Yoder et al., 2011) and fostering a commitment to social change could be a promising intervention for reducing the impact of sexist events on women's self-silencing (Watson & Grotewiel, 2016). According to a hypothesized model by Weis and colleagues (2018), the feminist identity is influenced by several factors: gender role beliefs and implicit and explicit feminism prototypes (i.e. the central, representative feminist that comes to mind when one thinks of feminists as a group; Redford et al., 2018). These beliefs are associated with vulnerability to sexism and behavioural willingness to engage in feminist action. In their study, they reported that individuals with stronger attitudes toward gender equality and more favourable explicit and implicit attitudes toward feminist prototypes were more likely to claim a feminist label while also reporting greater willingness to intervene when confronted with everyday sexist behaviours (Weis et al., 2018). This prototype, however, is largely influenced by medial representation of said groups.

Over three studies, Redford and colleagues (2018) showed that the feminist prototype is central to subjects' willingness to identify as feminists. They found that attitudes toward feminist prototypes predicted variance in feminist identity beyond gender-equality attitudes. Furthermore, feminist identity mediated between prototypes and both willingness to engage in and actual exhibited feminist behaviour. The authors conclude that promoting positive prototypes of feminists may be an effective way of encouraging feminist identity (Redford et al., 2018). In a quasi-experimental study by Moore and Stathi (2019), more than 300 female participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: exposure to positive stereotypes of feminists, negative stereotypes, or control condition. Findings revealed opposing effects: exposure to positive stereotypes significantly increased feminist self-identification while negative stereotypes reduced it, and lower identification mediated the path between negative stereotyping and collective action (Moore & Stathi, 2019).

Study Aims

Much of psychological research in sexist humour is largely based in an American context and might not be applicable to the Swedish situation. One aim of this study is therefore exploring differences in a Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian subsample. Similarly, this study will look for gender differences in IPV attitudes, self-silencing beliefs, sexist, and feminist measures in a sample of 18-30-year olds. Another aim of the current study is to investigate the influence of different types of humour on subsequent attitudes in a romantic relationship and feminist beliefs. In an exploratory approach, this study sought to

1) Explore differences in place of origin and compare IPV attitudes, self-silencing beliefs, and sexist and feminist attitudes among Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian subjects,

2) Explore gender differences and compare these attitudes among men and women,

3) Determine if there is a statistically significant difference in IPV attitudes and self-silencing beliefs for subjects exposed to either sexist, feminist, or neutral humour measured immediately after exposure, with participants exposed to sexist content scoring higher,

4) Investigate similar effects on secondary outcome variables modern sexism, active commitment to social change, and self-identification as a feminist.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

In a quasi-experimental, internet-based study design, participants were exposed to various video clips containing either sexist, feminist, or neutral humour and subsequently presented with questionnaires related to sexist and feminist attitudes.

In a first step, a pilot study was conducted in which participants rated 18 YouTube videos containing scenes from popular comedy shows produced in the US. It was their task to indicate how sexist or in line with feminist ideas the depicted scenes were perceived. The videos with the highest ratings of sexist and feminist levels - adding up to around 10 minutes in total - were taken for the main study, respectively. Similarly, videos rated neutral in content were chosen for the control condition. The clips identified in the pilot study were derived from *The Big Bang Theory, Brooklyn 99, The Office, Friends, Parks & Recreation,* and *How I Met Your Mother* and showed interactions between intimate partners (a list with links to these videos can be found in the Appendix). As 94% of regular characters in scripted broadcast are heterosexual (GLAAD, 2018), the portrayed couples were solely heterosexual couples.

This study made use of a convenience sample and participants for the main study were recruited via social networking sites (Facebook, WhatsApp). The survey was constructed as an online survey on the Qualtrics platform (Qualtrics.com) to allow for fast publication and accessibility among potential participants. It was available on both mobile phones and desktop computers. To be eligible for the study, subjects had to be between 18 and 30 years of age and understand English on a moderate level. Potential participants were

told that the purpose of this anonymous study was to investigate humour in comedy shows and its association with relationship behaviours and gender attitudes and values. The first page of the survey included a consent form where potential subjects could read more about the nature, course, and purpose of the study: Participants were informed that it would take approximately 30 minutes to complete, that they could quit the study at any time without giving reasons, how their data would be handled, and how to contact the researchers (the consent form can be found in the Appendix). Subjects had to explicitly indicate their consent to proceed with the study and were not compensated for their participation.

Once the subjects consented to participate, they were randomly assigned to one of three experimental study conditions in which they were presented with video clips containing either sexist humour (SH), feminist humour (FH) or control group (CG) with rather neutral jokes. After collecting demographic data and media consumption habits, subjects were primed with 3-4 video clips from popular comedy sit-coms that are publicly available on the video platform YouTube. These clips lasted about 9 - 10 minutes (SH: 9:20 minutes, FM: 9:38 minutes, CG: 9:52 minutes) in total.

A total of 146 potential subjects showed interest in the study, however, a large number had to be excluded due to missing values, resulting in a final sample of 80 subjects. As participants were randomly assigned to study condition and a large number dropped out, unequal group sizes occurred: Subjects in condition 1 (SH; $n = 27$) were primed with video clips containing sexist content that were derived from *How I Met Your Mother, The Big Bang Theory,* and *Parks & Recreation*. Condition 2 (FH; $n = 30$) included video clips with feminist humour from *Brooklyn 99, The Office* and *Parks & Recreation*. Participants in the control condition (CG; $n = 23$) watched videos taken from *Brooklyn 99, The Office,* and *Friends*.

After being exposed to these clips, subjects were presented with questionnaires related to IPV attitudes and sexist and feminist ideology. Items from questionnaires were presented in the following order: silencing the self-scale, intimate partner violence attitudes scale, social desirability, commitment to social change, modern sexism, and identification as a feminist. Scales using the same response format were presented in one block, however, in randomised order to prevent any potential carry-over effects.

Measures

Demographic Information

Basic demographic information was assessed with four questions regarding age ("How old are you?"), gender ("What gender do you identify with?": female, male, none of

the above), current occupation ("What is your current main occupation?": student, employee, other), and place of origin ("Where did you grow up?": Scandinavia, Europe – not including Scandinavia, other).

Media Consumption Habits

Media consumption was assessed using four items asking for frequency and duration of consumption of TV, YouTube, and streaming services as well as frequency of social media usage and duration of time spent on the Internet. These items were rated using a 3-point Likert scale and averaged as an index of media consumption ("How often do you consume TV shows or movies, either on television, YouTube, or on streaming services (such as Netflix or similar)?": 1 = up to 3 times a week, 2 = 4-6 times a week, 3 = more than 6 times a week; How many hours per week do you spend watching TV shows or movies, either on television, YouTube, or on streaming services (such as Netflix or similar)?": 1 = up to 8 hours, 2 = 8-16 hours, 3 = more than 16 hours; "How often do you visit social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram?": 1 = up to 5 times a day, 2 = 6-12 times a day, 3 = more than 12 times; "How many hours per day do you spend surfing the Internet (including social media, YouTube, TV, streaming services)?": 1 = up to 2 hours, 2 = 3-5 hours a day, 3 = more than 5 hours). Intervals of the scales were arranged around the mean values described in the latest media consumption report for Sweden (Myndigheten för press, radio och tv, 2019).

