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Article

Sexual harassment at workplace and in educational institutions: A case study of District Srinagar, Kashmir

Chesfeeda Akhtar

Department of Sociology, University of Kashmir, J & K, India, 190006. E-mail: chesfeeda1@gmail.com.

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Women were sexually harassed long before there was a term for it. Women working in homes have long been targets of sexual abuse. Since industrialization, women working in factories and offices have had to endure sexual comments and demands by bosses and coworkers as the price for economic survival. As students, women and girls have been sexual prey to teachers for as long as they have been allowed to be educated. This paper provides an analysis of the magnitude and nature of sexual harassment in Kashmir. It also examines women's responses to this type of violence. Administering 300 structured and pre-tested interview schedules on women through stratified random sampling, the paper concludes that sexual harassment was rampant, and was happening across the board - in educational institutions and offices. Moreover, women's responses to sexual harassment were more of endurance than of resistance for the fear of double victimisation.

Key words: Sexual harassment, violence, magnitude, women's responses, Kashmir.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is experienced by women of all ages and social classes, all races, religions and nationalities, all over the world. It is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men (Krug et al., 2002). It is the most pervasive violation of human rights in the world today. Its forms are both subtle and blatant and its impact on development profound. But it is so deeply embedded in cultures around the world that it is almost invisible (Charlotte, 1997). Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement, and violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men (United Nations, 1993). The United Nations Declaration on Violence against Women provides a basis for defining gender-based violence. According to Article 1 of the Declaration, violence against women is to be understood as:

"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether

occurring in public or private life" (United Nations, 1996).

The experience or threat of violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide, in all socio-economic and educational classes, cutting across boundaries of wealth, race, religion and culture thus violating and impairing or nullifying the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Every form of violence threatens all women and limits their ability to make choices about their lives. At a 12-country workshop held in China on women's non formal education, participants were asked to name the worst aspect of being female: fear of male violence was the almost unanimous answer (Heise, 1992).

Acts or threats of violence, whether occurring within the home or in the community, or perpetrated or condoned by the State, instil fear and insecurity in women's lives and are obstacles to the achievement of equality and for development and peace. The fear of violence, including harassment, is a permanent constraint on the mobility of women and limits their access to resources and basic activities. High social, health and economic costs to the individual and society are associated with violence against women. Violence against women impoverishes society economically, politically and culturally, by limiting

the active role that women can make in the development of their community. Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.

Sexual harassment is one of the forms of sexual exploitation of women that occurs in the workplace or in an educational setting under certain conditions. It is unwanted sexual pressure that one person inflicts upon another. Such behavior is illegal if it creates an environment that is hostile or intimidating, if it interferes with a person's work or school performance, or if acceptance of the harasser's behavior is made a condition of employment or academic achievement. Perceptions differ about what behaviors constitute sexual harassment. However, typical examples of sexual harassment include sexually oriented gestures, jokes, or remarks that are unwelcome; repeated and unwanted sexual advances; touching or other unwelcome bodily contact; and physical intimidation. Sexual harassment can occur when one person has power over another and uses it to coerce the person to accept unwanted sexual attention. It can also occur among peers—for example, if coworkers repeatedly tell sexual jokes, post pornographic photos, or make unwelcome sexual innuendos to another co-worker (Martha, 2003).

Women were sexually harassed long before there was a term for it. Under slavery, African American women were sexually used by white masters. Women working in homes have long been targets of sexual abuse. Since industrialization, women working in factories and offices have had to endure sexual comments and demands by bosses and coworkers as the price for economic survival. As students, women and girls have been sexual prey to teachers for as long as they have been allowed to be educated. On the streets and in the home, sexual pressure that women are not in a position to refuse has been invisible but pervasive. The exchange of sex for survival under conditions of coercion that defines prostitution has also marked women and men's unequal relations throughout and across societies (Martha, 2003).

Of all the forms that violence against women can assume, sexual harassment is the most ubiquitous and insidious; all the more so because it is deemed 'normal' behaviour and not an assault on the female entity. It affects women in all settings whether public or private and has psychological, medical, social, political, legal and economic implications. Instances of sexual harassment should not be viewed as isolated incidents; rather they should be construed as a gendered aggression against the rights and dignity of women. The fact that its pernicious effects are visible globally discounts any effort to view it with less gravity than it deserves (Srinivasan, 1998).

Power and status differences are almost always at the heart of sexual harassment. Harassers have a desire to exert control, humiliate and achieve and maintain dominance. A belief that women are inferior and should

be kept in a submissive role is often part of a harasser's mentality. The variables that give rise to sexual violence are undoubtedly numerous and complex. Gender biased socialisation and social control at the family and societal level is at the root of sexual violence against women. The discrepancy between the norms, values, expectations and sanctions imposed on girls and those on boys because of the socially structured gender inequality, is a critical factor. Men are given unlimited freedom right from childhood, sanctions are imposed only on girls and almost none on boys. Therefore sexual harassment can be perceived as an outgrowth of the gender biased socialization process and a mechanism by which men assert power and dominance over women.

Media plays a significant role in shaping notions about gender roles and gender identities within the Indian context. It is the cultural framework within which people get their cue. The portrayal of violence against women in any of the media - advertising, films, and newspaper reporting of sexual offences - is one of the most insidious as well as one of the most effective ways of showing where power lies in our society. It lies in the hands of the image-makers: men. To accept the media makers' excuse that 'we are not creating reality we are only reflecting it' is to accept that violence against women is a fundamental part of the relationship between the sexes (thus deserving accurate 'reflection'), rather than a symptom of the way men and women are taught to view each other (Davis et al., (ed) 1987).

Review of literature

Considerable variation exists in the estimated proportions of women reporting experiences with sexual harassment. Depending on the sample used, 16 to 90% of working women experience sexual harassment in their lifetime (Brooks and Perot, 1991; Gutek, 1985). Gruber's (1990) content analysis of 18 sexual harassment surveys found the median prevalence rate to be 44%. When coworker behavior is included, the prevalence rate ranges from 40 to 50% (Fitzgerald et al., 1995c). Research suggests that women's responses to sexual harassment fall along a continuum of avoidance, diffusion, negotiation, and confrontation (Gruber, 1989). Most women do not report their experiences of sexual harassment. Women do not report harassment for a variety of reasons ranging from a fear of retaliation or disbelief to a fear of losing one's job or making the situation worse (Loy and Stewart, 1984; Cochran et al., 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1995c).

METHODOLOGY

Study area

The study area of this research work was District Srinagar of Kashmir Province in J & K State. Although the biography of Kashmir is strikingly different from rest of India, woman in the

Table 1. Statistical figures of Crime against Women in Kashmir Zone for the year 2003, 2004 and 2005 up to November. The figures represent the number of cases registered in different Police Stations of Kashmir Zone.

S. No.	Crime Head	Year		
		2003	2004	2005
1.	Eve teasing	251	156	271
2.	Molestation	798	869	704
3.	Kidnapping	480	459	467
4.	Rape	97	123	104
5.	Cruelty by Husband	8	16	12

Source: Police Records, Crime Branch IGP's Office, District Police Headquarters, Batamalo, Srinagar.

Table 2. Statistical figures of Crime against Women in District Srinagar from the year 2000 upto the November 2005. The figures represent the number of cases registered in different Police Stations of District Srinagar.

S. No.	Crime Head	Years					
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
1.	Eve teasing	142	88	86	130	55	165
2.	Molestation	137	207	270	249	261	205
3.	Kidnapping	106	101	106	91	92	92
4.	Rape	11	09	24	23	24	16
5.	Cruelty by Husband	-	04	12	06	17	10
6.	Immoral trafficking Act	01	-	01	-	05	02

Source: Police Records, Crime Branch SSP's Office, District Police Headquarters, Batamalo, Srinagar.

traditional Kashmiri society lived like her sister communities in other parts / cultures of the Indian sub-continent. She equally shared the sorrows and fortunes of life. Although the practice of infanticide, foeticide, and dowry deaths were not resorted to, women were generally abused, maltreated, subjugated and physically victimized right from their childhood because of the socially structured inequality. Physical violence against women was prevalent among all social strata but the women belonging to lower social strata were victimized of sexual abuse also, thus writes Kapur (1992), "In Kashmir not only were the girls kidnapped for the purpose of prostitution but also sold by their poor parents themselves to the owners of the ill fame. In Srinagar there were many houses of ill-repute. The most notorious places in Srinagar, where prostitution was carried on in a big way, were however the houseboats 'the floating houses of ill-fame'. These were mostly visited by the foreign visitors, especially the bachelors who often contracted a dreadful disease which occasionally proved fatal. Sandys, a missionary visitor to Kashmir thus wrote to British Residence on 18 June, 1916; "In returning my pass for travelling in Kashmir, may I be allowed to say that our pleasure in the beauties of Kashmir would have been far greater had we not had so many evidences of the abominable custom of procuration of women, who are freely offered to visitors to Kashmir (Kapur, 1992).

The various processes of change, like the process of modernization, have not succeeded to cut at the root of the traditional values and attitudes of the people towards women. Rather, the changing social structure, which exposed the Kashmiri women (belonging to all social strata) to outside world, has made them more vulnerable to all types of sexual abuse. They are subjected to the abuses like sexual harassment, molestation, eve-teasing and even to immoral trafficking, kidnapping and abduction, and rape. Especially during the conflict situation in Kashmir a striking increase in the sexual violence against women has been witnessed. While entire communities suffer the consequences of

armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex.

Tables 1 and 2 present the Statistical Figures of Crime against Women in Kashmir Zone and District Srinagar respectively. Here it is important to mention that these figures represent only a part of the actual victimisation of women as was stated by the SHO Women's Police Station Rambagh, "Most of the cases of wife beating and dowry are resolved at our level by counselling and thus are prevented from undergoing further trial". Moreover, such cases are highly underreported by the victims because many of the abused women do not want their husbands to be prosecuted and also for the fear of humiliation and censure from family and community they do not report. Further, sexual violence is even more underreported mainly for the fear of being stigmatised and reprisal from the offender. Therefore these Police Records are an underestimation of the extent of violence against women in Kashmir.

Methods and techniques used

Data for the study was collected through both the quantitative as well as the qualitative methods by canvassing interview schedules, carrying out focus group discussions and observation. Interview schedules, carefully prepared and pretested, were administered to 300 respondents belonging to different age groups, educational and occupational categories. The required sample was selected through stratified random sampling. Stratification was made on the basis of age and occupational status of women which facilitated the distribution of the sample into different educational categories. Then the required sample was randomly selected among these strata.

Once the data had been collected, codebooks were developed, based on the responses in the interview schedules. Thereupon, the data in all the schedules, which had been duly filled in, were coded.

Table 3. Age distribution of respondents.

S. No	Age groups	No. of respondents	%
1.	20 – 30	111	37
2.	30 – 40	117	39
3.	40 – 50	72	24
Total		300	100

Table 4. Occupational distribution of respondents

S. No	Occupation	No. of respondents	%
1.	University students	102	34
2.	Non-gazetted employees	99	33
3.	Gazetted officers	99	33
Total		300	100

Table 5. Educational Qualification of respondents

S. No	Educational Qualification	No. of respondents	%
1.	Graduation	33	11
2.	PG & above	267	89
Total		300	100

The coded data was processed using the SPSS package. The task included feeding in the data, verification, computation, validation and presentation of tables to facilitate data analysis and interpretation. This quantitative data was then ready for interpretation. The interpretation of the data was carried out keeping in view the overall perspective of the study. Efforts were made to achieve a harmonious blend of quantitative and qualitative data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As shown by the Tables 3, 4 and 5, 34% of the sample was selected from the university students who are most vulnerable to this type of violence, 33% were selected from those in non-gazetted jobs and another 33% were selected from those in gazetted jobs. Keeping this distribution in view the age groups were started from 20 years which were as; 37% from (20 to 30) years age group, 39% from (30 to 40) years and 24% from (40 to 50) years age group. 11% of the respondents were graduates and 89% were with P. G. and above qualifications and those pursuing P. G. courses and research.

As is revealed by the Table 6, 21% respondents reported of suffering sexual harassment at workplace / educational institutions among whom 34.9% were university students, 25.4% were those in gazetted jobs and 39.7% were those in non-gazetted jobs. Moreover

52% of these abused women were unmarried and 48% were married, and all these women were having high educational qualifications and they belonged to upper middle class and middle class. Regarding the age of these abused women 31.7% of them belonged to (20 to 30) years age group, 52.5% belonged to (30 to 40) years age group and 15.8% belonged to above 40 years age group. The above figures reveal that all women are vulnerable to this type of violence irrespective of their occupational status, marital status, educational or economic status. Further, it can also be concluded that high socio-economic or educational status does not protect a woman from sexual harassment.

Moreover, regarding the magnitude of sexual harassment, the qualitative methods employed in this study revealed that the situation was much more complex than that revealed by the quantitative methods. Since anonymity for respondent is not possible while using interview schedule technique, there is always a high degree of underreporting of the sensitive topics like sexual harassment; by and large, a woman has much to lose and little to gain by reporting victimization. From the observation and informal group discussions that were held during the field work, it was revealed that sexual harassment was rampant, and was happening across the board - in educational institutions and offices; much higher percentage of women were being sexually harassed. Yet another reason for the underreporting of

Table 6. Incidence of sexual harassment at the workplace / educational institution.

S.No.	Responses	No. of respondents	%
1.	Yes	63	21
2.	No	237	79
Total		300	100

Table 7. Type of sexual harassment suffered.

S. No.	Type of sexual harassment	Frequency	%
1.	Sexually coloured remarks	63	100
2.	Demand or request for sexual favours	22	34.9
3.	Physical contact and advances	0	0
4.	Showing pornography	0	0
5.	Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature	0	0
Total		63	100

this type of sexual abuse that came to light through the qualitative methods was that a considerable number of abused women had responded to this violence through negotiation and had succumbed to the demands of their abusers thereby making the way of their career building, and therefore making the abuse even more debilitating and intense for those women whose response to this violence was either of endurance or of confrontation, and had laid even more negative impact on their career building.

As is revealed by the Table 7, there were two types of sexual harassment that the abused women had suffered from, the most common was suffering sexually coloured remarks which was experienced by 100% of the abused women whose perpetrators had been bosses, teachers as well as colleagues. While as 34.9% (22) of these abused women reported of having suffered a more severe type of sexual harassment also that is, request and demand for sexual favours - 5 of them were abused by their teacher and 11 of them were abused by their boss while as 6 of them had been victimized both as students as well as employee – they had been abused by teacher as well as by their boss.

Common threads could be identified in their description of undergoing this abuse, they were initially provided undue favours by their offender accompanied by sexually coloured remarks followed by requests for sexual favours and when they did not approve of it the request was transformed into the demand for sexual favour accompanied by threats for their career or job. When they did not comply to such demands, their offenders made the working/educational environment hostile for them. They were repeatedly punished and humiliated for no fault of theirs. Even after their extreme efforts to keep everything in precision, their offenders did not end finding faults with them thereby inflicting pressure on them for sexual favours. All these abused women had suffered

one to three such incidents in their lifetime and it was only when they left the educational institution, where they were abused, after somehow completing the course of education and, when either the abused women or the offender got transferred from the workplace where the women were sexually harassed, that the particular incident of violence came to an end but the fear of violence always hovered over their head.

The findings suggest that women working in offices have to endure sexual comments and demands by bosses and colleagues as the price for economic survival. As students, women and girls are sexual prey to teachers; in offices and educational institutions, sexual pressure is invisible but pervasive.

As shown by the Table 8, none of the abused women had ever taken any action against the offender neither had they told anybody that they were being subjected to sexual harassment. When the abuse was limited to sexually coloured remarks, the strategy that all the abused women employed was to avoid the harasser and if not possible then to ignore and deflect the harassment by joking while preventing / and escaping any untoward incident and ignoring rest of it because, besides staking their career they would be attaching stigma to themselves should they take such matters seriously enough to report or complain to anybody. However, in case of more severe abuse when the offender requested and demanded sexual favours from the abused women, besides avoiding the abuser and refusing to agree to his demands these abused women sometimes had confrontation with the abuser, which was retrospectively thought as least helpful by these abused women rather, it resulted only in the escalation of violence.

There were many reasons reported by the abused women for their reluctance to take any action against the offenders and for never reporting their victimisation to anybody which primarily included fear of embarrassment

Table 8. Abused women's responses to sexual harassment.

S. No.	Response	No. of respondents	%
1.	Took no action	63	100
2.	Complained to higher authorities	0	0
3.	Left the job / education	0	0
4.	Retaliated	0	0
Total		63	100

and of being stigmatized, fear of reprisal which might worsen the situation and make the environment more hostile and as a consequence of it fear of losing the job or otherwise hurting their careers which according to these respondents they could not afford keeping in view the importance of economic independence. And fear of not being believed was one of the worst fears; these abused women reported, what is most frustrating, is that it is not always easy to prove harassment. Invariably, the chances are that it is the victim who ends up being accused of having "invited it".

The irony is that it is always the victim (a woman) who fears losses (especially of stigmatisation) at the exposure of the offence committed by men who have no fear because society has given them unlimited freedom accompanied by lack of the sense of accountability thus inflicting double victimisation on women.

Moreover, none of these abused women had ever informed their family members about the incidents of sexual harassment suffered by them. The reasons, as reported by them, were, that primarily it would have been embarrassing to discuss such matters with their family members and moreover it would have only aggravated their problem by troubling their family members who in distress might have asked them to leave the job / education or there was some apprehension that they might have found faults with their behaviour to have "invited" the abuse. So they found it safest to hide their sufferings while employing strategies to prevent any untoward incident and endured rest of it as the price for economic survival.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that all women are vulnerable to this type of violence irrespective of their occupational status, marital status, educational or economic status. It can also be concluded that high socio-economic or educational status does not protect a woman from sexual harassment. Regarding the magnitude of sexual harassment, the qualitative methods revealed that the situation was much more complex than that revealed by the quantitative methods. Since anonymity for respondent is not possible while using interview schedule technique, there is always a high degree of underreporting of the sensitive topics like sexual harassment; by and large, a

woman has much to lose and little to gain by reporting victimization. From the observation and informal group discussions it was revealed that sexual harassment was rampant, and was happening across the board - in educational institutions and offices, much higher percentage of women was being sexually harassed than that estimated by the quantitative methods. Yet another reason for the underreporting of this type of sexual abuse that came to light through the qualitative methods was that a considerable number of abused women had responded to this violence through negotiation and had succumbed to the demands of their abusers thereby making the way of their career building, and therefore making the abuse even more debilitating and intense for those women whose response to this violence was either of endurance or of confrontation, and had laid even more negative impact on their career building.

There were mainly two types of sexual harassment that the reporting abused women had suffered from, the most common was suffering sexually coloured remarks which was experienced by all of them whose perpetrators had been bosses, teachers as well as colleagues. While as some of these abused women had suffered a more severe type of sexual harassment also that is, request and demand for sexual favours - some of them were abused by their teacher and some were abused by their boss while as some had been victimized both as students as well as employee - they had been abused by their teacher as well as by their boss.

Common threads could be identified in their description of undergoing this abuse, they were initially provided undue favours by their offender accompanied by sexually coloured remarks followed by requests for sexual favours and when they did not approve of it the request was transformed into the demand for sexual favour accompanied by threats for their career or job. When they did not comply to such demands, their offenders made the working/educational environment hostile for them. They were repeatedly punished and humiliated for no fault of theirs. Even after their extreme efforts to keep everything in precision, their offenders did not end finding faults with them thereby inflicting pressure on them for sexual favours. All these abused women had suffered one to three such incidents in their lifetime and it was only when they left the educational institution, where they were abused, after somehow completing the course of education and, when either the abused women or the

offender got transferred from the workplace where the women were sexually harassed, that the particular incident of violence came to an end but the fear of violence always hovered over their head.

Therefore, it can be concluded that women working in offices have to endure sexual comments and demands by bosses and colleagues as the price for economic survival. As students, women and girls are sexual prey to teachers; in offices and educational institutions, sexual pressure is invisible but pervasive.

None of the abused women had ever taken any action against the offender neither had they told anybody that they were being subjected to sexual harassment. When the abuse was limited to sexually coloured remarks, the strategy that all the abused women employed was to avoid the harasser and if not possible then to ignore and deflect the harassment by joking while preventing/and escaping any untoward incident and ignoring rest of it because, besides staking their career they would be attaching stigma to themselves should they take such matters seriously enough to report or complain to anybody. However, in case of more severe abuse when the offender requested and demanded sexual favours from the abused women, besides avoiding the abuser and refusing to agree to his demands these abused women sometimes had confrontation with the abuser, which was retrospectively thought as least helpful by these abused women rather, it only resulted in the escalation of violence.

There were many reasons for the abused women's reluctance to take any action against the offenders and for never reporting their victimisation to anybody which primarily included fear of embarrassment and of being stigmatized, fear of reprisal which might worsen the situation and make the environment more hostile and as a consequence of it fear of losing the job or otherwise hurting their careers which they could not afford keeping in view the importance of economic independence. And fear of not being believed was one of the worst fears as, what is most frustrating, is that it is not always easy to prove harassment. Invariably, the chances are that it is the victim who ends up being accused of having "invited it".

The irony is that it is always the victim (a woman) who fears losses (especially of stigmatisation) at the exposure of the offence committed by men who have no fear because society has given them unlimited freedom accompanied by lack of the sense of accountability thus inflicting double victimisation on women.

None of the abused women had ever informed their family members about the incidents of sexual harassment suffered by them. The reasons were, that primarily it would have been embarrassing to discuss such matters with their family members and moreover it would have only aggravated their problem by troubling their family members who in distress might have asked them to leave the job / education or there was some apprehension that they might have found faults with their behaviour to have "invited" the abuse. So they found it safest to hide their sufferings while employing strategies to prevent any untoward incident and endured rest of it as the price for economic survival.

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HARASSMENT BASED ON SEX: PROTECTING SOCIAL STATUS IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER HIERARCHY

JENNIFER L. BERDAHL
University of Toronto

I conceptualize sex-based harassment as behavior that derogates an individual based on sex. I propose that sex-based harassment is fundamentally motivated by the harasser's desire to protect or enhance his or her own sex-based status, a desire that stems from the fact that social status is stratified by a system of gender hierarchy. This theory explains currently identified forms of sexual harassment and predicts others, including nonsexual harassment between women.

Most people think sexual harassment is about sexual desire. Policy and research have focused on behaviors of a sexual nature: a boss who pressures a subordinate into sexual activity, a coworker who repeatedly asks another out on a date, or an environment rife with sexual jokes and materials. This focus has created the widespread assumption that sexual harassers are motivated by a desire for sexual expression and gratification. It has also led to a considerable amount of controversy. Heated debates have taken place over how realistic, or even desirable, it is to regulate sexual expression at work (Schultz, 1998). Sexual harassment is the frequent fodder of jokes, and the idea that it is a problem worthy of attention and sanction is often dismissed.

The first scholars to write about sexual harassment argued that it functions to keep women out of desirable jobs and economically dependent on men (Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). It has become clear that most harassment derogates and rejects victims based on sex rather than solicits sexual relations with them (cf. Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Schultz, 1998; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1981, 1988, 1995). Men who endorse male dominance are more likely than others to sexually harass (Pryor,

1987), and those who challenge male dominance are more likely to be harassed (Berdahl, in press; Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003). This offers quite a different view of sexual harassment than that held by lay observers. Rather than being driven by sexual desire, this suggests that sexual harassment is driven by men's desire to dominate women.

This paper offers a different view of sexual harassment. I argue that the primary motive underlying all harassment is a desire to protect one's social status when it seems threatened, a desire held by men and women alike. Harassment generally is repeated or persistent treatment that pressures, provokes, frightens, intimidates, humiliates, or demeans a person (Adams & Bray, 1992; Brodsky, 1976; Einarsen, 2000). I argue that sexual harassment should be viewed as harassment that is based on sex—as behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual's sex—and that sexual harassers derogate others based on sex to protect or enhance their own sex-based social status, and are motivated and able to do so by a social context that pervasively and fundamentally stratifies social status by sex.

This perspective provides a unified theory of sex-based harassment that both encompasses the variety of forms currently recognized in the literature and suggests others. It identifies a more basic motive than sexual expression or male dominance for sex-based harassment, as well as a more basic conceptualization of sex-based harassment than sexual comments and come-ons. It focuses attention on the social

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structure that encourages individuals to define and protect their status based on sex, and on behaviors that derogate individuals based on sex generally, from sexual behaviors to sex-based insults, exclusion, and sabotage. Importantly, this perspective expands the focus of sexual harassment research and policy beyond male harassers and female targets to consider why women might harass others based on sex, why men might be harassed based on sex, and what these different forms of harassment might look like.

I review how sexual harassers came to be viewed as individuals driven by sexual motives, as men driven by a desire to protect male dominance, or both. I explain why these views are problematic and propose that sexual harassers are driven by a desire to protect and enhance their social status in the context of gender hierarchy. I discuss what factors are likely to predict this desire and which events are likely to trigger it, and I then consider the different forms harassment may take when men harass men, men harass women, women harass men, and women harass women. The paper ends with a discussion of the theory's implications for future research.

FROM SEXUAL DESIRE TO MALE DOMINANCE: PRIOR VIEWS OF WHAT MOTIVATES SEXUAL HARASSERS

Sexual harassment largely has been conceptualized as sexual behavior directed at women by men at work. In the late 1970s, quid pro quo sexual harassment, defined as the loss or denial of a job-related benefit (e.g., a promotion, salary increase, or the job itself) for refusing to cooperate sexually, was judged to be a form of sex discrimination (*Williams v. Saxbe*, 1976). The ruling was based on a case of a male boss who sexually coerced his female subordinate, a case resembling other cases to reach the courts at the time (e.g., *Barnes v. Costle*, 1977; *Corne v. Bausch & Lomb*, 1975; *Heelan v. Johns-Manville Corporation*, 1978; *Miller v. Bank of America*, 1979). In the 1980s, sexual behaviors that were not accompanied by tangible or economic job outcomes but created a hostile or abusive work environment for one sex were judged to be sex discrimination (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1980; *Harris v. Forklift Systems*, 1993; *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 1986). Theorists

argued that persistent sexual attention, repeated requests for dates, and sexual comments, jokes, and materials create an abusive work environment for women by invoking the broader sociocultural context of sexual exploitation and oppression of women by men (Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979; Nieva & Gutek, 1981).

The Motive of Sexual Desire

Legal and social theories of sexual harassment initially viewed it as sexually motivated. U.S. courts have ruled that sexual harassment constitutes sex discrimination because it is sexual and because sexual acts toward an individual are necessarily motivated by that individual's sex (see Franke, 1997, for a review; *Tietgen v. Brown's Westminster Motors, Inc.*, 1996). Social theories of sexual harassment also have assumed it is motivated by sexual interest (for reviews, see Lengnick-Hall, 1995; Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982; Tangri & Hayes, 1997; Welsh, 1999). Proponents of the natural/biological approach view harassment as the expression of natural sexual urges that are expressed more by men than by women because, proponents argue, men are inherently more sexually aggressive and promiscuous than women (cf. Studd & Gattiker, 1991). Proponents of the sex roles approach view sexual harassment as "sociosexual behavior" gone wrong, guided by sex roles that assign men the role of sexual agent and women the role of sexual object (Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Nieva & Gutek, 1981). Proponents of the power approach view sexual harassment as the use of power to extract sexual compliance. According to this perspective, mostly men harass mostly women because men have more power than women (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1980; Evans, 1978; Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979; Schultz, 1998; Zalk, 1990). Implicit in this reasoning is the assumption that harassers use their power to sexually coerce others because they desire them sexually.

