A Sign of the Times: Humorous Slogans and Imagery in Modern Day Political Protest
Ellie Tomsett and Nathalie Weidhase

The rise of populism in the Western world since the millennium has been accompanied by a rise in protest cultures that aim to offer an alternative view of the world. In the UK, the Brexit campaign was dominated by men, both in the number of participants in public discussion and in content and form. While some women were visible in the debates (e.g. Kate Hoey, Gisela Stuart, or Priti Patel), the leading players of the referendum campaign on both sides were men (Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Nigel Farage on the Leave side, and David Cameron, George Osborne and various Labour figures on the Remain side). Indeed, Hozic and True argue that Brexit must be understood as an intra-elite gendered drama, 'manufactured not only by a generic male-dominated British political elite but in this case quite literally by men who happen to have gone to the same elite schools and have been competing with each other since adolescence'[1]. In this chapter we argue that feminist and gendered humour in modern-day political protest signs has the potential to disrupt and critique this male dominance of post-referendum political debate. These protest signs are often shared on social and traditional media, and the argument we make in this chapter is that the opportunity for sharing increases *because* of the inclusion of humour. It is our belief as researchers that, in addition to increasing circulation, humour within protest signs has the potential to 'render the listener more amenable to persuasion'[2]. In this chapter we argue that humour can be an instrument to offer an alternative discourse to the militaristic, masculinist language employed in political conversation and media coverage. This argument will be explored in relation to protests that we ourselves have attended: the #LassWar protest in 2017 in Manchester, and the Put It To The People March in March 2019 in London.

The gendered discourses of Brexit are evident in the language used as part of political speech during and after the referendum campaign which is 'problematically steeped in and wedded to gendered signifiers surrounding militarism and business rhetoric, reflective of a history of male domination and the valorisation of certain masculine traits'[3] such as strength and resilience. This is evident in the use of terms like 'vassal state' and 'surrender bill' as descriptions for Theresa May's Withdrawal Bill. Both the political and business world are regularly constructed as masculine spaces where women have difficulty competing and the language used in Brexit debates emphasises this exclusion and reproduces gendered hierarchies[4]. This is arguably an evolution of women's exclusion from industrial labour which was also constructed as exclusively male and working class (as opposed to the business world's upper-class focus).

This foregrounding of men and masculinist discourses is particularly problematic not only because 'they preclude the emergence of an approach based on dialogue, equality, empathy, care or other-regardingness'[5], but also because women are expected to be disproportionally affected by an exit from the EU and its labour protections[6]. Further, the UK is 'highly dependent on feminized migration'[7] in the education, care, and health sectors. The current dominant gendered discourses conceal this impact. One area where a small number of women have been markedly

hypervisible, however, is the aftermath of the referendum, 'ostensibly to "clean-up" the mess left by their male counterparts'[8] (this is partly thanks to the 'glass cliff' phenomenon, where women become more likely to gain leadership positions in times of crisis[9]). Nicola Sturgeon, Theresa May, Angela Merkel and even new royal Meghan Markle[10] have all been hailed as saviours at one time or another. While not sufficiently represented in official spaces such as parliament, women, and their employment of often gendered humour, have been visible in the protest movements triggered by the rise of populism.

In addition to the (historical and current) lack of representation for women and minority groups within spaces and institutions of power (for example politics, academia and the media industry), women have also been disenfranchised from humorous communication itself[11],[12]. Humour appreciation and arguably the ability (or freedom) to be comic is inherently associated with social power and therefore gender[13] and racial identities. Thus, as part of the exclusion of women from public discourse and the comedy industry, the ability to be humorous became associated with masculinity. However, in the UK and US outside of mainstream political spaces, humour has often been used as part of protest, including those by women and minority groups. Hart uses the student protests of the 1960s as an example, stating that 'playful acts were used widely as a technique in numerous non-violent protests; students explored the power of humour to attract media attention and to disarm the authorities'[14].

Sørensen extends this argument in relation to what she theorizes as the humorous political stunt[15]. She defines humorous political stunts as both incorporating comic incongruity and as 'a performance/action carried out in public which attempts to undermine a dominant discourse'[16]. Stunts can also be linked back to the work of the situationists (the Situationist International) and their subversion of cultural meaning through detournment[17]. These kinds of performative stunts have featured heavily in protests subsequent to the 2016 EU referendum in the UK. Examples here include the Led By Donkeys billboard protests across the UK, which enlarged historic social media posts of key politicians and displayed them publicly on billboards, to highlight the hypocrisy of those leading the country[18]. Additionally, the infamous stunt by comedian Simon Brodkin, handing Theresa May a fake P45 (termination of employment certificate) during the Conservative Party Conference in 2017, conforms to Sørensen's definition perfectly[19]. These stunts operate slightly differently from humorous signs however, as signs can be seen as a key aspect of traditional forms of protest.