Video Rating

After watching the videos, participants were asked to rate the videos in terms of how funny, sexist, and in line with feminist beliefs they perceived them to be. For that, subjects had to move a cursor on a continuous slider scale ranging from 0 = *not at all* to 100 = *very much so*. Numeral ratings were not visible to the subjects to prevent them from basing subsequent answers on their previous responses. Participants were not forced into categorical judgments but instead were able to respond more freely.

Internalised Gender-Role Attitudes (STS)

Aspects of internalised sexism were assessed using the Silencing the Self-Scale (Jack & Dill, 1992). Subjects rated 31 items on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree)* on four subscales: externalised self-perception (six items), care as self-sacrifice (nine items), silencing the self (nine items), and divided self (seven items). These subscales are conceptualized as intercorrelated components of an overarching construct. Responses for items were averaged to achieve subscale scores and a total score

(ranging from 1 to 5), with higher scores implying more sexist behavioural beliefs. If participants were currently not in a relationship, they were asked to provide information about a previous or hypothetical relationship. Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .84$) as measured by Cronbach's alpha.

Intimate Partner Violence Attitudes (IPVAS)

This was assessed using a modified version of the Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scale (Smith et al., 2005). It is rated on a 4-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *disagree* to 4 = *agree*) and contains 23 items on three subscales: abuse (twelve items), control (six items), and violence (five items). Some items were rephrased to reduce any personal, emotional involvement and/or heteronormativity, for example "I would not stay with a partner who tried to keep me from doing things with other people" was rephrased to "I don't think one should stay with a partner who tried to keep them from doing things with other people" or "It is okay for me to tell my partner not to talk to someone of the opposite sex" was rephrased to "It is okay to tell one's partner not to talk to someone of the sex they are attracted to". Some items are reversed in phrasing to control for acquiescence in response set and were inverted for statistical analysis. Responses were averaged to create an index of intimate partner violence attitudes, with higher scores indicating more accepting beliefs toward intimate partner violence. Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = 0.81$) as measured by Cronbach's alpha.

Social Desirability

As a control measure of social desirability, the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale – Short Form 1 (Strahan & Gerbassi, 1972) was used. The revised and shortened version of the Marlow-Crowne Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) contains seven items measuring either desirable but uncommon behaviour (e.g. admitting mistakes) or undesirable but common behaviour (e.g. gossiping). While usually answered in a "true" – "false" manner, subjects were able to respond on a 4-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *disagree* to 4 = *agree*) to allow for a more differentiated measurement as well as to ensure a uniform response format. Scores range from 1 to 4, with higher scores representing a stronger need to appear socially desirable. Internal consistency was lower for this scale ($\alpha = 0.61$) as measured by Cronbach's alpha.

Commitment to Feminist Action (FICS-AC)

This was assessed using the Commitment to Social Change subscale of the Feminist Identity Composite Scale (FICS; Fisher et al., 2000). Participants responded to seven items

that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree)* and all items were averaged to achieve a total score. The total scores for the FICS-AC ranged between 1 and 5, with higher scores indicating more commitment to social change and stronger feminist beliefs. An example item was "I want to work to improve women's status" (Internal consistency was $\alpha = 0.82$ in the present study).

Modern Sexist Attitudes (MS)

Attitudes towards sexism were assessed using an adaptation of the Modern Sexism Scale (Swim & Cohen, 1997). This adaptation does not measure endorsement of "old-fashioned" sexism but instead a rather modern form that is characterised by denial of the continued existence of discrimination against women (Swim & Cohen, 1997). It is assessed based on eight items that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. To get an overall measure of sexism, the scores were averaged after reversing some items, leading to values between 1 (low in modern sexism) and 5 (high in modern sexism). The modern sexism scale is thought to be better to detect covert or subtle sexist beliefs (Swim & Cohen, 1997) compared to scales measuring similar constructs. Example items included "Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination" and "On average, people in our society treat men and women equally". Some items have been adapted to a Scandinavian sample, with "USA" being changed to "Sweden". Alpha reliability was 0.82, as reported in the original paper (Swim & Cohen, 1997) and internal consistency was $\alpha = 0.83$ in the present study.

Identification with Feminism (SIF)

Participants also completed the Self-Identification as a Feminist Scale (SIF; Szymanski, 2004), which contains four items ("I consider myself a feminist"; "I identify myself as a feminist to other people"; "Feminist values and principles are important to me"; "I support the goals of the feminist movement"). Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) and were averaged for an index. SIF values ranged between 1 and 5, higher scores suggest stronger feminist identification. Internal consistency was high as measured by Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = .91$).

Ethical Considerations

The present study was carried out in accordance with national guidelines on ethical research (Swedish Research Council, 2017). Participants were informed about their voluntary and anonymous contribution and their right to quit the survey at any time without giving any

reasons. They were also informed that the data collected could not be linked back to their identity and would be handled according to guidelines on data storage. After this information, participants had to actively give their consent to proceed with the study and were presented with the priming condition as well as the questionnaires. After filling in the questionnaires, participants had to actively submit their responses and consent to their data being used in analysis. While the study intended to affect the participants psychologically, the stress they were exposed to when partaking in the study was similar to that experienced in everyday life. Priming material used in the present study was taken from popular TV shows that were publicly available on the platform YouTube.

Changes were made to items of the IPV attitudes scale to avoid having participants report about their personal situation and potentially evoke feelings of distress. This study did not intend to collect data on personal IPV experiences or mental health and well-being as this would require ethical approval; instead, general attitudes towards IPV were the focus of this investigation.

Statistical Analysis

In a first step, demographic information of participants was analysed. Distributional characteristics for all study variables were computed as well as correlations with Cronbach's alpha for each scale. A drop-out analysis was conducted to investigate characteristics of subjects who did not complete the study to rule out potential biases in sample characteristics. Intercorrelations of all study variables were computed using Pearson's correlation coefficient as interval scales were assumed for all dependent variables. Mean comparison analyses for both gender and place of origin were performed using Student's t-test for normally distributed and Mann Whitney U test for skewed scales as a non-parametric alternative. Group differences in a between-subjects, 2x3 design (gender: female / male – humour condition: SH, FH, NH) were analysed using ANCOVA for the main outcome variables self-silencing behaviour (STS total score) and IPVAS total score, as well as for secondary outcome variables modern sexism (MS), self-identification as feminists (SIF) and commitment to social change (FICS-AC), with media consumption and social desirability indices as covariates. For skewed scales, one-way Kruskal Wallis tests were performed as a non-parametric alternative. Data were analysed using jamovi (The jamovi project, 2019) and SPSS 21.0 (IBM SPSS statistics, 2017).

