

It's Just a Joke: Humor's Effect on Perceived Sexism in Prejudiced Statements

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Abstract

Humor's effect was explored on the perception of prejudice. The present study was a counterbalanced 2 (Levity: Humorous, Nonhumorous) \times 2 (Gender Targeted by Prejudice: Women, Men) within-subjects design requiring participants to read prejudiced beliefs about men, women, and Texans presented as jokes and blunt statements, and then rate the prejudice expressed by each text on a 5 point Likert scale. The stimuli were developed such that each prejudiced belief was presented within the study as both a joke and blunt, nonhumorous statement, with each participant rating every stimulus for the amount of prejudice it expressed. There was no main effect of Levity, but there was a main effect of Targeted Group such that prejudiced beliefs targeting women were considered more prejudiced than those targeting men. There was also an interaction of Levity and Target Group such that there was no difference between levels of Levity for statements targeting women while jokes targeting men were considered significantly less prejudiced than blunt statements targeting men. Further findings, implications, and future studies are discussed.

Keywords: disparaging humor, prejudice, sexism

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Sexism is a prevalent issue across many cultures. People experience sexism throughout almost every aspect of daily life: in advertisements, in popular media, and even in educational and professional settings. Feminist and other women's liberation movements have provided the frameworks necessary to bring analysis of sexism into the realm of academia. Though the means through which to express sexism are diverse, it is commonly framed with humor. Humor is often light-hearted jest based on absurdity or unexpected plays on words, but many people are well-acquainted with a darker form of humor: Disparagement humor is a style that insults, belittles, or otherwise demeans a target (Ford & Ferguson, 2004). Because sexist humor often relies on negative stereotypes about the targeted gender and typically perpetuates these stereotypes rather than challenging them, sexist humor is a specific type of disparagement humor. Sexism is a complex phenomenon, and is comprised of two dimensions: hostile and benevolent prejudice. Hostile sexism is an antagonistic prejudice that focuses on stereotypical, negative traits of the target sex. Benevolent sexism is prejudice that focuses on positive stereotypical traits of the target sex (Ford, Woodzicka, Petit, Richardson, & Lappi, 2015; Greenwood & Isbell, 2002; Thomae & Viki, 2013). An individual can be high on one dimension of sexism without being high in the other, and individual differences on these scales of sexism lead to behavioral differences, including how people use and react to sexist humor.

There are myriad proposed theories to explain why individuals might use sexist humor. Perhaps one of the most common ideas is that sexist humor is a useful strategy to establish social norms related to gender differences (Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998; Thomae & Pina, 2015). Love & Deckers (1989) found that when viewing cartoons depicting sexual and sexist violence, men tended to enjoy sexist humor targeting women as the victim more, while women tended to enjoy

sexist humor targeting men more. Despite both sexes tending to enjoy humor targeting the opposite sex, sexist humor is often misogynistic (typically being told by a man with the target of the joke being a woman), and many studies neglect to include measures of anti-male sexism. Despite this shortcoming, numerous studies have found sexist humor not only perpetuates sexist stereotypes, but also contributes to the development of novel sex stereotypes (Eyssel & Bohner, 2008; Ford & Fergusson, 2004). Disparaging misogynistic humor establishes a fundamental difference between men and women, and does so in such a way that shows that women are inferior to men, preventing women from reaching or maintaining a status of equal social power (Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998; Thomae & Pina, 2015). This strategic use of humor often “justifies the status quo of gender inequality” (Ford et al., 2015, p. 256). This is supported by the evidence that people find disparaging humor funnier when the target in the jokes is a member of an out-group relative to the participants of the study (Eyssel & Bohner, 2008), and that the humor of a joke increases as the participants have a higher degree of prejudice against the target group (Ford & Fergusson, 2004). Muted group theory suggests that this type of humor leaves cultural groups without a voice to protest their oppression due to the norms of language that are created by the stereotypes expressed by the jokes (Neuliep, 1987).