Kate Fox has recently argued that humour has become of increasing relevance to political discourse, as it has the potential to be a very effective tool with which politicians can engage their audience (which in many instances are also the electorate)[20]. Fox argues that by using humour, politicians 'are attempting to re-fuse with their increasingly alienated audiences, and to present themselves as authentic and relatable'[21]. Fox proposes a new word to account for the way humour can be used to effect change: humitas, which 'is a conflation of humour, which has its etymological origin in the word "fluid" […] and "gravitas", originating in words meaning serious

and weighty'[22]. Thus, whereas in much existing theory humour is proposed as the opposite of seriousness in a binary relationship, Fox argues that in the modern political environment there is an entanglement between humour and seriousness. This entanglement is exploited by those in power to engage increasingly fragmented and disengaged audiences in politics in the current media environment. As we will discuss it is also exploited by protestors challenging those in power.

It is worth remembering that humour, in diverse audiences, 'does not necessarily unite, it can also divide and exclude'[23] those considered outsiders or those perceived to be 'occupying contrasting or challenging identities'[24]. Just as the humour of the comic signs used in protest can assist in the forging of a collective identity amongst protestors, it can also draw boundaries between those who are 'in on' and 'not in on' the joke. The humorous signage used during protests is as much about creating a sense of identity within the group of protesters, with their similar views on the topic of the protest, as it is for indicating political positions and attracting the attention of those whose opinions the protest is challenging or attempting to change. This dual function may well occur at different times in the process of protest; firstly, during the physical act of protest when surrounded by those with similar beliefs it can solidify belief in the cause, and then secondly to challenge other belief systems when mediated via images on social media. The humour of protest signage is therefore fundamentally about closeness and distance. Comedy from a pro or anti Brexit position is not only meant to identify individuals as members of a group, but to distance individuals publicly from those with opposing viewpoints[25]. This distancing often takes on politically complex forms. Graefer et al analyse the ways in which humour is utilised as a mobilisation of the carnivalesque in anti-Trump (feminist) protest[26]. They argue that offensive humour (here defined as 'graphic' or 'explicit', rather than an attack on marginalised groups) can be utilised to challenge Trump and his politics, but they also identify tensions between radical and conservative humorous formations which 'reinforced established notions of ideal White masculinity'[27].

Davies, writing about the oral tradition of joking, reminds us that 'Jokes are an oral and social phenomenon. Jokes exist to be told, indeed performed, in company, and a further source of pleasure is that they promote sociability'[28]. Whilst protest signs are not verbal (although comic chants at protests do share a verbal link), the humour on protest signs feed into the circulatory aspect of joking. Just as jokes are made to be shared, the comic banners deployed in modern-day protest are designed to be circulated across society via social and traditional media.

The methodology of our research is interdisciplinary and falls into what would be considered feminist research. Whilst in many instances we are conducting textual analysis we are doing so with an awareness that existing methods may render the ideas and work of some groups invisible. Therefore, we are including information gathered from direct experience of protest situations. Ackerly and True state that 'feminist-informed research […] is self-reflective, critical,

political, and versed in multiple theoretical frameworks in order to enable the researcher to "see" those people and processes lost in gaps, silences, margins and peripheries'[29].

Protest is an embodied experience; people physically take to the streets. Thus, whilst our discussion will focus on the mediation of protest signs and images, we have situated ourselves and our own experiences within the discussion rather than drawing on examples that as individuals we have not engaged with (as the majority of existing research on this topic has done). In this way our research links with what Skeggs describes as feminist ethnography[30]. Humour is fundamentally a subjective experience related to social positioning; what one person may read as humour another may read as offence. It is with this subjectivity in mind that we embark on the analysis of our examples from an explicit participatory position, as we believe this highlights the subjectivity inherent in all critique of protest (and humour).

