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## Attitudes Toward Cultural Diversity in Spanish and Portuguese Adolescents of Secondary Education: The Influence of Heteronormativity and Moral Disengagement in School Bullying<sup>☆</sup>



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### ABSTRACT

The purpose was to analyze the joint influence of sexism, homophobia and moral disengagement on attitudes toward cultural diversity. A total of 1245 adolescents aged from 14 to 19 years old participated in the study. Of these, 57% were Spanish and 43% were Portuguese (54.9% were female and 45.1% were male). Structural equation modeling confirmed that hostile sexism, homophobia against gay men, moral disengagement in bullying and benevolent sexism to a lesser extent explained 53% of the variance of negative attitudes toward cultural diversity. Structural relationships among the assessed constructs were equivalent for girls and boys, and for Spain and Portugal. These findings highlight the close relationship between heteronormative and ethnocentric variables as well as the relationship between such values and moral disengagement in school bullying. We discuss the implications for critical and queer intercultural education.

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## Actitudes hacia la diversidad cultural de adolescentes de secundaria españoles y portugueses: influencia de la heteronormatividad y la desconexión moral hacia el *bullying*

### RESUMEN

El objetivo del estudio es analizar la influencia conjunta del sexismo, la homofobia y la desconexión moral en las actitudes hacia la diversidad cultural. Participan 1245 estudiantes de entre 14 y 19 años. De ellos, el 57% son españoles y el 43% portugueses (54.9% chicas y 45.1% chicos). El modelo de ecuaciones estructurales, equivalente por sexo y país, confirma que el sexismo hostil, la homofobia hacia gays, la desconexión moral hacia el *bullying* y, en menor medida, el sexismo benevolente explican el 53% de la varianza de las actitudes negativas hacia la diversidad cultural. Estos resultados ponen de relieve la estrecha relación entre las variables heteronormativas y etnocentristas, así como su vinculación con la desconexión moral en relación al *bullying* escolar. Se destacan las implicaciones para una práctica educativa intercultural crítica y *queer*.

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#### Palabras clave:

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## Introduction

More than 15 years after the celebration of the international year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and other related Forms of Intolerance (2001), the fight against this scourge is one of the most urgent and sensitive tasks in the area of human rights. These phenomena refer to any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the goal of or results in annulling or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise of the fundamental human rights and liberties in conditions of equality (United Nations Organization, 1965). For a better understanding and prevention of racist/xenophobic attitudes, it is necessary to identify the variables related to the phenomenon.

### *Attitudes toward cultural diversity*

Two types of racism can be differentiated (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995): blatant racism, stemming from the belief in the genetic inferiority of the outgroup, perceived as a threat, openly rejecting direct contact; and subtle racism, which defends the traditional values of the ingroup, exaggerating the cultural differences and denying positive emotions toward the outgroup. Some studies highlight that racism has evolved into more subtle expressions, to the detriment of more open expressions that are incompatible with the values of democratic societies (Redlawsk, Tolbert, & McNeely, 2014), thereby, producing a shift from the centrality of race to the centrality of culture, so that the other's culture is perceived as threatening to one's own cultural identity (Stolcke, 2000).

In any event, positive attitudes toward cultural diversity do not enjoy good health, and racial discrimination seems more the norm than the exception, as underscored in extensive reports and surveys that call attention to the policies of preventive detention of immigrants in Alien Internment Centers, police checks based on ethnic or racial traits, or the tendency to concentrate people of mostly immigrant and Romani origin in a single school (Rights International Spain, 2016). According to a survey from the European Commission (2015) on discrimination in the area of the Union, 64% of the Spanish people interviewed and 63% of the Portuguese think that discrimination of ethnic origin is widespread in their respective countries; it is also observed that almost one half perceive that ethnicity or skin color is a disadvantage when trying to get a job. In relation to how comfortable they would feel working with someone of another ethnicity/race, the most rejected ethnic is the Romani (7% and 19%, respectively, for Spain and Portugal). In the same vein, the general opinion poll of the European Commission (2016) shows that, for 46% of the Portuguese interviewees and 39% of the Spaniards, immigration from outside the European Union evokes a negative feeling; and that, according to 24 and 14%, respectively, his/her country should not help refugees.

This social climate is also reflected at school, with essentially assimilationist integration policies (Priegue, 2008), where the phenomena of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity/race are a part of the day-to-day routine in the classroom (Jiménez-Sedano, 2012).

### *Heteronormativity: sexism and homophobia*

Heteronormativity refers to the norms and social discourses concerning gender and sexual orientation that draw on a concept of complementary binary, opposite and hierarchical, necessarily heterosexual gender identities (Berlant & Warner, 1998). In this way, women and people who transgress the gender rules of femininity and masculinity, consistent with the "sexual body mark" and compulsory heterosexuality, suffer exclusion and violence (Butler, 2001; Sharma, 2009).

