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The effects of a humorous and informative call for protest on collective action intentions

Kirsten Jasmijn Groenhagen

Master Thesis - Applied Social Psychology

S3383660

January 2022

Department of Psychology

University of Groningen

Examiner/Daily supervisor:

Dr. Hedy Greijdanus

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Abstract

The present research examined the effects of a subversive humorous call for protest and an informative call for protest on collective action intentions, appropriateness and affective reactions. Involvement and perceived threat were assessed as individual differences to test possible moderation effects. Participants received an online questionnaire, where they answered questions based on a humorous or informative call for protest about a societal issue. The societal issues presented were either feminism, against climate change, pro zwarte piet and against the COVID-19 measures. Our findings do not support our hypothesis that people who saw the humorous call for protest would have higher collective action intentions compared to people who saw the informative call for protest. The results do support our hypotheses that high involved people had higher collective action intentions when they saw the informative call for protest compared to low involved people. Moreover, we found that the difference in collective action intentions between high and low involved people became smaller when they saw the humorous call for protest. We did not find a difference in collective action intentions between people who saw the humorous or informative call for protest based on how threatened they were by the societal issue. Our hypothesis that low involved people found a humorous call for protest more appropriate than high involved people was not supported, we found the opposite effect. The results support our hypothesis that people are more amused by the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. Our expectation that low involved people experience more positive emotions with regard to a humorous call for protest compared to informative call for protest is not supported. Moreover, our expectation that high involved people experience more negative emotions than low involved people with regard to a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest is also not supported. We did find support for our hypothesis that people who are threatened by the societal issue are more inspired by the humorous call for protest

compared to being less inspired by the informative call for protest. Moreover, we did not find support for our hypothesis that people who are threatened by the societal issue would be less angry at the humorous call for protest compared to being more angry at the informative call for protest. We did not find that people who were threatened by the societal issue differed in their rating of amusement with regard to the humorous or informative call for protest.

Collective action arises when people seek change, often because they perceive injustice. Those who set up a call for protest try to persuade other people into participating, thus it is interesting to find out what call for protest convinces people to engage in collective action. We will explore the effects of a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest on collective action intentions, because humor has shown to be persuasive in the advertisement literature (Weinberger & Gulas, 2019). We expect that involvement with the topic (Walter et al., 2018) and threat caused by the societal issue (Shepherd et al., 2018) moderate the effects of a humorous call for protest on collective action intentions.

Involvement can be specified as the perceived relevancy and importance of an issue (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). People do not have to belong to a social category to feel high involvement with the social category. For example, males can be feminists. According to Weinberger & Gulas (2019), a humorous call for protest can persuade low involved people to engage in collective action. However, it seems that a humorous call for protest may be less effective in persuading high involved people (Walter et al., 2018). Moreover, people who are threatened by the societal issue tend to show lower collective action intentions because they react defensively (Dijkstra & Elbert, 2019). A humorous call for protest can lower these defensive reactions, thereby increasing collective action intentions. Furthermore, we also studied the perceived appropriateness of a humorous call for protest, and subsequent affective reactions with regard to a humorous call for protest. That information can provide us with more insight about how angry, inspired or amused people were with regard to a humorous or informative call for protest.

Previous studies mostly used disparagement humor to persuade people of a societal issue. Disparagement humor directly targets a group of individuals, which can evoke negative reactions (Argüello et al., 2018). Therefore the present study will use a subversive humorous call for protest, which is humor targeting a system. Thus, this humor is more general and a

broader audience can relate to the humor, possibly lowering detrimental effects on persuasion and negative affective reactions (Adam-Troian et al., 2021).

Collective action predictors

A broad array of the social psychological literature on collective action studied predictors of collective action. Besides our interest in collective action predictors we are also interested in how we can form a call for protest such that it persuades people to engage in collective action. Therefore we will introduce a relatively new concept in the collective action literature, namely a subversive humorous call for protest. Individual differences determine how a humorous call for protest is interpreted and whether it is persuasive. We will first of all look at the predictors of collective action that are frequently mentioned in the literature. Two often mentioned predictors that are relevant within the present research are anger (Sabucedo et al., 2011) and social identity (Adam-Troian, 2021).

Anger

Affective states can trigger people to engage in collective action in order to protect the status quo, or to challenge it (Solak et al., 2021). Anger may arise when people perceive a situation as unfair or unjust. As a consequence, their anger causes them to engage in collective action. (Van Zomeren et al., 2004). As shown by Sabherwal et al (2021), social norm messages about collective anger increased collective action intentions just as much as a public support message. An important notion that can be extracted from this study is that emotion consensus can enhance collective action through signaling a shared motivational state. This indicates that a call for protest should enhance perceptions of a shared emotional state, such that people feel connected by an emotion about the issue. Based on the previous findings we may assume that this shared emotional state should be anger, because anger increases collective action intentions. We did construct a call for protest that shows anger, by highlighting that people demand change and that they are angry about the issue. However, the

question is whether people who see the humorous call for protest will still feel anger with regard to the call for protest. Generally, a humorous call for protest elicits positive emotions (Weinberger & Gulas, 2019).

However, we argue that a call for protest does not have to evoke anger to be persuasive. Bou Zeineddine & Leach (2021) argue that anger as a motivator for collective action is part of the classical approach. They argue for a more systems approach, where several emotions can determine whether an individual engages in collective action. Thus, anger may be an important predictor for collective action intentions, but other emotions may be potential triggers as well. Therefore we argue that a humorous call for protest can trigger a whole range of emotions, such as anger, amusement and inspiration which can all elicit persuasive effects. The persuasive effects of these emotions on collective action intentions are determined by individual differences such as involvement. Involvement has often been described in the collective action literature as social identity.

Social identity

Involvement can determine how people perceive a call for protest (Walter et al., 2018). It is thus important to consider the difference between those who feel engaged with the societal issue and those who feel less engaged with the societal issue. We will therefore distinguish between high and low involved people. High involved people are those who are engaged with a societal issue, and may therefore be more willing to engage in collective action. Low involved people are less engaged with a topic, and may therefore be less willing to engage in collective action. The important question is thus what motivates high and low involved people to engage in collective action. According to Adam-Troian (2021), the same psychological determinants can motivate both high and low involved people to engage in collective action, namely social identity and injustice. It seems that identification with a social group or awareness of injustice determines whether individuals engage in collective action

(Adam-Troian, 2021). This indicates that our call for protest should highlight a form of injustice, while creating a shared social identity.

It should be noted that there is less research examining what motivates low involved people to engage in collective action. There are however some indications. A study by Uluğ & Tropp (2020) stated that White people were motivated to engage in collective action for racial justice when witnessing racial discrimination against Black people. This is because awareness of racial privilege is heightened, which consequently increases willingness to participate in collective action. Moreover, collective action intention is partly driven by the need to conform (Badea et al., 2021). People have a tendency to follow what they perceive as normative in a social context. In their study, Badea et al. (2021) showed their participants an affirmation of a group identity that would increase group conformity. The participants tended to conform to these group norms in their support for collective action, regardless of whether these norms were discriminatory or non-discriminatory. Thus, it seems that the content of the call for protest is important. Discrimination towards a specific group might only enhance negative perceptions of the group targeted. Therefore, we will create a humorous call for protest that is not directly targeted at a social category, rather it is targeted at a system. This may increase conformity and awareness, without enhancing discrimination towards a specific social category.