Results

Preliminary analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted to assess the reliability of scales, distributional characteristics, intercorrelations of measures, and the extent of missing data. Throughout this article, *p*-values of .05 and less are considered as significant.

An analysis of missing values indicated a high rate of participant drop-out. Subjects who provided less than 80% of data were excluded from analysis (*n* = 66). Missing data for the final sample was minimal (< 5%) and were handled using a simple mean substitution method (Kline, 2005), as this is thought to be a good representation of the original data (Downey & King, 1998). An analysis of dropouts showed that participants quit the study after giving consent (*n* = 8), after providing demographic information (*n* = 9)*,* after filling in media consumption information / before watching the videos (*n* = 26), during the priming intervention (*n* = 21), and while filling in the questionnaires (*n* = 2). Dropout during priming presentation was equal across study conditions (*n* = 7 for each condition). Demographic characteristics of the dropout sample can be found in the Appendix (Table 1): No clear-cut differences emerged that would explain dropping out of this subsample.

The final sample consisted of *N* = 80 subjects (30 men, 50 women). The average age was 24.8 years (*SD* = 2.88). Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (age, gender, main occupation, and place of origin) can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Information of the Sample (N = 80).

	Female		Male	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Sample size	50	62.5	30	37.5
Place of Origin				
Scandinavia	23	46.0	14	46.7
Europe	19	38.0	11	36.7
Other	8	16.0	5	16.7
Main occupation				
Student	38	76.0	22	73.3
Employee	10	20.0	8	26.7
Other	2	4.0	0	0
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Age	24.4	2.85	25.2	2.91

Descriptive statistics for all dependent variables can be found in Table 3. Subjects reported high levels of self-identification as feminists and moderately high active commitment to social change (i.e. commitment to feminist action). The sample also scored low on attitudes toward intimate partner violence and relatively low on modern sexism.

Table 3

Descriptives of All Dependent Variables (N = 80).

	M	*SD*	*Mdn*	*Skewness*	Shapiro-Wilk *p*
STS total score	2.51	0.47	2.52	-0.05	.991
IPVAS total score	1.36	0.31	1.33	1.69	< .001**
MS	2.17	0.79	2.06	-0.38	.002**
FICS-AC	3.68	0.70	3.71	0.77	.117
SIF	4.03	1.06	4.50	-1.04	< .001**

Note. STS = silencing the self-scale, IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, MS = modern sexism, FICS-AC = active commitment to social change of the Feminist identity composite scale, SIF = self-identification as a feminist. IPVAS was measured on a 1-4 scale, STS, MS, FICS-AC, and SIF were measured on a 1-5 scale. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between frequencies of gender and study condition. The relation was not significant, and these groups did not differ from each other, $\chi2(2, N = 80) = 1.14$, $p = .564$. Another chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the relation between place of origin (dichotomised to Scandinavian – non-Scandinavian) and study condition, that was found significant, $\chi2(2, N = 80) = 8.76$, $p = .013$. The proportion of

subjects randomly assigned to the three study conditions was not equally distributed among Scandinavians and non-Scandinavians, with for example more non-Scandinavians ($n = 18$) being assigned to the control group than Scandinavians ($n = 5$).

Intercorrelations were computed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine how the outcome variables were associated with each other (Table 4). A table with intercorrelations of all study variables (including subscale scores) can be found in the Appendix (Table 6).

Table 4
Intercorrelation Matrix of Dependent Variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1 - STS total score	-	.246*	.032	-.110	-.095
2 - IPVAS total score		-	.514**	-.547**	-.575**
3 - MS			-	-.817**	-.669**
4 - SIF				-	.678**
5 - FICS-AC					-

Note. STS = silencing the Self scale, IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, MS = modern sexism, SIF = Self-identification as a feminist, FICS-AC = active commitment to social change subscale of the Feminist identity composite scale. * p < .05, ** p < .01.

Moderate to strong intercorrelations were found: Subjects who scored high on modern sexism also reported more positive attitudes towards IPV. Participants who were more willing to call themselves a feminist, on the other hand, tended to score lower on modern sexism and IPV attitudes. The same association was found between commitment to social change and modern sexism and IPV attitudes. Feminist measures were highly correlated and individuals who self-identify as feminists reported being more willing to engage in feminist action. Self-silencing beliefs were only found weakly correlated with IPV attitudes.

Mean Comparison Analyses for Place of Origin

Scandinavian subjects did not significantly differ from non-Scandinavian participants in any outcome measures. Student's t-tests were conducted to compare mean differences for self-silencing beliefs, $t(78) = 1.012$, $p = .315$, and commitment to feminist action, $t(78) = -0.834$, $p = .407$. Mann Whitney U-tests were used for non-normally distributed variables; however, no statistically significant differences were found for IPV attitudes (U = 692, $p = .317$), modern sexism (U = 710, $p = .411$), and feminist self-identification (U = 732, $p = .537$). Results summarised in tables can be found in the Appendix (Tables 7-9).

Mean Comparison Analyses for Gender

Independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare mean differences for self-silencing beliefs and commitment to feminist action based on gender. Women scored significantly higher on the latter (*M* = 3.81, *SD* = 0.67) than men (*M* = 3.47, *SD* = 0.70), *t* (78) = -2.206, *p* = .030. No significant difference was found for self-silencing beliefs (total score), *t* (78) = 0.538, *p* = .592.

A Mann Whitney U test showed that self-identification as a feminist was greater for female participants (*Mdn* = 4.75, *SD* = 1.00) than for male participants (*Mdn* = 3.88, *SD* = 1.06), U = 439, *p* = .002. The same test performed with modern sexism as outcome variable indicated a trend on MS scores (U = 559, *p* = .057), with women scoring lower (*Mdn* = 1.96, *SD* = 0.74) than men (*Mdn* = 2.38, *SD* = 0.83). There was no significant difference in IPVAS total score between male (*Mdn* = 1.35, *SD* = 0.40) and female participants (*Mdn* = 1.30, *SD* = 0.23), U = 620, *p* = .196. Results summarised in tables can be found in the Appendix (Tables 10-12).