In its most traditional sense, sexism can be defined as an attitude of hostility and aversion to women (Allport, 1954). It is a widespread phenomenon of prejudice and discrimination based on gender, which occurs, in varying degrees, in all societies and has repercussions in the domestic, work including the wage gap or glass ceilings—or broader social areas—including harassment and sexual violence (Zell, Strickhouser, Lane, & Teeter, 2016). Sexism has also been evolving toward covert expressions. In this line, the ambivalent sexism theory of Glick and Fiske (1996), which identifies two types of interrelated sexist attitudes—hostile and benevolent—is noteworthy. Hostile sexism shares the negative affective tone with traditional sexism, considering women as a subordinated group and attributing to them characteristics that raise criticism, thereby legitimizing the social control exercised by men. In contrast, benevolent sexism presents a positive affective tone directed toward women who assume traditional roles, idealizing them as good wives, mothers, and romantic objects, even favoring prosocial behaviors of protection. Both types offer a stereotyped view of women, assessing them negatively as inferior or positively as different, but subject to certain socially less-valued functions.

Together with sexism, homophobia is one of the pillars on which the patriarchy rests (Lameiras, Carrera, & Rodríguez, 2013). The term homophobia was coined by Smith (1971), who defined it as an attitude of fear and aversion to homosexuality, which therefore implies a discriminatory attitude toward people on the basis of their homosexual identity. In a less restrictive sense, homophobia is also aimed at all men—gay or not—who transgress the traditionally male stereotypes (Guasch, 2006), and at lesbian women, a phenomenon which is also known as lesbophobia (Viñuales, 2002). The term itself highlights the double discrimination to which lesbian women are exposed and which is an added prejudice. Homophobia has also evolved, adopting a more subtle and benevolent tone that coexists with another more hostile one, causing false illusions of tolerance and equality (Rodríguez, Lameiras, & Carrera, 2009).

Some studies have identified significant and strong relations between sexism and homophobia (Aosved & Long, 2006; Rodríguez, Lameiras, Carrera, & Vallejo, 2013); sexism and racism/xenophobia (Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2011); homophobia and racism/xenophobia (Daley, Solomon, Newman, & Mishna, 2008), and even between all three variables—racism, sexism, and homophobia (Aosved & Long, 2006; Morrison & Morrison, 2011).

In this line, and as stressed from a feminist perspective, in all three cases (racism/xenophobia, homophobia, and sexism), there is a hierarchy of identities configured around the self and those who are like me (the ingroup) and against "the other" (outgroup) (Butler, 2001; Lameiras et al., 2013).

### *Moral disengagement: the dehumanization of the other*

Moral disengagement is a sociocognitive process by which people who do not suffer from a mental disorder or imbalance can commit harmful acts against others. According to Bandura (1986), it consists of a cognitive restructuring of abusive behavior that allows breaking the nexus between what a person believes he should do (his theoretical moral judgment) and what he actually does (his harmful behavior). He argues that moral disengagement occurs due to: (1) justification of the behavior, which is presented as socially acceptable, serving laudable interests; (2) advantageous comparison, which presents the behavior as less serious than other behaviors; (3) euphemistic categorization, which disguises the perverse nature of the behavior; (4) distorting the consequences, which are minimized, ignored, or wrongly interpreted; (5) displacement or diffusion of responsibilities, which are diluted in the group; and (6) dehumanizing or blaming the victim. These mechanisms have a powerful disinhibitory effect by releasing the person from

self-censorship and feelings of guilt. Jolliffe and Farrington (2004) claim that moral disengagement acts in inversely to empathy.

Studies on moral disengagement in adolescence have mainly focused on the analysis of bullying. A study of Italian and Spanish children and adolescents confirmed that aggressors were described as having a higher level of moral disengagement (Menesini et al., 2003). Other works identified higher levels of moral disengagement in students implicated as aggressors (Hymel, Rocke-Henderson, & Bonnano, 2005), as well as in those who expressed positive attitudes toward the role of the aggressor (Almeida, Correia, & Marinho, 2010).

In addition, beliefs and attitudes toward gender (Carrera, Lameiras, Rodríguez, & Vallejo, 2013; Morales, Yubero, & Larrañaga, 2016), sexual orientation (Carrera et al., 2013) and ethnic origin (Rodríguez-Hidalgo, Ortega-Ruiz, & Zych, 2014) have been identified as key variables to understand bullying.

### Goals of the investigation

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the joint influence of sexism (hostile and benevolent), homophobia (toward gays and lesbians), and moral disengagement in bullying on racist/xenophobic attitudes.

These relationships have been partially studied from different fields. There is some theoretical and empirical evidence of the relationship between: (1) sexism and homophobia (Aosved & Long, 2006; Berlant & Warner, 1998; Butler, 2001; Rodríguez et al., 2013); (2) sexism and racism/xenophobia (Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2011); (3) homophobia and racism/xenophobia (Daley et al., 2008); (4) sexism, homophobia, and racism (Aosved & Long, 2006; Morrison & Morrison, 2011); (5) moral disengagement in bullying and bullying itself (Almeida et al., 2010; Hymel et al., 2005); and (6) bullying and sexism (Carrera et al., 2013); bullying and homophobia (Carrera et al., 2013); and bullying and racism/xenophobia (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2014).