Prejudiced norm theory explains how and why disparaging humor is such an effective strategy for expressing hostile sexism as well as establishing norms. Individuals low in hostile sexism rely on their own internal cues to not express sexist beliefs, but individuals high in hostile sexism rely on external cues to determine how they will express their sexist beliefs (Ford, Boxer, Armstrong, & Edel, 2008; Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001; Thomae & Viki, 2013). Due to this, individuals high in hostile sexism will often vary how they express their sexism, if at all, based on the norms established within any given social context (Ford et al., 2008). These norms can be

strongly shifted by the use of sexist humor. When someone expresses sexist beliefs as a joke, they cue listeners to take a non-serious mindset (Ford & Fergusson, 2004; Thomae & Viki, 2013) because humor often comes with a sense of “moral amnesty” that does not require it to be socially acceptable (Ford et al., 2008). In many ways, critique of the sexist joke is even discouraged (Ford & Fergusson, 2004; Ford et al., 2015; Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001), and if someone should actually choose to critique the social acceptability of the statement, the speaker can fall back on the excuse that the sexist statement was “just a joke” and therefore should receive moral amnesty and not be critiqued (Ford & Fergusson, 2004). When an individual high in hostile sexism hears a sexist joke that goes unchallenged, they perceive the social context to be more tolerant of sexist ideologies. Upon hearing sexist jokes, men become more likely to express sexist beliefs more openly within the immediate social context (Ford et al., 2008; Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998; Thomae & Viki, 2013). This effect is unique to sexist beliefs expressed as humor, and does not occur when men hear nonhumorous sexist statements or non-disparaging humor (Ford & Fergusson, 2004). Additionally, this effect requires that the sexist humor not be too violent or disparaging, or else even listeners high in hostile sexism will not be able to subconsciously grant the joke moral amnesty because the violence is more salient than the levity of the joke (Ford & Fergusson, 2004; Thomae & Pina, 2015).

When people hear sexist jokes, their identity, attitudes, and beliefs strongly influence the magnitude of levity they perceive from the joke. Perhaps not surprisingly, men are more likely to find sexist jokes (typically targeting women) funnier than women find it (Ford et al., 2015), and women are more likely to view sexist humor as less funny and more offensive than men (Ford et al., 2015; Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998; Love & Deckers, 1989; Neuliep, 1987). However, regardless of gender, people who strongly identify with ideologies associated with feminist and other

women's liberation movements tend to find misogynistic humor less funny than those who do not identify with the movements (Greenwood & Isbell, 2002; Moore, Griffiths, & Payne, 1987; Thomae & Pina, 2015). This is supported by Moore, Griffiths, & Payne who found that the more participants had a positive attitude regarding the targets of disparaging humor, the less humorous the jokes were perceived to be (1987). On the other side of the same, genderless coin, people high in hostile sexism are more likely to find sexist jokes funnier than those lower in hostile sexism, regardless of the participants' sex (Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001; Greenwood & Isbell, 2002; Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). Ryan & Kanjorski (1998) specifically found that women who harbored beliefs that women were "deceitful and manipulative" and who accepted interpersonal violence targeted toward women were more likely than women without these beliefs to find sexist humor funny. Despite these nuances in personal difference, sexist humor targeting women is typically considered funnier by participants than when the humor targets men (Neuliep, 1987; Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998; Woodzicka & Ford, 2010).

Despite sexist humor being framed as "just a joke," people experience significant changes when exposed to it. When women are exposed to misogynistic humor, they experience higher rates of body surveillance and self-objectification (Ford et al., 2015). Perhaps more important are the behavioral differences that arise when men are exposed to misogynistic humor. When they perceive the norms of the social context to accept sexist beliefs due to exposure to sexist humor, men report more belief in rape myths (Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998), are more comfortable discriminating against women (Ford et al., 2008), and report higher rates of likelihood to commit sexual assault (Greenwood & Isbell, 2002; Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998; Thomae & Viki, 2013). Men also rate sexual harassment and discrimination as more acceptable and harmless when the events are perceived as humorous rather than nonhumorous and therefore

more serious (Ford et al., 2008). When they imagine themselves as the target of these types of “humorous” encounters, they predict that they would experience less negative affect in response than women predict they would experience (Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001). Perhaps most important to note is that these effects were not seen with sexist blunt statements; they required humor to frame the prejudice in order for the belief to shape the perception of the acceptability of sexism in the immediate social context (Ford et al., 2015; Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001).

Sexism is ubiquitous in our society, and it clearly carries important social weight. Many studies exist that explore the various facets of identity, political belief, and cultural norms that influence how humor affects perceptions of sexism. The present study contributes to this literature by looking not only at prejudice that targets women, but also that targets men and Texans.

Method

Participants

Participants were currently-enrolled undergraduate students over the age of 18 who are fluent in English. Non-fluent English speakers were excluded from the study since humor often relies on nuanced language that might not be as accessible to non-fluent speakers of English. Recruitment occurred by word of mouth, flyers posted in residential buildings and student-operated businesses, promotion on university Facebook pages and groups, and promotion by professors in their classes. The only compensation provided for participation in the study was bonus points to psychology students.