Impact of Humour on IPV Attitudes, Self-Silencing Beliefs, and Sexist and Feminist Measures

Lastly, several analyses of variance were conducted to determine if there were any differences in sexist and feminist views based on experimental condition (descriptives of outcome variables can be found in Table 5). Prior to running inferential analyses, media consumption and social desirability were considered potential covariates. However, both were found unrelated to all outcome variables (*p* > .05) and were therefore excluded as covariates in the analysis. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the main effects of gender and study condition on self-silencing scale total score. No effects were found significant at the α = .05 significance level. The main effect of gender yielded an F ratio of $F(1, 74) = 0.348$, *p* = .557, partial η^2 = 0.005 and the main effect of the study condition yielding an *F* ratio of $F(2, 74) = 1.494$, *p* = .231, partial η^2 = 0.039, indicating that these groups did not differ in their STS total scores. Similarly, the interaction of gender and study condition was not significant, $F(2, 74) = 2.268$, p = .111, partial η^2 = 0.058.

Table 5
Descriptives of Dependent Variables, by Study Condition.

	Condition 1 - SH (n = 27)			Condition 2 - FH (n = 30)			Control group (n = 23)		
	M	*SD*	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*
STS total score	2.41	0.42	2.45	2.51	0.51	2.46	2.64	0.44	2.55
IPVAS total score	1.37	0.29	1.30	1.30	0.26	1.28	1.43	0.37	1.39
MS	2.10	0.82	2.10	2.06	0.71	1.88	2.41	0.84	2.25
FICS-AC	3.50	0.76	3.57	3.86	0.64	3.86	3.67	0.68	3.58
SIF	4.03	1.15	4.25	4.29	0.86	4.63	3.68	1.14	3.75

Note. STS = silencing the self-scale, IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, MS = modern sexism, SIF = Self-identification as a feminist, FICS-AC = active commitment to social change subscale of the Feminist identity composite scale. IPVAS was measured on a 1-4 scale, STS, MS, FICS-AC, and SIF were measured on a 1-5 scale. SH = sexist humour, FH = feminist humour.

A second analysis of variance was performed to determine if there were significant main effects of gender and study condition on commitment to feminist action (FICS-AC). A significant main effect of gender was found, $F(1, 74) = 6.376$, $p = .014$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.079$, while study condition did not reach but approached statistically significant effects on an $\alpha = .05$ significance level, $F(2,74) = 2.904$, $p = .061$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.073$. The interaction of both main effects did not yield significant results, $F(2,74) = 0.605$, $p = .549$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.016$.

For the variables modern sexism, IPV attitudes total score, and feminist self-identification, a non-parametric method was required as they did not follow a normal distribution. However, no equivalent of a two-way testing method could be found. The effects of gender were investigated using Mann Whitney U tests and were previously reported.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to determine a possible difference in IPV attitudes depending on study condition (sexist, feminist, neutral humour). No significant difference was found between IPVAS scores in the three study condition, $\chi^2(2) = 2.29$, p = .318, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.029$. A second Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to investigate potential mean differences in scores on the modern sexism scale based on experimental condition. However, the test failed to reach significance, $\chi^2(2) = 3.34$, $p = .188$, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.042$. Similarly, no significant differences were found in self-identification, $\chi^2(2) = 4.22$, $p = .121$, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.053$, based on experimental condition as investigated using non-parametric testing. Results summarised in tables can be found in the Appendix (Tables 13-15).

Discussion

This study investigated differences in gender and place of origin for IPV attitudes, self-silencing beliefs, and sexist and feminist measures in a sample of 18 to 30-year olds. Furthermore, it sought to determine whether a short exposure to sexist humour would

increase subjects' IPV attitudes and self-silencing beliefs in a romantic relationship measured immediately after exposure as compared to exposure to feminist or neutral humour. As recommended (Wright et al., 2017) and analogous to previous research in this area (Drucker et al., 2014, Eyssel & Bohner, 2007; Ford, 2000; Ford et al., 2001, 2008, 2013; Moore et al., 1987), this study used an experimental approach, with a between-subjects 3 (humour condition: sexist, feminist, control) X 2 (gender: male, female) design. In a priming paradigm, participants were presented with videos containing either sexist, feminist, or neutral humour and subsequently faced with questionnaires related to sexist and feminist views and attitudes towards intimate partner violence.

Independent sample t-tests showed that the Scandinavian subsample did not differ from the non-Scandinavian group in any of the outcome measures. Gender differences, on the other hand, were found, with women being more likely to identify as feminists and being more committed to social change. A trend was observed on modern sexism scores, with women scoring lower than men. No significant effect of the priming manipulation on self-silencing and IPV attitudes measures was detected using ANOVA and Kruskal Wallis tests, neither on secondary outcome variables modern sexism, commitment to social change, and self-identification as a feminist.

Place of Origin

No differences were found for Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian subjects for this sample; Scandinavian participants did not score higher on IPV, sexist, or feminist attitudes. However, this study was distributed among potential participants currently residing in Sweden. Non-Scandinavian subjects could have moved to Sweden because of its gender equal mindset. Similarly, participants who have been living in Sweden for a period of time could have adapted Swedish values and attitudes, and therefore not be statistically significant when compared to individuals growing up in Sweden: In processes of cultural assimilation, minority individuals come to resemble the dominant group and assume their values, behaviours, and beliefs (Spielberger, 2004). As the sample consisted predominantly of university students, they are incorporated into a similar network of education, even when growing up in different countries, and investigations of different samples might bring about different findings.

Gender Differences

In the present study, male subjects did not significantly differ from female subjects in attitudes toward intimate partner violence. In line with the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, 1988) and findings from previous studies (Deal & Wampler, 1986; Fincham et al., 2008; McDermott & Lopez, 2013; Price et al., 1999), holding positive IPV attitudes are considered a main risk factor for IPV perpetration. The lack of gender difference in IPV attitudes in this study, however, does not mirror official statistics of IPV victimisation in Sweden, with almost 80% of 10.500 cases of reported intimate partner violence in 2019 being directed at a woman (Nationella Trygghetsundersökningen, 2019). While attitudes toward a certain behaviour are an important factor in performance of the behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, 1988), it is not the sole component as effects of attitude and intention are moderated by the presence of intervening, situational variables (Cote & Wong, 1985).

Similarly, no gender differences on scores of the Silencing the Self-Scale were found. The STS measures imperatives about feminine behaviour in intimate relationships and was used as an indicator of internalised gender role attitudes and condonation of sexist behaviour in this study. Men and women, however, did not significantly differ from each other, and individuals in this study – Swedish natives, people currently residing in Sweden or otherwise connected to Swedish culture – hold similar attitudes toward behaviour in intimate relationships. The lack of difference on both endorsement and condonation measures – with regard to a clear gender imbalance in Swedish IPV statistics - implies that the relationship between attitudes toward IPV and IPV behaviour is a complex one that needs to be investigated in relation to additional factors.