Based on this evidence, Figure 1 presents the model of relations we attempt to test. We also expect that the relations between variables will be significant, and that the model will be equivalent for both genders and countries.

To our knowledge, no other works have jointly analyzed the influence of these variables on racist/xenophobic attitudes in a cross-cultural sample of adolescents, so the contributions of this work are innovative and could be especially relevant for intercultural educational practice and getting on with others at school.

## Method

### Participants

The sample consists of 1245 students, from the neighboring regions of the Galician Autonomous Community (northwestern Spain), and the district of Braga (north of Portugal). The choice of a Portuguese-Galician sample is due to the uniqueness offered by their spatial proximity along with their cultural difference.

For sample selection, we used stratified random cluster sampling, with the schools as the sampling units, and as the units of analysis, the students of 4th grade of Compulsory Secondary Education in Spain and of the 10th grade of Secondary Education in Portugal—equivalent with regard to the students' age. In both regions, the design of the sample draws on a double stratified universe: by province in Galicia— and by municipalities—in Braga—, according to the population size of the municipalities and towns (respectively, for the two countries). We randomly selected 30 Secondary Education schools, 21 Spanish schools and 9 Portuguese schools. Of the total of participants, 57% are Spaniards and 43%

Portuguese. The distribution by sex and age is similar for both countries (see Table 1).

### Instruments

We administered a self-report questionnaire in which, along with the socio-demographic variables, the following scales were presented:

*Ambivalent Sexism Inventory* (Glick & Fiske, 1996; short version of Rodríguez et al., 2009). This scale analyzes hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes toward women. Both the subscales of Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism consist of 6 items.

*Modern Homophobia Scale* (Raja & Stokes, 1998; Spanish version of Rodríguez et al., 2013). We administered the subscale of Interpersonal Discomfort toward Gays and Lesbians, in turn consisting of two subscales: Homophobia toward gays, with 9 items; and Homophobia toward lesbians, with 10 items.

*Moral Disengagement in School Bullying Scale* (Hymel et al., 2005; Portuguese version of Almeida et al., 2010). It is made up of 13 items that analyze the attitudes of moral disengagement to the phenomenon of school bullying.

*Racism/Xenophobia Scale* (adapted from Díaz-Aguado, Martínez, & Martín, 2004). We administered the subscale of Intolerance and Justification of Violence against Minorities (included in the *Questionnaire of Attitudes toward Diversity and Violence*), consisting of 15 items that measure racist/xenophobic attitudes in their blatant and subtle dimensions.

For the Portuguese versions of the *Ambivalent Sexism Inventory*, the *Scale of Modern Homophobia*, and the *Racism/Xenophobia Scale*, as well as for the Spanish version of the *Moral Disengagement in Bullying Scale*, the linguistic adaptation was carried out through the back-translation procedure.

In addition, due to the participants' age and the number of instruments and the complexity of the items, in order to simplify the response mode, we included in all the instruments a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Table 2 provides reliability and validity indexes for each scale and country. We note that—despite that the average variance extracted does not always reach appropriate values—in general, the reliability indices are good. With regard to validity, the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) show that the theoretical structure of the scales fits the data.

### Procedure

After selecting the schools, a letter was sent to the directors, explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their collaboration. Subsequently we contacted the school directors by telephone and they confirmed their participation. The questionnaires were applied in a 25-minute session, in lesson time during the school year 2012–2013 in Spain, and 2013–2014 in Portugal, where the research was approved by the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Data Protection. In both countries, we requested the active informed consent of parents or legal guardians. The questionnaires were individual, anonymous, voluntary, and self-administered.

All aspects relating to data collection adhere to the ethical standards required in research with human beings of the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 1964) and its subsequent updates. The study obtained the favorable assessment of the University of the first author of the study.

### Data analysis

First, different reliability indices were calculated and we performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for each scale. Then,

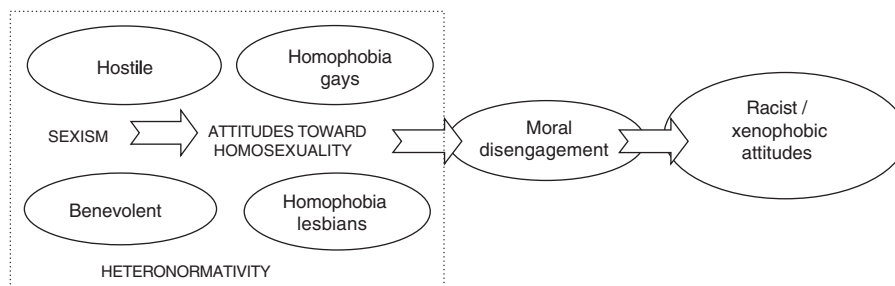


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of the relationships between variables.