99 participants completed the survey in its entirety, though 1 was excluded for indicating they did not understand the survey instructions, 1 was excluded for not being a current

ungraduate, 1 was excluded for not being a native English speaker, and 3 were excluded for not identifying within the gender binary. Ultimately, 93 participants' responses were included in analysis (56 women, 37 men). 14 participants were freshmen at the institution sampling occurred within , 38 were sophomores, 23 were juniors, 16 were seniors, and two were second-year seniors.

Design

The study was a counterbalanced 2 (Levity: Humorous or Nonhumorous) x 2 (Group Targeted by Prejudice: Women, Men) within-subjects design. Participants read all of the jokes and blunt prejudiced statements, presented on screen one at a time, and rated the prejudice expressed by each statement on a 5-point Likert scale before continuing to the next statement.

Procedure

The present study was conducted using Qualtrics. Upon accessing the study, participants saw a consent form, which they had to agree to in order to proceed into the study. They were then shown a sample statement with instructions on how to respond to the stimuli. Upon rating the prejudice of the statement, they then indicated whether or not they understood the instructions.

After consenting to the study and indicating they understood the instructions, participants proceeded to the stimuli, which were displayed in a randomized order using the same layout as the sample stimulus (refer to Table 1 for full list of stimuli). Only one statement was visible at a time, and it had to be rated before the participant could move on to the next statement. Participants were given as much time to respond as they desired. After rating all 30 statements, they completed a brief demographic survey before completing the experiment.

Measures

Participants used a slider to report the perceived prejudice of the displayed statement on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = *not at all prejudiced* to 5 = *extremely prejudiced*. Answers were reported as whole numbers.

Stimuli

The stimuli for the present study were created following a 2 (Levity: Humorous, Nonhumorous) x 2 (Group Targeted by Prejudice: Women, Men, or Texans) design. Jokes were compiled for each targeted group. The sexist jokes were compiled in a list to be rated on a 7 point Likert scale in a pilot study. The top 5 funniest jokes were selected for each targeted sex. The 5 anti-Texan jokes were selected by the authors to serve as filler stimuli to prevent participants from predicting the hypotheses and biasing their performance on the survey. After the funniest jokes were selected, the list of 15 blunt statements were created by utilizing language from each prejudiced joke to generate a nonhumorous representation of the same core stereotype presented within the disparaging humor. Refer to Table 1 for a complete list of the stimuli.

Hypotheses

Since none of the selected jokes are excessively disparaging or violent, most participants should be able to subconsciously grant them moral amnesty and forgo typical means of analyzing prejudiced statements (Ford et al., 2008). Additionally, evidence exists suggesting that humor can be enough to prevent perceptions of sexism by men compared to women (Ford et al., 2015). Due to this, it is predicted that humorous statements will be rated as less sexist than their blunt, nonhumorous counterparts.

Due to each sex enjoying humor that targets the other sex (Love & Deckers, 1989) and the countless attitudinal groups (political groups, activism movements, etc.) that seem to affect perceptions of sexist humor more than nominal groups (i.e., sex), it is predicted that there will not be a significant effect of targeted sex on perceived sexism. Additionally, it is predicted that there will not be an interaction of level of levity and targeted sex.

Results

A 2 (Levity: Humorous, Nonhumorous) \times 2 (Gender Targeted by Prejudice: Women, Men) repeated measures factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the effects of level of levity framing the prejudice and gender targeted by the prejudice on participants' perceptions of prejudice within the statements. There was not a main effect of levity, $F(1, 92) = 2.59, p > .05$. There was a main effect of gender targeted by prejudice, $F(1, 92) = 7.91, p < .05$, such that prejudiced statements targeting women were considered more sexist than those targeting men, regardless of the level of levity of the statement ($M = 3.98, 3.78; SD = 0.74, 0.73$, respectively). However, this effect was subsumed by an interaction of Levity \times Gender Targeted by Prejudice, $F(1, 92) = 12.25, p < .05$. As indicated in Figure 1, a post hoc Bonferroni comparison with a .05 threshold revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in perceived prejudice of humorous or nonhumorous statements targeting women ($M = 4.00, 3.97; SD = 0.81, 0.81$, respectively), though humorous prejudiced statements targeting men tended to be rated significantly less prejudiced than nonhumorous statements targeting men ($M = 3.68, 3.88; SD = 0.86, 0.71$, respectively). Additionally, humorous statements targeting women tended to be rated as significantly more prejudiced than those targeting men, though nonhumorous statements were rated about the same when targeting women or men.