Viewing sexual harassment as motivated by sexual desire is problematic. It has generated tremendous controversy that has undermined the ability to understand the harassment as a form of sex discrimination and to eradicate it in the workplace. Some forms of sexual expression at work may be benign or even pleasant, and

many workplace romances become long and lasting relationships. Therefore, there has been resistance to the idea that sociosexual behavior at work generally is a bad thing and that attempts to police it are good. Viewing sexual harassment as sexual expression has led to the (largely unfounded) fear that benign expressions of sexual interest may result in lawsuits, demotions, or unwarranted firings. Furthermore, this view of sexual harassment has been convincingly accused of hurting the fight against sex discrimination by promoting policies that ban sexual behavior at work, which, in turn, implicitly encourage employers to keep the sexes separate (and therefore unequal) in order to avoid sexual issues from arising (Schultz, 1998). All this might explain why most research on sexual harassment has taken a defensive stance, focusing on defining the construct (e.g., Blumenthal, 1998; Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997; Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett, 2001), documenting its prevalence (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gruber, 1998; Gutek, 1985; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1981, 1988, 1995), and demonstrating its negative effects (e.g., Glomb et al., 1997; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Raver & Gelfand, 2005; Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997) rather than theorizing why it occurs in the first place.

More important, viewing sexual harassment as motivated by sexual desire is inconsistent with much of what we now know about sexual harassment. The most common form of sexual harassment is gender harassment, which involves sexual and sexist comments, jokes, and materials that alienate and demean victims based on sex rather than solicit sexual relations with them (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999; Franke, 1997; Schultz, 1998; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1981, 1988, 1995; Waldo, Berdahl, & Fitzgerald, 1998). Examples of gender harassment include displaying offensive pornography, leaving soiled condoms in someone's locker, making sexually obscene comments or gestures, and insulting someone's sexual abilities or orientation.

Some have proposed that sexual approach forms of harassment are motivated by sexual desire but that gender harassment is motivated by sexist hostility (Fiske & Glick, 1995; O'Leary-Kelly, Paetzold, & Griffin, 2000; Stockdale, Visio, & Batra, 1999). This proposal allows original as-

sumptions about sexual harassment to remain intact by appending to them a separate explanation for gender harassment. This solution is unsatisfactory, for it fails to provide a unified theory of sexual harassment and to account for the fact that all forms of sexual harassment serve the common end of keeping women subordinate to men (Farley, 1978; Franke, 1997; MacKinnon, 1979; Schultz, 1998) and are highly related empirically (cf. Fitzgerald et al., 1999).

The Motive of Male Dominance

Some have suggested that a desire in men to dominate women drives sexual harassment generally, a view that has been championed by legal theorists. Franke (1997) argues that sexual approach forms of harassment should be reinterpreted as gender harassment rather than the other way around. Schultz writes that "a drive to maintain the most highly rewarded forms of work as domains of masculine competence underlies many, if not most, forms of sex-based harassment on the job" (Schultz, 1998: 1755). Consistent with this view, men who endorse male dominance and female subordination are more likely to say they would sexually exploit a woman if given the chance, and to actually do so (Pryor, 1987; Pryor, La Vite, & Stoller, 1993). Also consistent with this view is the fact that women who challenge male dominance are not only more likely to be targeted for gender harassment (Maass et al., 2003) but for sexual approach forms of harassment as well (Berdahl, in press).

This view of sexual harassment is limiting and problematic as well, though. It implies that only men are motivated to sexually harass, but the little evidence that exists on whether women sexually harass others suggests they do (Magley, Waldo, Drasgow, Fitzgerald, 1999; U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995; Waldo et al., 1998). Furthermore, viewing sexual harassers as men who want to dominate women reinforces the negative stereotype of men as "bad but bold." This stereotype is strongly associated with societal male dominance (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Glick et al., 2004) and is likely to reinforce it by suggesting that women need "good" men to protect them from "bad" ones, or that men are bad in general and therefore men and women should be segregated to protect women from men and men from themselves around women (cf. Schultz, 1998). In short, this view is not only

limiting but potentially damaging to the cause of sex desegregation and equality at work.

REENVISIONING HARASSMENT BASED ON SEX: THE MOTIVE OF SOCIAL STATUS

Instead of viewing sexual harassment as inherently driven by sexual desire, a desire in men to dominate women, or both, I suggest it is fundamentally motivated by the basic desire, present in everyone, to protect or enhance one's social status against threat. Sexual harassment occurs because the motive for social status takes shape in a context of gender hierarchy. The fact that social status is stratified by sex motivates and enables individuals to defend their status based on sex by derogating others' status based on sex. A man may be motivated to protect his status relative to a woman, but not necessarily on the grand scale of wanting to keep women subordinate to men generally. Rather, *both* men and women are motivated to protect their sex-based social standing as individuals, along with the benefits derived from it, and may do so by derogating a woman or a man based on sex.

This view of sexual harassment, henceforth referred to as sex-based harassment (SBH) to deemphasize its sexual nature, is developed below. I begin with a discussion of what SBH is and then articulate a motivational theory of SBH as driven by the basic human motive for social status. I consider what drives individuals to protect or enhance their social status based on sex and what kind of threats are likely to trigger a desire to do so with SBH. I conclude this section with a discussion of who is likely to be targeted for SBH and the forms it may take when it is directed at women by men, at men by men, at men by women, and at women by women.

SBH

I define SBH as behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual's sex. SBH may involve acts, comments, or materials that derogate an individual in sex-based ways, such as sexually objectifying and subordinating women. It may also involve seemingly sex-neutral acts, such as repeated provocation, silencing, exclusion, or sabotage, that are experienced by an individual because of sex. SBH casts an individual in a

demeaning role or light by portraying that individual as unworthy, inferior, servile, or a means to an end based on that individual's sex.

To determine whether an episode of harassment was based on sex, it is instructive to ask if the behavior served to derogate an individual in sex-based ways or if an individual of the other sex would have experienced it. If the act itself involved a sex-specific derogation or would not have been experienced by an individual of the other sex, it was harassment based on sex. This does not mean that all individuals of that sex had to experience the harassment. Only some individuals may be singled out for harassment based on their sex, such as an outspoken woman who is sabotaged by her coworkers but whose demure female colleagues or outspoken male ones are not. If a soft-spoken male is demeaned by coworkers in the same organization, the double standard is even clearer in establishing harassment based on sex (cf. Ely & Meyer-son, 2000; Sturm, 2001).

A critical component of harassment is power (cf. Brodsky, 1976; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). Power is relative control over outcomes through the capacity to withdraw rewards or introduce punishments (Dépret & Fiske, 1993; Emerson, 1962; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Kipnis, 1976; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Harassment requires a difference in actual or perceived power between the harasser and the target of harassment that leaves the target little recourse for self-defense or retaliation (Brodsky, 1976; Einarsen, 2000). A harasser may control a target with organizational or economic power, physical intimidation or might, or social norms that define the terms of social inclusion and respect. The latter is a less visible form of power because it takes place against the backdrop of everyday social assumptions and practices, but this does not mean it is less threatening or effective (Fiske & Berdahl, in press). Harassers can use organizational, economic, physical, or social power to harass (e.g., Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979), which explains why organizational subordinates can, and do, harass their superiors (Benson & Thomson, 1982; DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Grauerholz, 1989; McKinney, 1992).

SBH can also be a cumulative experience. An individual may be targeted by a variety of sources for social slights and harms that seem minor by themselves but add up to have signif-

icant impact when repeated often enough. It may be even more damaging when harassment is experienced in this way because it means the harassment is more pervasive and difficult to escape, more normative and difficult to demonstrate as wrong, and may come from multiple sources, making it more difficult to identify a particular wrongdoer. Several of the examples I give later of sex-based derogations may not amount to harassment by themselves, but would if done repeatedly.

The Desire to Protect or Enhance Sex-Based Status

I suggest that the primary motive underlying all forms of harassment is the desire to protect or enhance social status when it seems threatened. The need to belong—to receive social acceptance, approval, and admiration—is a basic human motive (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 2004; Hogan & Hogan, 1991). It may be the most primary or core motive we have as social beings (Fiske, 2004). The degree to which someone receives social esteem and respect is indicated by their social status. Our lives are replete with reminders of the importance of this status, from advertisements selling products to help us achieve it to everyday social comparisons assessing the relative status of individuals. No wonder individuals are motivated to achieve high social status: its many benefits include an increased chance and quality of survival, more influence and control over others (French & Raven, 1959), and a host of other physical, psychological, social, and economic rewards (Keltner et al., 2003; Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Morin, 2002; Sartorius, 2003).

While social status is a core social motive, sex is a core social organizer. More than any other social characteristic, sex is used as a basis to differentiate individuals, to assign social roles, and to accord status (Fiske, Haslam, & Fiske, 1991; Stangor, Lynch, Duan, & Glas, 1992; van Knippenberg, van Twuyver, & Pepels, 1994). The primary distinction made is male versus female, with male carrying higher status (Connell, 1987). Distinctions are also made within sex. Men are compared to other men to assess the degree to which they meet masculine ideals, and women are compared to other women to assess the degree to which they meet feminine ones. Masculine and feminine ideals are defined by pre-

scriptive stereotypes that include physical, psychological, and social characteristics (Fiske & Stevens, 1993). A man's social status is based on his being male and on his masculinity relative to other men (e.g., professional success, height, or dominance). A woman's status is based the fact that she is female and on her femininity relative to other women (e.g., beauty, fertility, and warmth).

I propose that all forms of SBH stem from the harasser's desire to protect or enhance his or her own sex-based social status when it seems threatened. Maass and colleagues (2003) have proposed that men are motivated to derogate women to protect their identity as men and the status it confers relative to women. This envisions SBH as an intergroup phenomenon directed at women by men. I expand this to suggest that SBH takes intragroup forms as well. Gender hierarchy is both an intergroup and an intragroup phenomenon: sex-based distinctions are made between as well as within the sexes. At one time or another, and to varying degrees of intensity, all individuals are motivated to defend their sex-based status and the benefits it yields when this status seems threatened, and all individuals are capable of doing so by derogating another based on sex.

I now consider what may strengthen or weaken a desire in individuals to defend sex-based status. Individuals in social contexts that stratify status by sex, who face the loss of valued benefits with a loss in sex-based status, and who endorse beliefs that justify gender hierarchy should be particularly motivated to protect their status based on sex when it is threatened.

Gender hierarchy. A social system that emphasizes sex differences and assigns higher status to one sex creates incentives to define and defend social status in terms of sex. Sociocultural systems marked by male dominance are ubiquitous. Being male is associated with higher status than being female in all cultures and societies, consistent with men's relative control over wealth in them (Buss, 1989; Connell, 1995; Williams & Best, 1990). Subsystems, like organizations, tend to mirror the intergroup power relations in their embedding contexts (Alderfer & Smith, 1982). Status is likely to be stratified by sex in organizations in ways similar to the sociocultural context in which they operate. Subsystems may amplify or dampen the stratification of men and women in their embedding

environments, however. Some organizations may emphasize sex differences even more than the societies in which they operate by valorizing male dominance and privilege (e.g., some fraternities, sports teams, police and fire departments, political bodies, or corporate boards), whereas other organizations may deemphasize sex differences and focus on treating people as individuals.

The more an organization differentiates the status of men and women, the stronger the incentives will be to meet sex-based ideals in that organization. Masculine and feminine ideals will differ somewhat by context (Connell, 1987), as when being a "real" man means being courageous and strong on a firefighting squad but being creative and intelligent on a team of scientists. There is much consistency in sex-based ideals across contexts, however (Bergen & Williams, 1991; Buss, 1989; Connell, 1995; Eagly, 1987; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Williams & Best, 1990). Competence and dominance generally are desired in men more than women, whereas deference and warmth generally are desired in women more than men (Bem, 1974; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Fiske et al., 2002, Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

Position in gender hierarchy. Gender hierarchy may provide everyone incentives to protect his or her sex-based status when it seems threatened, but it provides stronger incentives for some than for others. Because sharper distinctions are made between men based on their achievement of masculine ideals than between women based on their achievement of feminine ones, and because meeting masculine ideals is associated with more benefits for men than meeting feminine ideals is for women (Connell, 1987), men should be more motivated than women to defend their sex-based status against threat.

Within sex, the status of extreme individuals is not likely to change as easily as the status of average individuals. By definition, most people are "average" in meeting ideals for their sex. Small differences in meeting these ideals should therefore be used to distinguish between average individuals. This is consistent with the idea that those in the middle of the pack in terms of status vie for it more vigorously than those at the top and the bottom (Owens & Sutton, 2001). "Average" men have much to gain from being seen as more masculine and much to lose from being seen as less masculine, whereas

men who have clearly proven themselves as men or who have no hope of doing so are probably more impervious to threats to their sex-based identity. Similarly, "average" women have more to gain from being seen as more ideal and more to lose from being seen as less ideal than do women who unquestionably accomplish or fail feminine standards. In short, individuals whose sex-based status is average, and therefore more negotiable and tenuous, should be more strongly motivated to protect it against threat.

Beliefs about gender hierarchy. Holding constant an individual's sex-based status, the more an individual endorses beliefs that justify gender hierarchy, the more that individual will define his or her own and others' social status in terms defined by this hierarchy and the more that individual will want to defend his or her status accordingly. To some extent, all individuals endorse beliefs that justify gender hierarchy, given its ubiquity and the pervasiveness of beliefs that support it. Consistent with self-interest, men are more likely than women to support attitudes that favor male dominance (e.g., Pratto et al., 2000; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994; Twenge, 1997). Women also endorse beliefs that reinforce male dominance, however, consistent with the general tendency of low-status groups to experience and perpetuate false consciousness or beliefs and behaviors that justify their subordination (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Therefore, both men and women are motivated to protect their status in terms defined by male dominance, although men should be more strongly motivated than women to do so. There are also within-sex differences in these beliefs that should predict the likelihood to defend sex-based status. Men and women with particularly sexist attitudes should be more strongly motivated than their same-sex counterparts to protect their status based on sex.

Threats to Sex-Based Status

We have considered what predicts a desire to protect sex-based status. What triggers this desire? Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje's (1999) typology of social identity threats is useful for analyzing the forms that threats to sex-based status may take. These include (1) distinctiveness threats, which blur distinctions between the sexes, (2) acceptance threats, which

challenge an individual's status as a good or prototypical member of his or her sex, (3) category threats, which categorize an individual in a sex-based group against his or her will, and (4) derogation threats, which threaten the value of an individual's sex group. Maass and colleagues (Dall' Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 2003) have proposed that acceptance and distinctiveness threats motivate men to gender harass women.¹ I suggest that all four types of threat can trigger a desire in men and in women to defend their sex-based status. The forms these threats may take, and the defenses they are likely to trigger, are discussed below. The threats are grouped by whether they challenge distinctions between the sexes (distinctiveness threats) or emphasize them (acceptance, category, and derogation threats).

Threats that challenge group distinctions. Distinctiveness threats are unique among the four types of threats because they challenge the very notion of different groups. Blurring the distinctions that are usually made between men and women suggests these distinctions, and the benefits associated with them, are illusory and illegitimate. Distinctiveness threats involve women performing roles or displaying characteristics traditionally associated with men, or vice versa. Examples include women who perform "men's" jobs or are outspoken and assertive, and men who perform "women's" jobs or wear dresses and date men. Individuals who feel threatened when distinctions between men and women are blurred will try to reassert these boundaries by emphasizing the veracity or value of sex differences. This might include acts of SBH, such as repeated statements about what men and women can and should do, and socially rejecting or humiliating individuals who violate these prescriptions.

Consistent with this, women in male-dominated occupations are more likely than other women to be sexually harassed (Berdahl, in press; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman,

& Drasgow, 1999; Gruber, 1998; Mansfield et al., 1991), and women in these occupations who display characteristics considered more appropriate for men than for women are especially likely to be harassed. Case examples include a female police officer and bodybuilder who was subjected to sexually explicit noises and materials and who found vibrators, a urinal device, and a soiled condom and sanitary napkin in her mailbox at work (*Sanchez v. Miami Beach*, 1989) and a woman in a male-dominated accounting office who was denied partnership despite her exceptional performance because she needed to learn to "walk more femininely, talk more femininely, dress more femininely, wear make-up, have her hair styled, and wear jewelry" (*Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins*, 1989). Computer experiments show that women who express an intention to pursue a male-dominated career and the belief that men and women are equal are more likely than women who express traditional career goals and beliefs to be sent offensive pornography from men (Dall' Ara & Maass, 2000; Maass et al., 2003). Finally, field research shows that women in male-dominated jobs with assertive personalities are more likely than men and other women in these same jobs to be sexually harassed (Berdahl, in press).

Men who pose distinctiveness threats are also harassed. Male nurses are frequently targets of bullying (Erikson & Einarsen, 2004), and men in male-dominated jobs are harassed when they are perceived to be too feminine, or not masculine enough, by their supervisors or coworkers (Berdahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1996; Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Waldo et al., 1998). For example, men who leave work to care for their children, wear earrings, or refuse to discuss sexual exploits with women have been called "pussy," "fag," and "girlie-man"; incessantly taunted and teased; and subjected to sexually humiliating acts, such as simulated sodomy and threatened rape (cf. Axam & Zalesne, 1999; Berdahl et al., 1996; *Dillon v. Frank*, 1992; *Doe v. City of Belleville*, 1997; Franke, 1997; *Goluszek v. H. P. Smith*, 1988; MacKinnon, 1997; *McWilliams v. Fairfax County Bd. of Supervisors*, 1996; *Oncala v. Sun-downer Offshore Services, Inc.*, 1998; *Quick v. Donaldson Co.*, 1996).

Looking at SBH as a response to threats induced by blurred distinctions between men and women illuminates its role as a basic form of sex discrimination. In this light, SBH clearly can

¹ Maass et al. (2003) added (5) *legitimacy threat*, which challenges the legitimacy of status differences between the sexes. Legitimacy threat, however, may be viewed as a type of distinctiveness threat and as a derogation threat to members of the high-status group because it challenges distinctions in status between groups and, by implication, poses a relative demotion in status to the higher-status group.

be seen as a punitive means of "doing gender": defining, enacting, and enforcing masculinity in men and femininity in women with everyday social practices (cf. Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Padavic & Reskin, 2002; Ridgeway, 1997; West & Zimmerman, 1987). As Franke puts it, sexual harassment is sex discrimination "not because it is sexual, and not because men do it to women, but precisely because it . . . perpetuates, enforces, and polices a set of gender norms that seek to feminize women and masculinize men" (1997: 696). SBH, thus, is one of many negative social repercussions faced by individuals who violate sex roles (for examples of other repercussions, see Gill, 2004; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Herek, 1993; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Thomas-Hunt & Phillips, 2004).

Threats that emphasize group distinctions. Rather than blurring distinctions between men and women, acceptance, category, and derogation threats draw on them. Acceptance threats challenge an individual's status as a good or prototypical member of his or her sex: a man's masculinity (e.g., his virility, courage, or competence) or a woman's femininity (e.g., her purity, attractiveness, or warmth). Such challenges would not be threatening if distinctions between men and women were not considered meaningful or legitimate. Acceptance threats trigger a desire to prove one is a typical and worthy member of one's group (Branscombe et al., 1999), or, for men, a desire to prove their masculinity and, for women, a desire to prove their femininity. Category threats associate an individual with a sex-based group against his or her will. Individuals tend to experience more threat when associated with a low-status group than a high-status group, so in most contexts both men and women will likely experience a category threat when associated with women (e.g., when a man or a woman is called "bitch") than when associated with men (e.g., when a woman or a man is said to "have balls"). Category threats trigger a desire to disidentify from the group with which one has been unwillingly associated (Branscombe et al., 1999; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995), which may involve derogating the group or, in most cases, women. Finally, derogation threats devalue the status of an individual's sex group and are threatening to the extent one identifies with that group (Branscombe et al., 1999; Maass et al., 2003). Derogation threats trigger a desire to defend one's

group or to distance oneself from it, which may involve putting down the other sex or demeaning other members of one's own sex.

Like distinctiveness threats, benign or even egalitarian behaviors that threaten the status quo may be experienced as acceptance, category, or derogation threats and may motivate individuals to retaliate with SBH. SBH, however, may reflect nefarious forms of these threats. For example, a man whose masculinity is threatened by a woman who refuses to date him (acceptance threat) may respond by calling her a "bitch" (derogation threat) or saying she grows hair on her chest (category threat). Episodes of SBH may at times be cycles of retaliatory acts designed to derogate another based on sex, or an "eye for an eye" spiral of incivility (Anderson & Pearson, 1999). It is important to keep in mind, however, the direction and the impact of the acts involved. The guidelines outlined earlier for defining SBH should be used to determine whether a particular act qualifies as SBH—whether the harassment derogated an individual based on sex, would have been experienced by an individual of the other sex with otherwise the same characteristics, and the degree to which organizational, economic, physical, or social power was used to threaten the target.

We have considered what motivates a desire to protect sex-based status and what triggers this desire and SBH. We now consider who is likely to be targeted for SBH and what it may look like when men harass women, when men harass men, when women harass men, and when women harass women.

Targets of Harassment

If SBH stems from a desire to protect sex-based status when it seems threatened, targets of harassment will be chosen to achieve this goal. *Individuals who pose the threat* to the harasser's status in the first place are likely targets, since the threat will be most satisfactorily quelled if its source is. Individuals who blur distinctions between the sexes, challenge someone's achievement of sex-based ideals, categorize someone in a sex-based group against his or her will, or threaten the value of someone's sex-based group are therefore likely to be targeted for SBH. *Individuals who are less powerful* than the harasser are also likely targets (Blu-

menthal, 1998; Bourgeois & Perkins, 2003; Lester et al., 1986). If the person posing the threat is more powerful than the person threatened, the latter may target another who is less powerful for harassment (e.g., O'Leary-Kelly et al., 2000). For example, if a boss threatens a subordinate's status, the subordinate may pick on a coworker instead of the boss to try to restore a sense of status.

Because harassers are likely to target the source of the threat and men are more strongly motivated than women to protect their sex-based status, individuals who threaten men's status are especially likely to be targeted for SBH. Because harassers are likely to target less powerful individuals and because men, on average, are more powerful than women, men more than women will harass and women more than men will be harassed (Berdahl et al., 1996; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Fiske & Stevens, 1993). Combined, this means the most likely form of SBH should be men harassing women, especially women who challenge men's status. The second most likely form of harassment should be men harassing other men, especially men who challenge their status. The relative prevalence of these forms is supported by prior research. When women harass, they should mainly target other women, especially those who challenge their status. The least likely form of harassment should be women harassing men. When a woman harasses a man, she typically will target a man who challenges her status. We now consider these different harassment scenarios and how they reinforce gender hierarchy in the workplace.

Male-to-female harassment. The harassment of women by men needs little introduction, since I have already reviewed this most well-documented form of SBH. It requires reinterpretation from the perspective of a sex-based status motivation, however. A man wishing to protect or enhance his status relative to a woman may do so by derogating her as a woman. Hostile environment harassment that includes sexist jokes, comments, and put-downs derogates women, reminds them of their low status relative to men, and reminds men of their high status relative to women. This can even take the form of "not man enough" harassment against women who are told they are not tough enough, or are too sensitive, for the job (Berdahl & Moore, 2006). In a male-dominated environment, a man may ha-

arrass a woman coworker in these ways because she poses a distinctiveness threat to his sex-based status. By undermining her, he may restore his sense of status as a man who can do the job better than a woman and may enhance his status among other men, if they view his behavior as manly and stand to benefit from it (Connell, 1987). When groups of men perpetrate this type of harassment against women, they can gain courage, legitimacy, and cohesion by closing ranks and acting together (Farley, 1978).

Sexual advance forms of harassment may serve a similar purpose of enhancing a man's status by derogating a woman's. By sexually objectifying or dominating her, the man may increase his sense of masculinity by being heterosexually dominant (Franke, 1997). By being sexually objectified and dominated, the woman is relegated to the low status of being a means to a man's sexual ends. Like hostile environment harassment, bystanders are affected by this type of harassment (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Glomb et al., 1997). It yields dividends for all men and subordinates all women by reinforcing male dominance (Connell, 1987).

Male-to-male harassment. If a man wishes to protect or enhance his status relative to another man, he may do so by derogating the other man's status as a man. He can "prove" he is manlier than the other man by outperforming him on a masculine ideal, such as virility, courage, athletic ability, or intelligence. The ideal will be specific to what is considered manly in the context of competition (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Prentice & Miller, 2002), although much commonality exists across contexts (Connell, 1995; Williams & Best, 1990). He can also prove he is manlier by emasculating the other man. When such competition and challenge turns to sabotage, threatening insults, and sexual or other forms of derision that undermine the target specifically as a man, it is SBH (MacKinnon, 1997).

Competing with other men in sex-specific ways defined by gender hierarchy has the effect of reinforcing status distinctions within and between the sexes. It enforces the notion that "manly" characteristics are most relevant for evaluating men, but not women, who are omitted from candidacy in the competition. Women may be used in the competition between men as status symbols (e.g., a man who "scores" a more attractive woman has higher status) or as a de-

rogatory reference group to which the male target of harassment is likened (Connell, 1987, 1995; Franke, 1997; Harry, 1992), furthering the view of men as subjects and women as objects for attainment or derision.

Female-to-male harassment. The harassment of men by women has received little theoretical attention. Primarily, it has been envisioned as the mirror image of the prototype of harassment against women by men: unwanted heterosexual attention. As research has shown, however, sexual attention from women generally is not appraised by men as threatening or bothersome and is unlikely to be experienced by men as harassment (Berdahl, in press; Berdahl et al., 1996; Gutek, 1985; Konrad & Gutek, 1986; Malovich & Stake, 1990). Power discrepancies between men and women mean that women are less likely to threaten men than men are to threaten women, but this does not mean it never happens. Studies suggest that men are sometimes harassed by women in ways that bother them (e.g., U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1995; Waldo et al., 1998).

If a woman wishes to protect or enhance her sex-based status relative to a man, she may do so by derogating him as a man. This might take the form of deriding men as a group, but this is likely to pack relatively little punch in most contexts. It may be somewhat threatening to men in contexts associated with women's skills, as in the context of child care, when a woman asserts superior skills and instincts and suggests that men are incapable of caring for children properly. It may also be threatening to men in contexts led by women, even contexts associated with men's skills, as in military training, when a female officer refers to male recruits as the expendable half of the human race. Even if intended as a form of resistance to male dominance, however, such attempts to demean men may reinforce their dominance by supporting the idea that men and women differ in fundamental and important ways, a logic used to justify keeping men and women in their "places."

Comments that suggest a man does not measure up to other men are likely to be more threatening to a man than are comments suggesting he does not measure up to women. Women may find it more effective, in attempting to knock a man down in status, to compare him to other men and suggest he comes up short. This could involve a direct comparison, such as suggesting

he is less courageous, competent, or virile than other men, or an implicit comparison, such as suggesting he is not courageous, competent, or virile enough. Likening him to women is another way to demote his status, although perhaps less likely from women, who would disparage themselves in the process. Such comparisons draw on sex-specific characteristics to evaluate the man and are thus based on sex; to the degree they succeed in hurting him, they are harassing.