Furthermore, even though not significant on an $\alpha = .05$ level, a trend was observed with men scoring higher than women on modern sexism. In line with previous studies in which men reported higher levels of modern sexism (Ekehammar et al., 2000, Swim et al., 1995), male subjects tended to endorse subtle manifestations of sexism more than female subjects. However, while sexist attitudes have been strongly associated with positive IPV attitudes (Cross et al., 2018) and are considered an important factor in IPV perpetration (García-Moreno et al., 2014, Gracia et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013b), their precise influence on violent behaviour directed against an intimate partner is still unclear. Next to gender inequitable and positive IPV attitudes, a broad range of other aspects contribute to an increased risk of IPV perpetration. Past research has described a complex network of potential risk factors, for example self-regulatory failure and dispositional self-control (Finkel

et al., 2009), alcohol use and impulsivity (Leone et al., 2016), witnessing parental violence and holding permissive attitudes towards violence against women (Fleming et al., 2015), low self-esteem (Renner & Whitney, 2012), as well as childhood risk factors such as childhood abuse and neglect (Renner & Whitney, 2012) and school bullying perpetration (Falb et al., 2011; see Capaldi et al., 2012 for a review).

In the present study, women were found to score higher on feminist measures; they were not only more willing to identify as feminists but also more committed to social change, as compared to male subjects. Furthermore, a correlation was found between these two measures, indicating that the more subjects identified with the feminist label, the more willing they were to engage in feminist action and vice versa. Similar to the correlative relationship found in this study, previous research has shown that adoption of a feminist label is associated with increased feminist action (Weis et al., 2018; Yoder et al., 2011).

Generally, a distinction needs to be made between holding egalitarian beliefs and adopting a feminist identity; many were found to agree with gender equality while refusing to identify as feminists (Fitz et al., 2012). One reason for this discrepancy could be the predominantly negative picture of feminists in media (Beck, 1998; Lind & Salo, 2002) and individuals may be reluctant to the label because of the social stigma (e.g. Alexander & Ryan, 1997); not necessarily because of their own views of feminists, but because they assume that others have negative views of feminists (Roy et al., 2007). The belief that other individuals may hold negative stereotypes may therefore serve as a barrier to self-identification (Roy et al., 2007). However, high means for both self-identification ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.06$) and commitment to the feminist cause ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.70$) were found in the present study, with the female subsample scoring even higher (SIF: $M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.00$; FICS-AC: $M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.67$). In a sample of 261 US-American women between the ages of 19 to 69 years, Watson and Grotewiel (2016) found similar levels of self-reported commitment to social change ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.56$). In a 2008 study, Eisele and Stake (2008) found lower rates of self-reported identification with feminism ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.47$) in a sample of 435 US-American men and women as compared to subjects in the present study. In Sweden, with its strong open feminist discourse, individuals seem to be less reluctant to adopt a feminist label whereas commitment to feminist action appears to be similar in Sweden and the US.

Priming with Sexist Content

In the present study, subjects presented with sexist humour did not show more positive intimate partner violence attitudes, nor did they score higher on self-silencing beliefs.

Short exposure to sexist or feminist humour did not influence either condonation or endorsement of sexist attitudes in romantic relationships. No statistically significant results were found for secondary outcome variables modern sexism, commitment to social change, and self-identification.

In an experimental set-up similar to this study, Wright and colleagues (2017) presented more than 1500 college students with either sexist humour videos, neutral humour videos, or no videos at all. Participants in the sexist humour condition reported higher scores on all measures of sexism (such as modern, hostile, and benevolent sexism) and femininity ideology measuring expectations of how women should act. This priming effect could not be found for the sample in this study. Different to the present study, however, participants were not asked to respond, rate, or evaluate the video clips in any way as to not make them consciously aware of the potential priming material. When trying to explain this discrepancy in results, the situated inference model (Loersch & Payne, 2014) can offer some insight into priming research. According to the model, prime exposure alters the accessibility of prime-related content which then in turn leads to misattribution of accessible content to one's own response. This activated content is used as a source of information for higher order thought and subsequent behaviour. One notion of the model is that, even though primes can be effectively presented both supraliminal and subliminal, a very salient and blatant prime can make the true source of the mental content apparent and the second step of misattribution does not take place (Loersch & Payne, 2014). The content that is intended to prime is consciously processed and individuals can more easily differentiate between their own beliefs and external attitudes. Having subjects rate the video clips individually may have caused participants to interpret the content they have been exposed to more critically which might have negated the effect of its sexist content, as being aware of the priming could counterbalance the effect of it (Loersch & Payne, 2014).

Moreover, with a large sample size, very minor effects can lead to statistically significant tests of the null hypothesis, as can be the case for Wright and colleagues (2017). A lack of statistical significance does not indicate that the effect size is small. In small samples, effects may be drowned in noise and fail to be detected by statistical tests (Greenland et al., 2016). Important to keep in mind is that a detected p value is always a property of the result of a statistical test, and not a property of the effect or the population being investigated (Greenland et al., 2016). While not reaching significance on the $\alpha = .05$ level, small to medium effect sizes (partial $\eta^2 = 0.039$ for self-silencing, partial $\eta^2 = 0.073$ for commitment to social change, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.029$ for IPV attitudes, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.042$ for modern sexism, and $\varepsilon^2 = 0.053$

for self-identification, according to Cohen's [1988] guidelines) were found in the present study and the lack of significant results could be due to statistical difficulties such as a rather small sample size.

Stereotype Accessibility

While not reaching significance in this study, past research has found that exposure to sexist content increases sexist attitudes in both men and women (Ford & Ferguson, 2004; Wright et al., 2017) and an association has been drawn between enjoyment of sexist humour and different measures of sexism (Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998). Hansen and Hansen (1988) found that exposure to non-humorous stereotypes of men and women increased the accessibility and use of gender stereotypes. In line with that, Weston and Thomsen (1993) found that participants made more stereotypical evaluations of men and women after watching sexist comedy skits than after watching neutral comedy skits. However, they lacked a control condition in which they presented subjects with non-humorous skits. Nonetheless, it suggests that exposure to sexist humour activates gender stereotypes, makes them more accessible to the individual (Woodzicka & Ford, 2010), and the information related to the stereotype can be retrieved more easily (Higgins, 1996). As frequent activation makes any information more accessible (Higgins, 1996), repeated exposure to disparagement humour can reinforce these negative stereotypes. This is particularly dangerous as highly accessible beliefs and constructs are readily used in information processing (Higgins & King, 1982) and have a stronger impact on an individual's perception of people, objects, and events (Fazio, 1989). The greater the accessibility of the construct, the more likely it will be used to categorise stimulus information even when the stimulus information is impoverished, distantly related, or fit an alternative category better (Bruner 1957a, 1957b).