Additionally, as two middle class white women, we write with an acknowledgment that our voices are some of the best heard within mainstream/academic feminism and thus it is important that whilst acknowledging our own subjectivity, we do not universalise. We also recognise that we are academics attending protests organised by other academics, thereby privileging a certain academic perspective. Harding reminds us that, for feminist researchers, an awareness that 'women come only in different classes, races and cultures: there is no "woman" and no "woman's experience"'[31] is of vital importance. The following chapter considers the way humour has been integrated into post-EU-referendum UK based protests related to regional, national and international events. Each example will be considered in relation to protest by women and gendered experiences of political discourse.

Regional protest:

In February 2017 stand-up poet and humour scholar Kate Fox organised a protest against the Northern Powerhouse Conference in Manchester. The term 'Northern Powerhouse' is the name given to a political concept proposed by the UK government to provide the North of England with a sense of identity in a post-industrial economy. This project is considered necessary as years of under-investment has left the region lagging behind the South in terms of jobs, transport and infrastructure. The conference was convened by Built Environment Networking to bring together major political and business parties across the region. While this section does not discuss an explicitly anti-Brexit protest, the scene is very much set by Brexit. This is evidenced by, for example, the conference's own assertion that, according to the event's website, the Northern Powerhouse is 'more important than ever following Brexit'. Further, as this chapter demonstrates, both the conference and the counter protest operate in a political discursive environment that is marked by a domination of male political and economic actors. Of the two authors, Ellie participated in this protest.

The conference was criticised by Fox (who organised and led the #LassWar initiative), and a group of 15-20 women protestors assembled outside the conference on its first day. This assembly was motivated by the fact that all 15 keynote speakers at the conference were male (and of the remaining speakers only 13% were women). Prior to the day of the protest, and due to the negative publicity attracted by this glaring omission, and the vocal outcry by women politicians and business owners across the region, the conference organisers were forced to issue a public apology[32]. The perception was that women's voices were very literally being left out of this political, social and economic initiative. In a post-Brexit referendum Britain, where devolution to the regions was increasingly important, this was a significant oversight because it implied that women are not going to be part of this development.

Just as the history of the city of Manchester (and the North of England) continues to be framed overwhelmingly in relation to masculine achievements, the conference was attempting to frame the region's future in the same way. This lack of inclusion of women at the conference was seen as indicative of a wider issue with the Northern Powerhouse concept being positioned as masculine. This idea had been propagated within the imagery linked to reporting and promotion of related initiatives (for example the HS2 train line which would connect the North of England to the South). Many of these images involved white, male (predominantly Conservative) politicians being shown around workplaces and building sites whilst clad in hi-vis reflective safety gear and hard hats. The news of the time became an endless series of clips of the then chancellor George Osborne being chaperoned around factories pointing at things and nodding sagely.