Table 1 Distribution of the students by sex, age, and country

		Age (years)						M (SD)	Total
		14	15	16	17	18	19		
Girls	Spain	1	204	130	41	10	1	15.63 (.80)	387 (54.6%)
	Portugal	0	180	104	11	1	0	15.43 (.58)	
Boys	Spain	3	150	110	48	10	0	15.72 (.84)	321 (45.4%)
	Portugal	2	112	109	14	2	0	15.60 (.65)	
Total		6	646	453	114	23	1	15.60 (.74)	1243

Note. Two participants did not report their exact age.

Table 2 Reliability and validity indexes by country

		Reliability				Validity		
		α	Omega	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted			
Hostile sexism	Spain	.83	.86	.83	.46			
	Portugal	.70	.73	.71	.29			
Benevolent sexism	Spain	.76	.76	.75	.35			
	Portugal	.60	.65	.59	.23			
Homophobia gays	Spain	.92	.94	.92	.58			
	Portugal	.91	.91	.90	.55			
Homophobia lesbians	Spain	.91	.95	.92	.56			
	Portugal	.92	.95	.92	.54			
Moral disengagement	Spain	.89	.94	.90	.41			
	Portugal	.85	.91	.86	.33			
Racism/xenophobia	Spain	.87	.88	.87	.33			
	Portugal	.85	.85	.84	.28			
		Validity						
		χ <sup>2</sup> /df	GFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA		
Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (2 factors)	Spain	3.83	.953	.942	.924	.063		
	Portugal	2.49	.963	.909	.875	.053		
Modern Homophobia Scale (2 factors)	Spain	5.25	.896	.938	.924	.078		
	Portugal	4.95	.866	.921	.904	.086		
Scale of Moral Disengagement (2 factors)	Spain	5.06	.936	.933	.918	.076		
	Portugal	3.72	.939	.926	.902	.071		
Racism/Xenophobia Scale (2 factors)	Spain	3.91	.939	.928	.906	.064		
	Portugal	2.15	.955	.951	.913	.046		

we analyzed the differences in the evaluated variables using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and we calculated the correlation coefficients. Lastly, we carried out structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the model of relations hypothesized in Figure 1, its invariance by sex and country, and its indirect effects.

Given the total number of indicators and by variable, following the recommendations of Byrne (2010) and Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman (2002), we created three parcels in each scale that had 10 or fewer items (Benevolent sexism, Hostile sexism, Homophobia toward gays and lesbians), and four parcels in each scale with 13 or more items (Moral disengagement and Racism), resulting in a total of 20 parcels (see Figure 2). In order to simplify the results, we present the data of the direct and indirect predictors of racism/xenophobia.

## Results

### Differences as a function of sex and country

We performed a 2 (Country) x 2 (Sex) MANOVA (see Table 3), identifying a significant effect for country,  $F(6, 1236) = 30.40, p < .001, \eta^2 = .129$ , and for sex,  $F(6, 1236) = 114.67, p < .001, \eta^2 = .358$ , and their interaction,  $F(6, 1236) = 6.94, p < .001, \eta^2 = .033$ . Boys expressed significantly more negative attitudes toward cultural diversity, as well as more hostile sexist attitudes and more negative attitudes toward gays. We also identified more benevolent sexist attitudes and more negative attitudes toward lesbians in boys, although the effect size was very small ( $\eta^2_p = .004; \eta^2_p = .011$ ). The girls' score in moral disengagement in bullying was lower. Both the