The previous section reflected on the available collective action literature, which focuses mostly on the psychological determinants that explain collective action intentions. The present research wants to explore the persuasive effects of a humorous and an informative call for protest on collective action intentions.

Humor in advertisement

We will argue that a humorous call for protest can be effective in eliciting persuasion. The idea of humorous persuasion in collective action is based on extensive advertisement

literature where humor has shown to be persuasive. Namely, there has been a development in the advertisement literature, where humor is used more often as a persuasive tool for serious public interest advertisements. These topics are often of equal severity as collective action topics.

However, humorous messages have most frequently been used by advertisers to persuade their audience into purchasing low risk fun products. For example, a humorous ad about alcohol often leads to heightened purchase intentions of alcohol (Hendricks & Strick, 2019). The psychological factors that determine persuasion in this area have been revealed by several studies. According to Hendricks & Strick (2019), the positive attitudes caused by the humorous alcohol ad are formed because humorous messages increase interpersonal communication. As shown in the meta-analysis by Weinberger and Gulas (2019), humor can capture the attention while preventing negative brand attitudes. Moreover, the formation of counterarguments is reduced by humor. Another explanation is that humor leads to positive affect, which consequently leads to higher purchase intentions (Eisend, 2009). Thus, it seems that humor is an effective tool in persuasion for low risk fun products (Beard, 2004).

However, humorous messages have not only been used as a persuasive tool for promoting low risk fun products. The use of humor has already been extended beyond low risk fun products, such as using humor to persuade the audience of health and societal issues (Weinberger and Gulas, 2019). These are topics that can evoke negative emotions for individuals. It seems that humorous advertisement about such topics can both lower and facilitate persuasion.

Walter et al. (2018) indicate negative effects of humor on persuasion for serious public interest topics. There are indications that humorous messages negatively impact knowledge, attitudes and intentions (Walter et al, 2018). The greatest concern is that advertisers using humor are not taken seriously. More specifically, humor can decrease the perceived

importance of an issue (Weinberger & Gulas, 2019). This would be detrimental especially in light of collective action topics, which should be seen as important. The latter notion can be illustrated by looking at research of McGraw et al. (2015). Their results revealed that participants rated a societal issue as less important after viewing a humorous public service announcement.

Besides the perceived importance of a humorous message, it also seems that a humorous message strongly influences affect. People are more amused by humorous advertisement, which puts them in a nonserious mindset. However, positivity is less motivating than negativity according to Baumeister et al. (2001). Positive affect eliminates the feeling that something is wrong, however this feeling is necessary to elicit collective action. As Weinberger and Gulas (2019) stated, using humor to communicate societal issues should thus be done with caution, given the decreased importance of the issue or positive emotions that may lower persuasion.

However, even though many negative effects of humor on persuasion are present, there are also studies indicating that humor can be effective in eliciting persuasion for societal issues (Weinberger & Gulas, 2019). Positive emotions caused by the humor can also mean releasing suppressed feelings, which can increase collective action intentions (Morreall, 1983). Based on this information we hypothesize that people will show more positive emotions with regard to the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest.

Furthermore, humor creates a positive effect on persuasion through a distraction mechanism, thereby preventing negative associations that would otherwise emerge and lower persuasion (Eisend, 2011). Thus, a humorous appeal can lead to more support arguments and fewer counterarguments (Voss, 2009). It should be noted that according to this study persuasive effects of humor were found mostly for low involved people. Thus, individual

differences need to be taken into account when unraveling the persuasive effects of a humorous call for protest (Walter et al., 2018). The present study will focus on two individual differences in particular, namely threat caused by the societal issue and involvement with the societal issue.

Threat

People often experience negative emotions with regard to collective action topics. As mentioned before some negative emotions may facilitate persuasion, such as anger (Sabucedo et al., 2011). However, other negative emotions such as threat may lower persuasion. Societal issues can be threatening because people perceive injustice (Skurka et al., 2018). On the other hand, people may also be threatened by a societal issue if they feel targeted as being the wrongdoers. If people feel threatened by a societal issue, this threatened feeling can lead them to solve the issue such that the threatening feeling decreases. However, threat may only lead to willingness to undertake collective action if people believe it solves the threat (Van Zomeren et al., 2010). Thus, the threat information can be effective on its own when the audience directly turns to problem focused coping. However, threat caused by a societal issue may also evoke defensive reactions (Dijkstra & Elbert., 2019). Defensiveness is an important predictor of behavioral intentions and lowers persuasion by blocking the message in the mind. If an individual reacts defensively, it means they turn to avoidance or denial. As a solution to this defensiveness, humorous threat persuasion can be implemented. A humorous threat appeal can prevent defensive reactions, because humor eliminates the negative thoughts and emotions and facilitates processing of the message (Yoon & Tinkham., 2013). Humorous threat persuasion may thus be an effective way to persuade individuals of threatening information, through reducing high levels of threat. Therefore we hypothesize that people who are threatened by the societal issue show higher collective action intentions when they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest. Moreover, we

expect that people who are threatened by the societal issue experience more positive emotions when they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest.

However, according to Skurka et al. (2018) threat is necessary to activate collective action intentions. Intention to engage in collective action will decrease if the humorous message eliminates feelings of threat completely. Skurka et al. (2018) therefore argue that a moderate amount of threat should be present to increase collective action intentions.

Involvement

People differ in their involvement with regard to a societal issue. High or low involvement with a societal issue determines whether a humorous or informative call for protest leads to persuasion (Walter et al., 2018). Firstly, we hypothesize that high involved people have higher collective action intentions than low involved people, because high involved people are more engaged with the societal issue. It is thus interesting to find out how low involved people can be persuaded to engage in collective action, because they are less engaged with the societal issue. According to Walter et al. (2018), it seems that humor can elicit persuasive effects for low involved people. Low involved people are more likely to pay attention to positive surface cues, and they tend to show positive responses to a humorous appeal. According to Jäger & Eisend (2013), humorous advertisement increased behavioral intentions for low involved individuals. However, whether a humorous call for protest increases collective action intentions for low involved individuals depends on the type of humor used. It may occur that low involved individuals misinterpret the purpose of the humor. To illustrate, Saucier et al. (2016) used racist parody mocking the disadvantaged group to create awareness for racism. However, low involved people did not understand this deeper message, instead the humor increased their racist beliefs. This notion is also supported by Argüello et al. (2018), where low involved people exposed to disparaging humor reported greater stereotypic evaluations of that group. Thus, even though a humorous call for protest is

persuasive for low involved individuals (Walter et al., 2018) the type of humor used should be considered.

High involved people may understand the deeper message of racist disparagement humor (Saucier et al., 2016). At the same time, they may also feel more offended by disparagement humor. High involved people listening to disparagement humor about their ingroup frowned more, which indicates their disapproval of the humor (Argüello et al., 2018). Humor has been shown to evoke negative emotions when the humor violates social norms or when it focuses on a specific target (Warren & McGraw, 2010). Thus, humor might cause anger or irritation when the topic is of high importance to people. Likewise, a fear arousing message was more effective compared to humorous advertisement in increasing behavioral intentions for high involved people (Jäger & Eisend, 2013).