More sexual forms of harassment from women toward men are likely to be rare for three reasons (see Fiske & Stevens, 1993). First, for many men, "unwanted" sexual attention from a woman is a foreign concept. Men evaluate heterosexual attention, even unwanted attention, as a neutral to positive experience (e.g., Gutek, 1985; Berdahl et al., 1996; Waldo et al., 1998). Second, being forceful is contrary to the female sex role and is therefore likely to incur negative consequences for women and deter them from such behavior (e.g., Berdahl, in press; Rudman, 1998). Third, it is physically more difficult for women to be sexually aggressive against men than the other way around, further undermining its likelihood and threat. A woman may be motivated to sexually conquer a resistant man, however, if his resistance poses a threat to her status as a desirable woman. When a woman does overpower a man sexually, *against his will*, it is likely to be experienced as quite threatening by the man. A man who is sexually dominated is likely to experience a substantial threat to his masculinity, defined in terms of heterosexual dominance (e.g., Connell, 1995; Franke, 1997; Gutek, 1985). As such, sexually dominating a man is a potent way to demote his status as a man.

Female-to-female harassment. Harassment between women has received the least attention of all. Even a taxonomy proposing to capture all four quadrants of other- and same-sex harassment leaves blank the female-to-female cell for hostile environment harassment (Stockdale et al., 1999), although experimental research suggests women are prone to discriminate against other women (Biernat & Fuegen, 2001; Rudman, 1998). If sex harassment is targeted at less powerful individuals who threaten the harasser's sex-based status, other women are likely to be the primary targets of harassment by women. Harassment between women should be similar to harassment between men, in the sense that it

involves a woman trying to derogate the other woman in sex-based terms. The style of harassment will differ, however, because ideals for men and women differ.

A woman who feels her sex-based status is threatened may try to outperform another woman in feminine ideals, such as beauty, sexual desirability, warmth, and mothering. Again, ideals will be specific to the particular context (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Prentice & Miller, 2002), but much commonality exists across contexts (e.g., Connell, 1987; Williams & Best, 1990). When a woman tries to demote another woman's status by calling her ugly, a bad mother, a bitch, a slut, or a bull dyke, for example, she undermines that woman in sex-specific ways. Likening a woman to a man should be less insulting than likening a man to a woman, but it still suggests a woman has failed feminine ideals and carries the threat of social rejection. A woman may also attempt to enhance her status relative to another woman by winning the approval of higher-status men. Like other forms of SBH, competing with other women in sex-specific ways has the effect of reinforcing status distinctions within and between the sexes. It enforces the notion that "feminine" characteristics are most relevant for evaluating women, but not men. When this competition turns to active sabotage, insults, and other forms of undermining designed to demote the target as a woman, it becomes SBH.

It is important to keep in mind that being harassed by other women is probably less threatening to women than being harassed by men. The average power a man has over a woman is greater than that another woman has over her. Sex differences in power leave "limited scope for women to construct institutionalized power relationships over other women" (Connell, 1987: 187). Same-sex harassment between men is therefore likely to be more motivated, frequent, and threatening than same-sex harassment between women.

Summary

SBH was originally conceptualized as a sexual act and more recently has been conceptualized as an act of male dominance. I view SBH as an attempt to protect social status in a system that bases this status on sex. This perspective provides a unified explanation for various forms of harassment based on sex, including same-sex and other-sex harassment, harassment commit-

ted by men as well as by women, and sexual and nonsexual forms of SBH. I now turn to implications of this theory for research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This perspective provides a new way of thinking about SBH, with several important implications for future research. It moves the focus away from sexual behaviors toward a broader conceptualization of SBH as constituting acts that derogate individuals, men and women alike, based on sex. It highlights the incentives provided both to men and women by a system of gender hierarchy to defend their sex-based status by derogating others based on sex. It moves beyond treating harassers as sexual predators and/or misogynists toward understanding the social environments that motivate their behavior. These implications are discussed in turn below.

Moving Beyond Sexual Behaviors

SBH, broadly conceptualized, is behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual's sex. Unlike earlier conceptualizations, this does not limit SBH to sexual comments and behaviors. These are included if they derogate individuals based on sex, but many other behaviors qualify, including sex-based slurs, sabotage, and social exclusion. This expands the concept of SBH to include not only active threats but passive ones as well, consistent with conceptualizations of general harassment (Einarsen, 2000). Future research should expand measures of SBH to include more behaviors designed to derogate individuals based on sex, such as "not man enough" and "not woman enough" harassment, as well as ignoring, excluding, or undermining people in ways that may not contain direct references to their sex or sexuality but may nonetheless be motivated by it.

An important implication of this view of SBH is that it is contextually defined. Whether an act derogates another based on sex depends on the history and the social context of the behavior, power differences between the individuals involved (physical, organizational, and social inequalities), and the target's experience of fear or powerlessness. This means that a priori classifications of certain behaviors as SBH are not

possible. What may be harassing to some may be fun or flattering to others, depending on the context in which it occurs, the relationship between those involved, and the way it was delivered and received. Future studies should assess the degree to which a potentially harassing behavior derogated a recipient before concluding it was harassing and to what degree (cf. Berdahl, in press; Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Einarsen, 2000). This will help avoid classifying experiences as harassing that were not and will help prevent making erroneous estimates of the prevalence and severity of harassment.

Defining SBH in this way may raise the concern that it will become diluted and taken less seriously. I believe just the opposite is the case. Definitions that rely on sexual behaviors or motives pose a much bigger threat to the perceived legitimacy of sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination. Construing SBH as sexual in nature has caused behaviors that are sexual but not harassing to be wrongfully classified as harassment—for example, consensual or desired sexual attention—and behaviors that are harassing and based on sex but not sexual to be overlooked—for example, “not man enough” harassment between men (Schultz, 2003). A focus on sexual behaviors has generated confusion and controversy about sexual harassment as a form of discrimination and has led to policies that focus on policing sexual behavior at work rather than on acts that perpetuate sexual inequality (cf. Schultz, 1998; Williams, Giuffre, & Dellinger, 1999). Viewing SBH as behavior that derogates an individual’s status based on sex offers an improved understanding of harassment as discrimination.

Similar concerns have been raised as new forms of SBH have been considered by the courts. Courts initially worried that recognizing quid pro quo sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination would overwhelm them with litigants, dilute the concept of sex discrimination, and make a joke of discrimination law (MacKinnon, 1979). Hostile environment harassment, particularly against men, met similar resistance (cf. Axam & Zalesne, 1999; Franke, 1997).² Some wor-

ried that acknowledging SBH against men would detract from the effort to fight the larger problem of SBH against women. But studying “not man enough” harassment led to an improved understanding of how gender hierarchy is reinforced through harassment at work by derogating not only women but men who are like them. Broadening the lens of SBH to include other acts that derogate individuals in terms defined by gender hierarchy can only help to further understand and prevent this form of discrimination.

Moving Beyond Male Harassers

This perspective of SBH considers why women, not just men, may be motivated to commit SBH, what this harassment might look like, and how it might differ from harassment committed by men. Earlier views of harassers as motivated by sexual desire allowed for women to harass others in sexual ways, but more recent views of harassers as men motivated to protect male dominance have not left room for understanding why women might harass others based on sex. The current perspective proposes that women and men share the same underlying motive that gives rise to SBH: a desire to protect their social status when it is threatened. How this status is obtained, threatened, and protected differs by sex, however, because status and ideals differ by sex.

A promising line of future research would be to study the forms and prevalence of SBH committed by women. Much research is needed to identify whether women undermine men’s masculinity or other women’s femininity at work, as well as how and to what effect. I predict that women are more likely to harass other women than they are to harass men. Consistent with sex roles and socialization, women may be more

² “Not man enough” harassment took especially long to recognize as a form of sex discrimination because it does not fit the original prototype of sexual harassment. Some courts said harassment between men was not actionable because individuals could not discriminate against their own sex

(e.g., *Goluszek v. H. P. Smith*, 1988). Others claimed that such cases were actionable only when harassers were homosexual (e.g., *McWilliams v. Fairfax County Bd. of Supervisors*, 1996). Other courts concluded that “not man enough” harassment was actionable only if sexual in content (e.g., *Doe v. City of Belleville*, 1997). In its *Oncale* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court veered from this logic by recognizing that individuals could discriminate against members of their own sex and that “harassing conduct need not be motivated by sexual desire to support an inference of discrimination on the basis of sex” (*Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc.*, 1998: Opinion of the Court, p. 5).

likely than men to harass in passive or indirect ways, with ignoring, exclusion, slander, and sabotage, than in the more active and direct ways that men appear to harass, with direct insults, threats, and physical aggression (cf. Underwood, 2003). If this is the case, the fact that harassment by women largely has been ignored may explain why more passive and indirect behaviors that derogate individuals based on sex are generally absent from the types of SBH currently identified in the literature.

Like other perspectives, this one predicts that most harassers are men and most victims women. It may seem obvious at this point that men commit more SBH than women, but this actually requires more empirical testing. Most surveys have assumed male perpetrators. Even when women are included as potential perpetrators, most research examines male-dominated organizations where base rates alone would predict more male than female harassers (e.g., DuBois, Knapp, Faley, & Kustis, 1998; Waldo et al., 1998). Future studies should measure perpetrator sex and control for expected base rates to test whether men are indeed more likely than women to harass, especially when forms of harassment perpetrated by women are included. It may also seem obvious that mostly women are targets of SBH. Again, this needs to be tested with more research that includes forms of SBH directed at men, such as "not man enough" harassment, as well as forms of harassment committed by women. Finally, the idea that the primary targets of harassment by women are other women is counterintuitive, given prior theorizing. Research on bullying suggests this is the case (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Leymann, 1996; Underwood, 2003). This, too, needs to be tested with research that includes the forms of harassment proposed here to occur between women.

Moving Beyond Bad Individuals

Another implication of this perspective is that it moves away from viewing harassers as having something uniquely wrong with them to viewing them as having something wrong with their social context. It locates the primary cause of SBH in gender hierarchy and the incentives it provides individuals to define social status based on sex. This perspective suggests that future work on SBH should focus on understand-

ing gender hierarchy and how it relates to harassment. I predict that contexts that emphasize the superiority of one sex over another and distinctions between the sexes are more likely to exhibit SBH. Studies that compare organizations differing in their cultures and structures regarding sex-based stratification are needed to test this prediction, as are studies that examine the particular ideals for men and women in different contexts and how they relate to forms of SBH. Research is also needed to examine the claim that sex-based status stems from the approximation of these ideals, whereby "average" individuals are more easily threatened than extreme ones by challenges to their sex-based status and are therefore more motivated to commit SBH. Individuals high in sex-based status may be more *able* to harass others because of their power advantage, but individuals with average levels of sex-based status are expected to be more *motivated* to do so. Future research can explore whether it is average- or high-status individuals who are likely to *commit* more harassment.

Potential threats to sex-based status need to be studied and related to SBH. Maass and colleagues (Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 2003) have begun this with their computer paradigm experiments studying male-to-female gender harassment. This paradigm could be applied to study harassment between men, between women, and from women to men as well. Research is also needed to see if threats to sex-based status predict SBH outside the lab. Episodes of harassment can be studied within the framework of identifying whether a threat to the harasser's status preceded the event and whether the harassment served to derogate the target's status based on sex and to restore the perpetrator's. Comparative field research can examine whether contexts, events, or individuals that pose threats to sex-based status are associated with more harassment.

The premise of this theory can be applied to study harassment that is based on social distinctions other than sex. This theory locates the basic motivation for harassment in the motive for social status, the terms and conditions of which are in large part defined by sex. Sex may be the primary distinction made between individuals (Fiske et al., 1991; Stangor et al., 1992; van Knippenberg et al., 1994), but other distinctions are made as well, including ethnic, na-

tional, socioeconomic, and age. To the degree a social characteristic is used to define status, individuals will be motivated to protect and enhance their status based on that characteristic and will be able to do so by derogating another's. SBH has probably received the most attention because of the primacy of sex as a category and the resulting pervasiveness of SBH. Future research could broaden our understanding of harassment generally by studying how it serves to derogate individuals based on social characteristics used to define status, thereby reinforcing social hierarchies and the status quo.

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Jennifer L. Berdahl (jberdahl@rotman.utoronto.ca) is an assistant professor of organizational behavior at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. She received her Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Illinois. Her research focuses on understanding the emergence, maintenance, and effects of social inequality in workgroups and organizations.

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Bystander Sexism in the Intergroup Context: The Impact of Cat-calls on Women's Reactions Towards Men

Stephenie R. Chaudoir · Diane M. Quinn

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Abstract Despite the fact that sexism is an inherently intergroup phenomenon, women's group-level responses to sexism have received relatively little empirical attention. We examine the intergroup reactions experienced by 114 female students at a U.S. university in New England who imagined being a bystander to a sexist cat-call remark or control greeting. Results indicate that women experienced greater negative intergroup emotions and motivations towards the outgroup of men after overhearing the cat-call remark. Further, the experience of group-based anger mediated the relationship between the effect of study condition on the motivation to move against, or oppose, men. Results indicate that bystanders can be affected by sexism and highlights how the collective groups of men and women can be implicated in individual instances of sexism.

Keywords Sexism · Bystander · Intergroup emotions · Cat-call · Gender identity

Introduction

In nearly all cultures, patriarchal social systems ensure that women will occupy a lower-power status than men. Sexist

behaviors, such as sexual harassment, job discrimination, and cat-calls, are just a few of the many types of social phenomena that maintain this group-based hierarchy (e.g., Sidanius and Pratto 1999). While this group-based conflict lies at the heart of most sexist behavior, little research has examined how women's psychological responses may take the form of group-level reactions. That is, while the preponderance of research to date has demonstrated that women who are targets of sexism experience a host of deleterious intraindividual outcomes such as increased negative affect and lowered self-esteem (e.g., Crocker et al. 1991; Fitzgerald 1993), little research has examined how experiences of sexism may shape intergroup outcomes such as women's group-level emotions and behavioral intentions towards the outgroup of men, in general (for an exception, see Pennekamp et al. 2007). In order to address this gap, we apply insights from social identity perspectives (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner et al. 1987) and intergroup emotions (Mackie et al. 2000; Smith 1993, 1999) to examine the possibility that exposure to an instance of bystander sexism will elicit group-based responses from U.S. undergraduate women. Specifically, we examine how exposure to bystander sexism—imagining oneself as a bystander to a “cat-call” towards another woman—may elicit group-based emotions (i.e., anger and fear) and behavioral intentions (i.e., desire to move against or away from) towards men, in general.

Sexism and the Intergroup Context

Several decades of research demonstrates that sexism is a frequent occurrence in American women's personal and professional lives and can be detrimental to their psychological well-being, health, and job satisfaction (e.g., Crocker et al. 1991; Fitzgerald 1993; Fitzgerald et al.

S. R. Chaudoir · D. M. Quinn
Department of Psychology,
University of Connecticut, 406 Babbidge Rd.,
Storrs, CT 06269, USA

S. R. Chaudoir (✉)
Bradley University,
1501 W. Bradley Ave.,
Peoria, IL 61625, USA
e-mail: schaudoir@bradley.edu

1997; Major et al. 2003; Schneider et al. 1997, 2001; Swim et al. 1998; Swim and Hyers 1999; Swim et al. 2001; see Lee et al. 2007 for a discussion of cross-cultural incidence and origin of sexism). While a great deal of research has focused on understanding these intraindividual outcomes, very little work has examined the possibility that sexism may also have ramifications for how women view the outgroup of men, more generally (for an exception, see Pennekamp et al. 2007). Because sexism necessarily implicates group-based identities—prejudiced acts towards women based on their group membership, where the perpetrator is typically male—specific experiences of sexism may also have important implications for how women perceive and react to men, in general. Put differently, the actions of one sexist man may serve to taint women's perceptions of all men.

Under what conditions might we expect that the sexist actions of one man will affect women's perceptions of all men? Here, we suggest that women's group-based emotions and behavioral intentions towards the outgroup of men may become more negative when their gender group identity is salient. Drawing on insights from social identity perspectives (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner et al. 1987), individuals may vary to the extent that they view themselves as individuals vs. interchangeable members of a social group. In the context of gender, for example, environmental stimuli can prompt women to shift from thinking about themselves as unique individuals to thinking about themselves as interchangeable members of the larger social group of women, as a whole. Intergroup emotions theory (Mackie et al. 2000; Smith 1993, 1999), an extension of social identity perspectives, suggests that when women's group identities become salient, their emotions and motivations shift to reflect their group, rather than individual, concerns. Thus, when a woman views an instance of sexism, her group identity as a woman may become salient and she may subsequently experience emotions and motivations on behalf of her gender group (i.e., intergroup response) rather than as an individual person (i.e., intraindividual response). Because she is now thinking about herself as an ingroup member, she also necessarily becomes concerned with the outgroup (i.e., men). Thus, when gender group identity is made salient, women may experience emotions and motivations towards the outgroup based on whether the current situation may help or harm women as a whole (Mackie et al. 2000; for a review see Mackie and Smith 2002).

Research in the domain of intergroup emotions suggests that when individuals detect harm or threat to their group, these appraisals lead them to experience predictable patterns of emotional and behavioral responses (Cottrell and Neuberg 2005; Frijda 1986; Mackie et al. 2000). Two of the most common emotions elicited by group-based

threats are anger and fear. When individuals perceive that an outgroup threatens their ingroup but believe they also possess the strength and resources to counteract this threat, they are likely to feel anger towards the outgroup (e.g., Cottrell and Neuberg 2005; Frijda 1986; Mackie et al. 2000). This anger, in turn, should increase the ingroup members' desire to move against, or approach, the outgroup (e.g., Crisp et al. 2007; Mackie et al. 2000; Yzerbyt et al. 2003). However, when individuals perceive the same threat but believe they do *not* have sufficient resources to counteract the threat, they are likely to feel fear towards the outgroup (e.g., Cottrell and Neuberg 2005; Frijda 1986; Mackie et al. 2000). This fear, in turn, should increase the ingroup members' desire to move away from, or avoid, the outgroup (e.g., Mackie et al. 2000; Crisp et al. 2007).

While the intergroup emotions model (Mackie et al. 2000; Smith 1993, 1999) has been applied to many types of intergroup relations (e.g., differences in beliefs in controversial issues, race/ethnicity, and nationality; Butz and Plant 2006; Mackie et al. 2000; Maitner et al. 2006), its insights have rarely been applied to gender. Few studies have examined whether sexism leads women to experience group-based emotions and behavioral intentions towards men. Pennekamp and colleagues (2007) examined whether evidence of pervasive sexism would lead Dutch female undergraduates to experience feelings of anger towards men and increased behavioral intentions to improve the position of women in their society. Their results demonstrate that women who more strongly identified with their gender group reported more intergroup anger towards men which, in turn, was related to stronger motivations to demand reparations from men. While the Pennekamp and colleagues' (2007) study provides some initial evidence that intergroup emotions theory may offer a useful framework to consider women's group-level responses to sexism, it only examines one, approach-focused emotional response to sexism (i.e., anger). In the current work, we examine women's feelings of anger and fear towards the outgroup of men in order to capture both approach-and avoidance-related emotions.

In the current study, we also extend previous research by examining whether the actions of an individual outgroup member, as opposed to the actions of the entire outgroup, can elicit group-based reactions. The majority of previous research in the domain of intergroup emotions has elicited group-based reactions by prompting participants to think about their group memberships, per se, or by presenting group-level threats (e.g., Mackie et al. 2000; Maitner et al. 2006; Pennekamp et al. 2007). For example, as we noted above, Pennekamp and colleagues (2007) prompted Dutch women to think about the existence of pervasive sexism—where the outgroup of men currently threatens the equality

of their ingroup. The fact that this study procedure elicited anger towards *all* men may not be particularly surprising in light of the fact that the procedure itself prompted participants to think and respond at a group level.

Do daily, individual acts of sexism also render group-based responses from women? To our knowledge, this possibility has not been empirically examined. In the current study, we considered whether participants will experience group-based emotions and their concomitant motivations in a situation where they are not asked to think about their group membership explicitly and they are presented with an individual-, rather than group-, level threat. By definition, the motivation behind all forms of sexism is, in and of itself, group-based. Sexism represents prejudiced acts towards women based on their group membership. However, the manner in which this group-based prejudice or threat is *expressed* can vary widely. In some situations, such as those represented in Pennekamp and colleagues' (2007) work, women are presented with evidence of group inequality (e.g., gender pay gap). In these situations, women are likely to perceive that men, as a group, present a threat to women, as a group. Because these situations explicitly call attention to gender *groups*, it follows that women will also respond to the situation on behalf of their group and express emotions and motivations directed at men, in general.

In other situations, however, a sexist threat can be expressed through an individual group member's behavior, and women may not readily attribute the offense to gender group status. That is, when women make attributions about an individual man's sexist behavior, they may be just as likely to attribute the behavior to his individual self (e.g., his rude personality) as they are to attribute the behavior to his group membership (e.g., a sexist man whose behavior represents the group-based threat of sexism). When sexism is expressed via an individual man's behavior, American women frequently fail to attribute the behavior to the group-level threat of sexism (e.g., Crosby 1984; Inman and Baron 1996; Sechrist and Delmar 2009; for a review, see Barrett and Swim 1996). Unlike threats that are expressed in group-based terms, threats expressed in individual behaviors may fail to elicit group-level attributions and, therefore, group-based responses.

Bystander Sexism and Cat-calls

While individual instances of sexism can be expressed in any number of ways, bystander sexism is one expression that has received minimal empirical attention. Bystander sexism is an instance of sexism wherein a woman is not directly involved in the immediate social context of the sexist event targeted at another woman, but is exposed to the event nonetheless. To our knowledge, the only work

that has directly examined the impact of bystander sexism (or a related construct) on women's well-being is that of Hitlan and colleagues (Hitlan et al. 2006; Walsh and Hitlan 2007). These researchers have examined the impact of bystander sexual harassment—"experiences where one observes or knows about the sexual harassment of others but is not directly the target of the harassment." In their sample of U.S. female employed undergraduate students, 69% of participants reported being a bystander to sexual harassment and these researchers find that the experience of bystander sexual harassment exacerbated the negative emotional responses women had in their own personal experiences with sexual harassment (Hitlan et al. 2006).

This work provides some preliminary evidence to suggest that being a bystander can elicit negative, intra-individual psychological consequences for women. However, it does not address the possibility that bystander sexism may elicit group-based responses. Further, compared to the work by Hitlan and colleagues, our research adopts a more restrictive definition of what it means to be a bystander. That is, we examine how observing a specific sexist incident, rather than observing or knowing about chronic sexist behavior in one's workplace (i.e., sexual harassment), impacts women's outcomes.

One situation in which women are likely to be bystanders to sexist situations is when other women are targets of cat-calls. Cat-calls are directed at women as a way to highlight a sexualized part of her body (e.g., breasts, hips, butt). As Gardner (1980) points out, women in America are frequently targets of evaluative and objectifying cat-calls about their bodies when they are in public. Although it is possible that men may intend to make cat-call remarks in order to compliment or attract women, researchers have consistently emphasized the derogatory and sexist nature of these comments (Bowman 1993).

Cat-calls are a frequent way in which women are the targets of sexism in their daily lives (Swim et al. 2001), with 42% of U.S. female college students reporting that they are the direct targets of cat-calls at least once a month and an additional 31% reporting these experiences every few days (Fairchild and Rudman 2008). Recent work reports that the experience of street harassment is directly related to greater preoccupation with physical appearance and body shame, and is indirectly related to heightened fears of rape for U.S. undergraduate women (Fairchild and Rudman 2008).

The negative effects of cat-calls may not be confined solely to women who are targets. An important feature of cat-call remarks is that they are given in public contexts, such as on city streets. Because of the public nature of these comments, they are likely to be overheard by other female bystanders. Thus, overhearing and attending to cat-calls directed at other women may also affect female bystanders.

Overview of Present Research

In the current work, we examine female undergraduates' psychological responses to bystander sexism. To do so, we asked women to watch a video and imagine themselves as a bystander to an interaction where a man made either a sexist cat-call remark or a control greeting directed at another woman. We examined how exposure to these two different types of comments (i.e., sexist cat-call vs. control greeting) would impact the salience of their gender identity, their individual and intergroup emotional reactions, and their intergroup motivations towards men, in general.

We expected that participants would find the cat-call scenario to be more prejudiced than the neutral scenario, a difference that would serve as a test of the validity of our manipulation. Based on our theorizing noted above, we tested four main hypotheses in this study. In accordance with social identity perspectives (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner et al. 1987), we expected that women who were bystanders to the cat-call comment would be more likely to experience gender identity salience—thoughts about their gender group membership.

Hypothesis 1. Women in the bystander sexism condition will be more likely than women in the control condition to list thoughts about their gender group membership (e.g., girl, woman) on a measure of working self-concept.

Because women will be more likely to be thinking of themselves in terms of their gender identity, we expected that women exposed to the cat-call will also experience greater group-level emotions (i.e., anger and fear towards men) than women exposed to the control comment. However, to what degree will women experience anger compared to fear? Previous work in the intergroup emotions domain has often manipulated the relative power of the ingroup in order to elicit one emotion over the other (e.g., anger vs. fear; Mackie et al. 2000). For purposes of the present work, however, we chose a stimulus that could conceivably elicit either emotion: intergroup anger or fear. A cat-call is a particularly ambiguous sexist situation because it could be perceived as having either a harmful or complimentary intent (Bowman 1993). That is, some women may perceive the comment to be demeaning and overtly offensive while others may perceive the comment to be harmless and flattering. Thus, appraisals of the intent of the cat-call remark could vary widely. Further, we did not give women information about the relative power of the gender groups, making it possible that women's appraisals of relative group strength would also vary widely. In addition, prior work has demonstrated that participants experience increases of *both* intergroup anger and fear in response to group-based threats (e.g., Maitner et al. 2006).

Thus, in our study, it is possible that participants could feel intergroup anger or fear in response to the cat-call remark.

Hypothesis 2a. Women in the bystander sexism condition will report greater intergroup anger and greater intergroup fear than women in the control condition.

Although we predicted that women would report more of both negative emotions (i.e., anger and fear) when they overheard the cat-call compared to the neutral comment, we expected feelings of anger to be stronger than feelings of fear. Although fear is often a relevant emotional reaction in response to sexism (e.g., Woodzicka and LaFrance 2001), we expected that women would experience stronger feelings of anger because they were not the direct targets of the sexist commentary. Previous work indicates that women often anticipate that they will react with more anger than fear (Woodzicka and LaFrance 2001) and that they will be more likely to directly confront a sexist perpetrator (Shelton and Stewart 2004) when they are asked to indicate their expected responses to a hypothetical sexist situation. That is, women tend to overestimate the extent to which they will feel anger and exhibit confrontational behavior when they are asked to indicate how they think they will react. Although these results do not directly parallel the procedure used in the current work, these results do suggest that women who are bystanders watching a sexist scenario, but removed from the direct situation, will experience more intergroup anger than intergroup fear.

Hypothesis 2b. Among women in the bystander sexism condition, intergroup anger will be greater than intergroup fear.

Because intergroup emotions are hypothesized to elicit concomitant motivations towards the outgroup of men (Mackie et al. 2000; Smith 1993, 1999)—feelings of anger give rise to motivations to move against men while feelings of fear give rise to motivations to move away from men—our predictions for intergroup motivations were parallel to those noted above for intergroup emotions.

Hypothesis 3a. Women in the bystander sexism condition will report greater intergroup motivations to move against men and greater intergroup motivations to move away from men compared to women in the control condition.

Hypothesis 3b. Among women in the bystander sexism condition, women will report greater motivation to move against men than to move away from men.

According to intergroup emotions theory (Mackie et al. 2000; Smith 1993, 1999), intergroup emotions should mediate the effect of condition on their respective intergroup motivations. If, however, intergroup anger is the predominant response of female bystanders as we have

theorized, intergroup anger should mediate the effect of condition on motivations to move against men, but intergroup fear should not mediate the effect of condition on motivations to move away from men.

Hypothesis 4. Intergroup anger will mediate the effect of condition on motivation to move against men.