Though the stimuli targeting Texans were designed as filler stimuli to prevent participants from predicting the hypotheses and biasing their performance on the survey, a 2 (Levity: Humorous, Nonhumorous) \times 3 (Group Targeted by Prejudice: Women, Men, Texans) repeated measures factorial ANOVA was conducted on the effects of level of levity framing the prejudice and group targeted by the prejudice on participants' perceptions of prejudice within the statements. With the Texan-targeted stimuli included, there was a main effect of levity, $F(1, 92) = 10.59, p < .05$, such that humorous statements tended to be rated as less prejudiced than nonhumorous statements ($M = 3.77, 3.95; SD = 0.75, 0.64$, respectively). As before, there was a main effect of group targeted by prejudice, $F(2, 184) = 6.12, p < .05$, such that statements targeting women were considered more prejudiced than those targeting men or Texans ($M = 3.98, 3.78, 3.81; SD = 0.74, 0.73, 0.72$, respectively) with no significant difference between statements targeting men or Texans. However, as shown in Figure 2, these main effects were subsumed by an interaction of Levity \times Group Targeted by Prejudice, $F(2, 184) = 15.4, p < .05$. A post hoc Bonferroni comparison with a threshold of .05 revealed that humorous and nonhumorous prejudiced statements targeting women were not significantly different ($M = 4.00, 3.97; SD = 0.81, 0.81$, respectively), while humorous statements were considered less prejudiced than nonhumorous statements for both Men ($M = 3.68, 3.88; SD = 0.86, 0.71$, respectively) and Texans ($M = 3.63, 3.99; SD = 0.88, 0.71$, respectively).

In order to test for any effects of demographic variables, a 5 (Participant Class at Institution: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, or Second-Year Senior) \times 2 (Participant Gender: Woman, Man) \times 2 (Levity: Humorous, Nonhumorous) \times 3 (Group Targeted by Prejudice: Women, Men, Texans) mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted on the effects of level of levity framing the prejudice and group targeted by the prejudice on participants' perceptions

of prejudice within the statements. In addition to results already explored, this analysis did not reveal a main effect for either demographic variable, but did reveal two interactions. The first was an interaction of Participant Gender \times Levity, $F(1, 84) = 7.23, p < .05$, shown in Figure 3. A post hoc Bonferroni comparison with a threshold of .05 revealed that women tended to consider humorous statements less prejudiced than nonhumorous statements ($M = 3.93, 4.08; SD = 0.76, 0.69$, respectively). Men also tended to consider humorous statements to be less prejudiced than nonhumorous statements ($M = 3.48, 3.83; SD = 0.90, 0.81$, respectively). However, women still rated humorous statements as more prejudiced than men rated them, perceiving them to be considerably less different in levels of prejudice from blunt statements than men did. However, there was no significant difference in the prejudice ratings of nonhumorous statements between women or men. Though women granted humorous statements some moral amnesty, they granted considerably less than men did, and overall, were approximately equally sensitive to prejudice. The analysis also indicated a statistically significant interaction of Participant Class at Institution \times Levity, $F(4, 84) = 3.56, p < .05$, as shown in Figure 4. However, due to the study not being designed to test participants' years at the institution as a variable, the sample size within each class was not consistent, so this result is likely due to noise. A post hoc Bonferroni comparison with a threshold of .05 only revealed two significant differences within this interaction: Humorous statements were rated as less prejudiced than nonhumorous statements for both freshmen ($M = 3.50, 3.94; SD = 0.72, 0.65$, respectively) and seniors ($M = 3.47, 4.05; SD = 0.82, 0.74$, respectively). The $5 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3$ mixed factorial ANOVA did not reveal any other significant main effects or interactions.

Discussion

Depending on whether or not prejudiced beliefs targeting Texans are included in the analysis, the first hypothesis that humorous statements will be rated as less sexist than their nonhumorous counterparts may or may not be supported. The hypothesis that there would not be a main effect of group targeted by prejudice was not at all supported, nor was the hypothesis that no interactions would be observed. These findings are particularly interesting, as women are often considered the social out-group in comparison to men. As such, there has been considerable effort made by many to raise awareness of the disparity between genders. It is entirely possible that prejudiced statements targeting women are not granted moral amnesty simply because the efforts to raise awareness of these issues have actually caused people to avoid granting moral amnesty to prejudiced beliefs targeting women when they are framed as a joke (and also that humorous prejudiced statements targeting men and Texans still receive moral amnesty because there have not been as many efforts to minimize any prejudice that might be targeting these groups). Additionally, it is possible that this result only arises from people wanting to conform to social norms and expectations established by feminist and other women's rights movements about being politically correct in order to avoid being labeled as sexist. These results could also possibly occur because moral amnesty is only granted to jokes that target groups that are not socially disadvantaged. The fact that women tend to grant less moral amnesty to prejudiced humor could be an effect of women having more experiences throughout their life of being part of the group targeted by prejudiced humor, thus being less comfortable granting moral amnesty to prejudiced jokes.