Based on these notions, we hypothesize that the difference in collective action intentions for high and low involved people becomes smaller when they see a humorous call for protest. This can be explained through an increase in collective action intentions for low involved people who see the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest (Walter et al., 2018). At the same time, high involved people decrease slightly in collective action intentions when they see the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. Consequently, the difference becomes smaller when high and low involved people see the humorous call for protest. Moreover, we hypothesize that high involved people have higher collective action intentions when they see an informative call for protest compared to low involved people (Argüello et al., 2018).

Furthermore, we hypothesize that low involved people experience more positive emotions with regard to the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest (Walter et al., 2018). Likewise, we hypothesize that high involved people experience more negative emotions with regard to the humorous call for protest compared to the

informative call for protest (Argüello et al., 2018). Lastly, we hypothesize that high involved people will find the humorous call for protest less appropriate than low involved people (Argüello et al., 2018).

Subversive humor

In the studies described above, disparagement humor is used to persuade the audience of a societal issue. When disparagement humor is used, a certain group is targeted explicitly. Thus, it is directly confronting for those who belong to that social group. Consequently, that group might feel offended and will not be persuaded by the humorous message. Moreover, disparagement humor increases stereotypic evaluations (Argüello et al., 2018) and low involved people do not understand the underlying message (Saucier et al., 2016). Therefore, we will focus on a different type of humor, namely subversive humor. With subversive humor, the message is more subtle. Subversive humor targets a system, or society in general. Thus, no specific group is mentioned. It is broader and therefore it might be less likely that a group feels directly targeted. Thus, with subversive humor a shared social identity is created and the audience is made aware of injustice, which supports persuasion (Adam-Troian, 2021).

There are already indications that subversive humor can increase collective action intentions. Research by Riquelme et al. (2020) studied intentions to engage in collective action for gender equality. They revealed that subversive humor increased collective action intentions for males and females with lower feminist identity.

Subversive humor is often used to raise awareness and to seek change, and can be used as a means to confront prejudiced individuals. The advantage of subversive humor is that it confronts individuals who express prejudice, but in a less confrontational way (Saucier et al., 2016). Prejudiced individuals often resent the individual who confronted them, but humor can lower this resentment (Czopp et al., 2006). Moreover, individuals tend to reduce their future expressions of prejudice when they are confronted by others for their expressions of

prejudice (Czopp et al, 2006).

The present study

Thus, disparagement humor may be misunderstood by low involved people, consequently lowering collective action intentions. Moreover, high involved people may feel offended by disparagement humor, which is not beneficial for their collective action intentions. These negative effects seem to be eliminated when subversive humor is used (Riquelme et al., 2020). We will therefore show our participants a subversive humorous call for protest.

In addition to the subversive nature of the humorous call for protest, the content of the humorous and informative call for protest will be about contemporary societal issues. Thus, it should be noted that the people in our study are asked to think about their involvement with the societal issues that are presented to them. Likewise, they have to indicate how threatened they are by the societal issue. With regard to the societal issues presented, we chose to distinguish between progressive and conservative protests. This is because previous research has mostly looked at collective action against a system (Bou Zeineddine & Leach, 2021), while more research should be dedicated at collective action in favor of a system. The progressive societal issues that are shown to the participants are feminism and against climate change. The conservative societal issues are pro zwarte piet and against the COVID-19 measures.

To summarize, the present study will test whether involvement and threat influence the effects of subversive humor on collective action intentions, perceived appropriateness and affective reactions. This leads to our research question: What are the effects of involvement and perceived threat on the persuasiveness of a humorous and informative call for protest?

Collective action intentions

Based on Morreall (1983) and Baumeister et al. (2001) we expect that people who saw

the humorous call for protest will have higher collective action intentions compared to people who saw the informative call for protest (H1). Thereby we expect based on Walter et al. (2018) that high involved people show higher collective action intentions than low involved people (H2). Furthermore, we expect an interaction effect of involvement and humor on collective action intentions (H3). Based on Walter et al. (2018), we expect that high involved people will have higher collective action intentions when they saw an informative call for protest compared to low involved people (H3a). Moreover, we hypothesize that the difference in collective action intentions between high and low involved people will be smaller when they see a humorous call for protest (H3b). This can be explained by the notion that the collective action intention of high involved people decreases when they see a humorous call for protest compared to when they see an informative call for protest (Saucier et al., 2016). Meanwhile, a humorous call for protest increases collective action intentions for low involved people compared to when they see the informative call for protest (Weinberger & Gulas., 2019).

We also expect an interaction effect of threat and humor on collective action intentions (H4). Based on Dijkstra & Elbert (2019) we expect that threatened people show lower collective action intentions when they saw an informative call for protest compared to a humorous call for protest (H4a). Moreover, based on Yoon & Tinkham (2013) we expect that threatened people show higher collective action actions when they saw a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H4b).

Appropriateness and affective reactions

Adding to that, we will measure the perceived appropriateness of the humorous call for protest. More specifically, we expect based on Warren & McGraw (2010) and Argüello et al. (2018) that high involved people find the humorous call for protest less appropriate than low involved people (H5). With regard to affective reactions, we have chosen to measure

anger, amusement and inspiration with regard to the call for protest. These emotions were based on research by Thomas et al. (2020) where these emotions were used to measure responses towards a humorous message. Based on Weinberger & Gulas (2019), we expect that people show more positive emotions to the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. Specifically, they feel more amusement and inspiration as well as less anger (H6). Moreover, based on Warren & McGraw (2010), we expect that high involved people show less positive emotions to the call for protest compared to low involved people. Specifically, they feel less amusement and inspiration as well as more anger (H7).

With regard to threat caused by the societal issue, we expect based on Yoon & Tinkham (2013) that threatened people experience less positive emotions with regard to the call for protest. Specifically, threat decreases amusement and inspiration, and increases anger (H8). Moreover, we expect an interaction effect of involvement and humor on affective reactions to the call for protest (H9). Based on Weinberger & Gulas (2019), we expect that low involved people experience more positive emotions than high involved people with regard to a humorous call for protest (i.e., more amusement and inspiration, less anger) than an informative call for protest (H9a). Based on Argüello et al. (2018), we expect that high involved people experience more negative emotions than low involved people with regard to a humorous call for protest (i.e., less amusement and inspiration, more anger) than an informative call for protest (H9b). Lastly, we also expected an interaction effect of threat and humor on affective reactions caused by the call for protest (H10). We expect based on Yoon & Tinkham (2013) that people who are threatened by the societal issue experience more negative emotions (i.e., less amusement and inspiration, more anger) when they see an informative call for protest compared to a humorous call for protest (H10a). Moreover, based on Yoon & Tinkham (2013) we expect that people who are threatened by the societal issue

experience more positive emotions (i.e., more amusement and inspiration, less anger) when they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H10b).

Method

Participants and design

Participants were recruited via social media, namely Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram. Participants aged sixteen or older were recruited, and all participants were Dutch. People were asked to participate in research for a master thesis regarding a call for protest. The message was sent within the social network of the researcher, and asked the participant to share the message within their own social network. Thus, the snowballing method was used to spread the message and to reach a variety of participants. A total of 198 participants participated in the research, and 46 of them have been removed,ⁱ we thus analyzed a sample of 152 participants.

Ten participants did not fill in their gender. Of the 142 participants who did fill in their gender, 51% is female and 49% is male. Eleven participants did not fill in their age. Of the remaining 141 participants, age ranged from 16 to 75 years old ($M = 31.8$, $SD = 15.3$).