As a result of the #LassWar protest being directly about the way images influence understanding, it was this very (hi-vis) image that the protesters adopted themselves to draw attention to the startling lack of female inclusion in this forward-looking vision of the north. Wearing hi-vis jackets, hard hats and pointing randomly at surrounding buildings, the protestors greeted the attendees of the conference as they arrived. Holding signs such as 'Some Leaders are Born Women' and handing out leaflets about why the protest had been organised. One of the props used for the protest, created by Ellie, was a map of the North of England. This map had a notable difference to accurate cartography in that the names of towns and cities were adapted to foreground the male names included within them (for example BRADford and CARLisle with the suggestion of renaming Liverpool 'LiverPAUL(?)'). This was used in interactions with attendees of the conference and provoked some smiles and laughter, enabling conversation about why the protest was occurring.
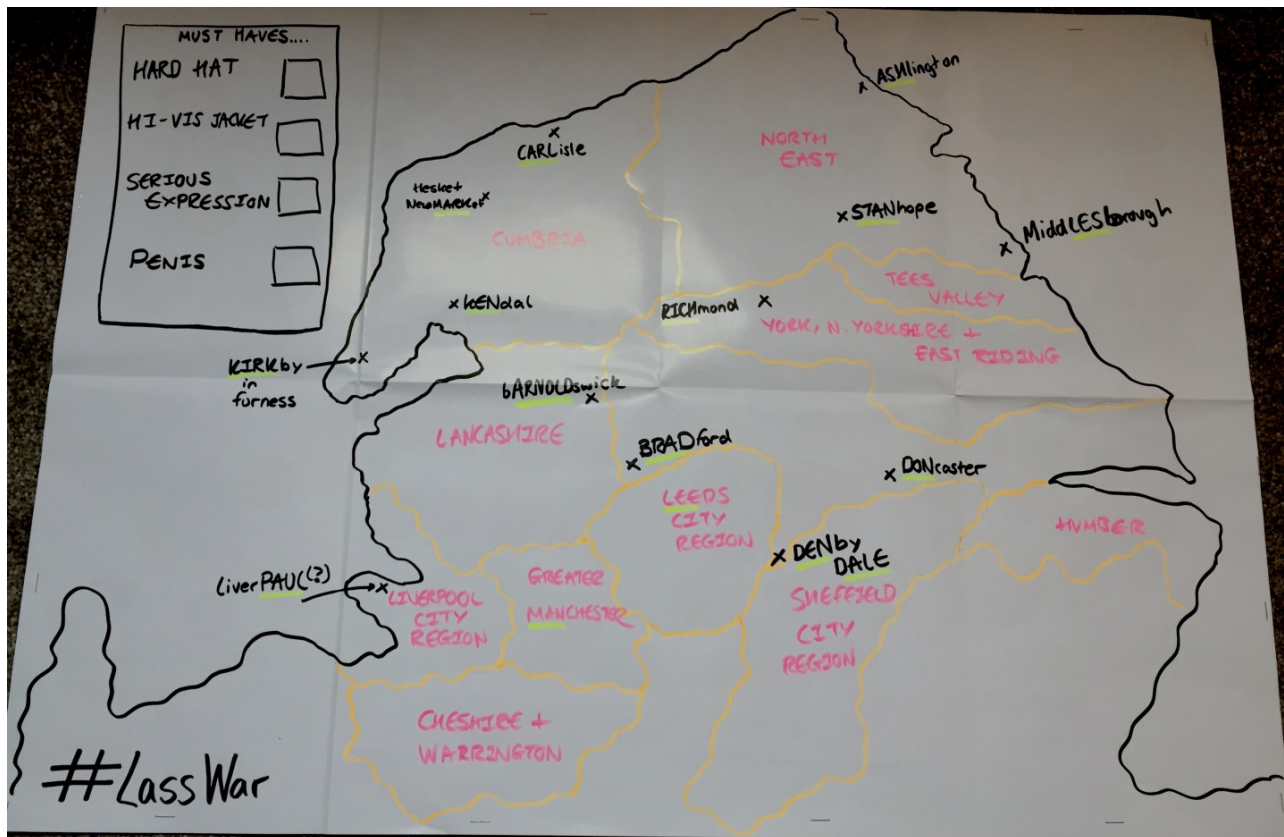
Fig. 1: Map created by Ellie Tomsett as part of the #LassWar protest, Manchester, February 2017

The 'must haves' checklist on the map (Hard hat, Hi-vis jacket, Serious expression, Penis), makes use of classic list structures for joking to subvert expectations. The list included on the map is a twist on the classic three-part list joke 'defined as "Establish, Reinforce, Surprise!"'[33]. In this way the map is a good example of incongruous humour in that some aspects are familiar (the shape of the map and the demarcations of the counties for example) and this familiarity builds expectations which are then subverted on closer inspection. The surprise element was used to highlight the exclusion of women from the discussions regarding this vision of the region's future[34]. In this instance humour was used not only to engage with the stereotypical imagery of the modern industrial North but to directly challenge the stereotypes surrounding women and humour too. As Gray comments, UK society has historically deemed it 'prudent to shut women out of the comic arena all together'[35] both within social interaction and the comedy industry, due to the way humour is intimately connected to social roles and power relations. She identifies several techniques deployed to maintain this exclusion of women from humour and highlights that feminist identity labours under the additional burden of being repeatedly cast as devoid of humour. Gray states that: 'when faced with women's objections to specific jokes, invoke the spectre of a thin-lipped and humourless prude averse to any form of spontaneity, life or joy'[36]. Whilst feminism as a movement goes far beyond simply objecting to offensive joking, the belittling of women's experiences in the contemporary postfeminist environment is often

packaged as humour to ensure the rhetorical 'just joking' defence. This is an approach the current Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has also deployed when attempting to allay considerable backlash relating to comments made about Muslim women[37]. As a result of the overt ridicule found in the map, costuming and physical posture of the protesters (pointing, strutting), it would have been impossible to frame the protestors as humourless.