Additionally, intergroup emotions should not mediate the effect of condition on their opposite motivational orientation. Anger—an approach-oriented emotion—should not mediate the effect of condition on motivation to move away from men. Fear—an avoidance-oriented emotion—should not mediate the effect of condition on motivation to move against men.

Ultimately, we expect that women who are bystanders to a cat-call remark will be more likely to respond to this situation on the basis of their group membership, rather than individual identity. If it is the case that women in the bystander sexism condition are more likely to exhibit gender identity salience and, therefore, exhibit greater group-based emotions, it also follows that these women should not necessarily experience greater individual-based emotions compared to women in the control condition. Because group- and individual-based emotions are distinct affective experiences (Seger et al. 2009; Smith et al. 2007), we expected that individual-based emotions would not be affected by our manipulation. In order to check this assumption, we also included a measure of individual level negative affect.

Method

Participants

One-hundred fourteen female students from a large public New England university in the U.S. participated in this study for partial course credit during the spring semester of 2005. Participants were predominantly Caucasian (79.8%), and the mean age of this sample was 18.6 ($SD=1.26$) years.

Measure

State Negative Affect

The Multiple Affect Adjective Checklist (MAACL; Zuckerman and Lubin 1965) served as a measure of respondents' experience of overall state negative affect. Respondents indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which each emotion adjective describes their current emotional state ($1 = \text{not at all}$, $5 = \text{very much}$). The MAACL is a 20-item measure composed of three subscales measuring anxiety (e.g., nervous), depression (e.g., discour-

aged), and hostility (e.g., angry), and items are averaged to create a composite measure of each subscale ($\alpha_s = .79$, $.78$, and $.81$, respectively). The MAACL has been used to assess changes in state negative affect in response to sexism in several prior studies (e.g., Samoluk and Pretty 1994; Schmitt et al. 2003).

Intergroup Emotions

A measure of intergroup emotions (Mackie et al. 2000) was included in order to assess other-directed emotions (i.e., emotions directed towards men). The intergroup emotions measure is comprised of two, 4-item subscales measuring anger (e.g., irritated, furious) and fear (e.g., anxious, afraid). Respondents indicate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*) the extent to which the out-group (i.e., men) makes them feel each emotion (e.g., "Men, in general, make me feel irritated"). Subscale items are averaged to create a composite measure of each emotion $\alpha_s = .93$ and $.85$, respectively.

Prejudice Appraisal Manipulation Check

In order to verify that women perceived the cat-call remark to be more prejudiced than the greeting, they were asked to make ratings about the extent to which they perceived the comment as prejudiced. We also included several filler rating items (e.g., intelligent, humorous) in order to reduce participant demand characteristics (adapted from Swim and Hyers 1999). Ratings of this one-item measure of prejudice were made on a 7-point Likert scale ($1 = \text{not at all}$, $7 = \text{very}$).

Intergroup Motivations

In order to assess motivations toward the out-group (i.e., men) after overhearing the male confederate's comment, the intergroup behavioral tendencies scale (Mackie et al. 2000) was utilized. This measure is comprised of two, 3-item subscales measuring the desire to move against (e.g., "Men, in general, make me want to oppose them") or away (e.g., "Men, in general, make me want to avoid them") from the out-group. Respondents indicate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*) the extent to which the out-group (men) makes them want to engage in each behavior. Subscale items were averaged to create a composite score for each behavioral tendency ($\alpha_s = .86$ and $.93$, respectively).

Gender Identity Salience

Participants completed the Twenty Statements Test (TST; Kuhn and McPartland 1954)—a measure of working self-concept—in order to assess whether women were thinking

about themselves in terms of their gender group. Participants were asked to fill in a series of twenty statements that complete the sentence “I am _____.” We created a dichotomous coding scheme in order to code for the presence or absence of gender identity (e.g., “I am a girl”) in each of participant’s 20 responses to this measure. Two trained raters coded each of these 20 statements for the presence of 3 target words representing gender identity: “girl,” “woman,” and “female.” These two raters demonstrated 99% agreement. Of the participants who wrote a gender identity response to the TST, only 1 participant wrote more than one gender identity response (i.e., 2 gender identity responses); the rest wrote only 1 gender identity response. Therefore, given this lack of variability in our sample, we created a final dichotomous measure that assessed whether women mentioned their gender identity (yes vs. no) in any of their 20 responses to the TST.

Procedure

Participants were tested in individual sessions and told that the purpose of the study was to examine how people form first impressions of others. After completing a consent form, participants were asked to view a videotape of an experimental session that was conducted during the prior semester and imagine that they were the participant in that session. Participants were told that they would be asked to make ratings about their impressions of a person in the video after they had finished watching it and that we were interested in seeing how their impressions compared to those of the participants we examined in the previous semester. They were told that we would be asking them to recall information about what they saw in the video and that they should make sure to pay attention to the video.

Participants were randomly assigned to hear one of two procedural manipulations in the video in which they believed they would later be interacting with the male participant as part of the study, or they believed that he was at the session due to a scheduling error. This manipulation did not affect the results described below, so we do not discuss the effect of this manipulation further.

The video was a recording of the following scenario involving a male participant and a female experimenter. The video was recorded from the perspective of the participant, where the participant would be seated facing the open doorway of the experiment room, and a female experimenter stood in front of the participant. Approximately one minute after the experimenter finished delivering verbal instructions regarding the nature of the study, a male confederate arrived at the experiment, paused in the open doorway leading into the room and made a brief statement to a fictitious female friend in the hallway outside. From their seated position, “participants” viewed

the profile of the male confederate as he made the comment in the hallway. Participants were randomly assigned to hear either a sexist cat-call remark ($N=58$) or a control greeting ($N=56$) in the video. In the sexist condition, the male confederate made a “cat-call” remark into the hallway, directed at the fictitious female target, saying, “Hey Kelly, your boobs look great in that shirt!” The “cat-call” was intended to serve as a sexual objectification of the target female by drawing attention to a sexualized part of her body (i.e., breasts). In the control condition, the male confederate directed a greeting to the fictitious female target, saying, “Hey Kelly, what’s up?”

After the male confederate made his comment, the experimenter directed him to wait in a separate room. After the male confederate left the room, the experimenter closed the door to begin the experimental session, and the video stopped. After viewing the videotape, participants completed ratings of the male participant and the comment he made. Measures were completed in the order listed in the section above.

In order to ensure that participants paid attention to the main study manipulation, we asked participants the following question after completing the materials noted above: “In the video, which of the following do you recall about what happened prior to the start of the experiment?” Participants chose from 1 of 4 options: (1) A man greeted his friend in the hallway, (2) A man made a comment about a girl’s appearance in the hallway, (3) Don’t remember what the man said, and (4) Don’t remember ever seeing a man. Participants in the cat-call condition who chose options 1, 3 or 4 and participants in the control condition who chose options 2, 3, or 4 were excluded. Based on these criteria, 14 of the participants incorrectly recalled what they heard the male participant say in the video, so these participants’ data were dropped from all analyses. Therefore, our final sample included 100 women (54 in the sexism condition; 46 in the control condition).

Results

Manipulation Check and Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for our main study variables. We first used our manipulation check to determine whether the bystander sexism condition was perceived to be more prejudiced than the control condition and, indeed, it was, $t(98) = 13.00$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.52$. However, although participants viewed the cat-call remark as more prejudiced than the greeting, their mean ratings of prejudice were just above the midpoint of the scale. Thus, the cat-call remark was rated as moderately prejudiced.

Table 2 presents the bivariate correlations among the main study variables. Intercorrelations among the state nega-

Table 1 Descriptive statistics based on condition.

	Bystander sexism (<i>n</i> =54)	Control (<i>n</i> =46)	Between-group <i>p</i> -value
Appraisal of prejudice	4.67 (1.93)	1.15 (0.42)	<.001
Gender identity salience	15 (28%)	6 (13%)	.06
State negative affect			
Anxiety	2.02 (0.54)	2.14 (0.67)	<i>n.s.</i>
Depression	1.95 (0.53)	2.11 (0.61)	<i>n.s.</i>
Hostility	1.75 (0.62)	1.71 (0.67)	<i>n.s.</i>
Intergroup emotions			
Anger	4.08 (1.30)	1.58 (0.83)	<.001
Fear	2.11 (0.98)	1.40 (0.77)	<.001
Intergroup motivations			
Move against	3.67 (1.48)	1.59 (0.83)	<.001
Move away	4.65 (1.30)	2.07 (1.47)	<.001

Gender identity salience is dichotomous measure. Appraisal of prejudice, intergroup emotions, and intergroup behavioral intentions were measured on a 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very/extremely*) scale. State negative affect was measured on a 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*) scale. Comparison is based on *t*-test for appraisal of prejudice, Chi-square for gender identity salience, and univariate ANOVAs for remaining variables.

tive affect subscales (r 's=.57 to .74), intergroup emotions (r =.62), and intergroup motivation (r =.57) were all significant and in the expected direction (all p 's<.05). Additionally, the intergroup emotions of anger and fear were each correlated with their respective intergroup motivation in the expected direction (r 's=.82 and .28, respectively; all p 's<.05).

Hypothesis 1: Gender identity salience

We conducted a chi-square analysis in order to determine whether participants who overheard the cat-call remark would be more likely to think of themselves in terms of their gender group identity. Results indicate that women in the bystander sexism condition were marginally more likely to exhibit gender identity salience compared to women in the control condition (28% vs. 13%), $\chi^2(1) = 3.4$, p =.06. Thus, there is a marginally significant trend for women to

be more likely to think of themselves in terms of their gender identity (i.e., gender identity salience) after overhearing the cat-call remark compared to a neutral greeting.

Hypothesis 2a: Intergroup emotions across condition

We hypothesized that women in the bystander sexism condition would report greater intergroup emotions of anger and fear compared to those in the control condition. In order to examine this hypothesis, we conducted a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) of the intergroup anger and intergroup fear scales with condition as a between-subject factor. This multivariate analysis supported our hypothesis, Wilks' λ =.40, $F(2, 97) = 72.31$, p <.01. Follow-up univariate tests indicated that women in the bystander sexism condition reported both more intergroup anger, $F(1, 98) = 142.95$, p <.001, and intergroup fear,

Table 2 Correlations among study variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Gender identity salience ^a									
2. Prejudice appraisal	.18								
State negative affect									
3. Anxiety	-.04	-.04							
4. Hostility	.04	.02	.57**						
5. Depression	.07	-.19	.67**	.74**					
Intergroup Emotions									
6. Anger	.14	.71**	.08	.26**	.09				
7. Fear	.02	.38**	.20*	.26**	.17	.62**			
Intergroup Motivations									
8. Move against	.10	.63**	-.04	.18	-.05	.82**	.43**		
9. Move away	.26*	.58**	-.08	.05	-.04	.56**	.28**	.57**	
10. Condition ^b	.20	.77**	-.11	.03	-.15	.77**	.42*	.67**	.71**

^a 0 = no, 1 = yes. ^b 0 = control, 1 = sexist

** p <.01. * p <.05

$F(1, 98) = 20.91, p < .01$, compared to women in the control condition.

Hypothesis 2b: Intergroup anger vs. intergroup fear in bystander sexism condition

We hypothesized that women in the bystander sexism condition would report greater intergroup anger compared to intergroup fear. In order to examine this hypothesis, we conducted a one-way ANOVA among women in the bystander sexism condition using intergroup emotion (anger vs. fear) as a within-subject factor. Consistent with our hypothesis, women in the bystander sexism condition reported greater intergroup anger than intergroup fear, $F(1,53) = 150.48, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .74$.

Hypothesis 3a: Intergroup motivation across condition

We predicted that women in the bystander sexism condition would report greater intergroup motivations to move against and away from men than women in the control condition. In order to examine this hypothesis, we conducted a one-way MANOVA of the intergroup motivation to move against men and motivation to move away from men scales with condition as a between-subject factor. This analysis supported our hypothesis, demonstrating that women in the bystander sexism condition reported more intergroup emotions compared to women in the control condition, Wilks' $\lambda = .40, F(2, 97) = 73.91, p < .001$. Follow-up univariate tests indicated that women in the bystander sexism condition reported both more intergroup motivation to move against men, $F(1, 98) = 78.42, p < .001$, and intergroup motivation to move away from men, $F(1, 98) = 98.39, p < .001$, compared to women in the control condition.

Hypothesis 3b: Intergroup motivation to move against men vs. motivation to move away from men in bystander sexism condition

We hypothesized that women in the bystander sexism condition would report greater motivation to move against men compared to motivation to move away from men. In order to examine this hypothesis, we conducted a one-way ANOVA among women in the bystander sexism condition using intergroup motivation (move against vs. move away from) as a within-subject factor. Contrary to our hypothesis, women in the bystander sexism condition reported less motivation to move against men compared to their motivation to move away from men, $F(1,53) = 14.70, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$.

Given that this finding was contrary to our hypothesis, we wanted to further examine whether this effect occurred only among women in the bystander sexism or if it occurred for women in the control condition as well. We conducted an additional one-way ANOVA among women in the control condition using intergroup motivation (move

against vs. move away from) as a within-subject factor. This analysis reveals that women in the control condition demonstrate the same effect—they report a greater desire to move away from men than move against them, $F(1,45) = 8.55, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .16$. Thus, across both experimental conditions, women demonstrated greater motivation to move away from than against the outgroup of men.

Hypothesis 4: Mediation analysis of intergroup anger and motivation to move against men

In accordance with intergroup emotions theory (Smith 1993, 1999; Mackie et al. 2000), we hypothesized that intergroup anger, but not intergroup fear, would mediate the effect of condition on the motivation to move against men. We utilized procedures outlined in Preacher and Hayes (2008) to examine bootstrapping estimates of the indirect effects in a multiple mediator model. These procedures allow us to estimate the respective effect of both intergroup anger and intergroup fear simultaneously. Further, bootstrapping allows us to derive estimates of the indirect or mediated effects from a sampling distribution (Shrout and Bolger 2002), and it is generally preferred over the causal steps approach (i.e., Baron and Kenny 1986) when dealing with relatively small sample sizes.

Consistent with hypotheses, the indirect effect of condition on motivation to move against men through intergroup anger was significant, $B = 2.13, SE = .36, p < .05$, 95% BCa bootstrap CI: 1.41, 2.82, while the indirect effect through intergroup fear was not significant, $B = -.15, SE = .12, n.s.$, 95% BCa bootstrap CI: -.41, .08. The direct effect of condition on motivation to move against men was not significant ($B = .25, SE = .30, n.s.$). Unstandardized path coefficients are presented in Fig. 1. In sum, intergroup anger, but not intergroup fear, mediated the effect of condition on motivation to move against men.

Additional Meditational Analyses

In addition to providing a direct test of this hypothesis, we also conducted an additional mediation analysis in order to

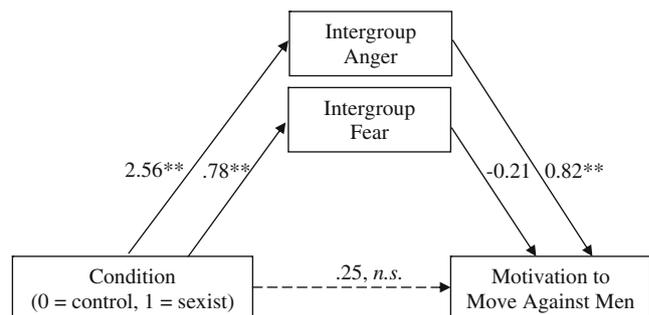


Fig. 1 Mediation analysis of condition on motivation to move against men. Path coefficients are unstandardized. ** $p < .01$.

provide additional, convergent support for our main prediction. Because we expected that intergroup anger would be the predominant intergroup emotional response to an instance of bystander sexism, we can also expect that intergroup fear should not mediate the effect of condition on the motivation to move away from men. Further, intergroup anger should not mediate the effect of condition on its opposite behavioral motivation to move away from men.

Consistent with hypotheses, neither the indirect effect through intergroup anger, $B=.19$, $SE=.31$, *n.s.*, 95% BCa bootstrap CI: $-.49$, $.77$, nor intergroup fear, $B=-.06$, $SE=.17$, *n.s.*, 95% BCa bootstrap CI: $-.38$, $.29$, mediated the effect of condition on motivation to move away from men. The direct effect of cat-call on motivation to move away from men was significant, $B=2.55$, $SE=.43$, $p<.001$. Thus, this analysis demonstrates that neither intergroup emotion mediated the effect of condition on motivation to move away from men.

Finally, if our theorizing is correct and bystander sexism leads women to shift from an individual- to a group-level of self-categorization and experience emotions on behalf of their gender group, it should also be the case that women in the bystander sexism condition should *not* experience greater individual-based emotions than women in the control condition. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) supports this assumption. This multivariate analysis indicates that there were no differences in state negative affect based on experimental condition (Wilks' $\lambda=.94$, $F(3, 96) = 2.22$, *n.s.*), and the follow-up univariate tests confirmed this (all $ps>.15$).

Discussion

The current study examined women's group-based reactions to overhearing a cat-call remark. We drew on insights from social identity perspectives (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987) and intergroup emotions theory (Mackie et al. 2000; Smith 1993, 1999) to examine whether women experienced group-based emotions and behavioral tendencies in response to this instance of bystander sexism. Our results suggest a marginally significant trend for women's gender identity to be more likely to become salient in instances of bystander sexism. Thus, women may be more likely to think about themselves in terms of their gender group identity and, therefore, react to an instance of bystander sexism based on their group-level concerns. Our results confirm that women experienced greater intergroup emotions (i.e., anger and fear) and motivations towards the outgroup of men (i.e., move against and move away from) when they were an imagined bystander to a cat-call comment. Consistent with our expectation that intergroup anger would be the predominant emotional response to bystander

sexism, women in the cat-call condition reported feeling more anger towards men than fear. Further, the effect of intergroup anger mediated the relationship between condition and motivations to move against or oppose men, demonstrating that greater anger towards men accounted for women's motivation to oppose them. However, intergroup fear did not mediate the relationship between condition and motivations to move away from men, a finding that lends additional support to our hypothesis that intergroup anger would be the predominant emotional response to bystander sexism. Together, these results provide new insight into the consequences of bystander sexism and the utility of conceptualizing sexist incidences from an explicit intergroup framework.

One unexpected finding in our data was that women who overheard the cat-call comment reported more motivation to move away from men relative to their motivation to move against men. However, this relative difference in motivations towards men occurred across both conditions, meaning that participants were more inclined to move away from the outgroup of men than to move against them *regardless* of what they heard a man say. We offer two possible explanations for these results. First, it may be the case that although the cat-call elicited more intergroup anger than fear, it was not sufficiently severe enough to produce marked increases in the desire to oppose men directly. Perhaps a more derogatory cat-call comment or a more severe sexist incident (e.g., direct sexual coercion by a coworker) would have produced greater motivations to oppose men compared to motivations to avoid them. Secondly, these results may simply demonstrate the tendency for group members to refrain from taking direct actions against offending outgroup members (e.g., Hyers 2007; Wright et al. 1990) or the tendency for women to refrain from engaging in confrontational behavior (e.g., Rudman 1999), perhaps due to gender role prescriptions (Henley 1977).

The current study highlights the impact of group identities in instances of prejudice. Previous work has focused on the impact of group identities from the perspective of the sexist perpetrator and has demonstrated that (male) identity concerns often lead men to enact sexist behavior (Hitlan et al. 2009; Maass et al. 2003; Pryor and Whalen 1997). From the perspective of the target, however, researchers have tended to emphasize the role of chronic group identification in affecting women's individual reactions to sexism (Cameron 2001; McCoy and Major 2003). Thus, our study's emphasis on the effect of situational salience of gender group identity is a new contribution and underscores the need for future research that examines how group identities are implicated in responses to sexist incidents.

Our results also provide new information regarding the psychological consequences of bystander sexism, an area of research that has received little empirical attention. Women

experience a variety of negative consequences as the direct targets of sexism (e.g., Shelton and Stewart 2004; Swim and Hyers 1999), and the current study demonstrates that bystanders are affected by instances of sexism as well. Although women may not feel greater negative emotional reactions directed inward in response to bystander sexism, they may feel greater negative emotions directed outwards towards men. Thus, this study provides some evidence that the effects of sexism are not confined solely to the target of prejudice when the sexist event occurs in a public setting. Instead, our results indicate that for every woman who is a direct target of sexism, there may be several other women who witness the event and are also affected as bystanders.

By positioning the current work within an intergroup framework, this study also emphasizes the utility of exploring the nature of group-based reactions to sexism. Most extant work has focused on individual reactions to sexism such as individual level negative affect and self-esteem (e.g., Swim and Hyers 1999), an emphasis that may fail to identify how specific instances of sexism affect how men and women perceive and interact with each other more generally. The current study demonstrates that women's emotions and motivations towards men become more negative when they are bystanders of sexism. These results not only demonstrate that women are affected as bystanders of sexism, but they also suggest that women's feelings and behaviors towards all men can be affected by the actions of a single man. That is, the actions of one sexist man can impact how female bystanders may perceive and interact with other men. From this perspective, instances of prejudice negatively impact bystanders in both groups; female bystanders may react negatively towards men and male bystanders may be perceived negatively because of the actions of a single sexist man.

Our study also extends current theorizing about group-based emotions. Previous work on intergroup emotions has largely focused on how people perceive and react to threats from collective outgroups on one's ingroup (e.g., Mackie et al. 2000), but has largely overlooked situations in which one's ingroup is threatened by an individual outgroup member. Any situation in which the individuals involved perceive themselves to be acting on behalf of their group may implicate group identity and be perceived and reacted to in terms of that group identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner et al. 1987). In the case of sexism, for example, women's social identity may become salient when men as a group threaten them (e.g., acknowledgement of pervasive gender discrimination) and when an individual man who is perceived to be acting on behalf of his gender threatens an individual woman (e.g., cat-call comments). However, this latter type of situation has not been examined within the context of intergroup emotions. By exploring the role of group-based emotions and behavioral tendencies in a

context where an individual outgroup member threatens one's ingroup, the present work extends the utility of intergroup emotions theory to new contexts that invoke social identity threats.

It is important that these results be interpreted with several limitations in mind. In the current study design, women were not physically present as bystanders in the sexist situation; rather, they imagined themselves in this situation via a video recording. Given that participants typically cannot accurately predict their reactions to sexist situations when they are not physically present in the situation (e.g., Shelton and Stewart 2004), current results may overestimate the anger or underestimate the fear women would experience had they overheard the cat-call remark in person. Thus, the ability of these results to generalize to women's reactions in real world settings is limited. Further, gender identity was only marginally more salient in the cat-call condition compared to our control. Additional work that replicates this pattern at conventional levels of statistical significance is needed in order to draw firm conclusions about this effect. Finally, our reliance on an undergraduate sample of women limits our ability to generalize these findings across women, more broadly. Future research that examines these processes among middle- and late-adult aged women who, presumably, have had more chances to be bystanders to sexism could offer one method to address this concern.

Nonetheless, the results from this study point to several promising directions for future research in the areas of sexism and intergroup emotions. Our study only examined the effect of bystander sexism on two intergroup emotions—anger and fear. Future work may benefit by examining other relevant types of negative intergroup emotions such as disgust (Cottrell and Neuberg 2005). Further, given that cat-calls are relatively ambiguous events that could be interpreted as complimentary (Bowman 1993), examining positive emotional reactions may also be a fruitful area for future work. In addition to intergroup emotions and motivations, additional research examining bystanders' likelihood of intervening in specific sexist incidents or likelihood of contributing to broader efforts to reduce sexism are also interesting areas for future work.

Ultimately, the current work underscores the notion that sexism can be bad for everyone. Women are obviously implicated because they often suffer direct negative consequences as targets of prejudice and, as the current work demonstrates, indirect consequences as bystanders. But sexism also harms men as well. Whenever a single man's prejudiced actions make gender identity salient, male perpetrators can impact how women view and react to men more generally. From this perspective, sexist instances do not occur in a social vacuum wherein a single perpetrator and target interact. As numerous researchers have already demonstrated, sexual harass-

ment in a work environment can negatively affect women as direct targets and bystanders (e.g., Fitzgerald 1993; Hitlan et al. 2006), can compromise the organizational climate, and can, ultimately, be financially costly to organizations (for a review, see Terpstra and Baker 1986). Thus, our study adds to the growing literature illustrating that individual incidences of sexism can have wide-ranging and deleterious consequences.

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Everyday Stranger Harassment and Women's Objectification

Kimberly Fairchild · Laurie A. Rudman

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Abstract The present research suggests that stranger harassment (i.e., experiencing unwanted sexual attention from strangers in public) is a frequent experience for young adult women, and that it has negative implications for their well-being. First, stranger harassment was positively related to self-objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, *Psychol Women Quart* 21:173–206 1997). This was true for women who coped with stranger harassment using common strategies (passive, self-blame, or benign), but not for women who used an uncommon, active coping strategy (e.g., confronting the harasser). Second, stranger harassment experiences and self-objectification were positively related to women's fear of and perceived risk of rape. Further, women who feared rape were more likely to restrict their freedom of movement. In concert, the findings suggest that stranger harassment may have both direct and indirect negative effects on women's lives, and that it is a phenomenon worthy of future research.

Keywords Stranger harassment · Sexual harassment · Self-objectification · Fear of rape

Introduction

In Margaret Atwood's (1986) novel, *A Handmaid's Tale*, women live in a society in which they are highly protected from men and the male gaze. Although they suffer

K. Fairchild (✉)
Department of Psychology, Manhattan College, Manhattan College Parkway,
Riverdale 10471-4098, NY, USA
e-mail: kimberly.fairchild@manhattan.edu

L. A. Rudman
Department of Psychology, Tillett Hall, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey,
53 Avenue E, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8040, USA
e-mail: rudman@rci.rutgers.edu

other hellish forms of repression, they nonetheless enjoy the luxury of no longer being leered at by strangers. Stepping from fiction into reality, both the Japanese and Brazilian governments have recently deemed it necessary to take steps to protect women from public harassment by men. As reported by ABC News in June of 2005, the Japanese have designated women-only train cars to be used during rush hours. A Japanese survey revealed that nearly two-thirds of women in their 20s and 30s have been groped while riding the Tokyo trains and subways; the women reported feeling degraded, humiliated, and frightened by the groping (“Japan,” 2005). Likewise, Women’s eNews reported in May of 2006 that women in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil now have the option of riding female-only, pink-striped subway cars during rush hours (Sussman, 2006). These attempts to segregate male and female subway riders are less extreme than the gender segregation found in *A Handmaid’s Tale*, but in all cases the intent is to shield women from being humiliated by men in public places.

The acknowledgment of stranger harassment, and the need to protect women from it, is virtually ignored in the social science and feminist literature. Stranger harassment is the “[sexual] harassment of women in public places by men who are strangers” (Bowman, 1993, p. 519). In other words, stranger harassment is perpetrated by men who are not known to the victim (i.e., not a co-worker, friend, family member, or acquaintance) in public domains such as on the street, in stores, at bars, or on public transportation. While the phenomenon has been defined, it is infrequently studied (cf. Gardner, 1995; MacMillan, Nierobisz, & Welsh, 2000). Why has stranger harassment been overlooked by social science researchers? As Bowman (1993) and Nielsen (2000) suggest in their analyses of stranger harassment from a legal point of view, the study of stranger harassment may be lacking because there is no legal recourse; it is nearly impossible to sue a stranger who disappears in a flash for sexual harassment, and it is likely that few would support laws limiting the freedom of speech in public places. Gardner (1995) goes even further to suggest that stranger harassment is so pervasive that it is a part of the social fabric of public life: “Women... currently experience shouted insults, determined trailing, and pinches and grabs by strange men and [are] fairly certain that no one—not the perpetrator and probably no official—will think anything of note has happened” (p. 4). Thus, stranger harassment may be perceived to be an innocuous part of daily life, and not an important topic for study (Gardner, 1995).