The study used a two (no humor vs subversive humor) by two (low vs high involvement) by continuous (threat) between subjects design. The dependent variables are collective action intention, appropriateness, and affective reactions anger, inspired and amusement. The study has been approved by the Ethical Committee Psychology (ECP), University of Groningen, PSY-2021-S-0393.

Materials and procedure

Participants were directed to the Qualtrics survey via an online link, where they gave their informed consent. The first question participants received was a ranking question. They had to rank four protest topics according to which they felt most and least involved with. The topics were as follows: Feminism, against climate change, pro zwarte piet, and against the

COVID-19 measures. We used this measure to allocate participants to either the high or low involvement condition. Thus, based on that ranking participants saw a topic in the call for protest they felt least or most involved with. Participants were allocated to four conditions, using the evenly present function in Qualtrics. 76 people saw the humorous call for protest, and 76 people saw the informative call for protest. 78 people saw a societal topic they felt most involved with, while 74 people saw a societal topic they felt least involved with. In both conditions, a call for protest was shown. An example of a humorous call for protest is shown in Figure 1. People who saw the informative call for protest received the same text but without the humorous image. All participants witnessed one call for protest, about one topic. They were instructed to look at and read the call for protest, and made aware that they could zoom in on their phone. After witnessing the call for protest, participants received a question which assessed whether they actually read and viewed the call for protest.

Subsequently, participants had to indicate to what extent they agreed with statements about the call for protest. Participants could answer all statements discussed here on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from -3 strongly disagree to 3 strongly agree.

The collective action intention of participants was measured with questions “ I would share a social media post regarding this topic”, “ I would sign a petition regarding this topic”, “I would participate in a protest regarding this topic”, “I would occupy a public building for this topic”, “I would threaten people who are responsible for this topic” based on Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha = .769$. Next, participants’ perceptions of the appropriateness of the call for protest was measured with questions “I find this kind of humor appropriate to use at a protest about this societal topic”, “I would support this kind of humor at a protest about this societal topic”, “I would use this kind of humor at a protest about this societal topic” based on Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha = .912$. It should be noted that only participants who saw the humorous call for protest received the statements about appropriateness. Then, participants’ affective reactions were

measured. “The Facebook-post (text and possible images) made me feel threatened and fearful ($r = .652$), furious and angry ($r = .839$), amused and entertained ($r = .738$) and inspired and strengthened ($r = .788$)”ⁱⁱⁱ We also measured participant characteristics with regard to protesting behaviors. We firstly provided participants with the statement ‘I identify with the people in the Facebook post who want to engage in collective action, which could be answered on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from -3 strongly disagree to 3 strongly agree. We found that the participants did not identify with those people ($M = -1.9$, $SD = 1.6$). We also measured how often participants engaged in protest before through the question ‘How often have you in 2019, before COVID-19, participated in protest? This was an open-ended question. It seems that few participants were active in protest before. Few had engaged in the same protest before as mentioned in the call for protest ($M < 0$, $SD = .33$). Slightly more participants had engaged in a different protest than mentioned in the call for protest ($M = .88$, $SD = 8.40$). Lastly, participants could indicate their gender and age. After this they were directed to the debriefing in which they were asked to distribute the survey within their social network, and they were thanked for their participation.

Figure 1

Humorous call for protest



Results

Assumptions

The dataset contained two outliers with regard to the variables collective action and inspired. These cases have not been used in the analyses because they deviated more than two standard deviations from the mean. Based on the Kolmogorov Smirnov test the assumption of normality has been violated for the scales of amusement, inspired, anger, threat, collective action intention and appropriateness ($p < .05$). Based on the Levene's test, the assumption of homoscedasticity has only been violated for the anger scale ($p < .05$). Because of the violation of assumptions, bootstrapping has been used in the ANOVA analyses.

Main analyses

Collective action intentions

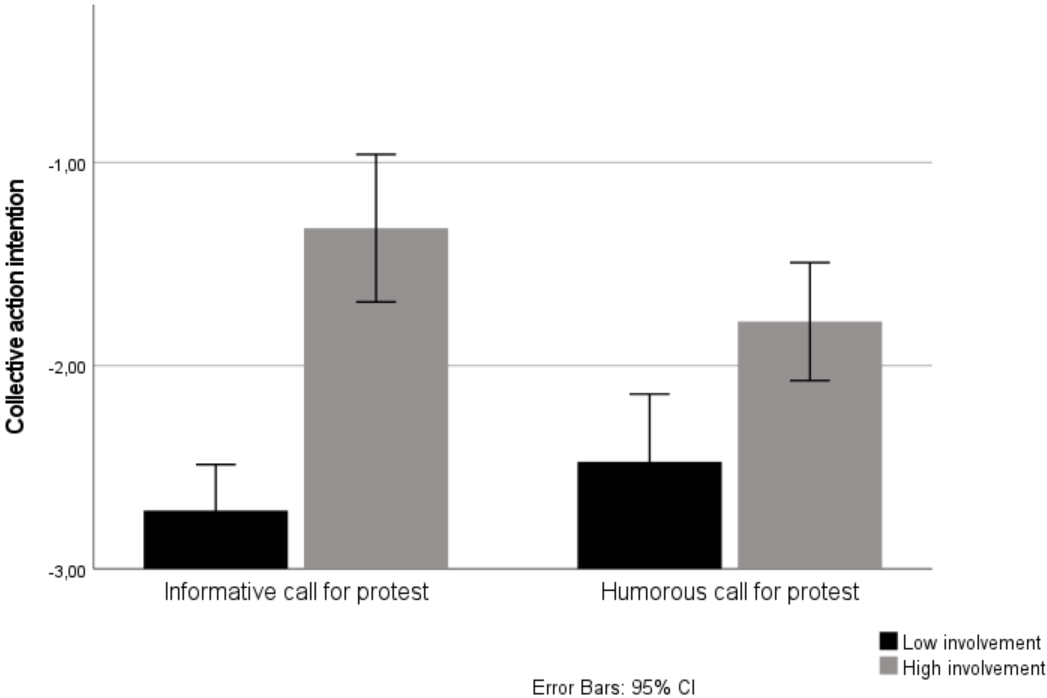
Our results show that collective action intentions did not differ based on whether people saw the humorous or the informative call for protest ANOVA $F(1,150) = .51, p = .478, d = .003$. Thus, our hypothesis that people who saw the humorous call for protest would have higher collective action intentions compared to people who saw the informative call for protest (H1) is not supported. We did however find that high involved people showed higher collective action intentions ($M = -1.6, SD = 0.1$) than low involved people ($M = -2.7, SD = 0.1$). Thus our expectation that high involved people show higher collective action intentions than low involved people (H2) is supported $F(1, 150) = 45.48, p = <.001, d = .235$.

We also found that high involved people had higher collective action intentions when they saw the informative call for protest compared to low involved people. Moreover, we found that the difference in collective action intentions between high and low involved people was smaller when they saw the humorous call for protest. Both these effects are shown in Figure 2. These findings support H3a and H3b. Thus, the interaction effect is supported $F(3, 148) = 5.15, p = .039, d = .029$. We can thus conclude that high involved people showed

higher collective action intentions than low involved people when they saw the humorous call for protest. Moreover, high involved people also showed higher collective action intentions than low involved people when they saw the informative call for protest. Based on the overlapping 95% confidence intervals it seems that the collective action intentions of high involved people did not differ based on whether they saw the humorous or the informative call for protest. Likewise, the collective action intentions of low involved people did also not differ based on whether they saw the humorous or the informative call for protest. It thus seems that no persuasive effect of a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest was found for low involved people.