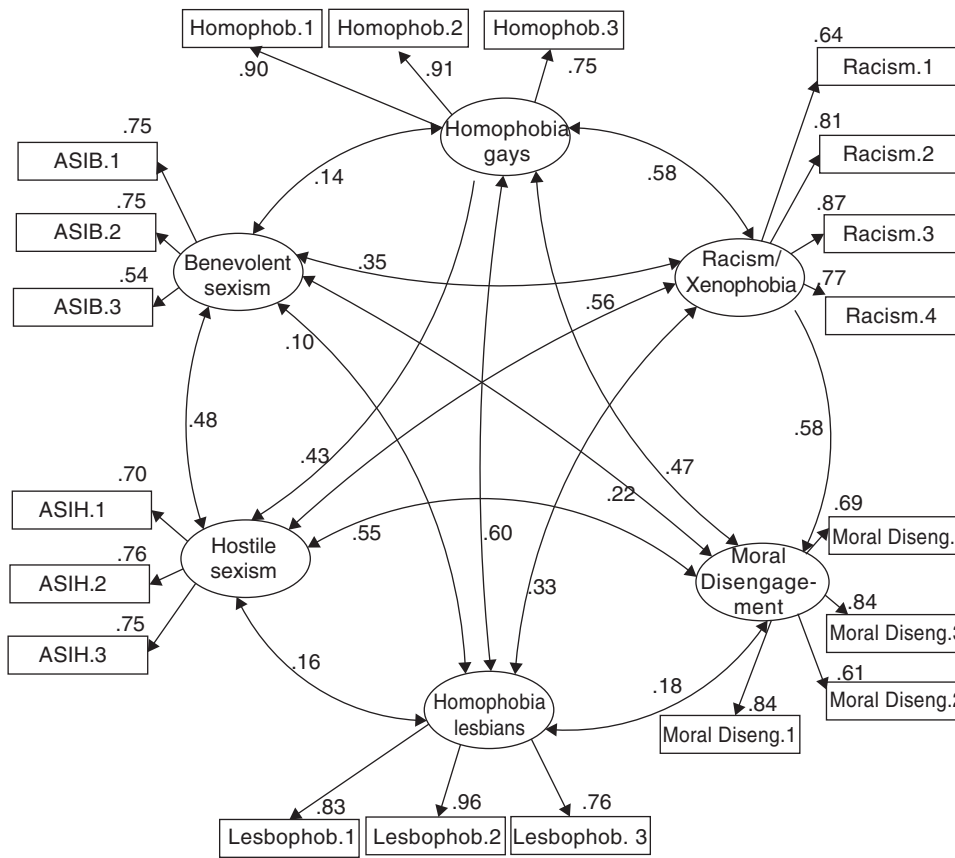


Figure 2. Standardized factor loadings of the parcels for each variable.

Table 3  
Differences as a function of country and sex in the analyzed scales

			M (SD)	Differences main effects
Hostile sexism	Spain	Girls	2.45 (.97)	Country Sex Country × Sex $F_{(1, 1244)} = 73.83^{***}, \eta^2_p = .056$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 193.17^{***}, \eta^2_p = .135$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 10.18^{**}, \eta^2_p = .008$
		Boys	3.41 (1.07)	
	Portugal	Girls	3.11 (.94)	
		Boys	3.72 (.94)	
Benevolent sexism	Spain	Girls	3.32 (1.09)	Country Sex Country × Sex $F_{(1, 1244)} = 140.159^{***}, \eta^2_p = .101$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 5.10^*, \eta^2_p = .004$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 2.95, \eta^2_p = .002$
		Boys	3.55 (1.06)	
	Portugal	Girls	4.09 (.85)	
		Boys	4.12 (.87)	
Homophobia gays	Spain	Girls	1.46 (.77)	Country Sex Country × Sex $F_{(1, 1244)} = 20.77^{***}, \eta^2_p = .016$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 469.69^{***}, \eta^2_p = .275$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 3.32, \eta^2_p = .003$
		Boys	2.65 (1.27)	
	Portugal	Girls	1.62 (.74)	
		Boys	3.03 (1.36)	
Homophobia lesbians	Spain	Girls	1.64 (.87)	Country Sex Country × Sex $F_{(1, 1244)} = 5.57^*, \eta^2_p = .004$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 14.17^{***}, \eta^2_p = .011$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 3.72, \eta^2_p = .003$
		Boys	1.96 (.99)	
	Portugal	Girls	1.88 (1.04)	
		Boys	1.98 (1.02)	
Moral disengagement	Spain	Girls	1.61 (.63)	Country Sex Country × Sex $F_{(1, 1244)} = 26.81^{***}, \eta^2_p = .021$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 183.72^{***}, \eta^2_p = .192$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 4.61^*, \eta^2_p = .004$
		Boys	2.32 (.94)	
	Portugal	Girls	1.94 (.60)	
		Boys	2.45 (.95)	
Racism/Xenophobia	Spain	Girls	2.55 (.86)	Country Sex Country x Sex $F_{(1, 1244)} = 15.45^{***}, \eta^2_p = .012$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = 139.94^{***}, \eta^2_p = .101$ $F_{(1, 1244)} = .77, \eta^2_p = .001$
		Boys	3.11 (.98)	
	Portugal	Girls	2.71 (.75)	
		Boys	3.36 (.99)	

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

Portuguese boys and girls expressed more *benevolent sexist attitudes*, more *hostile sexist attitudes* ( $\eta^2_p = .056$ ), and more *negative attitudes toward gays* ( $\eta^2_p = .016$ ) and *lesbians* ( $\eta^2_p = .004$ ), as well as greater *moral disengagement* ( $\eta^2_p = .021$ ), although the size of the effect was low or very low. The interaction by country and sex was significant for *hostile sexism* and *moral disengagement*, with the Portuguese boys obtaining higher scores, although the size of the effect was very low ( $\eta^2_p = .008$  and  $\eta^2_p = .004$ , respectively, for *hostile sexism* and *moral disengagement*) (see Table 3).