The irony of the conference occurring in Manchester, a city still influenced by the legacy of the suffragette movement[38], was not lost on protesters. The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded in the city in 1903, had also made use of humour as part of 'votes for women' protests. As Cowman argues, 'humorous tactics by suffragettes were sometimes dismissed as women ''doing something silly'', but served to win them attention in circumstances where female voices had traditionally been absent or silent'[39]. The approach deployed by #LassWar was highly reminiscent of the suffragettes' 'do something silly approach'. When faced with rigid male-dominated 'serious' politics, the protestors sought to disrupt this discourse through absurdist exaggeration. The mediated environment of current political protest however makes it even more important to find ways to grab attention, and humour is one key way of achieving this.

To extend Fox's argument that humitas is 'weighty humour or fluid seriousness'[40], in this way the liquidity of humitastic approaches to protest enable them to slip through gaps between fixed solid political positions, and take on the shape of any container. These containers are in fact the different media engaged with by the protest. This may be the physical space (through integrating in and amongst suited business people), the mediated 'container' of the national press through journalists' articles, or the mediated 'container' of social media posts. There was an overt awareness by protestors that they would be photographed and the images would be circulated online and that the best way of increasing circulation/getting attention was humour. We can see that despite the small scale of this protest and its regionally specific topic, the humorous approach was successful in that it achieved coverage in national newspaper, *The Guardian*[41].

This protest provides an example of how women can make use of humour to highlight their exclusion in political debate by satirising gendered, classed and geographic tropes. Humour can be used as a conscious strategy (just as theatrical spectacle has been used recently by Extinction Rebellion[42]) to move the debate beyond the specific geographic area of the protest to the online environment. We will now consider how humour has also been deployed consciously as part of protest strategies in relation to national and international topics. As we will see below, a similar male dominance is identified in national anti-Brexit protest.

National and International protest

On 23 March 2019, the 'Put It To The People: People's Vote' march occurred in Central London. Of the two authors, Nathalie participated in this protest both for the purpose of further

research for this chapter, and as a European citizen whose rights are currently under threat. *The Guardian* and *The Independent* dedicated live blogs to the event on their websites. These showcased protest signs, vox pops with participants, and reported on some of the speeches given at the rally at Parliament Square. This signified a marked shift in media coverage of Brexit, that in many ways had prior to this focused on angry Leave voters, slow negotiations, and the difficulties encountered by EU citizens applying for permanent residency, towards something more positive.

We have previously discussed the importance of social media in the mediation of protest signs and protest movements. However, mainstream media continues to play an important role, and partly aid transmission via social media by highlighting social media posts in coverage, and by utilising hashtags. Conversely, this media attention is actively courted by protesters to increase impact and transmission of their message. News media are essential to broadcast protest to wider audiences 'and it is by this same means that wider support and legitimacy for their actions and aims can be potentially won – or lost'[43]. The march's wider dissemination on traditional media (beyond what one may consider the 'filter bubble' of social media) must be considered in this context, especially as 'some demonstrations are more politically acceptable to sections of the news media than others, and some news media now actively champion some of them'[44]. As we argue in this chapter, protest signs and the humour employed in them are instrumental to the shareability of anti-Brexit protest – they are part of the media spectacle[45] of contemporary protest. With protest attendance reported as up to 1 million[46], the analysis presented in this section only captures a small percentage of the humorous signs displayed at the protest. However, in the signs observed in-person and those circulated on social and traditional media, some common themes emerged which we will focus on in this section.

Protest signs contained multiple references to 'the Maybot', making fun of then-Prime Minister Theresa May's mechanical and seemingly emotionless political persona. Buzzfeed selected a sign that featured an image of May with blonde extensions and the slogan "Do you like my extensions?" The blonde hair, beyond drawing on the 'dumb blonde' stereotype usually applied to women, can be linked to both Johnson and Trump, the two most glaring embodiments of contemporary populist macho politics. These two types of signs reveal a tension in the gendered humour of anti-Brexit protest: May is mocked for failing to be appropriately feminine (by being seen as uncaring and unemotional), and is 'masculinised' as she is linked to the wider global populist context of Brexit. This tension is further evident in the following protest sign theme.

In line with the fact that most actors in the pre- and post-referendum political world were men, many of the protest signs identified male politicians such as Gove, Johnson, or Jacob Rees-Mogg as the butt of the joke. In addition to images of protest signs from previous marches, the People's Vote campaign broadcast images of Johnson with a photoshopped clown face. A dominant theme both on placards seen at the protest and images distributed via social and news media, is that of sexual failure. A placard featuring Iain Duncan Smith, Gove, Farage and Johnson posed the

question "Do you want to be left alone on a small island with these men?" This alludes to both the obvious fact that Britain is an island, and insinuates that being left alone with these men would be a disappointing and potentially non-consensual sexual experience.