Figure 2

Collective action intention in the Humorous and Informative condition based on Involvement



Lastly, we found no difference in collective action intentions for threatened people based on whether they saw a humorous or informative call for protest. This interaction effect

is not significant $F(3,139) = 2.07, p = .130, d = .029$. Thus, our hypothesis that threatened people show lower collective action intentions when they see an informative call for protest compared to a humorous call for protest (H4a) is not supported. Moreover, our expectation that threatened people show higher collective action actions when they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H4b) is also not supported.

Appropriateness

We found that low involved people ($M = -1.2, SD = 0.2$) found the humorous call for protest less appropriate than high involved people ($M = 0.3, SD = 0.3$) based on the ANOVA $F(1,74) = 17.42, p = <.001, d = .209$. We thus found the opposite effect, namely that high involved people found the humorous call for protest more appropriate than low involved people. Our expectation that high involved people would find the humorous call for protest less appropriate than low involved people (H5) is thus not supported.

Affective reactions

We found that people who saw the humorous call for protest were slightly more amused ($M = -.7, SD = 1.6$) than people who saw the informative call for protest ($M = -1.3, SD = 1.7$). Thus, our expectation that people show more positive emotions to the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest (H6) is supported with regard to the rating of amusement based on the ANOVA $F(1,141) = 3.81, p = .042, d = .026$. We did not find a difference with regard to the rating of inspired based on the humorous or informative call for protest $F(1,141) = .15, p = .955, d = .026$. Likewise, we found no difference with regard to the rating of anger based on the humorous or informative call for protest $F(1,141) = .95, p = .303, d = .007$.

It seems that high involved people find the call for protest less inspiring ($M = -.9, SD = 1.6$) than low involved people ($M = -2.3, SD = 1.2$). Thus our expectation that high involved people show less positive emotions to the call for protest than low involved people (H7) is

supported $F(1.14) = 41.22, p = <.001, d = .226$. It also seems that high involved people are slightly more angry towards the call for protest ($M = -1.8, SD = 1.5$) than low involved people ($M = -1.2, SD = 1.8$), which also supports our hypothesis that high involved people show less positive emotions to the call for protest compared to low involved people $F(1.141) = 3.94, p = .042, d = .027$. We did not find a difference with regard to the rating of amusement based on the call for protest $F(1.141) = .48, p = .457, d = .003$.

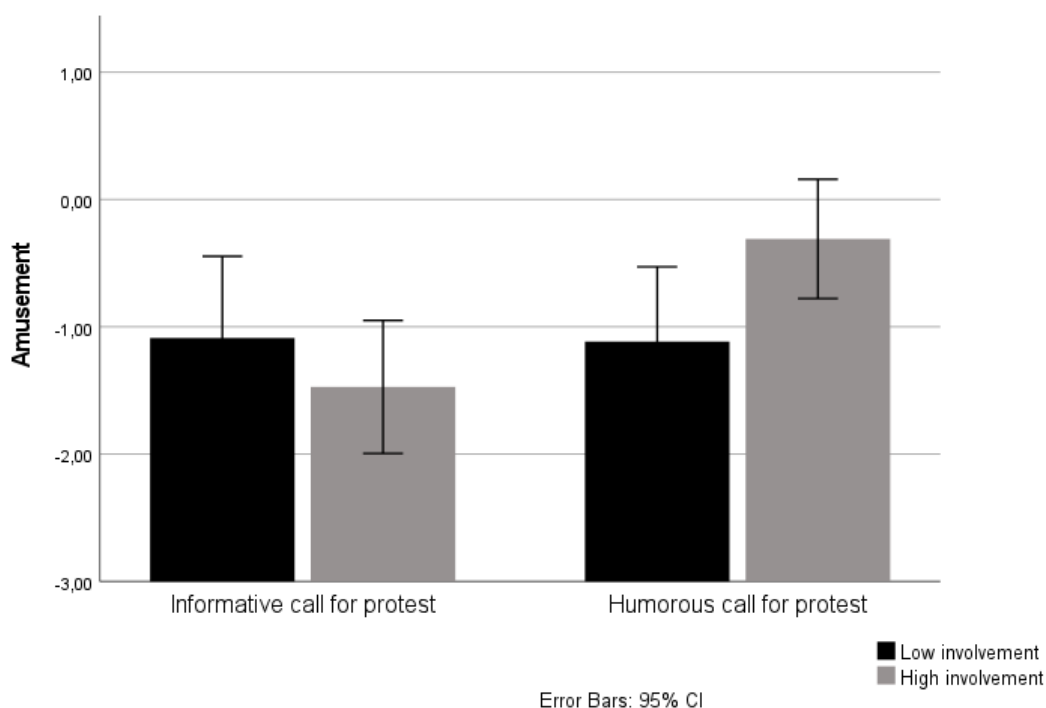
It seems that the rating of anger with regard to the call for protest is high when perceived threat caused by the societal issue increases. When anger with regard to the call for protest is low, perceived threat caused by the societal issue decreases. Thus, this supports our hypothesis that threatened people experience less positive emotions with regard to the call for protest (H8), which was tested by using an ANCOVA $F(1,141) = 8.57, p = .001, d = .078$. Moreover, it seems that the rating of inspired with regard to the call for protest is high when perceived threat caused by the societal issue increases. It seems that the rating of inspired with regard to the call for protest is low when perceived threat with regard to the societal issue decreases $F(1.141) = 6.95, p = .031, d = .033$. Thus, this does not support our hypothesis that threatened people experience less positive emotions with regard to the call for protest (H8). We did not find a difference for threatened people in the rating of amusement with regard to the call for protest $F(1.141) = 3.23, p = .138, d = .022$. The main effects of anger and inspired are qualified by a significant interaction between humor and threat.

As can be seen in Figure 3, high involved people were more amused by the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. However, low involved people were equally amused by the humorous and the informative call for protest, as can be seen based on the overlapping 95% confidence intervals. Thus, our expectation that low involved people experience more positive emotions than high involved people with regard to a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H9a) is not supported.

It also seems that there was no difference in the rating of amusement with regard to the humorous call for protest between high and low involved people, based on the overlapping 95% confidence intervals in Figure 3. Thus, our expectation that high involved people experience more negative emotions than low involved people with regard to a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H9b) is also not supported, even though the results are statistically significant based on the ANOVA $F(3.139) = 3.06$ $p = .035$, $d = .032$. We found no difference in the rating of inspired between high and low involved people based on whether they saw the informative or the humorous call for protest $F(3.139) = 14.45$, $p = .131$, $d = .238$. We also found no difference in the rating of anger between high and low involved people based on whether they saw the informative or the humorous call for protest $F(3.139) = 1.77$, $p = .623$, $d = .037$. Thus, our conclusion is that high involved people were more amused by the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest.

Figure 3.

Rating of Amusement in the Humorous and Informative condition based on Involvement



As can be seen in Figure 4, people who felt more threatened by the societal issue are more inspired by the humorous call for protest compared to people who saw the informative call for protest. This supports our hypothesis that people who are more threatened by the societal issue experience more negative emotions when they see an informative call for protest compared to a humorous call for protest (H10a). Moreover, this supports our hypothesis that people who are threatened by the societal issue experience more positive emotions when they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H10b) based on the ANCOVA $F(2, 139) = 3.72; p = .027, d = .050$. We can thus conclude that people who were threatened by the societal issue were more inspired if they saw a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest. Furthermore, they were less inspired by the humorous and the informative call for protest if they felt less threatened by the societal issue.