*Relations between variables*

For all the participants (see Table 4), *racism/xenophobia* correlated highly and positively with *negative attitudes toward gays*, *moral disengagement in bullying*, and *hostile sexism*; and moderately and positively with *benevolent sexism* and *negative attitudes toward lesbians*. We also found significant correlations in the expected direction, highlighting the positive and high correlations of *moral disengagement* with *hostile sexism* and *homophobia toward gays*; and of *hostile sexism* with *homophobia toward gays*. The lowest correlations were found between *benevolent sexism* and *homophobia toward gays and lesbians*, as well as between *homophobia toward lesbians* and *moral disengagement*; these low correlations between variables ( $< .20$ ) indicate scarce or null relation between them. This pattern was repeated in the analysis by sex and country, highlighting the weak correlations in the Portuguese students *between hostile and benevolent sexism* (.14).

*Model of structural relations between variables*

To verify the suitability of the parcels created from the items of each variable, we tested the measurement model through a CFA (see Figure 2).

The indicators revealed an acceptable fit of the measurement model to the data of the total sample [ $\chi^2$  ( $df=154$ ,  $N=1245$ )= $652.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df=4.2$ ;  $NFI=.953$ ;  $CFI=.963$ ;  $RMSEA=.051$ ;  $SRMR=.047$ ]. The factor loadings and the correlations between latent variables were both significant ( $p < .001$ ).

Next, SEM analysis was performed to verify the structural model proposed in Figure 1. The indices reveal that the hypothesized model presented a good fit to the data for the total sample [ $\chi^2$  ( $df=155$ ,  $N=1245$ )= $657.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df=4.24$ ;  $NFI=.952$ ;  $CFI=.963$ ;  $RMSEA=.051$ ;  $SRMR=.047$ ]. As expected, most of the direct links between variables were significant (see Figure 3).

Next, we examined the possible equivalence of these relations between variables for both countries and sexes. The indices obtained are shown in Table 5.

Both goodness of fit indices and decreases in the CFI indicated that the hypothesized model can be considered equivalent for both countries and sexes. Finally, through SEM, we studied the indirect effects between variables. The results can be seen in Table 6.

The most intense indirect effects identified were between *hostile sexism* and the other variables. Thus, an important part of the total negative effect of *hostile sexism* on *moral disengagement* ( $\beta = .561$ ) was mediated through *homophobia toward gays and lesbians* ( $\beta = .155$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with *homophobia toward lesbians* playing a less relevant role and having the opposite sign from *homophobia toward gays*.

Both *hostile sexism* and *homophobia toward gays* had indirect effects on *racism*. Most of the total effects of *hostile sexism* on *racism/xenophobia* ( $\beta = .504$ ) were positively mediated through *homophobia toward gays* and *moral disengagement*, and to a lesser extent, through *negative attitudes toward lesbians* ( $\beta = .322$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The total effects of *homophobia toward gays* on *racism/xenophobia* ( $\beta = .433$ ) were positively mediated through

*moral disengagement* ( $\beta = .106$ ,  $p < .001$ ). To a lesser extent, the total effects of *benevolent sexism* on *racism/xenophobia* ( $\beta = .110$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were negatively mediated through *homophobia* ( $\beta = -.033$ ,  $p > .05$ ), further decreasing its impact. These variables, along with *moral disengagement in bullying* ( $\beta = .29$ ), explained 53% of the variance of *racism/xenophobia*.

**Discussion**

This paper analyzes the influence of sexism, homophobia, and moral disengagement in bullying on attitudes toward cultural diversity, as well as the mediation effects among the different variables of the study. Secondarily, we analyzed differences by sex and country in the studied variables, as well as the relationship among them.

In the line of previous work, results highlight the fact that boys express more negative attitudes toward cultural diversity (Aosved & Long, 2006; Morrison & Morrison, 2011), exhibit more hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Rodríguez et al., 2013), and express more negative attitudes toward gays (Lameiras et al., 2013). Although the differences are small, we observe that boys also show more benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and have more negative attitudes toward lesbians (Lameiras et al., 2013). In contrast, girls obtain significantly lower scores in moral disengagement (Almeida et al., 2010). Regarding the country, the Portuguese students present significantly more benevolent sexism. We also note that they express more racist attitudes, more hostile sexist and more homophobic attitudes— toward gays and lesbians—as well as presenting higher levels of moral disengagement in bullying, although the differences are small. Likewise, the analysis of correlations shows that, in Portuguese students, the correlation between hostile and benevolent sexism is very low, in contrast to the findings in similar works (Carrera et al., 2013). In this line, Glick and Fiske (1996) note the low correlations between the two dimensions observed in more sexist or more purely hostile sexist people.

These differences could be due to cultural factors that have not been analyzed in this work. Studies such as that of Moya, Páez, Glick, Fernández, and Poeschl (2001) show that a country's index of human development (IDH) correlates with its cultural femininity, which is characterized by an emphasis on interpersonal harmony, community relations, and the ethics of care (Hofstede, 2001), and it predicts the level of sexism and inequality. Thus, according to this indicator, although both Spain and Portugal are in the group of countries with high human development, Spain ranks 26 whereas Portugal ranks 43. Likewise, in other related indices such as the Inequality-adjusted IDH and the Index of Gender Inequality, Spain obtains better results (UN Development Program, 2015), which could help to explain the differences found in the diverse variables analyzed.