Limitations

The present study was designed only to explore the magnitude of levity and prejudiced humor targeting both binary sexes. Due to this, results that arise when including the filler stimuli

targeting Texans as well as the demographic variables could simply be the result of noise that happened to be statistically significant. Additionally, the participants were taken from a convenience sample of undergraduates at a private university; the effects found within this study could very well only represent a trend within the university or universities as a whole compared to general populations, and more work needs to be done to determine the generalizability of the results. Humor also often relies on nuances of intonation and inflection; different results could arise if participants saw and/or heard someone telling the jokes rather than simply reading them.

Future Studies

The difference across groups of how moral amnesty is granted to humorous versus nonhumorous prejudice could be the result of participants monitoring their responses to avoid performing in a socially undesirable manner. In this case, that could have shown up as participants trying to avoid being sexist, and therefore trying to carefully think about how prejudiced misogynistic jokes were instead of quickly responding. It would be beneficial to utilize a paradigm that forced faster, more automatic, and less conscious responses. Only allowing participants a small window of opportunity to rate prejudice could reveal processes of monitoring and filtering responses; recording response times to compare the average time to respond across stimuli could also reveal these processes. Given that reading speed will vary across participants, response times would probably be the better option for exploring this question rather than having a set time to answer within.

Additionally, it could be interesting to explore the effects of diversity and sensitivity trainings in a longitudinal manner to see if people actually do change the way they perceive prejudice. If the differences in prejudice ratings occurred due to more exposure to sociopolitical movements to reduce prejudice, then one should see the difference between prejudice ratings of

humorous and nonhumorous prejudiced statements decrease over time until either framing of prejudice is considered equally problematic. Ideally, the perceptions of prejudice within statements would also increase over time, and a decrease in discrimination and voiced prejudice would be observed behaviorally as participants participated in the diversity trainings.

One's identity can also play a role in how prejudice is perceived. Perhaps a statement is seen as more prejudiced if someone identifies with the group being targeted than an equally prejudiced statement that target groups an individual does not identify with. In a similar vein, perhaps individuals identifying with socially disparaged groups are more sensitive to prejudice targeting *any* group and are less likely to grant moral amnesty to these statements; it would be beneficial to explore various minority groups to see if their experience with socially disparaged identities causes increase in sensitivity to prejudice only in groups they identify with, or if that sensitivity extends to all prejudice or even just to prejudice targeting other socially disparaged minority groups.

In line with prejudiced norm theory (Ford, Boxer, Armstrong, & Edell, 2008), it could also be beneficial to explore whether participants respond differently when they are exposed to prejudiced humor that is not critiqued versus those exposed to prejudiced humor that is critiqued. In a similar vein, being in a group where people hear the jokes rather than having to read them could also lead to different results, as humor is often supplemented by body language, intonation, and inflection. Compared to other subjects within psychology, disparaging humor has received little attention, and this study alone can inspire countless studies that should be conducted to capture a better understanding of how it functions and affects cognition.

Among numerous other results, the present study revealed that moral amnesty is not granted to prejudiced jokes targeting women, though it is granted to prejudiced jokes targeting

other identities. It also revealed that prejudiced statements targeting women tend to be rated as more prejudiced than statements targeting other identities, regardless of the degree of levity of the statement. Women participating in the study considered all statements more prejudiced than men did, and granted less moral amnesty to prejudiced humor compared to the moral amnesty men granted. Numerous follow-up studies need to be conducted to test whether these results can be reproduced, and to explore the nuances of prejudiced humor. Understanding how moral amnesty is granted and how people become more sensitive to prejudice can offer invaluable insight into developing better diversity training and awareness campaigns to help minimize prejudice in daily life. With recent significant sociopolitical events in the United States, extensive research on minimizing social disparity and prejudice needs to occur.