As shown in Figure 5, it seems that people who were threatened by the societal issue were more angry at the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. This does not support our hypotheses that people who are more threatened by the societal issue experience more negative emotions when they see an informative call for protest compared to a humorous call for protest (H10a). This finding does also not support our expectation that people who are threatened by the societal issue experience more positive emotions when they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H10b) based on the ANCOVA $F(2, 139) = 5.31, p = .006, d = .071$. People who were threatened by the societal issue did not differ in their rating of amusement based on whether they saw a humorous or informative call for protest $F(2, 139) = 5.31, p = .006, d = .071$.

Figure 4.

Effect of Threat on Inspired in the Informative and Humorous condition

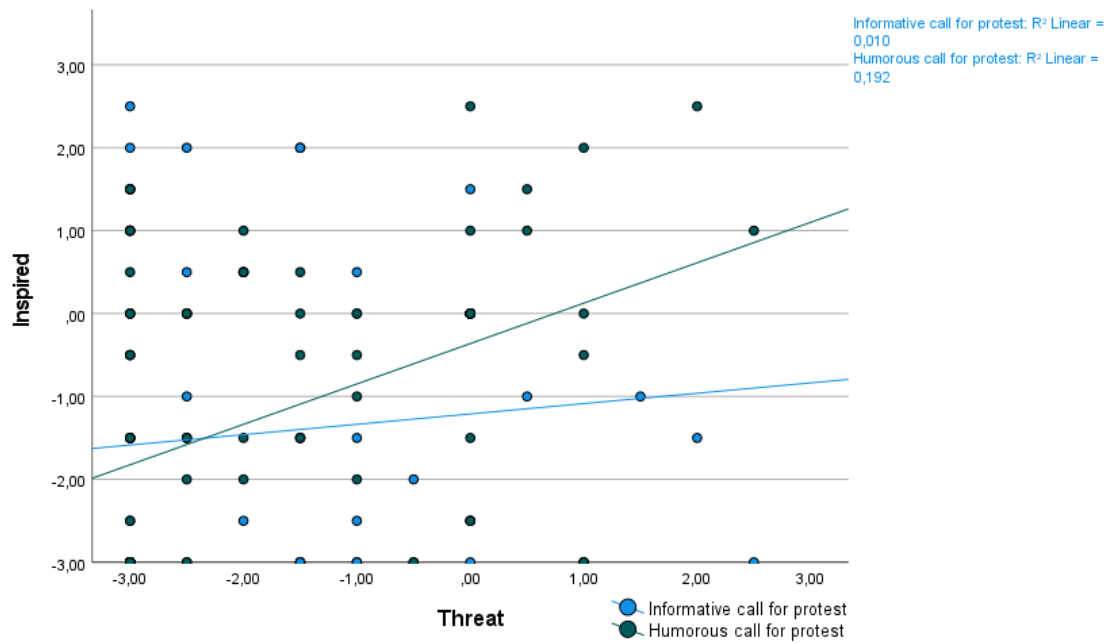
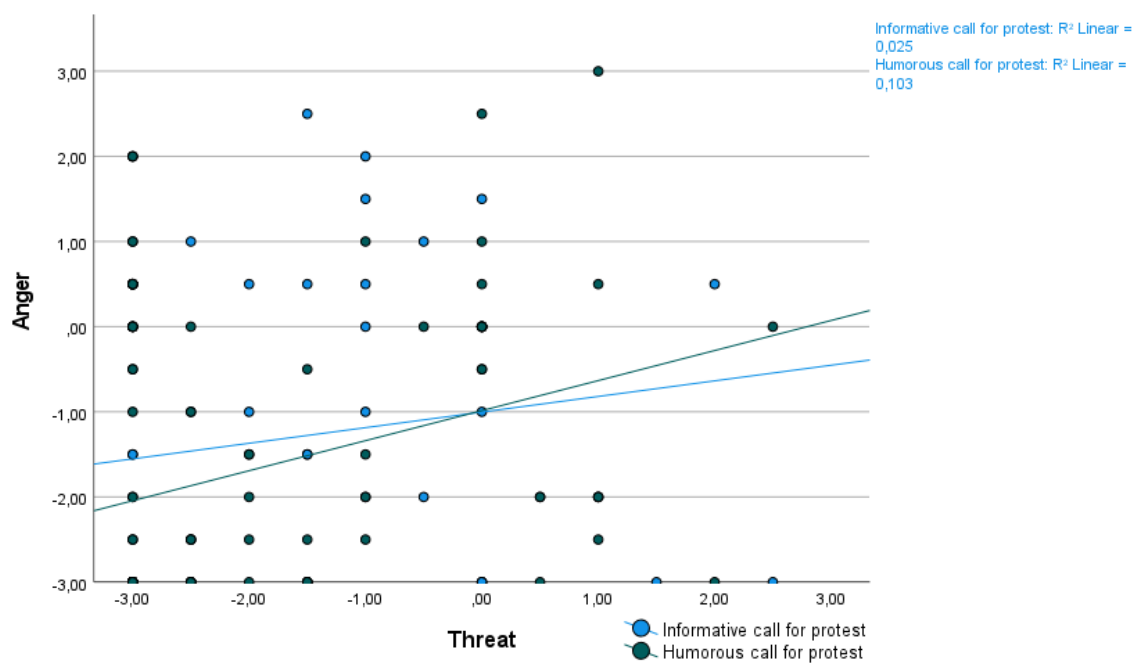


Figure 5.

Effect of Threat on Anger in the Informative and Humorous condition



Discussion

The present research was interested in the persuasive effects of a humorous call for protest on collective action intentions, perceived appropriateness and affective reactions. To recap, the societal issues presented in the call for protest were feminism, against climate change, pro Zwarte piet and against the COVID-19 measures. We will first provide an overview of the results we obtained. High involved people had higher collective action intentions than low involved people when they saw the informative call for protest, compared to the humorous call for protest. Moreover, the difference in collective action intentions between high and low involved people became smaller when they saw the humorous call for protest, compared to the informative call for protest. It seems that threat with regard to the societal issue did not have an effect on the collective action intentions of people who saw either the humorous or the informative call for protest. Moreover, it seems that high involved people found the humorous call for protest more appropriate than low involved people. High involved people were more amused by the humorous call for protest than the informative call for protest. Furthermore, it seems that a humorous call for protest made people feel most inspired when they were threatened by the societal issue. Ratings of inspired were low when people were less threatened by the societal issue, regardless of whether they saw the humorous or the informative call for protest. Lastly, people were more angry at the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest when they felt threatened by the societal issue.

Collective action intentions

Our results show that collective action intentions did not differ based on an informative or humorous call for protest. This does not support our expectation that collective action intentions would be higher if people saw a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H1). This finding is not in line with the notion that humorous

messages are persuasive, as shown by Walter et al. (2018). Instead, these results support the findings of Weinberger and Gulas (2019), where it is argued that humor lowers persuasive effects. It might thus be that humor decreases the perceived importance of the call for protest (McGraw et al., 2015), and that the humorous call for protest decreases intentions (Walter et al., 2018). However, collective action intentions may not differ based on an informative or humorous message, but collective action intentions did differ based on involvement. The results support our expectation that high involved people show higher collective action intentions compared to low involved people (H2).