Fig. 2: Sign referencing American sitcom Friends *seen at the Put It To The People march, London, March 2019.*

Another sign at the march read:

It's <u>not</u> that stable
It <u>doesn't</u> happen to every Prime Minister
And it is a<u> crap deal!</u>

This intertextual reference draws on the infamous scene from American sitcom *Friends* (1994-2004) in which the character Rachel shouts after Ross 'It's not that common, it doesn't happen to

every guy and it is a big deal' in order to humiliate him as a sexually inadequate man after they break up a second time. While this joke critiques the results of male politicians' actions, it does so in a language that is embedded in notions of male sexual prowess – the lack thereof can be read as a sign of weakness. This mirrors the ways in which Trump's body, and particularly his genitals, were mocked in feminist protest around his inauguration. Graefer et al. argue that this vulgar, carnivalesque humour is 'used to challenge privileged positions and reframe public and political discourse'[47].

Buzzfeed featured a placard that stated "Pulling out never works!", referring to the process of leaving the European Union and a contraceptive method with high failure rate. Finally, *The Guardian* selected another image of Johnson, Gove, Rees-Mogg and Farage with the slogan "We need immigrants… to dilute this gene pool". While the placard critiqued the homogeneity of the UK upper and ruling class, it also references the offensive notion that immigrants main purpose is to fill the jobs that the indigenous population does not want to do. These slogans are similar to those in anti-Trump protests, as they subject the male body to ridicule and a degree of surveillance that is usually reserved for women. However, in the case of Trump, 'it ironically also works to restore dominant assumptions of an idealized White masculinity that is free from feminine trace'[48]. What emerges here is that while the protest signs criticise the male political actors of Brexit, they do so by reinscribing masculinist and patriarchal discourses of power or the lack thereof, by linking masculinity to virility, and sexual failure to political failure. This marks a stark contrast to the #LassWar protests discussed above. Where the #LassWar explicitly critiqued a lack of representation for women in order to challenge the power structures that produced the exclusion of women, many images in the anti-Brexit protest both challenged, but ultimately reinscribed the masculinist discourses that produced the current political situation.

To some degree, the travelling of cultural concepts across transatlantic boundaries and a mobilisation against populist politics emphasises the fact that populism is now a global phenomenon and that protest movements connect across national borders, partly thanks to social media. This international language (the literal language, English, and the particular signifiers, for example *Friends*) perhaps also keeps in mind the inherent shareability of images, and anticipates their distribution on social media which defies the specifics of geography.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have demonstrated some contemporary ways in which humour, employed in visual protest, facilitates a sense of belonging and community which is enhanced by the transmission of imagery of the protest across social and traditional media. While similar strategies are utilised, namely the focus on men and masculinity as the 'butt of the joke', both protests achieved different levels of national attention.

Our chosen examples deployed similar strategies, but remarkably only one challenged the underlying patriarchal and masculinist power structures explicitly. It is not only the obvious different focus of these protests, but also perhaps the difference in scale that may help to explain the different levels of critique: a local, grassroots protest initiated by a woman with a clear aim to critique patriarchal power structures is able to offer a more coherent visual language with a core message. It is notable that the #LassWar protests did not achieve a significant digital footprint. This could be down to its small scale but also due to the complexity of the signage/props used. The detail of the map discussed above would not have travelled well despite its humour, due to the regional knowledge required to be 'in' on the joke. Perhaps in this regard the other performative aspects (costuming, posturing etc.) were more successful, in line with Sørensen's concept of the humorous political stunt. Conversely the Anti-Brexit protests succeeded in mobilizing the humorous messages through clear and internationally comprehendible and circulatable signage.

A large national protest with the primary aim to stop a national/international political event needs to appeal to a more diverse set of people, and needs to mobilise the broadest political base. Nonetheless, the commonalities are remarkable, and speak to a broader sensibility evident in the visual language of modern-day political protest against populist political formations. Populism (and its economic and political actors) is identified as a masculine ideology, and humour helps to critique the male actors seen as responsible for the current political situation. However, as established through this discussion, despite the similarities in approach to uses of humour, the anti-Brexit protestors' critique of individual actors is not as subversive as the systematic critique evident in the #LassWar protest.