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Table 1

Full List of Stimuli

Targeted <u>Group</u>	<u>Humorous Presentation</u>	<u>Nonhumorous Presentation</u>
Women	Is Google male or female? Female, because it doesn't let you finish a sentence before making a suggestion.	Women interrupt people to make unsolicited suggestions.
	What's the difference between a wife and a mistress? About fifty pounds.	Women let themselves go when they get married.
	I haven't spoken to my wife for 18 months- I don't like to interrupt her.	Women talk a lot and don't let men speak.
	If a tree falls on a woman, and nobody is around to hear her complain, does she still make a sound? Better question, why is there a tree growing in the kitchen?	Women should spend their time caring for their family by cooking.
	When can women make you a millionaire? When you're a billionaire.	Women spend money excessively.
Men	What's the difference between men and government bonds? Government bonds mature.	Men never mature.
	How can you tell if a man is sexually aroused? He's breathing.	Men are always sexually aroused.
	What do you call a man with half a brain? Gifted	Men seem to think with only half their brain.
	Never let your man's mind wander – it's too little to be out all on its own.	Men's minds are too little to be trusted on their own.
	Why are blonde jokes so short? So men can remember them.	Men are not intelligent enough to have good memories.
Texans	What is 20 feet long and has 5 teeth? The funnel cake line at the Texas state fair.	People from Texas are often missing teeth.
	What does a Texas native and a bottle of beer have in common? They're both empty from the neck up.	People from Texas are not smart.
	What's the difference between a Texas wedding and a Texas funeral? One less drunk.	People from Texas are drunks.
	Why do all football fields in Texas have artificial turf? So the fans won't graze after the game.	People from Texas are animals.
	How are a tornado and a Texas divorce similar? You know someone is going to lose their trailer home!	People from Texas live in trailers.

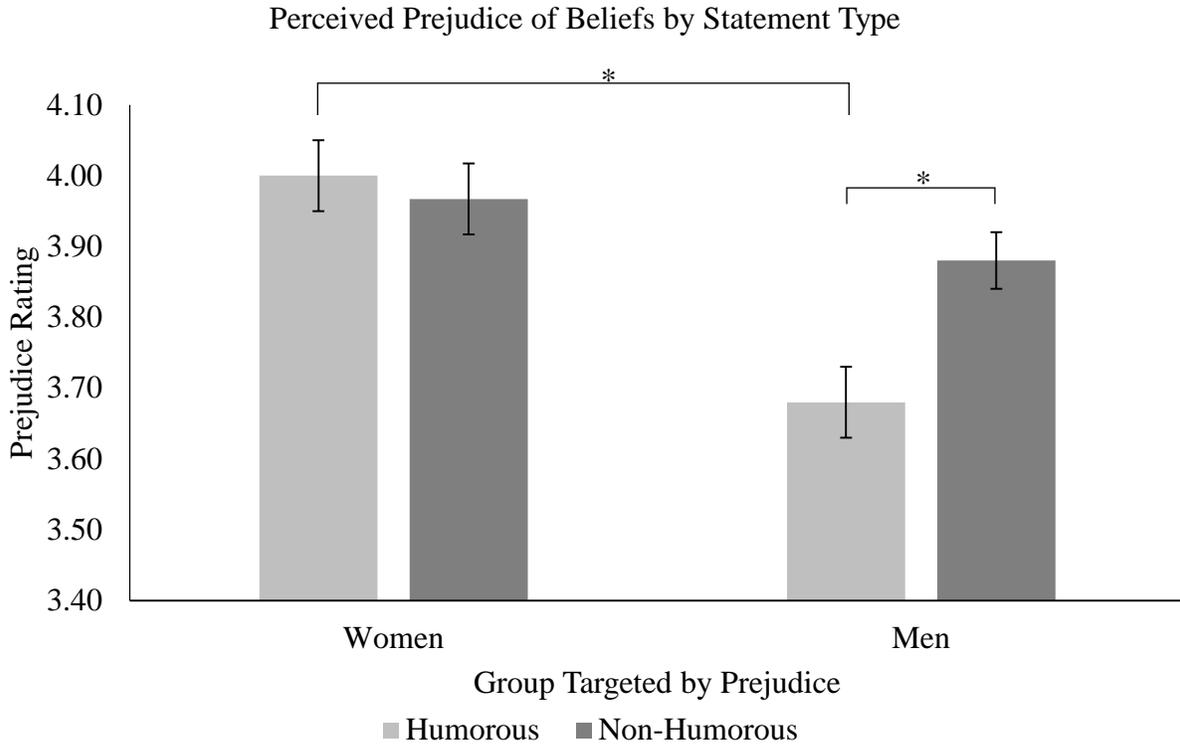


Figure 1 Perceived prejudice of beliefs by statement type. This figure illustrates that humor targeting men is perceived as less prejudiced than blunt statements targeting men, though this difference is not present in humor targeting women. * indicates a statistically significant difference.