Adding to that, high involved people who saw the informative call for protest had higher collective action intentions than low involved people (H3a). Moreover, the difference in collective action intentions between high and low involved people who saw the humorous call for protest also became smaller (H3b). These findings thus support our hypotheses. High involved people may have felt that the humorous call for protest decreased the perceived importance of an issue (Weinberger & Gulas, 2019). Therefore they may have preferred an informative call for protest. Moreover, the increase in collective action intentions for low involved people who saw the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest supports the notion that humor elicits mostly persuasive effects for low involved people (Jäger & Eisend, 2013). It could be that the humorous call for protest increased the attention of low involved people, reduced their counterarguments and thereby increased collective action intentions (Weinberger & Gulas, 2019) compared to an informative call for protest.

It seems that threat with regard to the societal issue does not have an effect on collective action intentions when people see an informative or a humorous call for protest. This is not in line with our hypotheses, since we expected that threatened people show lower collective action intentions when they see an informative call for protest compared to a

humorous call for protest (H4a). This is also not in line with our expectation that threatened people show higher collective action actions when they see a humorous call for protest (H4b) compared to an informative call for protest. We expected that threatened people would react defensively when they saw the informative call for protest, because it emphasizes negative thoughts and feelings. As shown by Dijkstra & Elbert (2019) this defensiveness lowers collective action intentions. The humorous call for protest would lower high levels of threat and thus defensive reactions, thereby increasing collective action intentions (Yoon & Tinkham, 2013). However, according to Skurka et al. (2018), threatened people show higher collective action intentions because threat acts as a motivator for collective action intentions. An alternative explanation may thus be that both of these effects were present, evening each other out.

Appropriateness

The results indicated that high involved people found the humorous call for protest more appropriate than low involved people. This is the opposite of what we hypothesized, namely that high involved people would find the humorous call for protest less appropriate than low involved people (H5). This notion was based on Argüello et al. (2018), where high involved people experienced negative affect when they listened to jokes. Communicating a controversial societal issue in a humorous way may trigger negative emotions in people (Warren & McGraw, 2010), thus we expected high involved people to find a humorous call for protest inappropriate. An alternative explanation for our results may lie in the subversive nature of the humorous call for protest. The humorous message in the study by Argüello et al. (2018) was disparagement humor, which targeted the disadvantaged group. High involved people may have found this disparagement humor offensive, thereby finding it less appropriate. The subversive humor that we used targeted the system that needed to be changed, which is more relatable for high involved people. Therefore, they may have found

the subversive humorous call for protest more appropriate.

Affective reactions

To recap, we looked at differences in the rating of amusement, inspired and anger with regard to the call for protest. We found that people were more amused by the humorous call for protest than people who saw the informative call for protest. This supports our hypothesis that people show more positive emotions to the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest (H6). Moreover, it seems that high involved people were less inspired and more angry towards the call for protest than low involved people. This supports our hypothesis that high involved people show less positive emotions to the call for protest than low involved people (H7). An explanation for their low rating of inspired is that high involved people do not need to be inspired anymore. They are already engaged with the societal issue, thus they have probably been inspired before. Interestingly, low involved people were thus more inspired by the call for protest than high involved people were.

Moreover, people were more angry at the call for protest when people felt more threatened by the societal issue. This supports our hypothesis that people who were threatened by the societal issue experience less positive emotions with regard to the call for protest (H8). This also supports the literature stating that threatened people experience more negative emotions such as anger (Skurka et al., 2018). We also found that people felt more inspired by the call for protest when they felt more threatened by the societal issue. This is not in line with our hypothesis that people who were threatened by the societal issue experience less positive emotions with regard to the call for protest (H8). However, an alternative explanation may be that negative emotions can act as motivators, such that people feel inspired by the call for protest (Skurka et al., 2018).

We cannot conclude that low involved people were more inspired or angry at the humorous or informative call for protest. Namely, our hypothesis that low involved people are

more inspired and less angry than high involved people at a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H9a) was not supported. Likewise, our hypothesis that high involved people are less inspired and more angry than low involved people at a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H9b) was not supported. This is not in line with our expectation that the rating of anger and inspired would differ with regard to a humorous or informative call for protest based on involvement (Warren & McGraw, 2010). This is also not in line with the literature stating that high involved people experience more negative emotions with regard to a humorous call for protest, while low involved people experience more positive emotions with regard to a humorous call for protest (Argüello et al., 2018).

We did however find that low involved people felt equally amused when they saw either the humorous or the informative call for protest. This does not support our hypothesis that low involved people would be more amused than high involved people at a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H9a) This is also not in with the literature where it is argued that low involved people are easily amused by humor, because they pay more attention to positive surface cues (Walter et al., 2018). Furthermore, our hypothesis that high involved people would be less amused than low involved people by the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest (H9b) was also not supported. It thus seems that high involved people were more amused by subversive humor, thus humor that is targeted against a system, than low involved people. It seems that they were equally amused by the humorous call for protest. We can however conclude that high involved people were more amused by the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. Thus, high involved people may be more amused by subversive humor.

People were more angry at the humorous call for protest than the informative call for

protest when they were threatened by the societal issue. This is not in line with our expectation that people would be more angry at the informative call for protest compared to the humorous call for protest if they felt more threatened by the societal issue (H10a). We expected that a humorous call for protest would lower anger (Dijkstra & Elbert, 2019). However, on the basis of our results we can conclude that people were more angry at a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest. Skurka et al. (2018) showed that anger may increase collective action intentions if it is triggered by injustice about the societal issue. However, an important difference between the study by Skurka et al. (2018) and our study is that people in our study were not angry at the societal issue, but at the humorous call for protest. We can thus not conclude that anger acted as a motivator for collective action in our study. It may have been that people were angry at our humorous call for protest because they think a humorous call for protest violates social norms (Warren & McGraw, 2010). Thus, anger towards a humorous call for protest may lower persuasive effects, and consequently collective action intentions.

Reflecting back on Figure 4, it also seems that people were less angry at the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest when they felt less threatened. This supports the literature that negative emotions decrease even further based on the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest if people feel less threatened by the societal issue (Shepherd et al., 2018).

Another interesting finding is that people who were threatened by the societal issue were also more inspired by the humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest. This supports our hypothesis that people who are threatened by the societal issue experience more positive emotions when they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest (H10b). A possible explanation can be found in the literature by Dijkstra & Elbert (2019). Their research illustrated that a humorous call for protest can reduce

high levels of threat to at least moderate levels of threat (Dijkstra & Elbert, 2019), thereby reducing defensiveness and creating an open mindset where people can feel inspired by the humorous call for protest. This supports the notion that a humorous call for protest has positive persuasive effects over an informative call for protest, because a humorous call for protest increases positive affective states (Weinberger & Gulas, 2019).

Thus, people felt less inspired when they saw an informative call for protest compared to a humorous call for protest, regardless of how threatened they were by the societal issue. They may thus have reacted defensively with regard to the informative call for protest, thereby showing low ratings of inspired with regard to the informative call for protest. People also felt less inspired when they felt less threatened by the societal issue. This supports the notion that low levels of threat are decreased even further by a humorous call for protest, such that people do not feel inspired anymore (Shepherd et al., 2018).