However, as the Japanese and Brazilian examples suggest, stranger harassment may not be so innocuous; in both cases, the harassment experienced by women on the trains required segregating them from men. In view of the multitude of negative effects that sexual harassment has on women (described below), it becomes clear that the gap in the literature considering stranger harassment needs to be filled. In the current research, we take a first step toward a social psychological understanding of stranger harassment.

Sexual Harassment Versus Stranger Harassment

Over the past 25 years, sexual harassment research has boomed as researchers have sought to define the components of sexual harassment and elaborate its causes and consequences (Gutek & Done, 2001; Pryor & McKinney, 1995; Wiener & Gutek,

1999). To do so, sexual harassment has been commonly parsed into three main components: sexual coercion, gender harassment, and unwanted sexual attention (Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995). Sexual coercion is the direct request or requirement of sexual acts for job or school related rewards (e.g., promotion or a better grade); this component aligns with the legal conceptualization of *quid pro quo* sexual harassment. Gender harassment involves degradation of women at the group level such as making jokes about women as sex objects or posting pictures of women as sex objects. Unwanted sexual attention involves degradation of women at the individual level, such as treating a woman as a sex object by sending her dirty e-mails, grabbing her inappropriately, or leering at her. Both gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention fall into the legal category of hostile environment sexual harassment. Gelfand et al. (1995) note that while women frequently label sexual coercion as sexual harassment, it is experienced by only 5–10% of samples, making it somewhat rare. Gender harassment is by far the most prevalent, experienced by approximately 50% or more of samples, followed by unwanted sexual attention, experienced by approximately 20–25% of samples.

Unfortunately, many sexual harassment researchers seem to assume that sexual harassment is a phenomenon experienced only in the workplace or at school. One of the most popular measures of sexual harassment is the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995a), which asks for respondents' experiences with a variety of behaviors (e.g., "unwanted sexual attention," "told suggestive stories," and "touching in a way that made you feel uncomfortable"). The bulk of behaviors listed in the SEQ can be applied to many situations, but the majority of researchers ask respondents to think about these experiences in the context of the workplace and school. As such, it is difficult to ascertain the prevalence of sexual harassment outside of these locales. Moreover, while researchers examining sex discrimination more broadly have recognized that harassment can occur in a variety of settings (i.e., beyond the workplace and school; e.g., Klonoff & Landrine, 1995; Klonoff, Landrine, & Campbell, 2000; Landrine et al., 1995; Landrine & Klonoff, 1997), they often fail to separate out the effects of being harassed by strangers (as opposed to known perpetrators). For example, Berdahl (2007a) assessed undergraduate students' experiences of sexual harassment using the SEQ. Since the students had little work experience, they were encouraged to consider their experiences in relation to school and time with friends and family. While this study expands the realms of where and with whom sexual harassment can occur, Berdahl does not parse the results based on location or source. However, in more theoretical work, Berdahl (2007b) argues that sexual harassment stems from a need to maintain social status and as such can occur in any situation in which a perpetrator's status is threatened.

In *Passing By: Gender and Public Harassment*, Gardner (1995) provides an empirical focus on stranger harassment as she details the contexts in which stranger harassment takes place, the participants in stranger harassment, the behaviors that are characteristic of stranger harassment, the interpretations people have of stranger harassment, and the strategies employed to avoid stranger harassment. Her evidence stems from information obtained from 506 interviews with 293 women and 213 men. From her qualitative analysis, it is clear that stranger harassment is highly akin

to sexual harassment researchers' conceptualization of unwanted sexual attention. As Bowman (1993) describes it, stranger harassment "includes both verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls, and stranger remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman's physical appearance or on her presence in public" (p. 523). The information provided by Gardner (1995) gives the reader a vivid sense of the experience of stranger harassment, but she overlooks the connection between stranger harassment and the established literature on unwanted sexual attention.

To date, MacMillan et al. (2000) provide the only known attempt to document differences between unwanted sexual attention from strangers and known perpetrators. Using data collected in 1993 from a national sample of Canadian women responding to the Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS; Johnson & Sacco, 1995), the authors focused on the data obtained from eight items measuring stranger and non-stranger sexual harassment. The stranger harassment items assessed "whether respondents had ever received an obscene phone call, received unwanted attention (i.e., anything that does not involve touching, such as catcalls, whistling, leering, or blowing kisses), been followed in a manner that frightened them, or experienced an indecent exposure" (p. 310). The items measuring non-stranger sexual harassment represented both *quid pro quo* and hostile environment sexual harassment. Their data show that 85% of the women reported experiencing stranger harassment, with the majority experiencing unwanted sexual attention (e.g., catcalls and leering). By contrast, 51% experienced non-stranger sexual harassment, with only 5% reporting having experienced *quid pro quo* sexual harassment. MacMillan et al.'s (2000) research indicates that stranger harassment may be a more pervasive problem than non-stranger harassment. Moreover, they found that stranger harassment has a more consistent and significant impact on women's fears than non-stranger harassment. Specifically, they noted that, "Stranger harassment reduces feelings of safety while walking alone at night, using public transportation, walking alone in a parking garage, and while home alone at night" (p. 319). MacMillan et al. (2000) were the first to show that stranger harassment is more prevalent than non-stranger sexual harassment, and that it has an impact on women's fears.

Consequences of Sexual and Stranger Harassment

Since sexual harassment and stranger harassment are conceptually related, they are likely to produce many of the same consequences. Since MacMillan et al. (2000) showed remarkably high rates of stranger harassment, it can be further inferred that stranger harassment may affect more women than sexual harassment. The work of Louise Fitzgerald and her colleagues (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, Magley, 1997; Glomb et al., 1997; Magley, Hulin, Fitzgerald, & DeNardo, 1999; Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997) is among the most prominent for investigating the outcomes of sexual harassment. In their model of the antecedents and consequences of sexual harassment, Fitzgerald, Hulin, and Drasgow (1995b) propose that sexual harassment results in decreased job satisfaction and physical well-being. In addition, tests of their model suggest that sexual harassment has a negative impact on

psychological outcomes; women who experienced low, moderate, and high levels of sexual harassment showed more negative psychological outcomes than women who experienced no sexual harassment (Schneider et al., 1997). Furthermore, Schneider et al. (1997) found that experiencing harassment has negative outcomes for women even if they do not label the events as sexual harassment. This finding was also supported by research that investigated the outcomes of self-labeling (Magley et al., 1999); specifically, the researchers found no differences in negative outcomes between women who labeled their experiences sexual harassment and women who did not label them as such. Thus, sexual harassment negatively impacts women's psychological well-being whether the harassment is mild or severe, labeled or not labeled. Unfortunately, while the sexual harassment research indicates negative psychological outcomes for women, it is unclear whether decreased psychological well-being refers to depression, anxiety, or some other mental health disorders. For example, Magley et al. (1999) used the Mental Health Index to assess psychological well-being. The Mental Health Index includes measures of depression, anxiety, and positive affect. However, the researchers used different variations of the index in their different samples, and did not separate depression and anxiety (combined as psychological distress). Moreover, no research on sexual harassment has examined self-objectification as a consequence, which has been linked to depression (e.g., Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004) and thus may account for some of the negative psychological outcomes. Additionally, sexual harassment research has not explored potentially significant consequences such as women's increased fear of rape or voluntarily restricting their movements. The present research on stranger harassment was designed to address these gaps in the harassment literature relating to self-objectification, fear of rape, and restriction of movement.

Objectification

Sexual objectification is a clear component of both sexual harassment and stranger harassment. In both cases, women are treated as objects to be looked at and touched, and not as intelligent human beings. The main tenet of self-objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) is that the human body is not merely a biological system, but that “bodies exist within social and cultural contexts, and hence are also constructed through sociocultural practices and discourses” (p. 174). In American culture, women's bodies are constantly and consistently regarded as sexual objects through pornography, the mass media, and advertising. The unwanted sexual attention experienced in both sexual harassment and stranger harassment is another example of women being regarded as sexual objects. Despite the diversity of mechanisms through which sexual objectification can occur (e.g., pornography, advertising, and stranger harassment), “the common thread running through all forms of sexual objectification is the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174).

Self-objectification theory, as proposed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), provides a framework for understanding the psychological experience of sexual

objectification. They argue that this experience is uniquely female and can lead to mental health problems. For Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), the consequences of objectification arise when the woman begins to objectify herself (i.e., self-objectify). Repeated exposure to sexual objectification increases the likelihood that women will objectify themselves. This leads women to regard themselves as mere sex objects, to experience body shame, and to chronically monitor their external appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Prior research shows that self-objectification is positively correlated with negative outcomes, including depression and disordered eating (e.g., Greenleaf, 2005; Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003; Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglama, 2002; Muehlenkamp, Swanson, & Brausch, 2005; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004; Tiggemann & Slater, 2001). In the present research, we hypothesized that women who experience greater amounts of stranger harassment will be more likely to self-objectify. As such, it is a first attempt to test unwanted sexual attention (in the form of stranger harassment) as a predictor of self-objectification.

Fear of Rape and Restriction of Movement

The limited work on stranger harassment (MacMillan et al., 2000) suggests that it may increase women's fear of rape and therefore their willingness to limit their freedom of movement (e.g., Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Swim et al., 1998).

In the present research, we hypothesized that women would fear sexual assault to the extent they reported being harassed in public by strangers. Research on the fear of rape among women suggests that women are more fearful of stranger rape than acquaintance rape, even though most women recognize that stranger rape is much less prevalent than acquaintance rape (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997). Research on sex differences in perception of danger and fear of victimization, such as murder or robbery, consistently illustrate that women are more fearful than men, although men are much more likely to be victims of crime than women (Ferraro, 1996; Harris & Miller, 2000). Ferraro's (1996) "shadow of sexual assault" hypothesis suggests that women are more fearful overall because the fear of rape permeates their fear of other victimizations. Since, for women, rape is a potential outcome of any face-to-face victimization, it may be a primary source of anxiety. In support of this hypothesis, Ferraro (1996) found that women's fear of rape predicted their fear of other personal crimes (e.g., murder, burglary). Fisher and Sloan (2003) replicated Ferraro's (1996) work finding that the fear of rape did indeed shadow other fears of victimization for women.

Similarly, Harris and Miller (2000) discovered that women, compared with men, are consistently more fearful of ambiguously dangerous situations involving men. They suggest that women's higher fear of victimization may stem from daily experiences of minor victimizations, which are likely to be ignored because of their non-criminal nature. Although they did not test this hypothesis, they specifically posited that the experience of "stares, whistles, condescending behavior, being interrupted when speaking, and harassment at work" socializes women to be more fearful and more perceptive of danger (Harris & Miller, 2000, p. 857). When taken

together with Ferraro's (1996) and Fisher and Sloan's (2003) research, this suggests that stranger harassment may increase women's fear of rape, as well as their perceived risk of rape.

Finally, the fear of rape literature suggests that women typically alter their behaviors by limiting how, when, and where they travel to protect themselves from rape (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Krahe, 2005; Warr, 1985). By avoiding walking alone at night or specific places (e.g., parking garages; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997), women voluntarily restrict their freedom to move about in the world. Similarly, Swim, Cohen, and Hyers (1998) note that women's tendency to avoid sites of sexual harassment restricts their freedom of movement. Thus, in addition to fear of rape, we predicted that women's voluntary restriction of movement would be a consequence of stranger harassment.

Coping with Stranger Harassment

Research on women's responses to sexual harassment suggests that the majority of women are likely to use passive, non-assertive coping strategies. Gruber's (1989) review of the literature found that less than 20% of women use assertive or active coping strategies. Women typically respond to harassment by ignoring it or attempting to avoid the harasser (see also Magley, 2002). Less frequently, women may cope with harassment by reporting or confronting the perpetrator, engaging in self-blame, or by perceiving the harassment to be a compliment or benign (Fitzgerald, 1990). While it is likely that many of the coping strategies used by women who are sexually harassed are similar to the strategies used by women who are stranger harassed (e.g., ignoring it), there may also be differences (e.g., there are no laws specifically against stranger harassment, so it is unclear to whom a stranger harasser would be reported).

For our purposes, we borrowed items from the Coping with Harassment Questionnaire (CHQ; Fitzgerald, 1990) that seemed most pertinent to stranger harassment and excluded items more descriptive of sexual harassment (e.g., "I filed a grievance," and "I told a supervisor or department head"). It was predicted that women who endorsed the active coping items (e.g., "I let him know I did not like what he was doing") would experience less objectification than women who endorsed the passive items (e.g., "I pretended nothing was happening") or who engaged in self-blame (e.g., "I realized I had probably brought it on myself"). In rejecting the harassment through active coping strategies, it is thought that these women will also be rejecting the objectified view of their bodies, thus limiting their self-objectification; on the other hand, women employing passive or self-blame strategies are not actively fighting the objectified view of their body and thus may be more likely to internalize the objectification. Finally, we had competing predictions about women who responded to stranger harassment as though it were benign (e.g., "I considered it flattering"). On the one hand, it was possible that these women would not be adversely affected by stranger harassment. On the other hand, women who perceived stranger harassment to be a compliment or innocuous might be already highly self-objectified. In essence, their response might reflect society's

view of stranger harassment as something women should “expect” by virtue of their gender. If so, these women should show high levels of objectification depending on the frequency of stranger harassment.

Summary and Hypotheses

Women’s experiences of sexual harassment in public places (i.e., stranger harassment) is an area of research that has been ignored by traditional sexual harassment research. Stranger harassment shares many common themes with sexual harassment, most specifically the component of unwanted sexual attention. However, stranger harassment is unique from sexual harassment in that it is perpetrated by strangers (as opposed to co-workers, teachers, or peers) and that it takes place in public domains such as on the street, in stores, and in bars (as opposed to the office or school).

The current research investigates the prevalence and hypothesized outcomes of stranger harassment, as well as potential moderators of stranger harassment’s consequences. First, we sought to determine the frequency of stranger harassment experiences in a sample of female college students. Second, we predicted that frequent experiences with stranger harassment would lead to increased levels of self-objectification. Third, we expected that stranger harassment would positively predict women’s fear of sexual assault and perceived risk of rape and, therefore, voluntary restriction of movement.

However, we also hypothesized that women’s coping behaviors would moderate the relationship between stranger harassment and objectification. First, we expected that women who responded actively to stranger harassment (e.g., by confronting the harasser) would buffer themselves from self-objectification. Second, we predicted that women who responded passively (e.g., by ignoring the harassment) or who engaged in self-blame would be more likely to self-objectify with more experiences of stranger harassment. Finally, although women who viewed stranger harassment as benign might not be affected by their experiences, we suspected they might show high levels of objectification if their responses reflect being co-opted by society’s view that women should expect to be sexually objectified.

Method

Participants

Female volunteers ($N = 228$) participated in exchange for partial credit toward their Introductory Psychology research participation requirement. About 44% (101) were White, 33% (75) were Asian, 8% (18) were Latina, 7% (16) were Black, and the remaining 8% reported another ethnicity. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 29, with a mean age of 19.3 years old. The majority (97%) reported being exclusively heterosexual.

Measures

Stranger Harassment

Experiences with stranger harassment were assessed using a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al., 1995a). Participants were first asked whether they had ever experienced nine different behaviors from strangers; these behaviors ranged in severity (e.g., “Have you ever experienced unwanted sexual attention or interaction from a stranger?”; “Have you ever experienced catcalls, whistles, or stares from a stranger?”; “Have you ever experienced direct or explicit pressure to cooperate sexually from a stranger?”; and “Have you ever experienced direct or forceful fondling or grabbing from a stranger?”). Table 1 shows the items. Participants then responded to the same behaviors in terms of frequency (1 = *once*; 2 = *once a month*; 3 = *2–4 times per month*; 4 = *every few days*; 5 = *every day*).

Following this, participants were instructed to think about how they typically respond to the experiences described above and to rate statements about potential reactions on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all descriptive*) to 7 (*extremely descriptive*). The reactions were selected from the Coping with Harassment Questionnaire (CHQ; Fitzgerald, 1990) to reflect active coping (e.g., “I talked to someone about what happened”), passive coping (e.g., “I just ‘blew it off’ and acted like I did not care”), self-blame (e.g., “I realized he probably would not have done it if I had looked or dressed differently”) or treating harassment as benign or inconsequential (e.g., “I figured he must really like me,” and “I treated it as a joke”). Table 5 provides the items for each subscale.

Objectification

Self-objectification was measured using McKinley and Hyde’s (1996) Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS). The OBCS is comprised of three subscales (surveillance, body shame, and control beliefs) to which participants respond on

Table 1 Reported frequency (in percent) of women’s stranger harassment experiences

	Once a month	Twice a month	Every few days or more
Catcalls, whistles, or stares	32.0	33.3	30.9
Unwanted sexual attention	40.8	24.1	14.5
Crude or offensive sexual jokes	37.3	25.9	11.4
Sexist remarks or behaviors	40.8	22.4	11.4
Seductive remarks or “come ons”	30.0	24.6	15.8
Unwanted touching or stroking	36.0	11.4	2.7
Subtle pressure to cooperate sexually	30.3	6.1	8.1
Direct pressure to cooperate sexually	25.9	5.3	1.3
Forceful fondling or grabbing	26.3	4.8	1.3

scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). For the current study, only the body surveillance and body shame scales were used, consistent with prior research (Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglana, 2002; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004; Tiggemann & Slater, 2001). The surveillance subscale assesses concern with body appearance over functioning (e.g., “I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good,” and “I am more concerned with how my body looks than with what it can do”). The body shame subscale assesses how respondents feel about their bodies’ imperfections (e.g., “When I am not the size I think I should be, I feel ashamed”; “When I cannot control my weight, I feel like something must be wrong with me”). Both subscales showed adequate internal consistency (surveillance $\alpha = .86$; shame $\alpha = .87$). As in past research, the body surveillance and body shame scales were significantly correlated ($r = .50$, $p < .01$). Thus, they were averaged to form the Self-Objectification Index ($\alpha = .88$).

Fear and Risk of Rape

Women reported their fear of being raped by a stranger and an acquaintance on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all afraid*) to 10 (*very afraid*). Specifically, the items read, “How afraid are you of being raped by a stranger [acquaintance]?” They also responded to two items assessing perceived risk of being raped on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 10 (*very likely*). These items were, “How likely is it that you will be raped by a stranger [acquaintance]?” Fear of rape by a stranger and an acquaintance were highly related, $r(226) = .67$, $p < .001$, as were the likelihood measures, $r(226) = .50$, $p < .001$. They were subsequently combined to form the fear of rape and risk of rape indexes, respectively. The subsequent indexes were modestly related, $r(226) = .17$, $p < .05$.

Restriction of Movement

Women also responded to 10 items designed to assess restriction of movement, on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include “I feel safe walking around campus alone at night,” “I would not feel comfortable walking alone in the city at night,” and “If I need to go out of my house at night, I often try to have a male friend accompany me.” Reliability analyses suggested removing two items (“I try to avoid certain places at night,” and “I feel as safe with a group of girlfriends as I do with a male companion even at night”). The 8-item scale showed adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .71$).

Procedure

Participants were escorted to private cubicles equipped with a desktop PC. The experimenter administered the instructions and informed consent and started a computer program for the participants. Participants completed the measures in the order described above. Items were presented randomly within each measure. Participants were then asked to report their age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. At

the conclusion of the study, participants were thanked for their participation and fully debriefed.

Results

Prevalence of Stranger Harassment

Table 1 displays women's reported frequencies of stranger harassment experiences. The first two items ("catcalls, whistles, or stares" and "unwanted sexual attention") were reported to be experienced once a month by 32% and 40% of the sample, respectively. Strikingly, 31% reported experiencing "catcalls, whistles, or stares" from strangers every few days or more. Over one-third of participants reported hearing offensive sexual jokes or sexist remarks from strangers once a month. In addition, 36% reported being the victim of unwanted touching or stroking once a month. These results support Gardner's (1995) assertion that stranger harassment is a common experience for many women. It should also be noted that the final three items in Table 1 ("subtle pressure to cooperate sexually," "direct pressure to cooperate sexually," and "forceful fondling") represent the most extreme harassing behaviors from strangers and can be characterized as sexual coercion or assault. Remarkably, over a quarter of the sample reported experiencing these types of sexual coercion once a month.

To analyze experiences of stranger harassment in relation to self-objectification, fear of rape, risk of rape, and restriction of movement, the Stranger Harassment Index (SHI) was created. The SHI was computed by multiplying the respondents' yes/no responses to experiencing the 9 types of stranger harassment (coded as 1 or 0) by their reported frequency of occurrence (ranging from 1 to 5). The results were factor analyzed using a principle components analysis and varimax rotation. As can be seen in Table 2, two factors emerged. The first consists mainly of verbal stranger harassment, while the second consists of sexual pressure from strangers. Combining these items separately yielded sufficient reliabilities ($\alpha = .85$ for verbal, $\alpha = .75$ for sexual pressure). The two factors correlated well, $r(226) = .54$, $p < .001$. We therefore combined the two factors to form the SHI ($\alpha = .85$). Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the SHI and all of the study's measures.

Consequences of Stranger Harassment

Table 4 presents the correlations among the measures. As hypothesized, experiences of stranger harassment were significantly related to self-objectification, $r(226) = .16$, $p = .01$. Thus, women reported greater body surveillance and shame depending on their experiences of stranger harassment. In addition, stranger harassment was marginally related to fear of rape, $r(226) = .12$, $p = .07$, and reliably related to perceived risk of rape, $r(226) = .25$, $p < .001$.

Unexpectedly, Table 4 shows a negligible correlation between the SHI and the restriction of movement scale, $r(226) = -.10$, *n.s.* Thus, our hypothesized relationship between stranger harassment and women's willingness to curb

Table 2 Factor analysis of the stranger harassment index

Factor	Question	Loading factor 1	Loading factor 2
Verbal ^a	Crude and offensive sexual remarks, jokes, or actions from a stranger.	.78	.21
	Seductive behavior, remarks, or “come ons” from a stranger.	.77	.27
	Catcalls, whistles, or stares from a stranger.	.76	.09
	Sexist remarks or behaviors from a stranger.	.71	.16
	Unwanted sexual attention or interaction from a stranger.	.70	.27
Sexual pressure ^b	Direct or explicit pressure to cooperate sexually from a stranger.	.06	.82
	Subtle pressure or coercion to cooperate sexually from a stranger.	.21	.75
	Direct or forceful fondling or grabbing from a stranger.	.22	.71
	Unwanted touching, stroking, or hugging from a stranger.	.41	.61

Note: Items factor analyzed were responses to each question (Have you ever experienced...?) multiplied by the frequency of the experience

^a Eigenvalue = 4.55, variance = 45.55%, and $\alpha = .83$

^b Eigenvalue = 1.27, variance = 14.17%, and $\alpha = .75$

Table 3 Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Standard deviation
Stranger harassment index	13.96	7.18
Self-objectification	4.04	1.00
Fear of rape	7.84	2.43
Risk of rape	3.18	1.87
Restriction of movement	4.16	.95
<i>Coping responses</i>		
Passive	4.01	1.54
Self-blame	2.77	1.34
Benign	2.72	1.15
Active	3.36	1.49

Table 4 Correlations among measures

	Stranger harassment	Self-objectification	Fear of rape	Risk of rape
Self-objectification	.16*			
Fear of rape	.12	.17*		
Risk of rape	.25**	.25**	.17*	
Restriction of Movement	-.10	.12	.31**	.06

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

their movements was not supported. However, consistent with past research, women who feared rape were more likely to restrict their movements, $r(226) = .31$, $p < .001$ (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Krahe, 2005; Warr, 1985). Moreover,

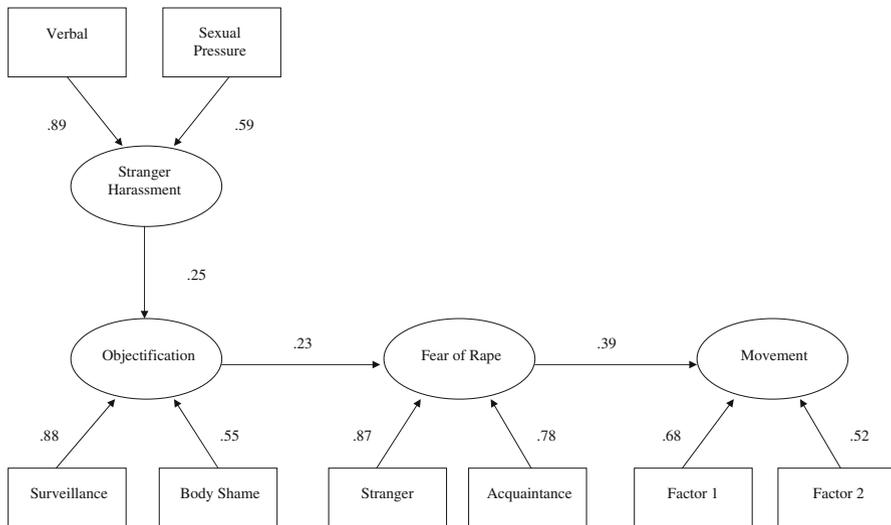


Fig. 1 Standardized beta coefficients are shown. All coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. The R^2 for objectification, fear of rape, and restriction of movement were .06, .05, and .16, respectively

self-objectification was related to both fear of rape and perceived likelihood of being raped, both $r_s(226) > .17$, $p_s < .05$. The pattern shown in Table 4 suggests that stranger harassment may have an indirect effect on women's fear of rape (through increased self-objectification). As a result, stranger harassment may have an indirect effect on women's freedom of movement (through the link between objectification and increased fear of rape).

To test these possibilities and provide an overall picture of our results, we conducted a structural equation analysis. To create a latent stranger harassment variable, we used the two factors described above (verbal and sexual pressure). To create a latent self-objectification variable, we used the surveillance and shame subscales; for fear of rape, we used the two items that assessed fear of stranger rape and fear of acquaintance rape. Finally, restriction of movement was factor analyzed and the results used in the SEM.¹ The model is shown in Fig. 1. Testing the hypothesized structural model provided a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(12, N = 228) = 19.64$, $p = .07$. Indices of fit were good (CFI = .95, GFI = .97, and RMSEA = .05). No modification indices exceeded 4.51. A test of a model that added a direct path from stranger harassment to fear of rape revealed little change in the fit indices, but the coefficient was weak ($\beta = .09$, ns).

Coping with Harassment

To assess whether our data adequately captured multiple coping with harassment strategies, we conducted a principle components factor analysis, using varimax

¹ The two factors that emerged had eigenvalues greater than 1.00 and accounted for 51% of the variance, but they were not conceptually illuminating.