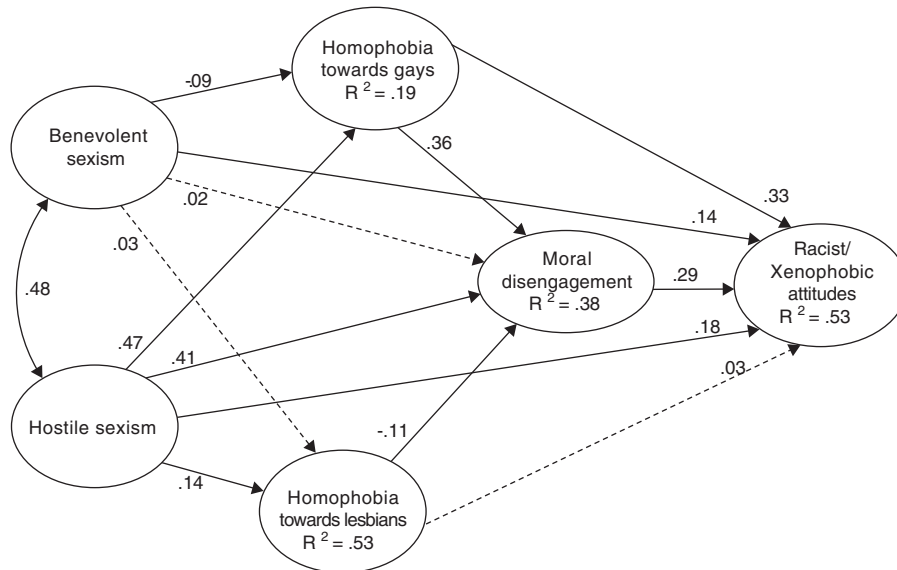
In relation to the structural equation model, *hostile sexism*, *homophobia toward gays*, *moral disengagement in bullying* and, to a lesser extent, *benevolent sexism* explained 53% of the variance of *racism/xenophobia*. This is confirmed for the total sample, and also by sex and country.

With regard to the different predictor variables, *hostile sexism* positively and directly predicts *negative attitudes toward cultural diversity* (Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2011). Also, this effect is increased by the partial mediation of *homophobia toward gays* (Aosved & Long, 2006) and *moral disengagement in bullying* and, to a lesser extent and contrary to our expectations, by the negative mediation of *homophobia toward lesbians*. This means that adolescents presenting more hostile sexism also manifest more racist/xenophobic attitudes, in part because they also have more negative attitudes toward gays and greater moral disengagement, two variables that enhance racist/xenophobic attitudes.

**Table 4**  
Pearson correlations between the analyzed scales

	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Hostile sexism						
(2) Benevolent sexism		.370**				
(3) Homophobia gays			.373**			
(4) Homophobia lesbians			.118**	.143**		
(5) Moral disengagement				.088**	.472**	
(6) Racism/xenophobia				.558**	.454**	.541**
					.169**	.312**
						.513**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .



**Figure 3.** Structural relations between variables (standardized regression coefficients).  
Note. The dashed lines represent nonsignificant coefficients ( $p > .05$ ). To simplify the representation, the indicators (*parcels*) and factor weights are not shown.

**Table 5**  
Goodness-of-fit Indices for the Invariance by country and sex

		$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	NFI	RMSEA	CFI	$\Delta CFI$
Invariance by country	M1	935.7	310	3.02	.930	.040	.952	
	M2	996.1	324	3.07	.930	.041	.948	.004
	M3	1025.2	337	3.04	.929	.041	.947	.001
Invariance by sex	M1	837.9	310	2.70	.929	.037	.954	
	M2	898.6	324	2.77	.924	.038	.950	.004
	M3	973.6	337	2.88	.918	.039	.944	.006

Note. M 1: unconstrained model, M 2: model with invariant measurement weights, M 3: model with invariant measurement weights and regression coefficients.

**Table 6**  
Total, direct and indirect effects between variables

Predictor→Criterion	Indirect effect Sum ( $p$ ) <sup>a</sup>	Direct effect ( $p$ )	Total effect ( $p$ )
Benevolent sexism→Moral disengagement	-.035(.010)	.018(.628)	-.017(.675)
Benevolent sexism→Racism/Xenophobia	-.033(.141)	.143(.001)	.110(.003)
Hostile sexism→Moral disengagement	.155(.001)	.406(.001)	.561(.001)
Hostile sexism→Racism/Xenophobia	.322(.001)	.182(.001)	.504(.001)
Homophobia gays→Racism/Xenophobia	.106(.001)	.327(.001)	.433(.001)
Homophobia lesbians→Racism/Xenophobia	-.031(.025)	.034(.413)	.003(.969)

<sup>a</sup> The probability associated with each sum of standardized indirect effects was estimated with the bias-corrected confidence interval bootstrap test of AMOS. 22 (confidence interval = 95%; samples = 5000).