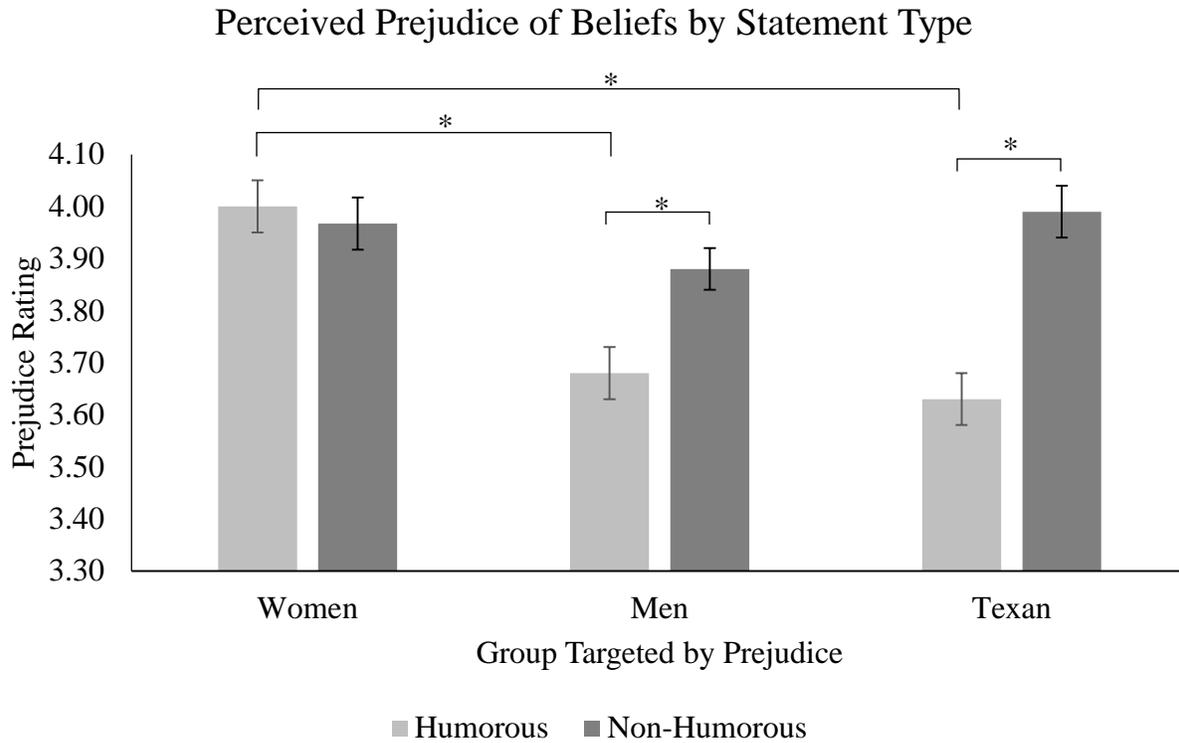


Figure 2 Perceived prejudice of beliefs by statement type. This figure uses the same data from Figure 1, including the ratings from the filler stimuli. Beliefs targeting Texans follow the same trend as those targeting men, however there is a greater disparity between perceived prejudice of humorous and blunt statements for Texans than for men. * indicates a statistically significant difference.