Table 5 Factor analysis of the coping with stranger harassment scale

Factor	Question	Loading
Passive ^a	I just “blew it off” and acted like I did not care.	.80
	I just let it go.	.80
	I just ignored the whole thing.	.78
	I did not do anything.	.77
	I acted like I did not notice.	.75
	I tried to forget the whole thing.	.74
Self-blame ^b	I pretended nothing was happening.	.73
	I realized that I had probably brought it on myself.	.83
	I blamed myself for what happened.	.81
	I realized he probably would not have done it if I had dressed differently.	.70
Benign ^c	I felt stupid for letting myself get into the situation.	.67
	I considered it flattering.	.75
	I assumed he meant well.	.75
	I figured he must really like me.	.67
	I assumed he was trying to be funny.	.62
Active ^d	I treated it as a joke.	.58
	I let him know I did not like what he was doing.	.85
	I let him know how I felt about what he was doing.	.82
	I talked to someone about what happened.	.63
	I reported him.	.46

^a Eigenvalue = 5.76, variance = 27.43%, and $\alpha = .90$

^b Eigenvalue = 3.63, variance = 17.30%, and $\alpha = .77$

^c Eigenvalue = 1.68, variance = 7.98%, and $\alpha = .75$

^d Eigenvalue = 1.51, variance = 7.20%, and $\alpha = .74$

rotation. This analysis revealed the expected four factors (each with eigenvalues greater than one), which we labeled passive, self-blame, benign, and active (see Table 5). We averaged the appropriate items to form four subscales; each showed adequate reliability (all α s > .73). Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for each subscale. Paired sample *t*-tests showed that women were more likely to report passive coping strategies compared with active, self-blame, and benign, all t s(227) > 3.87, p s < .01. Thus, as with sexual harassment, women were more likely to respond passively rather than actively to stranger harassment (e.g., Gruber, 1989; Magley, 2002).

Objectification

Our next set of analyses tested support for the hypothesis that women's coping strategies would moderate their levels of self-objectification in response to stranger harassment. Since women reported how they coped with stranger harassment, support for this prediction would be shown by main effects in regression analyses (e.g., if you coped passively, you might objectify), but it was also possible that

Table 6 Predicting objectification from coping strategies and stranger harassment

Measure	β	t	p	R^2
<i>Passive</i>	.27	4.32	.001	.11
Stranger Harassment	.16	2.48	.014	
Stranger harassment \times Passive	.06	.88	.378	
<i>Self-blame</i>	.17	2.61	.010	.07
Stranger harassment	.14	2.14	.030	
Stranger harassment \times Self-blame	.11	1.72	.086	
<i>Benign</i>	.14	2.14	.030	.08
Stranger harassment	.16	2.41	.010	
Stranger harassment \times Benign	-.08	1.23	.220	
<i>Active</i>	-.08	1.23	.217	.06
Stranger harassment	.15	2.23	.026	
Stranger harassment \times Active	-.15	2.22	.027	

stranger harassment would interact with coping (e.g., higher levels of harassment, in tandem with passivity, might lead to greater objectification). Table 6 presents the results. As can be seen, results support our hypotheses that women who responded either passively or with self-blame to stranger harassment would self-objectify, both β s $> .16$, $ps < .01$. Moreover, benign coping strategies were positively related to objectification, $\beta = .14$, $p < .05$. Thus, viewing stranger harassment as innocuous or complimentary does not protect women from self-objectification. Finally, active coping did not show a main effect but instead interacted with stranger harassment such that the more women were harassed and responded actively, the less they self-objectified, $\beta = -.15$, $p < .05$. In sum, non-active coping strategies predicted self-objectification, and these effects did not depend on how many types of harassment they experienced, or how often they occurred. By contrast, active coping depended on harassment level to dampen its effects on this consequence.

Fear of Rape and Restriction of Movement

Although we did not have a priori predictions concerning coping strategies and the remaining outcome variables, Table 7 shows some intuitive relationships. First,

Table 7 Correlations with coping responses

	Passive	Self-blame	Benign	Active
<i>Outcome</i>				
Objectification Index	.28**	.21**	.15*	-.07
Fear of rape	-.02	-.04	-.14*	.05
Risk of rape	.01	.13*	.08	-.01
Restriction in movement	-.04	.03	-.18**	-.05
Stranger harassment index	.05	.10	.08	.16*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

benign responses were negatively related to fear of rape and restriction of movement, suggesting that viewing stranger harassment as innocuous protects women from fears of being victimized (and therefore, they feel freer to move about in public). Second, self-blame, which may reflect the need for an internal locus of control, was positively linked to fear of rape, suggesting that it may not be an effective means of increasing women's perceived sense of control. Finally, the bottom row of Table 7 shows that increased frequency of stranger harassment was associated with using active strategies. Thus, women may become more confrontational the more they are harassed and, as the regression analysis suggests, if that strategy is used often, it may protect them from self-objectification.

Discussion

The present findings represent a first step toward a social psychological analysis of stranger harassment. We found relatively high prevalence rates of stranger harassment for female college students. Approximately 41% reported experiencing unwanted sexual attention from strangers at least once a month, including sexist remarks or seductive “come ons,” and nearly one-third reported harassment consisting of catcalls, whistles, or stares. In fact, 31% of our sample reported experiencing catcalls, whistles, and stares every few days or more. Moreover, over a quarter of our sample suffered experiences akin to sexual coercion or assault (e.g., forceful grabbing) at least once a month. These data support treating stranger harassment as a significant form of humiliation and indignity that targets women and is likely to undermine the quality of their lives. In essence, stranger harassment turns public spaces into an everyday hostile environment for women.

With respect to the consequences of stranger harassment, we predicted (and found) that it would positively predict women's self-objectification. Although our data cannot speak to causality, this finding suggests that one potential source of women's self-objectification may be their experiences with stranger harassment. Self-objectification reflects emphasizing the body's appearance over its function, and feeling ashamed of a less than ideal body. A large literature suggests that self-objectification predicts negative outcomes in women, including depression and disordered eating (e.g., Greenleaf, 2005; Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003; Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglama, 2002; Muehlenkamp et al., 2005; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004; Tiggemann & Slater, 2001). As a result, it is conceivable that stranger harassment indirectly promotes psychological and behavioral problems in women, through its link to self-objectification.

Moreover, as expected, women's coping responses to stranger harassment were significantly related to self-objectification. First, active coping interacted with stranger harassment to predict less objectification. Thus, women who experience greater harassment and acknowledge the behavior as inappropriate by confronting or reporting the harasser, or talking the experience over with a friend, may be able to resist feeling sexually objectified. Second, women who responded passively (e.g., by ignoring or denying the harassment) reported feeling self-objectified. Since passive strategies were more prevalent than active (or any other type) of coping, the

likelihood of women feeling objectified by stranger harassment is high. Third, self-blame responses were also positively related to self-objectification. As predicted, women who viewed the harassment as their own fault (i.e., as something they could have avoided) also reported feeling self-objectified. Finally, coping with harassment by viewing it as benign, innocuous, or complimentary was also positively related to self-objectification. By coping with the harassment as though it was a form of flattery (or “no big deal”), women may be capitulating to being sexually objectified. Even if they enjoy the attention from men, being objectified by others can lead to self-objectifying (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) which, as noted above, predicts serious outcomes in women such as depression and disordered eating.

We also predicted that stranger harassment would be positively related to women’s fears of victimization and voluntary restriction of movement. However, with the exception of perceived risk of rape, our hypotheses were not supported. Nonetheless, the structural model suggested that stranger harassment may have indirect effects on fear of rape (through self-objectification) and restriction of movement (through fear of rape). Although past research has found that women who feared rape were more likely to curb their movements (e.g., to avoid going out alone at night; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997), we extended these findings to include stranger harassment and self-objectification as potential antecedents of victimization fears.

Limitations and Future Directions

One of the main limitations of the current research is that the sample consisted of college-aged women. It is quite possible that young women are more likely to experience stranger harassment than older women. However, MacMillan et al. (2000) found that 85% of Canadian women reported stranger harassment, suggesting that youth may not be a significant factor. Nonetheless, their research included behaviors that we did not assess (e.g., obscene phone calls), which may be experienced regardless of age. Thus, future research is necessary to lend confidence to the generalizability of our findings.

Another limitation is that the current research did not address the issue of where the harassment took place. While it is theorized that stranger harassment can occur in public places ranging from the street to stores to public transit, the unique characteristics of a college campus may present different “public” experiences than the average woman faces. For example, college women may be more likely to attend parties at fraternities or bars that allow for more harassment opportunities. A follow-up study is underway to ascertain some of the specifics about where stranger harassment is experienced on a college campus. In addition, evidence from Gardner (1995) suggests that women in metropolitan areas are more susceptible to harassment than women in suburban and rural areas. Future research needs to address the specifics of where stranger harassment is most frequent for a variety of settings.

The present research also suggests the need for further investigation of the link between objectification and sexual harassment. It seems likely that if women who are harassed by strangers experience self-objectification, women harassed by known

perpetrators (e.g., in the workplace or school) may also suffer a similar outcome. Moreover, self-objectification and sexual harassment have been independently linked to negative psychological outcomes (e.g., depression and anxiety; Fitzgerald, et al., 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1995a; Fitzgerald et al. 1995b). Thus, future work should test the possibility that self-objectification may serve to mediate the relationship between sexual harassment and psychological dysfunction. Additionally, the current research assumes that the negative consequences of stranger harassment will be similar to the negative consequences of sexual harassment (i.e., decreased psychological well-being). Future research should directly assess the relationship of depression and anxiety to experiences of stranger harassment.

Further, women's strategies for coping with stranger harassment should be further investigated. For example, passive and self-blame responses may reflect women's gender role socialization (e.g., to avoid confrontation and blaming others), whereas active strategies may require more agency. Future research should explore a likely connection between women's acceptance of gender roles or stereotypes and their use of passive (versus active) strategies. Since passive and self-blame strategies were linked to self-objectification, future work may reveal a vicious cycle whereby women are taught to ignore or fault themselves for harassment, which then makes them more vulnerable to experiencing its negative effects. Results for self-blame were particularly poignant in this regard, as self-blame was related to perceived risk of rape. Although women who viewed stranger harassment as benign or complimentary were less likely to fear rape and restrict their movements, they also reported greater self-objectification. Feeling flattered by sexual attention from strangers may reflect women's acceptance of sexual objectification as normative—something women should expect from men as positive reinforcement (e.g., for being attractive). In this respect, stranger harassment may be similar in function to benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001), in which women are praised for being a “good woman” but which actually has a pernicious influence by making them feel weak. Future research should examine whether women who respond to stranger harassment as though it were a compliment are also likely to be benevolent sexists.

Conclusion

Despite the wealth of sexual harassment research, women's analogous experience of public harassment by strangers has been largely ignored. The present findings suggest that stranger harassment is a remarkably common occurrence for many women, and that common means of coping with it may lead to increased self-objectification. Since self-objectification has negative consequences for women (e.g., depression and eating disorders), stranger harassment may be a serious form of discrimination. Moreover, through its link to objectification, stranger harassment may have indirect consequences that decrease the quality of women's lives, such as increased fear of rape and restriction of movement. Overall, stranger harassment appears to be a frequent and significant experience for women and therefore is deserving of future research designed to more fully elaborate the experience and its consequences.

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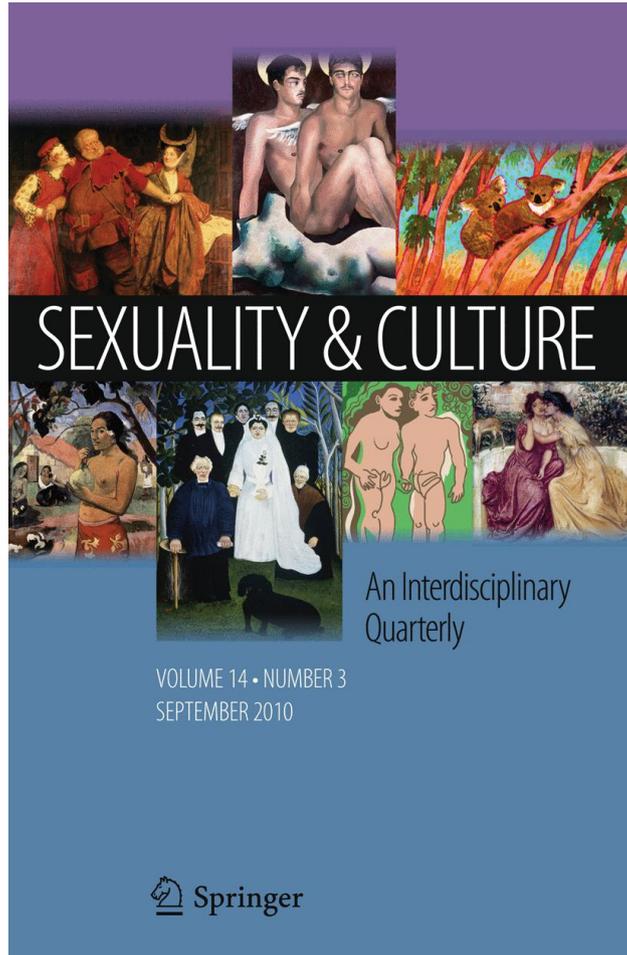


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Context Effects on Women's Perceptions of Stranger Harassment

Kimberly Fairchild

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Abstract The current research suggests that perceptions of stranger harassment experiences (i.e., experiencing unwanted sexual attention in public) are altered by the context of the situation. Study one investigated which elements of the situation (context) might be most influential in increasing fear and enjoyment of the cat-calling experience. Attractiveness and age of the perpetrator, time of day, and whether the victim was alone or with friends were some of the categories that were selected as influencing both fear and enjoyment. Study two used a perspective taking methodology to ask women to predict a target character's emotions, fears, and behaviors in harassment situations that varied by context. Results mirror the sexual harassment literature and suggest that harassment by younger and attractive men is viewed as less harassing. Exploratory analyses were also conducted with women's personal experiences with stranger harassment as well as gender differences in perceptions. Context plays a vital role in interpretation of stranger harassment.

Keywords Stranger harassment · Street harassment · Sexual harassment · Context effects

*While on my way to work in the middle of the day in any area of my city, I get catcalled by a variety of men on the street. If I walk home from work at dusk, the comments only intensify. Old men, young men. Creepy men, adolescent boys. Whoever. They might say something fairly "benign," such as, "You have very beautiful eyes" or they might say something very frightening, such as (approximately), "I want to bang you, b*tch." Or just make some utterly degrading animal sound, laughing and giving their buddies a round of high-fives. Or, worst of all, pull over (nice car, beat up car—any class of men has its bottom-feeders), making such sounds from their car, then driving away, laughing maniacally.*

K. Fairchild (✉)
Department of Psychology, Manhattan College, 4513 Manhattan College Parkway,
Riverdale, NY 10471, USA
e-mail: kimberly.fairchild@manhattan.edu

I do not appreciate these comments AT ALL. If you think I have beautiful eyes, then appreciate them from afar instead of whispering a comment in my ear while I'm walking past you. I don't care what your 'complimentary' intentions are. I'm trying to get to my job or to walk home or to run some errands, or maybe I'm just enjoying the day. There's nothing that will wipe the smile off of my face faster than these comments. My policy is to ignore any comments, although somehow I can't help looking painfully shocked by a remark/drive-by yell. Additionally, sometimes these comments rattle me and I can't do my job as well as I'd like. From an anonymous poster on the blog.

Stop Street Harassment (2009)

Introduction

Fairchild and Rudman (2008) demonstrated that stranger harassment is a very real, common and often unpleasant experience in the lives of women. Being catcalled, stared at, whistled at, and even groped and grabbed are monthly and weekly experiences, and for some women a daily experience. In their research, Fairchild and Rudman (2008) demonstrate that stranger harassment functions akin to unwanted sexual attention (a subset of the sexual harassment spectrum) by eliciting reactions of ignoring the behavior. The authors even provide evidence of frequent experiences of stranger harassment correlating with more body objectification and fear of rape. The quote at the start of this article and many of the other submissions to Stop Street Harassment (<http://streetharassment.wordpress.com/>), The Street Harassment Project (<http://www.streetharassmentproject.org/>), HollabackNYC (<http://www.hollabacknyc.blogspot.com/>), and related websites suggest that many women find the experience of stranger harassment to be frightening, unpleasant, and disruptive; women frequently describe themselves as frustrated, disgusted, and angered by the experience.

On the other hand, Fairchild's (2009) dissertation provides some intriguing tidbits that suggest that the harassment experience may not be universally loathed by women. This is also demonstrated in popular press discussions of stranger harassment or street harassment in which some women declaim harassment as invasions of their personal space, while others enjoy the attention (Grossman 2008). The title of Grossman's article sums it up: "Catcalling: creepy or a compliment?"

Individual differences may account for women's varying acceptance and rejection of stranger harassment. Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that the same woman may enjoy a compliment 1 day, and be infuriated by a catcall the next. It seems highly likely that the context of the situation in which the harassing behavior occurs can alter the perception and perspective of the target. In one situation, a mild catcall may be threatening, but in another, it may be complimentary. As the author of the quote at the beginning of this article notes, harassment comes from many different types of men and the severity changes as day turns to night. The current research seeks to elucidate what contextual effects influence the perception of stranger harassment.

Stranger harassment or street harassment can be defined as the "[sexual] harassment of women in public places by men who are strangers" (Bowman 1993, p. 519) and includes "both verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls, and street remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment evaluatively on a woman's physical appearance or on

her presence in public” (p. 523). While being the recipient of any of the above behaviors may indicate one has been stranger harassed, like sexual harassment, it is the perception of the target or victim that determines if the event was indeed harassing. Sexual harassment researchers have noted that the official definition of sexual harassment provided by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment in terms of the perception of the victim in regard to frequency, coerciveness, and welcomeness (Faley 1982; Pryor 1985; Katz et al. 1996; Golden et al. 2001). Harassment is in the eye of the beholder; in other words, it is up to the victim to label the behavior harassment. Sexual harassment, and by extension stranger harassment, is a matter of individual perception. This suggests that there are a multitude of potential individual and situational variables that can influence the perception of harassment.

Context Effects

While under the greater umbrella of sexual harassment, stranger harassment has been rarely studied (Fairchild and Rudman 2008). However, because of the similarities between stranger harassment and sexual harassment's unwanted sexual attention, an understanding of the sexual harassment literature can shed light on how women react to stranger harassment. Because sexual harassment is defined by the perception of the victim, many researchers have investigated the individual and contextual differences that may influence a victim's interpretation. Katz et al. (1996) note that researchers have investigated the influence of variables such as observer gender, harasser's age and marital status, observer's occupation, and the severity of harassment on perceptions of sexual harassment. LaRocca and Kromrey (1999) add to this list that many have also studied the effects of power and attractiveness (of both the harasser and victim) on perceptions. Finally, Golden et al. (2001) highlight that researchers have also investigated the effects of responses made by the victim to the harassment and the gender composition of the occupation.

In his article on the “lay person's understanding of sexual harassment,” Pryor (1985) reviews past research on the factors that influence an observer's perception of whether sexual harassment has occurred in an ambiguous situation.¹ These factors range from characteristics of the perpetrator, victim, and observer to the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. Overall, it is clear that the unwelcomed sexual attention of sexual harassment is up to the individual's interpretation, which is affected by a myriad of factors. Pryor (1985) deduces from the past research and a small study that Kelly's attribution theory can be applied to

¹ It is important to note that most of the sexual harassment research focuses on the perception of harassment from the standpoint of an outside observer. The perceptions of outside observers of harassment have important legal ramifications for sexual harassers. It is the human resources department at a company or even a jury in a legal case that determine whether harassment has occurred and how it should be handled. While the victim needs to identify it as harassment to herself in order to file a complaint, it is the outside observer who has the power of instituting penalties for harassing behavior. Therefore, the sexual harassment literature focuses on understanding how observers interpret situations of sexual harassment. In the current investigation of context effects and stranger harassment, it is the victim's perception that is sought through a perspective taking study because legal consequences are not typically a result of stranger harassment.

determine whether an observer will label an ambiguous behavior as sexual harassment. Understanding the context behind the harassment event, especially details about the harasser that signify the consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus of his behavior, are influential in determining whether sexual harassment has occurred.

Terpstra and Baker (1986) develop a framework for the study of sexual harassment that argues that the perception of the behavior is what determines the response to and outcomes of the behavior more so than the actual behavior itself. This is the result of individuals interpreting similar events differently; what is sexual harassment to one person, may be viewed as funny by another, and inconsequential by a third. These authors suggest that potential variables that might influence an individual's perception of sexual harassment include: sex, age, marital status, attractiveness, familiarity status, and job status of the perpetrator; demographic, psychological, and work-related factors of the victim; sex-role identity and attitudes toward women of the observer. Like Pryor (1985), Terpstra and Baker (1986) suggest Kelly's attribution theory may be a good explanation for causal attributions of sexual harassment.

Unfortunately, transferring the effects of context from the sexual harassment literature to stranger harassment is difficult. Because the perpetrator of a stranger harassment event is a stranger, it is impossible for the victim or even an observer to assess many of the attributes deemed important in determining the occurrence of sexual harassment through Kelly's attribution theory as suggested by Pryor (1985) and Terpstra and Baker (1986). Victims can estimate age and attractiveness, but factors that would support Kelly's attribution theory to demonstrate consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus of behavior are impossible to establish in a single episode. Moreover, the crucial outcomes of stranger harassment, such as the toll that it may take on women's emotions, body image, and behaviors, are dependent on the individual woman perceiving the occurrence of harassment, not on an outside observer's opinion of whether or not harassment occurred. While the use of Kelly's attribution theory serves a good purpose in understanding how observers (who may be involved in determining the repercussions of a sexual harassment case) process and understand sexual harassment is useful knowledge, it is unhelpful in understanding what contextual effects may influence perceptions of stranger harassment.

Context Effects: Attractiveness of the Perpetrator

The contextual factor of attractiveness likely has an effect on the perception of harassment from both known and unknown others. The research on attractiveness and perceptions of sexual harassment suggest that the ambiguous behavior of attractive perpetrators is likely to be viewed as less sexual harassing than the same behaviors performed by unattractive perpetrators (Cartar et al. 1996; LaRocca and Kromrey 1999; Golden et al. 2001). LaRocca and Kromrey (1999) conducted a study in which participants read a vignette about an ambiguous sexual harassment situation; the attractiveness and gender of the perpetrator and victim were manipulated in each of the vignettes. Their results showed an interesting interaction between observer gender, perpetrator gender, and attractiveness. Both men and

women viewed the opposite sex perpetrator as less harassing than the unattractive opposite sex perpetrator. In other words, for women, the behavior of the attractive male perpetrator in the vignette was rated as less harassing than the same behavior by an unattractive male perpetrator.

Golden et al. (2001) explain that the attractive perpetrator may be off the hook for his behaviors because of the attractiveness stereotype. Individuals who are attractive receive the benefit of the “halo effect” in which their attractiveness encourages others to ascribe positive traits and behaviors to them. An attractive individual may then be more likely to “get away with” ambiguous sexual harassment behaviors because of the additional good qualities he is assumed to have under the attractiveness stereotype. Because beautiful is believed to be good, the authors hypothesize that attractive male perpetrators will be viewed as less harassing in their behavior than unattractive male perpetrators. Their data support their hypothesis and they conclude that the effect of attractiveness on perceptions of sexual harassment stem directly from the stereotype of attractiveness. This supports the work of Trope (1986), Trope and Alfieri (1997) that suggests that elements of the context help to determine what happened in ambiguous situations.

For stranger harassment, these results suggest that attractiveness of the harasser may play a role in women's perceptions regarding their own experiences. If an attractive man catcalls a woman, the woman may be more likely to view the incident as benign and potentially feel flattered. Likewise, a catcall from an unattractive man may lead to a more typical interpretation of the incident as harassment and a more negative reaction from the woman. Attractiveness of the perpetrator is a contextual factor that may have an effect on the perception of stranger harassment. While the behaviors of stranger harassment (catcalling, whistling, leering, etc.) are not as ambiguous as some of the unwanted sexual attention behaviors with sexual harassment, the intention behind the behaviors is ambiguous and therefore the victim is likely assessing the context to determine her emotional and physical reaction. Whistles from an attractive man may be perceived as less threatening than the same behavior from an unattractive man. What Cartar et al. (1996) suggest of sexual harassment is likely true for stranger harassment: “the male's beauty would likely ‘soften’ the negative reaction of a female to his sexual advances” (p. 739).

Context Effects: Severity and Threat

Research by Cartar et al. (1996) investigated the relationship between attractiveness of the perpetrator and severity of the behaviors. The researchers predicted that varying the attractiveness of the perpetrator would have an effect on women's perceptions of the situation including how flattered they felt, how violated, and how socially desirable the behavior was. In addition, the researchers predicted that varying the severity of the behavior would effect perceptions. Quite simply, they predicted that increasing the amount of coercion in the situation would increase the negative reaction in women; however, following prior research, women would regard all of the sexually coercive situations negatively, and that negativity would increase as the amount of coercion increases regardless of attractiveness of the perpetrator.

The researchers created three vignettes to represent low (gentle kiss), medium (touching of breast), and high (grabbing genitals) sexual coercion (Cartar et al. 1996). Each of the vignettes was described as being conducted by a very attractive or unattractive man. Participants rated the overall effect of the situation, social desirability of the actions, and how flattered they would feel. In addition, they rated how coercive the behavior was perceived to be and how attractive they believed the perpetrator to be. The results indicated that coercion and physical attractiveness were highly related. Specifically, as the men's behavior became more coercive, their attractiveness decreased. In terms of flattery, the attractive male's behavior in the least coercive condition was considered moderately flattering, followed by the unattractive male in the same condition whose behavior was considered moderately unflattering. The women did view all three acts as having a negative effect on them with the medium and high conditions being much more negative than the low condition.

Cartar et al. (1996) conclude that in low levels of coercion, women view themselves as objects of seduction and not as victims. This may come from the fact that they feel mildly flattered in these conditions; however, importantly, most of the women reported no interest in further sexual contact with the perpetrator. Overall, when the perpetrator is more attractive his behaviors (at least in the low and medium conditions) were viewed less harshly and as more flattering: "attractiveness of an opposite gender perpetrator alters how that person's sexually coercive advances are perceived" (Cartar et al. 1996, p. 749).

Most incidents of stranger harassment represent low levels of coercion. Catcalls, whistles, and leers involve no physical contact. Fairchild and Rudman (2008) found that these types of unwanted sexual attention were the most frequently experienced by women and were experienced by the greatest number of women. Behaviors high in coercion such as groping and grabbing or unwanted sexual touching were less frequent and experienced by fewer women. This suggests that the behaviors indicative of stranger harassment may be more open to interpretation through context because of their low coercive nature. Being lower in coercion does not absolve the behavior of its negative effects (Cartar et al. (1996) demonstrated that low coercive behaviors still elicit a primarily negative effect), however, being lower in coercion allows stranger harassment behaviors to be more ambiguous in the intent of the harasser. A male harasser who leers at a woman may or may not have intentions or desires to pursue a sexual engagement; a male harasser who forcefully fondles a woman has a more clear sexual intent to his actions.

Level of coercion may be an imprecise stand-in for perceived amount of threat. Baker et al. (1990), in a study of reactions to sexual harassment, find that assessing perceived severity does not fully address the range of observed reactions. These authors suggest that instead of severity, a better measure might be the perceived level of threat. It is highly likely that the more threatening the behavior (e.g., forceful fondling), the more likely an assertive reaction or response is elicited. Thus it is presumed that "wolf-whistles" and obscene gestures will elicit more passive responses because they are viewed as less threatening. Baker et al. (1990) included whistles and obscene gestures in their study as forms of sexual harassment (performed by known others in the workplace) and found that they received passive

reactions, such as ignoring. This fits with Fairchild and Rudman's (2008) findings that most women respond passively to stranger harassment. However, their study did not assess the effect of context on reactions, which might, as Baker et al. (1990) suggest, alter women's responses. In other words, while a catcall may appear low in severity, certain context effects (e.g., at night in an isolated location) may increase the perceived threat, thus changing the reaction of the victim to a potentially more active response.