Benevolent sexism also directly predicts racism/xenophobia, although weakly. This effect is even more weakened by the partial mediation of homophobia toward gays, which is inhibited by benevolent sexism. This protective effect of benevolent sexism against homophobia toward gays could be explained by its affective-positive and paternalistic tone, as found in studies that

have analyzed its influence in the phenomenon of bullying, where it has also acted as a protective factor (Carrera et al., 2013).

Homophobia toward gays also directly predicts racism/xenophobia, in the line of works that identified strong relationships between the two variables (Aosved & Long, 2006; Daley et al., 2008), with this effect increasing through the partial

mediation of moral disengagement. Therefore, people who are more homophobic are also more racist because they express greater moral disengagement.

Likewise, moral disengagement in the phenomenon of bullying directly predicts racism/xenophobia, also in the line of the works that reveal that attitudes toward race/ethnicity are keys to understanding bullying (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2014).

Finally, contrary to the initial hypotheses, we confirmed that homophobia toward lesbians does not predict racism/xenophobia, and we also observed that negative attitudes toward lesbians are a negative predictor of disengagement; in other words, students who express more positive attitudes toward lesbians have higher levels of moral disengagement in bullying. This relationship could be due to the stronger influence of other variables in the model of structural equations—such as hostile sexism or homophobia toward gays—, which would overshadow the already weak effect of homophobia toward lesbians. In addition, this result could also be due to the complex nature of homophobia toward lesbians. This second hypothesis is based on the fact that attitudes toward lesbians are usually more positive than attitudes toward homosexuals, particularly in the case of men (Morrison & Morrison, 2011) and adolescents (Rodríguez et al., 2013). This might be explained by the phenomenon of “eroticizing lesbianism”, which shows that heterosexual men attribute a high erotic value to lesbians, derived from the pleasure of observing or imagining sex between two women. As a result, despite their transgression of the heterosexual norm, these women are especially attractive to men and are even perceived as bisexual and sexually daring (Carrera et al., 2013; Raja & Stokes, 1998; Rodríguez et al., 2013; Ruiz, 2006). In this way, this assessment could be biasing the students' responses, which should not be interpreted as truly positive attitudes toward lesbians, who, like heterosexual women, continue to be exploited by men for their own pleasure.

This study has some limitations that should be commented on. Firstly, its correlational nature necessarily limits the conclusions of cause-effect between variables. Thus, despite theoretical evidence supporting the proposed model, experimental and longitudinal studies are needed to corroborate and/or qualify it. Secondly, the fit indices of some of the scales are low, especially of that of benevolent sexism. Thirdly, it would be interesting for future research to analyze traditional and subtle racism separately and to examine in more depth the role played by benevolent sexism as well as by homophobia toward lesbians in both constructs.

Despite the above limitations, the results of this work are useful and innovative, as they underline the close relationship between heterosexist and ethnocentric variables, as well as their relationship with moral disengagement in school bullying. These relationships should be taken into account in the design of intercultural educational programs.

Specifically, we underscore that educational policies aimed at the prevention of racist/xenophobic attitudes—closely related to phenomena of racial discrimination at school—must promote positive and egalitarian attitudes toward sexual diversity. Likewise, the influence of moral disengagement in bullying on racist/xenophobic attitudes indicates the need to carry out programs to promote sociocognitive skills aimed at the development of a moral conscience and empathy, which has been linked to understanding the other, the reduction of prejudice, and the rejection of violence. In addition, empathy is closely linked to the expressive values of intercultural sensitivity, respect and care, traditionally associated with femininity and far from the instrumental values of insensitivity, toughness, and aggressiveness, traditionally associated with masculinity (Díaz-Aguado et al., 2004). In this line, the fight against sexism and homophobia contributes not only to the construction of a more egalitarian and inclusive gender reality, but also to one that is more respectful toward cultural diversity, thereby reversing

these attitudes both in the reduction of gender violence and hate crimes.

Therefore, we need a *liberating educational practice*, committed to the constant dynamic of denunciation of social injustice and the proposal of alternatives, in the line of the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1970, 2001), which leads to an education oriented toward humanization and, ultimately, to the development of students' emotional dimension and their formation in values of social justice and commitment (Cortina, 2000; Jares, 2005; Merino, 2008). Also, it must also be a *queer educational practice*. The term *queer* means “geek” or weird, and was used in the past as an insult for sexually diverse people, redefined later, thanks to the reivindicative activity of this group, as a term that reflects the pride of being different. In this line, queer pedagogy is based on the philosophical theory of Judith Butler (2001) and it highlights the violence generated by rigid gender norms, as well as making different sexual identities visible and fostering positive attitudes toward sexual diversity (Britzman, 2002).

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