However, this effect of increased use of gender stereotypes immediately after exposure to sexist humour could not be found in the present study, and subjects exposed to 10 minutes of humorous sexist content did not report higher scores on IPV attitudes and self-silencing beliefs scales. Ford and colleagues (2001) found that exposure to sexist humour did not affect the evaluative content of men's stereotypes about women relative to comparable non-humorous disparagement or neutral, even for subjects high in hostile sexism. Similarly, Olsen and colleagues (1999) investigated whether exposure to disparaging humour would elicit more extreme stereotypes over three experiments and found no evident effect on stereotype extremity or accessibility. However, disparaging humour used in their studies was

targeting advantaged groups of society (men and lawyers) as compared to disadvantaged individuals such as women and the findings can only be generalised to a certain extent.

In conclusion, both past research and the current study show somewhat inconclusive findings as to the extent to which consumers of sexist humour are impacted by its sexist content. More research is needed to investigate the influence of consumed media on sexist and feminist attitudes, particularly the role of humorous content.

Priming Feminist Attitudes

Research on the effects of exposure to sexist content on attitudes is plenty, however, the equivalent effect of exposure to feminist content is under researched. Some insight can offer social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) stating that the social world is divided into groups, known as in-group and out-group, and that an individual's sense of self and identity is based on membership to certain groups. An individual's social identity encompasses the knowledge that he or she has of their membership in a particular social group and the emotional significance they attach to that group. Processes of group identification refer to the extent to which people perceive themselves as being similar to their group members (Gurin et al., 1980; Gurin & Townsend, 1986); the more individuals see themselves in line with certain group characteristics, the more likely they are to identify with it. The central hypothesis of social identity theory is that group members of an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, in order to enhance their own self-image (Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner & Tajfel, 1986). Enhanced group identification impacts the interpretation of events and highly identified individuals were found to interpret ambiguous behaviour as discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989). For instance, feminist identity was shown to predict perceptions of gender discrimination on a college campus (Fisher & Good, 1994) and in general (Kobrynowicz & Branscombe 1997).

Another relevant process identified by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) is social comparison, with highly identified individuals being more likely to make intergroup, as opposed to interpersonal, comparisons (Gurin & Townsend, 1986). Identification with a stigmatised group is associated with an increased recognition of group inequalities and discrimination (Major, 1994); for example, Fisher and Good (1994) found that women reported a greater sex bias and discrimination compared to male subjects in an investigation of a college campus environment. Similarly, identifying as a feminist may be related to a greater awareness of sexism (Henderson-King & Steward, 1994).

Based on these ideas, research has been conducted to experimentally raise or lower identification with a certain group. In an experimental study, Moore and Stathi (2019) exposed more than 300 women to either positive or negative stereotypes of feminists, or a control group with no stereotypes. Exposure to positive stereotypes was found to significantly increase self-identification. In a similar set-up, Roy and colleagues (2007) demonstrated that women in the control and negative stereotype conditions were equally unlikely to self-identify, suggesting that negative stereotypes are the status quo. Improving attitudes toward feminist prototypes may therefore help promote feminist identification (Weis et al., 2018; Redford et al., 2018), that in turn has been not only associated with increased recognition of sexist instances but instead various favourable outcomes, for example with higher self-esteem (Fischer & Good, 1994), self-efficacy (Foss & Slaney, 1986), self-reliance (Liss et al., 2001), and academic achievement (Valenzuela, 1993).

Contrary to previous findings (Moore & Stathi, 2019; Roy et al., 2007), higher feminist identification and commitment to social change could not be experimentally induced in the present study. However, in these aforementioned studies, subjects were presented with informative texts about feminists and the feminist movement whereas in the present study feminist priming content was wrapped in a comedic setting. The same mechanisms that excuse sexism in comedy may come into play here as humour impacts the manner in which we interpret a given message (Ford et al., 2008). Humour is thought to activate a non-critical mindset and humorous messages are not examined in a critical manner and are not taken seriously (Ford et al., 200). Feminist content in the videos may not have been distinct enough to cause the intended priming effect.

Limitations

This study faces several limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, the sample tested in this experiment entails several restrictions. This study makes use of a convenience sample that might not be representative of the general population. Furthermore, compared to other studies investigating similar constructs, this study used a rather small sample ($N = 80$). This poses major difficulties in analysis and interpretation, especially in terms of reaching significance with traditional null hypothesis testing methods. Even though subjects were randomly assigned to one of the study conditions, the high rate of dropouts ($n = 66$) caused unequal group sizes that further complicated analysis. For instance, the sample consisted predominantly of university students ($n = 60$). This is a distinct group that might be different to the general population as they may be better educated on the matter and thus have more

progressive attitudes when compared to the general Swedish population. Another risk of selection bias can be found in the wording of the announcement and promotion of this experiment: The study was advertised as investigating relationship behaviours and gender attitudes. Certain groups might be more inclined to partake, such as individuals who are very passionate about the topics of gender equality. Thus, the sample might not be representative of the population this study was intended to investigate, and results must be interpreted with caution.

In this priming paradigm, potential effects of the material on subsequent attitudes are measured directly after exposure. As this is only a snapshot, no predictions can be made about how long these potential changes would last. A different study design is needed to investigate long-term effects that more resemble real life conditions.

This study used an internet-based set-up to allow for fast distribution and easier accessibility for potential participants, as well as to guarantee anonymity to subjects as sexist and feminist views can be a sensitive topic to some individuals. Even though subjects were instructed to carefully watch the videos, it cannot be ensured that participants watched the videos to the end and were exposed to the priming material as it was possible to continue the questionnaire without having seen the videos to the end. Furthermore, participants were not able to ask for clarification during the study and might have interpreted and responded to items differently. As this study was conducted in the spring term of 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic forced the world to avoid face-to-face contact and this study could not be performed as an in-lab experiment.

Within-in subjects designs are thought to better capture the impact of potential priming effects (Budiu, 2018). However, to relieve potential participants of time constraints, a baseline measurement of sexist and feminist variables was discarded, and the present study took 30 minutes to fill in. Participants were informed about the length and course of the study on the first page. It is recommended to not exceed a 20-minute time frame for psychological studies (ideal median of 10 minutes) to avoid having participants drop out midway (Revilla & Ochoa, 2017) as announced study length is identified as a crucial factor in participant drop out (Galesic, 2006). Past research has suggested that around 10% of participants drop out within the first dozen responses in web-based, voluntary psychological research (Hoerger, 2010), accumulating to up to 30% by the end of the survey in web surveys (Galesic, 2006). In the present study, a higher rate was found with 43 subjects (29%) quitting within the first 10 items and 66 subjects (45%) dropping out in total. With only two subjects dropping out in the later stages of the study, study length did not seem to be the main barrier to completing the

survey. Besides study length, another important factor in participant drop out is subject burden. As video clips used in the priming intervention were taken from popular tv shows, participants might have been familiar with them and therefore bored by being forced to watch them again, or might have felt burdened by being forced to watch them to begin with. Similarly, being tasked with rating the video clips could have added to subject burden and participant drop out, as consciously thinking about the sexist nature of behaviours can pose additional stress.