Current Studies

The current studies were designed to assess which context effects may be important in the perception of stranger harassment and how those context effects may alter women's emotions, fear of rape, and behavioral reactions. Study one presented women with an array of contextual influences regarding both the situation and the perpetrator. Perpetrator characteristics included attractiveness, age, and number of harassers. Situational characteristics included time of day, location, and whether the victim was alone or with others. Participants categorized each potential factor as to whether it would make a typical stranger harassment situation more frightening or more enjoyable. Based on the women's categorizations in study one, study two was developed to assess how changing the context might alter women's emotions, fear of rape, and behavioral reactions to a typical stranger harassment situation. Through the use of a vignette, participants were presented with the same typical stranger harassment situation which varied only in one contextual feature at a time. The women were asked to take the perspective of the target woman in the vignette and predict her emotions, fear of rape, and behavioral reactions. It was predicted that the changing context would alter the emotions, fear, and reactions that were ascribed to the target character in line with the findings from study one as to which elements of context make the situation more fearful or more enjoyable.

Study One: Determining Context

The first study was intended as an exploratory assessment of the contextual elements that may be involved in a stranger harassment experience. A list of contextual elements was developed by the researcher and research assistants based on personal experiences and anecdotal stories from acquaintances' experiences. Additionally, the study sought to replicate the prevalence findings of Fairchild and Rudman (2008) in a non-college, internet sample.

Method

Participants

The survey received 1,698 responses. Eight individuals (.5%) declined the informed consent and did not complete the study. Twenty-seven individuals (1.7%) reported

their sex as male; their data were dropped from the study. As Tuten et al. (2002) note, it is impossible to accurately assess response rates to Web-based surveys because unlike emailed or mailed surveys, the entirely Web-based survey is not addressed to a specific population; the common method for estimating response rates for Web-based surveys is to report the total number of useable participants. Of the remaining participants, 1,277 (76.8%) completed enough of the survey to be used in the data analysis.

The 1,277 remaining participants all reported their gender as female. The majority (87.2%) reported white for their race and heterosexual (74.2%) for their sexual orientation. The mean age of the participants was 28.11 years old (SD = 9.29); reported ages ranged from 15 to 71 years old.

Materials

Stranger Harassment

Experiences with stranger harassment were assessed using the modified version of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al. 1995) developed by Fairchild and Rudman (2008). Participants first responded “yes” or “no” to having ever experienced nine different behaviors from strangers that ranged in severity from unwanted sexual attention to forceful fondling (e.g., “Have you ever experienced unwanted sexual attention or interaction from a stranger?”; “Have you ever experienced catcalls, whistles, or stares from a stranger?”; “Have you ever experienced direct or explicit pressure to cooperate sexually from a stranger?”; and “Have you ever experienced direct or forceful fondling or grabbing from a stranger?”). Participants then responded to the same behaviors in terms of frequency regarding how often they had experienced each of the behaviors (1 = *once*; 2 = *once a month*; 3 = *2–4 times per month*; 4 = *every few days*; 5 = *every day*). Table 1 provides a list of the behaviors.

Contextual Factors

Participants were presented with a list of 17 context factors including (attractiveness, time of day, race, and location) and asked to select which of the features would make a typical stranger harassment experience more fearful, which would make the experience more enjoyable, and which would make them more likely to react verbally (an active coping strategy). The active coping strategy of verbally responding is borrowed from Fitzgerald’s (1990) Coping with Harassment Questionnaire (CHQ). The items on this portion of the scale include: “I let him know I didn’t like what he was doing” and “I talked to someone about what happened.” These items are interpreted by Fairchild and Rudman (2008) to demonstrate active coping through verbally responding to the harasser in contrast to passive coping through ignoring the situation. Table 2 presents the context factors. Each of the questions was asked separately and the participants were allowed to select as many factors as they wanted for each question. The instructions simply stated that the participants were to think of a typical experience with strangers in

Table 1 Reported frequency (in percent) of women's stranger harassment experiences

	Once a month	Twice a month	Every few days or more
Catcalls, whistles, or stares	29.2	22.6	28.2
Unwanted sexual attention	29.3	16.7	12.6
Crude or offensive sexual jokes	34.5	20.0	10.0
Sexist remarks or behaviors	33.1	21.2	18.2
Seductive remarks or "come ons"	33.9	19.5	9.8
Unwanted touching or stroking	17.5	3.8	1.0
Subtle pressure to cooperate sexually	12.3	4.0	1.0
Direct pressure to cooperate sexually	6.2	1.9	.8
Forceful fondling or grabbing	6.3	.9	.4

public places as exemplified by the items they had responded to previously (the stranger harassment index items) and select the factors that would increase fear (or enjoyment or verbal response).

Procedure

In order to attract participants to the survey, the researcher and her research assistants posted the link in various web forums; the links advertising the study invited the participants to take part in a study on experiences in public places and importantly, the term stranger harassment was never used. Some websites were devoted to psychological research, while others were related to topics that women would be interested in (i.e., women's magazines, knitting, health and fitness). When participants arrived at the website for the survey, they first read the informed consent, which was carefully worded to avoid using the term stranger harassment. If they consented to participate, they clicked the "next" button at the bottom of the screen. Each survey measure was presented on successive pages of the survey.² Participants were required to answer each question before being able to continue to the next measure. The components of the study were presented in the following order: demographics, Stranger Harassment Index (first "have you ever experienced...", and then on the next page, "how frequently have you experienced..."), and Contextual factors (first fearful, then enjoyable, and finally more likely to respond verbally). After completing the survey, participants were debriefed with a final screen that described the study's hypotheses regarding stranger harassment; this is the first and only time the words "stranger harassment" appeared in the survey. Participants could quit the study at any time by clicking "exit this survey" or by simply closing their web browser.

² This presentation format has been shown by Granello and Weaton (2004) to be successful in attaining high completion rates. It is likely that more participants were retained in the current study by the use of a meter or gauge letting the participants know how many questions remained.

Table 2 Frequency (in percent) of contextual factors reported to increase fear, enjoyment, and verbal reactions to stranger harassment

	Fear	Enjoyment	Verbal reaction
Attractive harasser	1.9	27.1	8.3
Unattractive harasser	20.3	.2	3.4
Younger harasser (20–30 s)	10.1	18.2	14.0
Older harasser (40 and up)	32.6	1.6	3.7
Harasser is the same race as me	3.1	4.7	7.6
Harasser is a different race than me	15.0	1.1	1.6
I am alone	71.9	.5	4.4
I am with girlfriends	.9	26.5	53.1
I am with a male companion	1.6	11.4	28.0
Nighttime	74.5	.5	1.9
Daytime	1.1	12.3	31.9
On the street	34.7	.7	11.1
In a store	2.8	3.6	16.5
At a bar/restaurant	7.0	12.2	24.1
On public transportation	31.9	.9	11.2
In a public park/garden	22.2	3.6	9.2
None of the above	3.1	46.3	18.9

Results and Discussion

Prevalence of Stranger Harassment

Table 1 displays women's reported frequencies of stranger harassment experiences. "Catcalls, whistles, or stares" and "unwanted sexual attention" were each reported to be experienced once a month by 29% of the sample. Further, 28% reported experiencing "catcalls, whistles, or stares" from strangers every few days or more. These percentages and those reported in Table 1 are inline with Fairchild and Rudman (2008). The current sample's reported experiences are somewhat less frequent than those found by Fairchild and Rudman, but this is likely due to the near 10 year mean age difference between the samples (Fairchild and Rudman's sample had a mean age of 19).

Contextual Factors

Participants responded to the contextual factors by selecting as many of the sixteen factors (or "none") that would likely increase their fear, enjoyment, and likelihood to verbally respond to a typical stranger harassment situation. Table 2 displays the percentages of participants who selected each of the sixteen items or "none." This table shows an interesting (yet logical) contrast between the contextual factors that increase fear and enjoyment. Twenty-seven percent of respondents selected that an attractive harasser would make the experience more enjoyable and 20% selected

that an unattractive harasser would make the experience more fearful. This suggests that attractiveness of the perpetrator may function similarly to how attractiveness of the perpetrator functions in sexual harassment research; simply, similar behaviors from an attractive and unattractive man are viewed differently with the attractive man receiving more leeway in the potentially harassing behaviors. Likewise, there is a contrast between younger harasser (18% responded more enjoyable) and older harasser (33% responded more frightening); this suggests that age may be an important contextual factor, particularly for determining if a situation is threatening enough to induce fear. Being alone (72%) and nighttime (75%) were the most selected items for increasing the fear felt during a typical stranger harassment situation. Public places such as the street (35%), public transportation (32%), and parks/gardens (22%) were likely to be sites of more fear. Finally, 46% of respondents selected "none" in regard to what would make the situation more enjoyable. Because this data was a simple checklist, it can only be assumed that the women feel that stranger harassment is an unpleasant experience that cannot be improved. However, it is equally likely that these women (or some of them) find the experience highly enjoyable and such enjoyment cannot be increased. With this data set, it is impossible to interpret the "none" response.

In terms of what contextual factors would increase the likelihood that a woman would verbally respond demonstrating an active coping strategy (Fairchild and Rudman 2008), several factors were commonly selected. Fifty-three percent of respondents and 28% of respondents selected that they would be more likely to verbally respond if they were with a group of girlfriends or a male companion, respectively. In contrast to being alone eliciting more fear, it would seem that being with others would diffuse any threat in the situation and potentially inspire an active response. Taken together with 27% of women responding that a typical stranger harassment experience would be more enjoyable with a group of girlfriends, there may be less "harassment" viewed when with a group and more flirtation perceived. This speculation can be supported by the 24% of women who would be more likely to verbally respond to a situation in a bar/restaurant, which might indicate an acknowledgement of sexual attention through flirting as a more accepted practice in a bar and therefore more proclivity to say "I'm not interested." Ultimately, these data cannot provide definite answers to what the women may have been thinking while responding. The speculation of dividing stranger harassment experiences into harassment and flirting needs to be tested through future research.

Overall, study one suggests that the sample surveyed are experiencing stranger harassment behaviors somewhat frequently. This mirrors the frequency rates found by Fairchild and Rudman (2008) even with a sample that is approximately 10 years older. In addition, this study highlights some of the important contextual factors that may play a role in women's perceptions of stranger harassment as frightening or enjoyable and in women's coping strategies (i.e., verbally responding). These factors include attractiveness and age of the perpetrator, time of day, location, and whether the woman is alone or with others. Study two was designed to manipulate some of these factors to assess direct differences in emotional reactions, fear, and coping.

Study Two: Manipulating Context

Based on the results of study one, study two asked participants to take the perspective of a target of stranger harassment and predict how she would feel and react. Research by Davis et al. (1996) suggests that when people take the perspective of another person, they readily ascribe their self-related traits to the target individual. Perspective taking is known to increase the cognitive overlap between the self and other; this overlap may become possible through the perspective taker asking herself how she would feel in the same situation (Davis et al. 1996). Additional research suggests that it does not matter whether a perspective taker is instructed to imagine herself or imagine the target (other) in the situation; both perspectives elicit empathy emotions (Baston et al. 1997). Baston et al. (1997) demonstrated that imaging the self in the situation also elicits feelings of personal distress, but these feelings of distress are more evident when the target is experiencing physical harm. Personal distress is less evident in situations involving psychological harm. Regardless, the experience of personal distress may add a dimension in which there is increased empathy and desire to help (Baston et al. 1997). In all, perspective taking seems an effective tool for indirectly assessing individuals' reactions to a stranger harassment situation.

Study two presented participants with one of eleven vignettes and asked them to predict how the target woman would feel emotionally, how afraid she would be of rape, and how she would cope with the situation. The control vignette represented a generic stranger harassment situation without any direct manipulation of the event. Five pairs of alternate vignettes were created to manipulate attractiveness of the harasser, age of the harasser, whether the target was alone or with friends, time of day, and the number of harassers. It was hypothesized that women would predict a more negative emotional reaction, increased fear of rape, and more passive reactions to the vignettes that featured the unattractive harasser, the older harasser, being alone, nighttime, and a solo harasser. The opposing characteristics (attractive harasser, younger harasser, being with friends, daytime, and multiple harassers) were predicted to elicit a slightly less negative response on all three outcomes measures. The control vignette was predicted to fall in the between the scores for each pair.

Method

Participants

The survey received 818 responses. One individual declined the informed consent and did not complete the study. Eighty-six individuals (10.5%) reported their sex as male; their data will be discussed separately. Of the remaining participants, 464 (63.3%) completed enough of the survey to be used in the data analysis.

The 464 remaining participants all reported their gender as female. The majority (82.1%) reported white for their race and heterosexual (83.0%) for their sexual orientation. The mean age of the participants was 29.76 years old ($SD = 10.49$);

reported ages ranged from 14 to 65 years old. Fifty percent of the participants reported living in an urban setting and 37% reported living in a suburban setting.

Materials

Stranger Harassment

Study two employed the same measure for stranger harassment that is described for study one. This measure was used to assess the participants' frequency of experiences with stranger harassment.

Contextual Effects

To study the effects of manipulating the context on the perceived emotions and behavioral reactions of the target character, a brief vignette that could be easily modified was created. The control condition presented the basic vignette without any manipulation and reflects a typical stranger harassment experience: "Angie is walking down the street. She notices a man sitting on a bench. As she passes the man, he calls out to her 'Hey, sexy baby. Looking hot today!'" Five pairs of alternate vignettes were created to manipulate attractiveness of the harasser, age of the harasser, whether the target was alone or with friends, time of day, and the number of harassers. Each of the alternate vignettes maintained the same basic plot of the control condition, but inserted descriptions that were intended to focus the reader on the desired manipulation. For attractiveness, the new vignette read: "Angie is walking down the street. She notices a *very attractive (very unattractive)* man sitting on a bench. As she passes the man, he calls out to her 'Hey, sexy baby. Looking hot today!'" (italics added for emphasis). To manipulate the age of the harasser, the phrase "who appears about 15 years younger" or "who appears about 15 years older" was inserted into the control vignette. To manipulate whether the target woman was alone or with friends, the phrase "alone" or "with two friends" was added. To manipulate time of day, the phrase "at night" or "during the day" was included. Finally, to manipulate the number of harassers, the phrase "sitting alone" or "sitting with two other men" was incorporated into the vignette.

Predicted Outcomes

In order to assess women's predictions of the target's emotional state, participants were prompted with: "Imagine how Angie would feel in the situation just described and answer the following questions from her point of view." Participants then rated the target's emotions on a 6-point Likert scale from *not at all* to *very much*. The eleven emotions included: happy, indifferent, disgusted, anxious, complimented, nervous, excited, joyous, angry, fearful, and sad. The positive emotions were reverse scored and the combined emotions scale was created with a high score reflecting more negative emotion ($\alpha = .88$).

Participants were asked to predict how fearful the target woman would be in her day-to-day life of being raped by a stranger and being raped by an acquaintance.

Fear was rated on a 10-point Likert scale from *not at all* to *very much*. Because fear of rape by a stranger and an acquaintance were highly correlated ($r = .75$), the two items were averaged into the Fear of Rape scale ($\alpha = .86$). Likewise, two items assessing fear of harassment (being a victim of unwanted sexual attention and being a victim of sexual harassment) were highly correlated ($r = .79$) and averaged to create the Fear of Harassment scale ($\alpha = .88$). Fear of rape and fear of harassment were assessed separately from negative emotions because each may represent a more motivational factor than that assessed by negative emotions. Feeling angry, sad, or disgusted may or may not motivate behavioral changes in the woman, but research by Fisher and Sloan (2003) and Hickman and Muehlenhard (1997) suggest that fear of rape motivates precautionary behaviors. Hickman and Muehlenhard (1997) specifically found that as women's fear of rape increased, so did their precautionary behaviors. Fairchild and Rudman (2008) found that fear of rape was positively correlated with women restricting their movement in public places (i.e., avoiding areas where harassment may occur), but that stranger harassment was not directly linked to such precautionary behaviors. While the current study does not specifically assess precautionary behaviors, it is assumed the fear of rape (and fear of harassment) may be motivational stand-ins for behavioral intentions, and that manipulation of the context may heighten or lessen these fears.

Participants were asked to rate the severity of the situation with one question that assessed how threatening the target character would perceive the situation to be; this Likert scale was anchored from "not at all threatening" (1) to "very threatening" (7).

Participants rated how likely the target would be to have 21 different thoughts and reactions. The thoughts and reactions were taken from the Coping with Stranger Harassment Scale that Fairchild and Rudman (2008) created based on the Coping with Harassment Questionnaire (CHQ; Fitzgerald 1990). The items represent passive, active, self-blame, and benign coping strategies. The active items (e.g., "I let him know I didn't like what he was doing") were predicted to be less frequently attributed to the target than the passive items (e.g., "I pretended nothing was happening"). Study one suggested that active (i.e., verbal) responses to stranger harassment were only likely in a few situations, such as when with girlfriends or during the daytime. In regard to whether the participants would predict that the target would see the experience as though it were benign (e.g., "I considered it flattering"), it was predicted that the same conditions that would elicit slightly less negative emotion would elicit slightly more benign reactions (i.e., perceiving less threat). There were no a priori predictions about the amount of self-blame (e.g., "I realized I had probably brought it on myself") participants would ascribe to the target. The four coping scales had adequate reliability (all α s $> .70$).

Finally, participants predicted how likely it was for the target to ascribe to beliefs that would represent a vain personality. Netemeyer et al.'s (1995) Vanity Scale's subscale for physical concern was included to assess whether the participants might view the target as seeking attention from men. Physical concern ($\alpha = .94$) relates to worry about one's appearance (e.g., "I am very concerned about my appearance"; "I would feel embarrassed if I was around people and did not look my best"). It is speculated that an individual with a vain personality might seek out attention and

comments from strangers. If participants perceive the target as vain, this should correlate strongly with them perceiving her as enjoying the experience more. In her dissertation, Fairchild (2009) found that physical concern vanity was positively correlated with stranger harassment. She speculated that women who are more concerned with their appearance (physical concern vanity) may be more likely to dress in ways that attract stranger harassment. If female participants view the target as vain, they may have less empathy for her (in terms of perspective taking) and produce results that show more enjoyment and less fear.

Procedure

The procedure for obtaining participants and the survey hosting was identical to study one. Additionally, as in study one, the term stranger harassment did not appear in the informed consent or in the survey until the debriefing page. Once participants reached the survey, they were presented with an informed consent. Their demographic information was asked first followed by the randomization procedure for the vignettes. After reading their assigned vignette, the participants responded to the emotion items, fear of rape items, vanity items, and coping items. Finally, the participants reported their own experiences with stranger harassment and the frequency of those experiences.

Results

Prevalence of Stranger Harassment

Table 3 displays women's reported frequencies of stranger harassment experiences. "Catcalls, whistles, or stares" and "unwanted sexual attention" were each reported to be experienced once a month by 24% of the sample. Further, 27% reported experiencing "catcalls, whistles, or stares" from strangers every few days or more. These percentages and those reported in Table 3 are similar to those found in Study one.

Contextual Factors

Collapsing across vignettes, the participants viewed the harassment as emotionally negative ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .90$). They also predicted that the target character would experience moderate amounts of fear of rape ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 2.62$) and fear of harassment ($M = 5.98$, $SD = 2.68$). Severity was rated to be moderate on a 1–7 scale ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.36$). The target character was rated as moderately vain ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .97$), but low in likelihood to use self-blame coping strategies ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.07$). Overall, the target character was predicted to frequently use passive coping strategies ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.05$), but to use benign ($M = 2.37$, $SD = .91$) or active ($M = 2.55$, $SD = .97$) coping strategies only moderately.

Correlations between the independent variables (collapsing across vignettes) show a logical pattern (see Table 4). Negative emotion is strongly positively

Table 3 Reported frequency (in percent) of women's stranger harassment experiences

	Once a month	Twice a month	Every few days or more
Catcalls, whistles, or stares	24.4	20.3	27.8
Unwanted sexual attention	25.2	14.4	11.2
Crude or offensive sexual jokes	31.7	17.0	13.3
Sexist remarks or behaviors	29.1	21.3	16.2
Seductive remarks or "come ons"	26.9	17.7	14.2
Unwanted touching or stroking	20.0	5.0	.4
Subtle pressure to cooperate sexually	15.1	5.8	1.5
Direct pressure to cooperate sexually	9.9	2.2	1.5
Forceful fondling or grabbing	9.3	.9	1.5

correlated with fear of rape, fear of harassment, and ascribing a high amount of severity/threat to the situation. Predictions of negative emotions in the target character were positively correlated with her adopting passive and active coping strategies, and negatively correlated with viewing the situation as benign. Fear of harassment and severity were both positively correlated with self-blame and active coping strategies, yet negatively correlated benign strategies. Finally, predictions that the target character was vain were positively correlated with all outcome measures except for passive coping strategies.

An ANOVA was conducted to assess the effects of the 11 vignettes on the dependent variables: emotion, fear of rape, fear of harassment, severity, vanity, passive coping strategies, self-blame coping strategies, benign coping strategies, and active coping strategies. Even though the trials ranged in number of participants from 25 to 46, the test of equal variances was not violated.

Table 4 Correlations between dependent variables

	NE	VS	FoR	FoH	S/T	PCS	SBCS	BCS
1. Negative emotions	–							
2. Vanity scale	–.04	–						
3. Fear of rape	.23**	.17**	–					
4. Fear of harassment	.43**	.12*	.66**	–				
5. Severity/threat	.58**	.14*	.41**	.43**	–			
6. Passive CS	.21**	–.02	.07	.10*	.07	–		
7. Self blame CS	.07	.16**	.32**	.27**	.17**	.21**	–	
8. Benign CS	–.56**	.16**	–.03	–.24**	–.23**	.14**	.22**	–
9. Active CS	.11*	.15**	.14**	.19**	.19**	–.21**	.04	–.07

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. CS coping strategy

Several significant results were highlighted in the ANOVA. First, there was a significant effect of trial on emotion ($F(10, 400) = 6.98, p = .00$). Second, there was a significant effect of trial on the predicted use of benign coping strategies ($F(10, 400) = 2.28, p = .01$). Finally, there was a significant effect of trial on the perceived severity or threat of the situation ($F(9, 231) = 3.69, p = .00$).³ None of the remaining dependent variables illustrated significant differences because of trial (all $F_s(10, 400) < 1.64$, all $p_s < .10$).

Tukey's post-hoc tests elaborate the significant differences found through the ANOVA. Table 5 presents the mean comparisons for the vignettes that differed significantly in the post-hoc tests. The comparisons in Table 5 suggest that less negative emotion was experienced in the condition with the attractive harasser (2) than the conditions with the older man (5), at night (8), and a single harasser (10). The younger man (4) also elicited less negative emotion than the older man (5), being alone (6), at night (8), a single harasser (10), or multiple harassers (11). Being with two girlfriends (7) was viewed as less negative emotionally than the conditions with the older man (5), alone (6), at night (8), or a single harasser (10). Interestingly for emotions, the control condition was viewed as more negative than the conditions with the attractive man (2), the younger man (4), and with two girlfriends (7). For severity/threat of the situation, the younger man (4) is viewed as more benign and less threatening than the control condition (1) and night condition (8). Finally, the younger man (4) is viewed as less threatening than the conditions with a single harasser (10) and multiple harassers (11). Post hoc tests did not reveal any specific effects for the vignettes on benign coping strategies.

Stranger Harassment Experiences

To assess if participants' own experiences with stranger harassment were reflected in their responses, correlations between the stranger harassment scale (SHS) and the outcome measures were analyzed. Scores on the SHS were positively correlated with negative emotions, fear of rape, fear of harassment, passive coping strategies, and self-blame (all $r_s > .12$, all $p_s < .05$). Additionally, SHS was negatively correlated with viewing the harassment situation as benign ($r = -.10, p = .05$). Differences between high and low scorers on SHS were assessed via t -test on the dependent measures. Because of very small N s for each vignette when splitting participants based on SHS scores over and under the mean, all analyses were collapsed across vignette. Significant differences for participants scoring above ($M = 4.47, SD = .91$) and below ($M = 4.24, SD = .86$) the mean on SHS were found on negative emotions ($t(404) = 2.57, p = .01$). Female participants who more frequently experience stranger harassment themselves predicted more negative emotions from the situation presented in the vignette. On the measure of fear of rape, women with more frequent experiences of stranger harassment predicted higher fears of rape for the target ($M = 4.96, SD = 2.49$) than women

³ Due to an error in the survey administration, the severity/threat question did not appear for all participants. A total of 232 participants responded to the severity question. Importantly, no participants in trial 7 (Angie walking with two girlfriends) received the severity question.

Table 5 Mean comparisons for Tukey's post-hoc tests

Dependent variable	Vignette–mean	Vignette–mean	Significance
Emotion	1–4.76	2–3.89	.001
	1–4.76	4–3.86	.00
	1–4.76	7–3.85	.00
	2–3.89	5–4.59	.04
	2–3.89	8–4.59	.002
	2–3.89	10–4.75	.01
	4–3.86	5–4.59	.002
	4–3.86	6–4.55	.01
	4–3.86	8–4.59	.00
	4–3.86	10–4.75	.00
	4–3.86	11–4.35	.02
	7–3.85	5–4.59	.02
	7–3.85	6–4.55	.04
	7–3.85	8–4.59	.00
7–3.85	10–4.75	.003	
Severity	4–3.86	1–4.26	.03
	4–3.86	8–4.43	.003
	4–3.86	10–4.60	.01
	4–3.86	11–4.06	.01

with fewer stranger harassment experiences ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 2.62$; $t(423) = 2.48$, $p = .01$). The same pattern is seen for fear of harassment with high SHS predicting higher fears of harassment ($M = 6.91$, $SD = 2.49$) than low SHS ($M = 5.30$, $SD = 2.57$; $t(426) = 6.49$, $p = .00$). Women scoring high on SHS viewed the target as more likely to use passive strategies ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .96$) than women scoring lower on SHS ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.06$; $t(416) = 3.14$, $p = .002$). High SHS scores predicted viewing the harassment as less benign ($M = 2.28$, $SD = .95$) than low SHS ($M = 2.51$, $p = .88$; $t(422) = 2.59$, $p = .01$). Interestingly, high SHS scores predicted more self-blame ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.16$) than low SHS scores ($M = 2.26$, $SD = .98$; $t(422) = 2.32$, $p = .02$).

Gender Differences

Finally, using the sample of 86 men who were removed from the above analyses along with an additional 16 male participants collected in a psychology class, gender differences were compared between 102 male and 102 female subjects. The 102 female subjects were randomly selected via SPSS from the larger female data set. Demographic statistics and means for this subsample were not significantly different from the means and statistics reported above. Because of the small N s per vignette cell, the analyses were collapsed across vignette to explore any gender differences.

The results demonstrated a clear distinction in men's and women's interpretations of the harassment situation. In terms of emotions, vanity, and two of the four

Table 6 Dependent measures by gender

	Sex	Mean (SD)	<i>t</i> -Test
Negative emotions	M	3.85 (.98)	$t(202) = 3.41, p = .001^{**}$
	F	4.30 (.89)	
Fear of rape	M	4.73 (2.70)	$t(202) = 80, p = .43$
	F	4.43 (2.69)	
Vanity	M	4.09 (1.05)	$t(202) = 3.40, p = .001^{**}$
	F	3.61 (.98)	
Passive coping	M	4.16 (1.04)	$t(202) = 1.73, p = .09$
	F	4.41 (1.05)	
Self-blame	M	2.55 (1.05)	$t(202) = 1.61, p = .11$
	F	2.31 (1.06)	
Benign	M	2.88 (1.23)	$t(202) = 3.35, p = .001^{**}$
	F	2.35 (.99)	
Active coping	M	3.06 (1.07)	$t(202) = 3.05, p = .003^{**}$
	F	2.61 (1.06)	

Note: Dependent measures used a 1–6 Likert Scale; high scores indicate more of the title of the measure (i.e., more negative emotions; more vanity). Fear of rape was scored on a 1–10 Likert Scale; high scores indicate more fear of rape

** $p < .01$

strategies for dealing with harassment (benign and active), *t*-tests showed a significant difference in men's and women's responses (see Table 6). These results suggest that men perceive the stranger harassment situation as less negative emotionally than women. In addition, men believed that the target character was more vain than women believed and that the target character was more likely to brush off the harassment as benign and harmless. Finally, men were more likely than women to believe that the target character would employ active strategies such as confronting the harasser. No gender differences were found between men and women in perceptions of the target character's fear of rape⁴ or use of passive and self-blame strategies.