To sum up, we found that people who are already highly involved with a societal topic were overall less inspired, because they are already engaged with a topic. Thus, they do not need to be inspired anymore by the call for protest. They were also more angry at the call for protest, which means that high involved people experienced more negative emotions with regard to the call for protest. Meanwhile, low involved people were less angry and more inspired by the call for protest, which means they experienced more positive emotions with regard to the call for protest. Overall, ratings of inspired and anger were highest when people were threatened by the societal issue and when they saw the humorous call for protest. Lastly, we found that high involved people were more amused than low involved people when they saw the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest.

Limitations

We will now highlight some implications of the current study, which are important to consider when interpreting the results. Firstly, it should be noted that the sample of the present

study consists mostly of people located in the Northern Netherlands. This means that results cannot be generalized to the rest of the Netherlands or to people of other countries.

An important note with regard to interpreting the results is that the rating of collective action intentions were below zero. Participants indicated mostly 'disagree' with regard to statements about collective action. Thus, collective action intention differed between people who saw the humorous or informative call for protest, but overall people indicated they would not engage in collective action.

Furthermore, the present study did not include a baseline measure of collective action intentions. We can conclude that low involved people had higher collective action intentions when they saw the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest, but we have no information about their collective action intentions at baseline to compare with.

A methodological limitation lies in the humorous call for protest that we showed the participants. Based on the low ratings of amusement, it seems that participants did not find the humorous call for protest funny. We suggest future research to explore in advance the most effective humorous call for protest, one that has been tested before and that has shown to be effective.

A second methodological limitation is that the research was conducted via an online questionnaire. Thus, there was little control over the participants. They could have been distracted during the questionnaire, or they may have had concentration issues. These limitations may have biased the data. A possible solution is to replicate this research in an experimental session.

Another possible limitation concerns the way we measured involvement. We asked participants to rank their involvement with four topics. We did provide the participants with an instruction on how to interpret involvement. However, personal involvement with a topic is very subjective and the participants may have had different perceptions or experiences on

which they based their perception of involvement with the topic.

Suggestions for future research

We will now provide some ideas for future research based on our findings and implications. First of all, we investigated a two way interaction. It might however be interesting to study whether high and low involved people show higher collective action intentions with regard to a humorous or informative call for protest based on how threatened they feel by the societal issue. Based on Yoon & Tinkham (2013), it seems that high involved people are more likely to have greater motivation to process threatening information, because they appreciate the nature of the threatening information. In that case, humor can lower persuasion because it lowers the seriousness of the message. However, low involved individuals turn to positive surface cues such as humor, which aids them in processing a message that is threatening in nature (Yoon & Tinkham, 2013). Thus, previous research has already looked at the three way interaction of humor, involvement and threat, however not yet in combination with subversive humor. Thus, a suggestion for future research is to investigate the three way interaction of subversive humor, threat and involvement. Thus, it may be interesting for future research to investigate how threatened high and low involved people feel by a topic, and if this influences their collective action intentions when they see a humorous call for protest.

As mentioned before, the present study did not include a baseline measure of collective action intentions. Therefore we suggest future research to test people at baseline on their collective action intention, and to compare this baseline measure with collective action based on the humorous and informative call for protest. This would be relevant in light of the present research because it would provide us with more information about the persuasiveness of a humorous call for protest.

Furthermore, it might be interesting for future research to investigate whether a

humorous call for protest increases collective action intentions for activists, non-activists, or both. The present study differentiated between high and low involved people, but not between activists and non-activists. We did measure how often participants engaged in protest before to describe our sample, but this information was not included when analyzing the persuasive effects of a humorous and informative call for protest. It does seem that our sample included people who participated in protest before, because on average people participated once before in collective action as shown in the method section. Generally, non-activists are more difficult to persuade because collective action is not a common means for everyone. We suggest differentiating between activists and non-activists because it may be interesting to see whether non-activists can be persuaded to engage in collective action if they see a humorous call for protest. This is relevant because the present results show an increase in collective action intentions for low involved people who saw the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. Thus, an increase in collective action is shown based on a humorous call for protest for those who are less engaged with a topic. These results may also apply to non-activists.

Another interesting factor might be to incorporate gender in the analyses, to see if males and females differ in their reaction to a humorous or informative call for protest. A societal issue shown in the call for protest was feminism in the present study. It would be interesting to see if low involved males show higher collective action intentions for a feminist protest if they see a humorous call for protest compared to an informative call for protest.

Conclusion

The present study is relevant because it is an extension of the research field regarding collective action intentions by adding a subversive humorous call for protest as a persuasive tool. Involvement and threat have been studied before in the context of collective action, but not yet in combination with subversive humor. We argue that our study did not show

persuasive effects of a humorous call for protest for high or low involved people. We can conclude that high involved people showed higher collective action intentions than low involved people when they saw the informative call for protest and when they saw the humorous call for protest. Thus, the humorous call for protest did not increase collective action intentions of low involved people to the same level as high involved people. Moreover, high involved people found the humorous call for protest more appropriate than low involved people. High involved people were also more amused by the humorous call for protest than the informative call for protest. Based on these results, we can conclude that high involved people are more persuaded by an informative call for protest compared to a humorous call for protest. It seems that low involved people did not differ in their collective action intentions based on a humorous or informative call for protest. Thus, it seems that the subversive humorous call for protest in our study was not effective in increasing collective action intentions for high or low involved people. It does seem that high involved people react more positively to subversive humor, finding it more appropriate and being more amused by it. This is a sign of progress, because high involved individuals reacted negatively towards disparagement humor in previous studies (Argüello et al., 2018).

It does however seem that a subversive humorous call for protest has persuasive effects for people who felt threatened by the societal issue. Threatened people were more angry towards the humorous call for protest than the informative call for protest. However, threatened people were also more inspired by the humorous call for protest compared to the informative call for protest. Thus, a subversive humorous call for protest may reduce the negative feelings and thoughts that threatened people experience, thereby creating space for emotions that facilitate persuasion. Therefore we conclude that a humorous call for protest may be most effective for people who feel threatened by a societal issue.

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Footnotes

ⁱ Twelve of these participants stopped after filling in the informed consent. Thus, 186 participants gave their consent and continued with the research. Fourteen of them stopped after filling in the involvement ranking. Nine of them stopped right after having seen the nonhumorous call for protest, after answering the manipulation check. Likewise, nine of them stopped after having seen the humorous call for protest, after answering the manipulation check. Two participants have been removed for suspicious answering, leaving things blank or repetitive patterns. Another six participants did not complete the full questionnaire, but they did complete the appropriateness measure and collective action intention measure. Thus, they were not excluded.

ⁱⁱ Variables that were part of the questionnaire but were not analyzed are the collective action question 'I would participate in the protest which the Facebook post invited me for' which could be answered on a seven-point likert scale. We did not use this because the statements about collective action intention provide a broader image of collective action intentions. We also measured amusement, inspired and anger with regard to the societal issue. However, we were more interested in the affective reactions towards the humorous or informative call for protest. With regard to the measure of threat, we also measured threat with regard to the Facebook post. However, we were more interested in threat responses towards the societal issue, and if this would affect collective action intentions and affective reactions with regard to the humorous/informative call for protest. We also measured involvement at the end of the questionnaire by providing participants a statement 'I feel involved with the societal issue the call for protest was about' which could be answered on a seven point likert scale. However, we did not measure involvement but we chose to manipulate it.