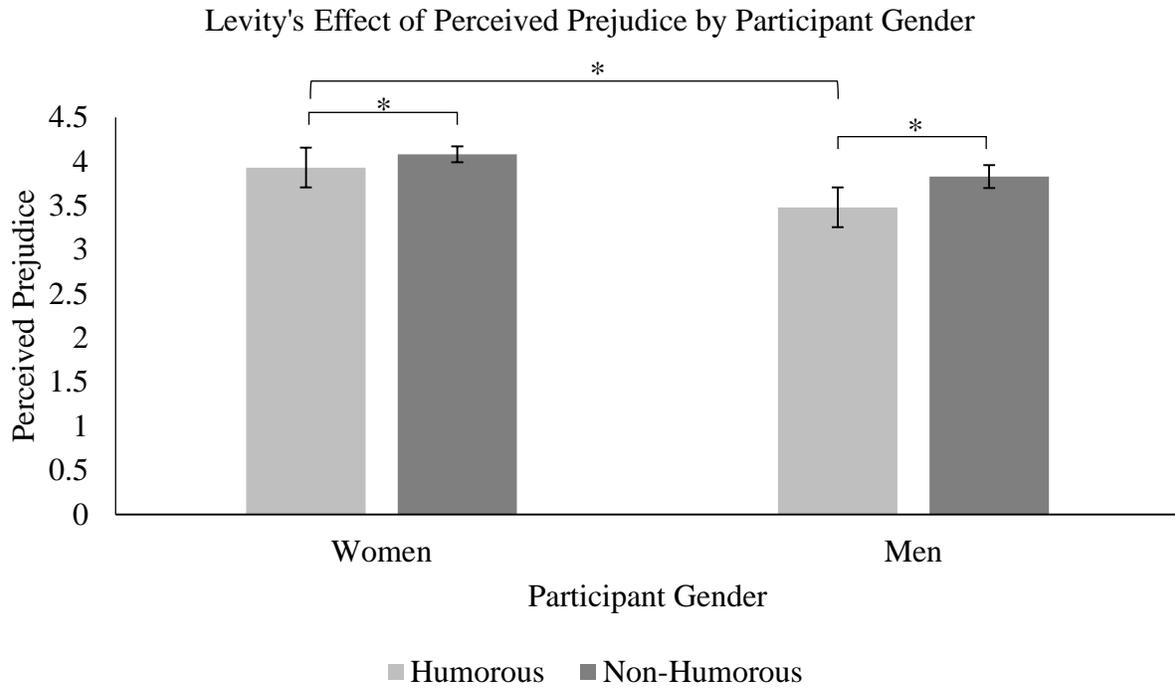


Figure 3 Levity's effect on perceived prejudice by participant gender. This figure illustrates the interaction of Participant Gender x Levity, indicating that women tend to perceive all statements as more prejudiced than men did, granting less moral amnesty to humorous statements compared to nonhumorous statements than men tend to grant. * indicates a statistically significant difference.

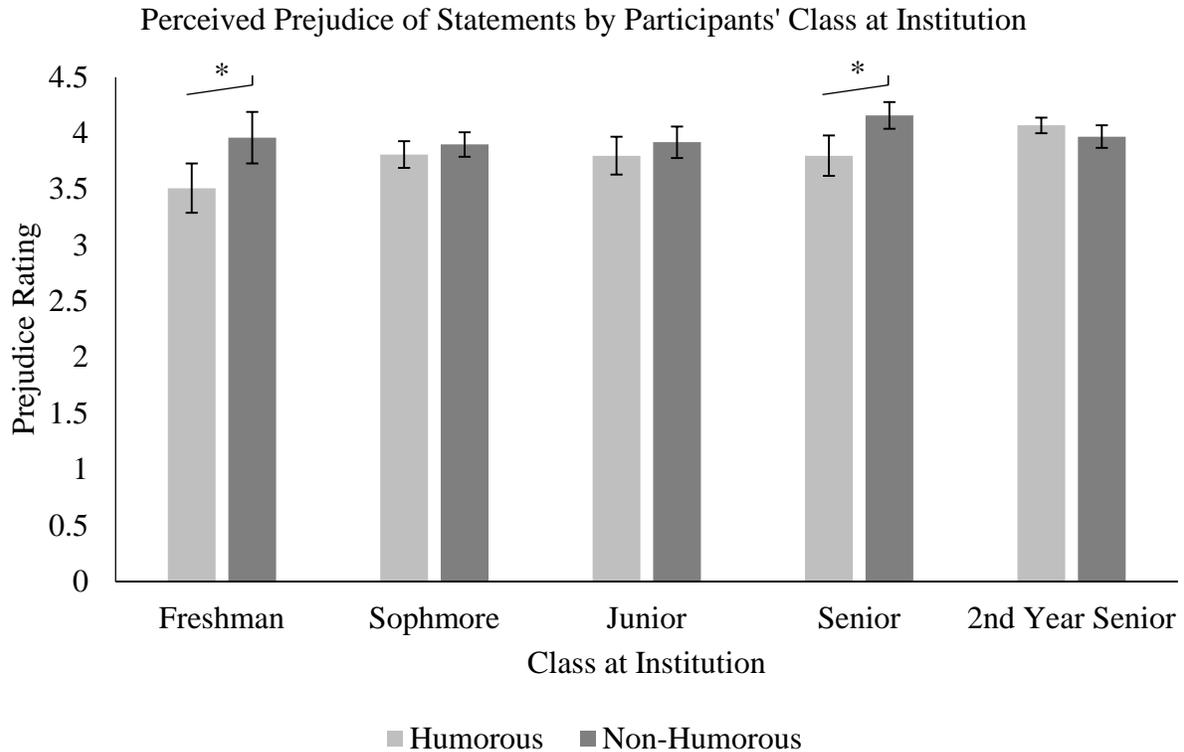


Figure 4 Perceived prejudice of statements by participants' class at institution. This figure illustrates the interaction of participants' class within the institution and the level of levity framing the prejudiced belief on the perceived prejudice. Though these data are statistically significant, their validity is questionable due to uncontrolled variance in sample size for each class. * indicates a statistically significant difference.