While much of past research in this area has focused on sexist attitudes such as hostile sexism with the use of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), this study used a modified scale measuring modern sexism (Swim & Cohen, 1997) which has been shown to highly correlate with traditional sexism measures (Ekehammar et al., 2000). To get a more detailed picture of manifestations of sexism in romantic relationships, it used the Intimate Partner Violence Attitude Scale as an indicator of endorsement and the Silencing the Self-Scale as condonation of sexist attitudes. However, these measures were not constructed with the intention of using it in this context and other scales might have been better to detect subtle differences and ensure greater validity of the present study.

Some of the main outcome variables were found to be heavily skewed. For instance, the sample was shown to score very high in feminist measures and very low in partner violence attitudes. This not only complicates statistical analysis but can be taken as an indication that new measures are needed to better capture constructs that are currently shifting in public awareness (Lewis, 2018). While sexism is still very present in Western cultures, it has moved from overt discrimination to more subtle manifestations, such as modern sexism or gender microaggressions (Lewis, 2018).

Lastly, despite a pilot study being conducted to identify appropriate videos, the clips used in this study may have contained ambiguous material. For instance, in one video a character talks about a sexist encounter that had happened to her. Her partner then reacts in a way that was rated as very much in line with feminist beliefs. Subjects were instructed to rate the behaviour of the characters shown in the clips; however, these scenes, for both feminist and sexist humour, might have been too inconclusive in content to lead to the priming effect this study was seeking.

Future Research

Future research should further investigate the mechanisms of the Nordic Paradox to help understand and solve this contradictory phenomenon. Studies investigating gender

inequality and gender-role attitudes show that the relationships among these constructs are complicated and potentially bidirectional (Latzman et al., 2018). Some studies show increased sexist attitudes after exposure to sexist content while other studies do not find similar effects. Past research on the effects of sexist content, particularly sexist humour, is inconclusive and should be further studied. Gender inequitable attitudes are not the sole risk factor to positive IPV attitudes which in turn are not the sole predictor for IPV behaviour. However, identifying these risk factors is a complex task and should be investigated in a dyadic framework.

With a study design in which potential effects are measured directly after exposure to priming material, is it impossible to determine how long changes would last. Future research should investigate the long-term effect that exposure to depictions of sexist behaviours has on sexist attitudes. Similarly, it should explore the effect of exposure to positive stereotypes of feminists on self-identification through various media outlets. Even if the positive effect demonstrated in past studies is passing, repeated exposure to positive portrayals could potentially influence individuals' willingness to adopt a feminist label and engage in egalitarian endeavours.

Future research might also benefit from the use of new measures that are developed to detect more subtle differences in attitudes than already established scales, as sexist attitudes have shifted from overt to a more nuanced, subtle form of discrimination against women.

Conclusions

In the present study, Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian subjects did not differ in their self-reported scores on IPV attitudes, self-silencing beliefs, and sexist and feminist measures. When comparing scores for female and male subjects, gender differences were only found for identification with and commitment to a feminist cause, with women scoring higher than men on both, whereas no difference was found for IPV attitudes and self-silencing beliefs. While attitudes toward a certain behaviour is a crucial factor in execution of that behaviour, simply referring to differences in attitudes is not sufficient to explain higher rates of sexual crimes and a clear gender imbalance in perpetration of IPV in the Nordic countries.

Previous research has shown that certain beliefs condoning or accepting physical, sexual, and psychological violence in relationships are key risk factors for not only attitudes toward but also IPV perpetration itself. The media, with their extensive impact on public opinion, play a central role in reshaping perceptions of and attitudes toward IPV and

downplaying the seriousness of it as a global health issue through various outlets. However, no statistically significant priming effect of sexist and feminist humour, respectively, on condonation and endorsement of sexism in romantic relationships was found and this study cannot make any definitive assumptions about the contribution of certain types of humour to the problem of high rates of intimate partner violence in the Nordic countries. Both past research and the present study show somewhat inconclusive findings as to the extent to which consumers of sexist humour are impacted by its sexist content. The relationship between sexist and IPV attitudes and IPV behaviours is complex and needs to be further investigated. More studies are needed to investigate the mechanisms of emergence and maintenance of the Nordic paradox.

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Appendix

List of priming videos

Condition 1: Sexist humour

- Parks & Recreation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJW0Pfkk0XE
- The Big Bang Theory: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=la86r6fcphI
- How I Met Your Mother: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30IvuRZQVo8
- The Big Bang Theory: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzGZxeHFR1I

Condition 2: Feminist humour

- Brooklyn 99: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBx3sC09hLM
- Parks & Recreation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMnxPsQanrs
- The Office: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7MaPrEhcL0

Condition 3: Control group

- Friends: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khc_EnTl0U4
- Brooklyn 99: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb1Q0xZGauY
- The Office: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLxHtBt2jtU
- Brooklyn 99: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlBYdiXdUa8

Consent form

Welcome to this study!

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the association between media consumption, relationship behaviours, and gender attitudes and values. It is being conducted as a thesis of the M.Sc. psychology program at Lund University. For this study to be eligible, you must be between 18 and 30 years of age. The study language is English. If you find yourself unsure about how to answer, please try to answer it the best you can.

This study is separated in three parts and takes up to 30 minutes to complete. Participants begin by giving some basic information. In the second part, they watch several video clips from popular TV shows for about 10 minutes. After that, participants are asked to fill out questionnaires about behaviour and attitudes.

For some people, this survey may have the potential to cause feelings of stress or discomfort. However, the stress should be minimal and similar to that you experience in daily life. It is important to remember that participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. All answers given are anonymous and will be stored on a password-secured laptop with only the investigators having access to them. The data collected do not contain any personal information that can be linked back to your identity.

For this study, you will need an active internet connection to watch the video clips, so please make sure to stay connected to a Wi-fi or mobile network. This study can be filled out using mobile devices, however, it is recommended to use a laptop or similar.

If you have further questions about this study, or if you would like to learn more about our research, please feel free to contact the principal investigator Elisa Wandinger at el8002wa-s@student.lu.se

By checking the button below, you are agreeing to the following statement:

"I have read the above description and volunteer to participate in the study. I understand that I am taking part in psychological research. I understand that I can decide to discontinue my participation at any time without question. I am between 18 and 30 years of age and am therefore eligible for participation in this study."

Table 1

Demographic information of the dropout sample (N = 66).

	n	%
Gender		
Female	43	65.2
Male	14	21.2
NA	9	13.6
Place of Origin		
Scandinavia	27	40.9
Europe	17	25.8
Other	14	21.2
NA	8	12.1
Main occupation		
Student	37	56.1
Employee	16	24.2
Other	4	6.1
NA	9	13.6
	M	*SD*
Age	25.6	4.36

Note. NA = not indicated.