References

Achilleos-Sarll, Columba, and Benjamin Martil. "Toxic Masculinity: Militarism, Deal-Making and the Performance of Brexit," in *Gender and Queer Perspectives on Brexit*. eds. Moira Dustin, Nuno Ferreira and Susan Millns. 15-44. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

Ackerly, Brooke, and Jacqui True. *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Barreca, Gina. *They Used to Call Me Snow White… But I Drifted: Women's Strategic Use of Humor*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2013.

Batchelor, Tom. "Theresa May's speech interrupted. By prankster handing over fake P45." *The Independent*, October 4, 2017. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-may-speech-live-protester-interrupt-fake-p45-simon-brodkin-a7982421.html

Clifton, Katy. "Extinction Rebellion protest: Police make 14 arrests after thousands of activists descend on central London." *Evening Standard*, November 24, 2018. https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/extinction-rebellion-protest-london-police-make-14-arrests-after-thousands-of-activists-descend-on-a3999251.html

Cottle, Simon. "Reporting Demonstrations: the Changing Media Politics of Dissent." *Media, Culture and Society* 30, no. 6 (2008): 853-854.

Cowman, Krista. "'Doing Something Silly': The Use of Humour by the Women's Social and Political Union, 1903- 1914." *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 15 (2007): 259-274.

Davies, Christie. *Jokes and Targets*. Bloomington: Indiana Unviersity Press, 2011.

DeLuca, Kevin, and Jennifer Peeples. "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism and the 'Violence' of Seattle." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002): 125–51.

Double, Oliver. *Getting the Joke: The Inner Workings of Stand-up Comedy*. London: Methuen, 2014.

Fox, Kate. "Humitas: Humour as Performative Resistance." In *Comedy and Critical Thought: Laughter as Resistance,* edited by Krista Giappone, Fred Francis and Iain MacKenzie. 83-99. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.

Fox, Kate. "Humitas: a new word for when humour and seriousness combine." *The Conversation*, August 24, 2017. http://theconversation.com/humitas-a-new-word-for-when-humour-and-seriousness-combine-82556.

Grafer, Anne, Allaina Kilby and Inger-Lisa Kalviknes Bore. "Unruly Women and Carnivalesque Countercontrol: Offensive Humour in Mediated Social Protest." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 43, No. 2 (2018): 1-23.

Gray, Frances. *Women and Laughter*. London: Springer, 1994.

Guerrina, Roberta and Annick Masselot "Walking into the Footprint of EU Law: Unpacking the Gendered Consequences of Brexit." *Social Policy and Society* 17, no. 2 (2018): 319-330.

Halliday, Josh. "'Lass War' protest at 'Northern Powerhouse' event over lack of female speakers." *The Guardian*, February 21, 2017.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/21/lass-war-protest-at-northern-powerhouse-event-with-no-female-speakers

Hart, Marjolein't. "Humour and Social Protest: An Introduction." *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 15 (2007): 1-20.

Hozić, Aida A., and Jacqui True. "Brexit as a scandal: gender and global Trumpism." *Review of International Political Economy* 24, no. 2 (2017): 270-287.

Lewis, Tim. "Led by Donkeys: There is political power in Laughing at these people." *The Guardian*, October 19, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/oct/19/led-by-donkeys-interview-there-is-as-political-power-in-laughing

McDonough, Tom. *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents.* London: MIT Press, 2004.

Medhurst, Andy. *A National Joke: Popular Comedy and English Cultural Identities.* London: Routledge, 2007.

Mørk Røstvik, Camilla, and Ella Louise Sutherland, eds. *Suffragette Legacy: How Does the History of Feminism Inspire Current Thinking in Manchester.* Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2015

Majken Jul Sørensen. *Humour in Political Activism: Creative Nonviolent Resistance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Marsh, Sarah and Ruth Quinn. "Brexit March: '1 Million' rally for people's vote – as it happened." *The Guardian*, 23 March, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2019/mar/23/brexit-hundreds-of-thousands-expected-to-march-for-peoples-vote-london-live-updates

Parveen, Nazia. "Northern Powerhouse event organisers apologise for lack of female speakers." *The Guardian*, February 19, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/feb/19/northern-powerhouse-conference-organisers-issue-apology-over-lack-women-speakers

Press Association. "Boris Johnson cleared over burqa comments." *The Guardian*, December 20, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/dec/20/boris-johnson-cleared-over-burqa-comments

Ryan, Michelle K. and Haslam, Alexander. "The Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women are Over-Represented in Precarious leadership Positions". *British Journal of Management* 16, no. 2 (2005): 81-90.