Table 6

Intercorrelations of all Study Variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 - Media consumption index	-													
2 - STS-ESP	.174	-												
3 - STS-CSS	-.091	.262*	-											
4 - STS-STS	.018	.384**	.332**	-										
5 - STS-DS	.134	.390**	-.022	.319**	-									
6 - STS total score	.076	.719**	.583**	.799**	.598**	-								
7 - IPVAS-A	-.091	.106	-.066	.212'	.341**	.221*	-							
8 - IPVAS-C	.026	.100	.059	.245*	.199	.230*	.547**	-						
9 - IPVAS-V	.001	-.032	.011	.160	.148	.116	.406**	.492**	-					
10 - IPVAS total score	-.041	.091	-.009	.259*	.307**	.246*	.884**	.831**	.677**	-				
11 - MS total score	.015	-.155	.013	.140	.048	.032	.425**	.436**	.402**	.514**	-			
12 - SIF	-.010	.046	-.095	-.137	-.091	-.110	-.446**	-.544**	-.315**	-.547**	-.817**	-		
13 - FICS-AC	.055	.124	-.003	-.265*	-.050	-.095	-.482**	-.500**	-.414**	-.575**	-.669**	.678**	-	
14 - MCSD	-.163	-.153	.064	.152	-.232*	-.036	-.293**	-.147	-.189	-.271*	-.081	.082	.127	

Note. STS = silencing the self-scale, STS-ESP = STS externalised self-perception subscale, STS-CSS = STS care as self-sacrifice subscale, STS-STS = STS silencing the self subscale, STS-DS = STS divided self subscale, IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, IPVAS-A = IPVAS abuse subscale, IPVAS-C = IPVAS control subscale, IPVAS-V = IPVAS violence subscale, MS = modern sexism, SIF = Self-identification as a feminist, FICS-AC = active commitment to social change subscale of the Feminist identity composite scale, MCSD = Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. * p < .05, ** p < .01.

Table 7

Descriptives of Study Variables, by Place of Origin.

	Scandinavian (*n* = 37)				Non-Scandinavian (*n* = 43)			
	M	*SD*	*Mdn*	Shapiro-Wilk *p*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	Shapiro-Wilk *p*
STS total score	2.57	0.48	2.53	.386	2.46	0.46	2.48	.485
IPVAS total score	1.34	0.31	1.30	.001**	1.38	0.31	1.35	< .001**
MS	2.30	0.90	2.13	.017	2.07	0.68	2.00	.249
FICS-AC	3.61	0.83	3.57	.362	3.75	0.57	3.71	.515
SIF	4.01	1.22	4.50	< .001**	4.04	0.92	4.25	< .001**

Note. STS = silencing the self-scale, IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, MS = modern sexism, FICS-AC = active commitment to social change subscale of the Feminist Identity Composite Scale, SIF = self-identification as a feminist scale. * p < .05, ** p < .01.

Table 8

Student's t-test to Investigate Mean Differences in Place of Origin.

				95% Confidence Interval		
	statistic	*df*	*p*	Lower	Upper	Cohen's *d*
STS total score	1.012	78	.315	-.103	0.314	0.227
FICS-AC	-0.834[a]	78	.407	-0.444	0.182	-0.187
Media consumption index	-1.521	78	.132	-0.349	0.047	-0.341

Note. [a] Levene's test is significant (p < .05), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances. STS = silencing the self-scale, FICS-AC = active commitment subscale of the Feminist Identity Composite Scale.

Table 9

Mann Whitney U-tests to Investigate Mean Differences in Place of Origin.

			95% Confidence Interval		
	statistic	*p*	Lower	Upper	Cohen's *d*
IPVAS total score	692	.317	-0.180	0.050	-0.142
MS	710	.411	-0.250	0.500	0.286
SIF	732	.536	-0.250	0.500	-0.249

Note. IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, MS = modern sexism, SIF = self-identification as a feminist.

Table 10

Descriptives of Study Variables by Gender.

| | Men (*n* = 30) | | | | Women (*n* = 50) | | | |
	M	*SD*	*Mdn*	Shapiro-Wilk *p*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	Shapiro-Wilk *p*
STS total score	2.55	0.44	2.52	.992	2.49	0.49	2.52	.988
IPVAS total score	1.45	0.40	1.35	.001**	1.31	0.23	1.30	.014*
MS	2.41	0.83	2.38	.079	2.04	0.73	1.96	.009
FICS-AC	3.47	0.70	3.43	.451	3.81	0.67	3.86	.063
SIF	3.61	1.06	3.88	.094	4.28	1.00	4.75	< .001**

Note. STS = silencing the self-scale, IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, MS = modern sexism, FICS-AC = active commitment to social change subscale of the Feminist Identity Composite Scale, SIF = self-identification as a feminist scale. * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01.

Table 11

Student's t-test to Investigate Mean Differences in Gender

| | statistic | *df* | *p* | 95% Confidence Interval | | Cohen's d |
				Lower	Upper	
STS total score	0.538	78	.592	-0.157	0.274	0.124
FICS-AC	-2.206	78	.030	-0.662	-0.034	-0.510
Media consumption index	-0.771	78	.443	-0.285	0.126	-0.178

Note. STS = silencing the self-scale, FICS-AC = active commitment subscale of the Feminist Identity Composite Scale.

Table 12

Mann Whitney U-tests to Investigate Mean Differences in Gender.

| | statistic | *p* | 95% Confidence Interval | | Cohen's *d* |
			Lower	Upper	
IPVAS total score	620	.196	-0.040	0.220	0.452
MS	559	.057	< .001	0.750	0.481
SIF	439	.002	-1.00	-0.250	-0.659

Note. IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, MS = modern sexism, SIF = self-identification as a feminist.

Table 13

Two-way ANOVA Using Self-Silencing as the Dependent Variable.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2	η^2p
Gender	0.0732	1	0.0732	0.348	0.557	0.004	0.005
Study Condition	0.6289	2	0.3144	1.494	0.231	0.036	0.039
Gender ✳ Study Condition	0.9548	2	0.4774	2.268	0.111	0.055	0.058
Residuals	15.5779	74	0.2105				

Table 14

Two-way ANOVA Using Commitment to Social Change as the Dependent Variable.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2	η^2p
Gender	2.898	1	2.898	6.376	0.014	0.073	0.079
Study Condition	2.640	2	1.320	2.904	0.061	0.066	0.073
Gender ✳ Study Condition	0.550	2	0.275	0.605	0.549	0.014	0.016
Residuals	33.638	74	0.455				

Table 15

Kruskal Wallis Tests to Investigate Mean Differences Based on Study Condition.

	χ^2	df	p	ε^2
Modern sexism	3.34	2	.188	0.042
IPVAS total score	2.29	2	.318	0.029
SIF	4.22	2	.121	0.053

Note. IPVAS = intimate partner violence attitudes scale, SIF = self-identification as a feminist.