Skeggs, Beverley. "Feminist Ethnography." In *Handbook of Ethnography* edited by Atkinson, Paul Anthony., Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland, and Lyn H. Lofland. 426-443. London: Sage, 2001.

Tomsett, Ellie. "'May, Farage and Junker walk into a bar…': Comedy is playing a vital role in enabling people to come to terms with Brexit." *LSE Brexit Blog*. July 30, 2018. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/07/30/may-juncker-and-farage-walk-into-a-bar-comedy-is-playing-a-vital-role-in-enabling-people-to-come-to-terms-with-brexit/

Weidhase, Nathalie. "'Harry has gone over to the dark side': Race, Royalty and UK-US Romance in Brexit Britain." In *Love Across the Atlantic: US-UK Romance in Popular Culture,* edited by Barbara Brinckman, Deborah Jermyn and Theodore Trost. 275-290. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020.

Zillman, Dolf and Joanne Cantor. "Directionality of Transitory Dominance as a Communication Variable Affecting Humor Appreciation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 24, no. 2 (1972): 191-198.

---

[1] Hozić and True, "Brexit as a scandal," 276.

[2] Hart, "Humour and Social Protest", 8.

[3] Achilleos-Sarll and Martil "Toxic Masculinity," 21.

[4] Ibid

[5] Achilleos-Sarll and Martil "Toxic Masculinity," 16.

[6] Guerrina and Masselot, "Walking into the Footprint of EU Law," 319-330.

[7] Hozic and True, "Brexit as a scandal," 278.

[8] Hozic and True, "Brexit as a scandal," 217.

[9] Ryan and Haslam, "The Glass Cliff"

[10] Weidhase,"'Harry has gone over to the dark side'," 275-290.

[11] Gray, *Women and Laughter*.

[12] Barreca, *They Used to Call Me Snow White*.

[13] Zillman and Cantor, "Directionality of Transitory Dominance as a Communication Variable Affecting Humor Appreciation," 191-198.

[14] Hart, "Humour and Social Protest," 7.

[15] Sørensen, *Humour in Political Activism.*

[16] Ibid. 10.

[17] McDonough, *Guy Debord and the Situationist International.*

[18] Lewis, "Led by Donkeys"

[19] Batchelor, "Theresa May's speech interrupted"

[20] Fox, "Humitas: Humour as Performative Resistance," 83-99.

[21] Ibid. 84.

[22] Ibid. 85.

[23] Hart, "Humour and Social Protest," 2.

[24] Medhurst, *A National Joke,* 19.

[25] Tomsett "'May, Farage and Junker walk into a bar…',"

[26] Grafer et al., "Unruly Women and Carnivalesque Countercontrol," 1-23.

[27] Ibid. 18.

[28] Davies, *Jokes and Targets*, 4.

[29] Ackerly and True, *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science*, 22.

[30] Skeggs, "Feminist Ethnography," 426-443.

[31] Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 7.

[32] Parveen, "Northern Powerhouse event organisers apologise".

[33] Double, *Getting the Joke,* 373.

[34] In no way was this section of the map intended as a biologically deterministic position in relation to a male/female binary. Manchester has, subsequent to 2017, seen a spike in intimidation of transgender people in LGBTQ* spaces by trans-exclusionary protestors (specifically around access to women-only spaces). Had this map been made in more recent times a different way of making this point would have been found to ensure it could not be misread as transphobia.

[35] Gray, *Women and Laughter*, 8.

[36] ibid.

[37] Press Association, "Boris Johnson cleared over burqa comments".

[38] Mørk Røstvik and Sutherland, eds. *Suffragette Legacy.*

[39] Cowman, "'Doing Something Silly'," 261.

[40] Fox, "Humitas: a new word for when humour and seriousness combine".

[41] Halliday, "'Lass War' protest at 'Northern Powerhouse' event".

[42] Clifton, "Extinction Rebellion Protest".

[43] Cottle, "Reporting Demonstrations," 853-854.

[44] Ibid., 857.

[45] DeLuca and Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen," 125–51.

[46] Marsh and Quinn, "Brexit March: '1 Million' Rally for People's Vote – as it happened"

[47] Grafer et al., "Unruly Women", 8.

[48] Ibid.