Correlational data from the men provide some interesting clues to the gender differences. The male participants completed the Tolerance of Sexual Harassment scale (Lott et al. 1982), which assesses how tolerant a man is of sexual harassment in everyday life. High scores on this scale indicate that men are more tolerant or accepting of sexual harassment. Correlations with the dependent measures suggest that men who are tolerant of sexual harassment are more likely to see stranger harassment as an enjoyable experience for women ($r = -.47, p < .01$). In addition, there is a relationship between tolerance of sexual harassment and the target using self-blame strategies ($r = .25, p < .05$). This suggests that men who tolerate sexual harassment believe in part that women provoke or encourage such behavior.

⁴ The fear of harassment questions were not assessed for all male participants and thus removed from the analyses.

Discussion

Study one illuminated some of the important factors that may play a role in women's perceptions of stranger harassment situations. Age and attractiveness of the harasser, time of day, location, and whether the woman is alone or with friends were all implicated in making a harassment situation more frightening or more enjoyable. There was also some evidence that manipulating these context factors would inspire women to more actively respond to their harassers. Study two was conducted to manipulate these factors and to have participants adopt the perspective of the harassed woman and predict her responses. Study two predicted that the stories featuring an unattractive harasser, an older harasser, a solo harasser, the woman being alone, and nighttime would elicit predictions of more negative emotion, increased fear of rape and harassment, and more passive reactions or coping strategies. The opposing context factors were predicted to produce slightly less negative emotion, fear, and passive strategies.

Context Effects

The results of study two provide some support for the hypotheses as well as some interesting results. The ANOVA highlighted a significant effect of the vignettes or context factors on negative emotion, but not fears of rape and harassment, or passive coping strategies. Across all conditions, the target woman was predicted to be equally fearful and to as frequently use passive coping strategies to ignore the harassment. In other words, context effects did not affect a woman's level of fear or first tendency to ignore the event. For negative emotions, the pattern of results fits the predictions from study one: an attractive or younger harasser and being with friends would elicit less negative emotion than the other conditions. Less negative emotion was experienced in the condition with the attractive harasser and the younger harasser than the conditions with the older man, at night, and a single harasser; the younger harasser also elicited less negative emotion than being alone and having multiple harassers. This reflects the findings in the sexual harassment literature that the behavior of attractive men is viewed to be less harassing than the behavior of less attractive men (Cartar et al. 1996; LaRocca and Kromrey 1999; Golden et al. 2001). In addition, the post-hoc tests revealed that as predicted being with two girlfriends was viewed as less negative emotionally than the conditions with the older man, alone, at night, or a single harasser. This may reflect a "safety in numbers" mentality, but because being with friends had no effect on fears of rape and harassment or actively responding, it may be a false or fleeting sense of safety. An alternative explanation may be that being with girlfriends allows women to defuse the situation by discussing, laughing about, or ranting about the situation. Additional research could unveil why being with friends slightly lessens the negative emotions of the harassment experience. The most interesting finding regarding emotions was that the control condition was viewed as more negative than the conditions with the attractive man, the younger man, and with two girlfriends. This was not predicted and presents a curious result. Because the control condition did not include details about the harasser, harassee, or situation, it is quite likely that

participants added their own interpretations to the story or possibly even elaborated the story with their own personal experiences. Future research is needed to tease out why the control condition elicited greater predictions of negative emotion.

The context effects in the vignettes produced two other noteworthy, but not predicted, differences. First there was a significant effect on benign coping strategies. This effect was driven by a difference between the younger man condition and the control and night conditions. The data suggests that women predicted that the target character would be more likely to view the harassment as harmless or a joke when the harasser is younger than the target woman in comparison to the at night or control conditions. This is mirrored in that the younger man was also viewed as less threatening than the same conditions, as well as the conditions with a single harasser and multiple harassers. Age appears to be an important factor in determining the threat that the harasser poses. A strong negative correlation between severity/threat and benign coping strategies further solidifies the idea that less threatening situations are able to be viewed as meaningless or jokes. Likewise, the predicted emotional reactions show that the younger man elicits less negative emotion than many of the other conditions. The current research only addressed benign strategies (viewing the harassment as a joke) and did not investigate viewing the harassment as a compliment. Future research should attempt to use these context effects to determine if and when harassment may be viewed as not only benign, but complimentary.

Correlation Results

Collapsing across the scenarios, the correlations between the dependent measures followed the predictable pattern. Stronger negative emotion was positively correlated with more fear of rape and harassment and viewing the situation as severe/threatening. In addition, negative emotions were positively correlated with adopting passive and active coping strategies. The means suggest that passive strategies are more common than active coping strategies; in other words, women are more likely to ignore the harassment than to verbally respond with disapproval to the harassment. Additional research is needed to assess which negative emotions are correlating with each coping strategy. A quick correlational analysis revealed a strong correlation between active coping strategies and anger, disgust, fear, and anxiety ($r_s > .11$, $p_s < .05$); no correlations between the individual emotions and passive coping strategies was found. Finally, negative emotion was negatively correlated with benign coping strategies, which clearly indicates that negative emotions are not compatible with thinking of the harassment as meaningless or a joke.

Additional correlations of note include the positive correlation between fear of harassment and severity with self-blame and active coping strategies. These correlations seem to suggest that more perceived fear and perceived severity are related to more thoughts of "I brought this on myself." Likewise, more fear and severity are related to taking an active stance and defending oneself from the harassment. As with the correlation between negative emotions and passive and active coping strategies, there is more research needed to tease apart which aspects

of fear of harassment and severity drive some women to predict self-blame and others to predict active coping. The negative correlation between fear of harassment as well as severity with benign coping strategies is logical; the more fearful and severe the harassment, the less likely it is to be viewed as a joke.

The final correlations of interest about which there were not a priori predictions are vanity and the remaining outcome measures. Participants' perceptions of vanity in the target character (without any more information about her than the simple vignette story) were positively correlated to their ratings on fear of rape, fear of harassment, severity/threat, and self-blame, benign, and active coping strategies. The most understandable of these correlations is between vanity and self-blame; the assumption may be made by the participants that a vain individual (interested highly in her own looks) is seeking attention and yet when she receives it as harassment, recognizes that she brought the situation on herself. An explanation for the other correlations is unclear at this time. The author is currently conducting research on the attractiveness and sexiness of the target to elaborate on the effects of perceived vanity on these and other outcomes measures.

Exploratory Analyses

Several exploratory analyses were conducted to assess the effect of participants' own experiences with stranger harassment as well as the possible gender differences in perceptions of the outcomes of the harassment experience. Because participants' own experiences with stranger harassment were correlated with the outcome measures, additional analyses were conducted to explore the nature of personal experiences on their predictions for the target character. A mean-split was used because the nature of the investigation was preliminary and a more refined analysis ought to start with a more thorough picture of participants' stranger harassment experiences. The t-tests showed significant differences between participants scoring above and below the mean on the stranger harassment scale (SHS). Females with more personal experience of stranger harassment predicted that the target character would feel more negative emotions. This suggests that women with more experience of stranger harassment are more familiar with their own negative emotional reaction and ascribe that to the target character. As Davis et al. (1996) suggest, perspective taking leads individuals to ascribe self-related traits to the target. This is also demonstrated in the difference in scores for fear of rape and fear of harassment. Women with more experiences with stranger harassment predicted the target would be more fearful of both rape and harassment. Additionally, women scoring higher on the SHS predicted the target woman would be passive in dealing with the harassment and not likely to view the situation as benign. Again, these results suggest that women with more experiences of stranger harassment ascribe to the target character the characteristics and reactions that are typical of women who are harassed (see Fairchild and Rudman 2008). Finally, there was an odd finding that women high in SHS predicted more self-blame than women low in SHS. The means in both cases are on the low side of self-blame (less than 2.5 on a 6 point scale), thus it is not clear if this difference is an artifact or suggests that women who experience more stranger harassment may actually blame themselves and thus blame the target

character. More research is needed to elaborate the connection between women's experiences and their reactions.

An exploratory analysis was also conducted on a subsample of the women's responses to compare them with a sample of men's responses. The t-tests demonstrated a clear and distinct difference between men's and women's predicted reactions for the target character. Mirroring the research on gender differences in sexual harassment (e.g., Katz et al. 1996), these analyses showed that women viewed the situation as creating more negative emotions, as less benign, and the target as less likely to use active coping strategies. Research on sexual harassment suggests that ambiguous situations and hostile environment sexual harassment are the situations most likely to be perceived differently by men and women (Elkins and Velez-Castrillon 2008). In this ambiguous situation of stranger harassment, the gender difference is clear; men believed the target character to be more vain, less negative emotionally, more likely to react actively, and also more likely to think of the incident as harmless or a joke. Correlations between the men's scores and their score on the Tolerance of Sexual Harassment Scale (Lott et al. 1982) suggest that men who are more tolerant of sexual harassment view the stranger harassment experience as eliciting less negative emotion, which would suggest that they believe that women enjoy these incidents. This assumption is qualified by the correlation between tolerance and self-blame, which suggests that these men believe that the woman is provoking or at least encouraging the harassing behavior. More research on men's views of stranger harassment and their predictions of women's responses is warranted by these results.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current study is a first step exploration of the effect of context on women's perceptions of stranger harassment experiences. As a first step, it is limited in its scope and conclusions. While the vignettes were designed to evoke a generic and somewhat ambiguous stranger harassment experience, the results suggest that participants may have incorporated their own experiences and beliefs in their judgment of the story, especially the control condition. When this is taken with the participant recruitment process of self-selection, there is the possibility that more positive perceptions of stranger harassment were not found because it is possible that only the women with negative reactions completed the entire survey. Because of the ease of quitting a study administered via the internet, it is possible that women with more positive experiences were "turned off" and quit early on despite the care taken to hide the true purpose of the study and avoid the phrase "stranger harassment." Unfortunately, we do not know the differences between the participants who completed the study and those who quit the study early. However, because the results found do mirror Fairchild and Rudman's (2008) and Fairchild's (2009) results, which were collected through more traditional (laboratory) methods, it would not be incorrect to assume that for the majority of women negative experiences will be most frequent. Future research may wish to incorporate longer vignettes that elaborate the details of the situation to ensure that all participants are evaluating the vignette similarly. Likewise, future research ought to solicit from

participants information about their interpretation of the vignette; for example, asking participants if they have been in the same situation as the target character or know someone who has.

Another limitation of the current study is that each participant rated only one stranger harassment situation. The set-up did not allow for rating of multiple situations without the participant becoming highly aware of the hypotheses of the study. However, a creative solution that would allow a researcher to test multiple scenarios on the same participant would truly illuminate the differences between the context effects. Though not likely, there is a chance that the differences found between the vignettes is the result of some cohort effect of the group that responded to that vignette.

The results of the study highlight three major context factors that can alter the interpretation of the situation: attractiveness, age, and being alone or with friends. It is highly likely that these three factors (as well as others) may interact to influence a woman's perception of any harassment experience. Future research should attempt to look at the factors in relation to each other as well as in conjunction with each other. For example, would a woman respond more positively to an older, attractive harasser when she is with friends as compared to a younger, unattractive harasser when she is alone? The combinations are many, but all of these factors are being assessed simultaneously by the victim. Moreover, the question arises as to which factor is most important. The sexual harassment literature has focused on attractiveness and severity. Are these the most important factors for stranger harassment situations, or might age and whether or not a woman is alone be more influential?

Moreover, because the study focused on perspective taking and did not assess women's personal experiences, it is difficult to absolutely state that the perceived reactions and emotions are representative of how women actually interpret the situation in the moment. The research on perspective taking (Baston et al. 1997; Davis et. al. 1996) does give confidence in the results being representative of women's personal reactions, especially when taken along with the fact that the perceived reactions found here mirror women's actual reactions found by Fairchild and Rudman (2008). The important element, though, that is missing from this research through the perspective taking paradigm is the effect of characteristics of the target on perceptions of stranger harassment. While there is some evidence from the exploratory analyses with women's own frequency of experience with stranger harassment as a target characteristic, this study does not account for target age, attractiveness, race, etc. Future research should investigate the characteristics of the target/victim as additional elements of the context.

The current study, additionally, focused solely on a heterosexual model in which females are the victim of men's unwanted sexual attention. It is important to note that while concrete numbers on male victim-female harasser and same-sex stranger harassment are not available, anecdotal evidence suggests that these experiences do exist and it would be worthwhile to investigate how context may influence these situations. The literature on sexual harassment suggests that males are frequently the victim of sexual harassment in the workplace. Waldo et al. (1998) found that male-to-male sexual harassment was nearly as common in their samples as

female-to-male harassment. In their study, Waldo and colleagues found that men were the victims of both unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment by women and men, but that the victims rated their experiences as only “slightly upsetting.” This suggests that the men may not view the behaviors addressed in the study as *harassment*. The most upsetting category to the men was gender harassment that enforced the male gender role. While stranger harassment has been defined in terms of behaviors that represent unwanted sexual attention (i.e., catcalls, whistles, stares), future research should expand this definition to include gender enforcing behaviors that may capture a broader range of gender policing that occurs in public spaces. It is likely that men are not only harassing women in public, but are also harassing their fellow men; moreover, there are likely men who experience being harassed by female strangers. Future research ought to vary the genders of the victim and perpetrator to assess stranger harassment from all angles.

Conclusion

This is the first research to suggest that when women are catcalled on the street they assess the context in formulating their reactions. Similar research from the field of sexual harassment supports such a conclusion. Many sexual harassment researchers have found that manipulating the context of the situation (i.e., attractive versus unattractive harasser) changes perceptions of the severity of the harassment. As highlighted throughout the Discussion section, there are a multitude of follow up studies that can elaborate the processes involved in these context effects. A more thorough understanding of the experiences and mental processes of women during stranger harassment situations can ultimately lead to programs for reducing its ill effects such as increased self-objectification and fear of rape (Fairchild and Rudman 2008).

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Implications for Criminal Justice from the 2002 and 2006 Department of Defense Gender Relations and Sexual Harrasment Surveys

Juanita M. Firestone · J. Mitchell Miller · Richard Harris

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Abstract Sexual misconduct has emerged as a widespread problem throughout the criminal justice system as indicated by law enforcement officer sexual assault incidents in various cities and the findings of the recent National Prison Rape Elimination Act Research Commission. Through multivariate statistical analysis of data from two Department of Defense-wide surveys (2002 and 2006), this paper examines the indicators and cofounders of sexism, sexual harassment, and sexual assault with attention to change during the study period. Findings inform a suggested anticipatory model for prevention and intervention in military settings that, based on shared characteristics such as male dominance and authoritarian culture, provide an approximate reference context for criminal justice sexual misconduct best practices consideration.

Keywords Sexual harrasment · Military gender relations

There can be little doubt that sexual misconduct is a system-wide criminal justice concern. Public outrage and scrutiny has forced attention to these acts of official oppression which indicate serious personnel and perhaps agency and institutional level problems. Police officer sexual assault is pointedly disturbing and marks the polar opposite behavior the citizenry expects from sworn law enforcement agents. In addition to undermining public confidence and deteriorating police-community relations, officer sexual misconduct shakes the very foundation of democratic society by challenging trust in the rule of law and civil liberty.

J. M. Firestone · J. M. Miller (✉)
Department of Criminal Justice, University of Texas at San Antonio, 501 W Durango Blvd.,
San Antonio, TX 78207, USA
e-mail: jm.miller@utsa.edu

R. Harris
Department of Social Work, University of Texas at San Antonio, 501 W Durango Blvd.,
San Antonio, TX 78207, USA

The problem is also a current concern in corrections. The U.S. Congress formed the National Prison Rape Elimination (PREA) Commission in 2005 to analyze and reduce sexual violence in correctional settings. The PREA Commission implemented a national research agenda which examined both inmate and staff perpetrators and found several accounts of correctional officer sexual assault, an understandably sensitive, controversial, and highly confidential subject.

The topic of sexual misconduct is so sensitive, in fact, that researchers typically are met with near categorical resistance. A range of barriers exist to studying the topic. Data are embedded within internal affairs or agency investigator offices (a vault within a vault of sorts), are potentially litigious, and usually only made available to researchers in heavily redacted form. The potential findings from such analyses carry implications for administrators and frontline practitioners alike. The former are on tilt between the needs of minimizing negative public relations, honest disclosure, and proactively addressing problematic situations. The bulk of practitioners, in turn, rally around unions and officer associations who attempt to block and hamper legal and scientific scrutiny, giving reaffirmation to the suspicions of the dark side of police subculture.

This paper considers the indicators and scope of sexual harassment and sexual assault between 2002 and 2006 in the United States military. After reviewing extant literature on sexism, generally, and sexual harassment and sexual assault more specifically, the multivariate models and analytic techniques used to examine survey reported misconduct data are described. Findings inform discussion of policy and practice implications with particular attention to criminal justice best practices.

Background

As emphasized by Firestone and Harris (1994, 1999, 2003, 2008, Firestone 2007) the U.S. military provides an interesting context for analyzing sexual harassment (and sexual assault) behaviors. The military, including the reserve component, is large enough to provide an adequate sample of individuals across various demographic group memberships (sex, race, ethnicity, age) for meaningful comparisons. The active duty component, at least, claims to be the largest equal opportunity employer in the U.S. Following orders and invoking hierarchical decision making is ingrained in the military culture so that personal opinions/prejudices are supposedly irrelevant to duty requirements. In addition, within the military system, cohesion is very highly valued, and divulging negative information about fellow soldiers or about the organization in general is taboo.

Interestingly, cohesion has been used to exclude rather than include individuals seen as “outsiders” or “troublemakers” in militaristic settings (e.g., women, race/ethnic minority members; see Harris and Firestone 1997; Shields 1998). Furthermore, since harassment in general is part of military culture, and sexual harassment may be a subset of those incidents, the military environment may be less open to receiving complaints (either formal or informal). In addition, sexual assault has been used as a technique of control by those with power over those with less power, especially in closed organizational settings such as prisons and law enforcement agencies. Below, we review the primary forms of sexual misconduct in order of ascending severity from sexism to sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Sexism

Normative assumptions about how women and men differ with regard to work-related skills, attitudes and knowledge typically suggest that women are deficient compared to male peers (Heilman 1997). For example, the pop-psychology literature is replete with self-help advice for women on overcoming deficiencies by “succeeding at corporate gamesmanship” (Harragan 1977), “breaking into the boys’ club” (Jardim and Hennig 1990), “improving communication styles and supervising skills” (Feuer 1988; Fierman 1990), and how to be “feminine and still succeed in the workplace” (Foley 2007; Trunk 2007; Wish 2008). These attitudes often translate, whether intentionally or not, into sexist behaviors.

Sometimes labeled gender harassment, sexism includes generalized sexual or sexist comments or behaviors that insult, degrade or embarrass based on gender, typically women. Sexist attitudes originate from stereotypical views of gender appropriate behavior (De Judicibus and McCabe 2001; Bem 1974), such as masculine traits of rationality, risk taking, and aggression. Feminine traits include nurturance, emotional expressiveness, and self-subordination. These attitudes result in the stereotypical beliefs that women are inferior to men (particularly in the paid workplace) and that men have the prerogative to initiate sexual behavior—a risky mantra for an environment where pressure and invitation are often blurred (Bartling and Eisenman 1993; Walker et al. 1993. McElroy et al. (1996; see also, Saal and Moore 1993; McEnrue 1989) found that blacks and women are more likely than white males to perceive promotions are based on unfair criteria (e.g. “she slept her way to the top” or if a black is promoted it constitutes “reverse discrimination”). Such perceived inequities are associated with reduced job satisfaction, increased work attendance and organizational commitment (McElroy et al. (1996). Thus, an environment can be sexist, based on perceptions of inequity, although the behaviors creating that situation may not constitute the legal definition of sexual harassment.

Sexism relates to both sexual harassment and sexual assault because people with sexist attitudes are unlikely to believe a target who says the behavior was unwanted and may blame the target for having in some way encouraged the perpetrator (Valentine-French and Radtke 1993). Glick and Fiske (1996) proposed that sexism may not only be a single concept; rather attitudes toward women may be ambivalent, comprising “hostile sexism” and “benevolent sexism.” Hostile sexism can be described as the negative attitude toward women that is commonly associated with sexist prejudices (e.g., Tougas et al. 1995). In contrast, benevolent sexism can be characterized as a set of attitudes that are sexist in their manifestation of stereotypical roles for women but are subtly positive and affectionate towards women (Harris and Firestone 1997; Glick and Fiske 1996). According to Glick and Fiske (1996), ambivalent sexists reconcile their hostile and benevolent attitudes by differentiating between “good” and “bad” women. Thus, benevolence is targeted at those women that conform to traditional roles (“good girls”), whereas hostility is reserved for women in nontraditional roles (“bad girls”) (Glick et al. 1997). This differentiation between “good” and “bad” subcategories of women appears to provide a means for men to justify and excuse aggressive behaviors towards some women. Such behaviors may include sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been the focus of much academic research across disciplines as well as much media attention. Research shows that sexual harassment is a widespread phenomenon with negative consequences for both individuals and organizations such as career interruptions, lowered productivity, lessened job satisfaction, lowered self confidence, loss of motivation, physical health ailments, and loss of commitment to work and employer (Crull 1982; DiTomaso 1989; Gutek 1985; Gutek and Koss 1993, USMSPB 1981, 1987, 1995; Dansky and Kilpatrick 1997; Faley 1991; Niebuhr 1997).

The original definition of sexual harassment for the military was “deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature which are unwelcome” (USMSPB 1981). The initial definition was expanded to include any conduct of a sexual nature which created “an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment” (USMSPB 1995). Even the expanded definition is so broad, however, that empirical and theoretical inconsistencies arising from specific studies remain (Schneider 1982).

For instance, definitions are sometimes inconsistent and often discipline-specific, which further confounds clear conceptualizations (Terpstra and Baker 1986). Recognizing that considerable overlap in conceptualizations exists, most researchers use the definitions specific to their discipline. Military sociologists and criminologists focus on organizational and societal level environmental variables (e.g., power/status differences); psychologists focus on individual variables (e.g., sexist attitudes); economists look at labor market issues (e.g., who benefits?); while organizational/business studies use work structures (e.g., formal/informal hierarchies, power dynamic, organization culture). As a result, the body of literature available may be so restricted that it is only useful within a specific discipline or for a single explicit purpose.

Because the defining criteria for identifying sexual harassment have been “uninvited and unwanted,” other complicating factors lie in the perceptions and evaluations of being “unwanted.” Definitions of “acceptable” versus “unwanted” as well as their visions of effective policies are likely to differ vastly between the perpetrators and the targets as well as by gender (Baker et al. 1990; Dougherty 1999, 2006; Fitzgerald and Ormerod 1991; Loreda et al. 1995; Saal 1996; Sev’er and Ungar 1997).

Perhaps most problematic is that virtually any behavior, including requests for dates, pressure for sexual activities, comments, jokes, and aggression up to rape can constitute sexual harassment. Many argue that definitions of these behaviors as sexual harassment could vary systematically depending on individual characteristics as well as the specific contexts in which the behavior occurred. In other words, some argue that sexual harassment appears highly subjective and the experiences of women and men are variable and open to alternative explanations (Dougherty 1999, 2006; Gordon 1981).

Sexual harassment in the workplace has typically been characterized as consisting of two forms, both of which are defined legally. The *quid pro quo* type is the easiest to identify and, although frequencies are low, it is the most likely to be challenged. This form includes the exchange of work-related benefits or consequences for sexual

favors through bribes, threats or even physical force (see Firestone and Harris 1994). The second form, environmental harassment, includes unwanted sexualized actions to alter, interfere with or affect one's work performance by creating a hostile and offensive work climate (Firestone and Harris 1994; Sev'er 1999). The definition of this type is blurred regarding how to ascertain whether an act is "unwanted" and on deciding on whom the burden of proof should fall that the action was against the individual's will. Expectations of economic losses and/or psychological pain due to the harassment have also been an issue as some courts demand that targets have proof of both before claims of environmental harassment can proceed.

Two Supreme Court rulings inform environmental harassment. First, a "reasonable" woman standard grants any woman classified as reasonable to assess whether she is being subject to harassment or to acceptable behaviors (e.g., teasing, fun jokes, etc., Greenhouse 1993; Wells and Kracher 1993). Second, the ruling that "psychological stress" does not have to be documented by medical professionals establishes precedent for allowing women to interpret their experiences within the boundaries of the organization (Wells and Kracher 1993).

An organization's culture includes the value and belief system, including regularities, norms, rules for working and getting along, and the organizational climate (Schein 1990, 1996). Bastien et al. (1995) demonstrated the ways in which culture is structured to have considerable impact on how people behave in an organizational setting. How sexual harassment policies (reporting procedures, training) are exacted is impetus for the stories employees tell about an organization's willingness to eradicate or perpetuate sexual harassment (Conrad and Taylor 1994; Hulin et al. 1996).

One aspect of organizational culture derives from the gender balance of the employees. It seems clear that sexual harassment is more prevalent in male-dominated occupations (e.g. police, professional sports, military). It has been suggested that work settings that place a high value on "masculine" qualities such as power, toughness, dominance, aggressiveness, and competitiveness may contribute to negative attitudes toward women (Firestone and Harris 2008). In addition, there is some evidence that fields such as the military may attract individuals who possess more traditional gender-role attitudes. In such a setting, women may be seen as disrupting the masculine camaraderie that infuses the culture of the occupation and weans a "warrior culture" traditionally deemed necessary to maintain a ready and effective fighting force (Fitzgerald et al. 1995).

Sexual Assault

The term sexual assault has been used to describe a large range of nonconsensual sexual behaviors from kissing and/or touching to coerced penetration by physical force or threat of force. The question of force is balanced against conceptualizations of "bad girls" who deserve bad things and "good girls" who need protection strongly impact how most script rape (Tendayi et al. 2004; Conly 2004). If a victim is considered incapable of giving consent (due to age, mental/physical status, intoxication), the act may be considered rape or sexual assault and attempted rape is often considered the equivalent of actual rape. Whether rape is subsumed under sexual harassment or sexual harassment is considered a form of rape, conceptual

distinctions between the two become clouded and provide some with the evidence to contend that sexually wrong behaviors are in the eye of the beholder.

While most people believe that rape in the workplace is uncommon, Lee and Kleiner (2003) contended that at the time of their research, 51,000 rapes/sexual assaults occurred in the workplace each year. Being sexually assaulted in the workplace not only leads to physical injuries and psychological trauma, many victims develop symptoms similar to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This reaction may be compounded when the environment where the assault occurred is a military workplace where women are sometimes viewed as “outsiders” or as “bad girls.” In either case, such women are sometimes perceived as deserving whatever happens to them (Lee and Kleiner 2003; Tendayi et al. 2004).

The definition of sexual assault and rape has evolved from one designed to control “competing male interests in controlling sexual access to females, rather than protecting women’s interests in controlling their own bodies and sexuality” (Greenberg et al. 2004: 776; Hasday 2000) to a code focused on the use of force and lack of consent (Lyon 2004). The Uniform code of Military Justice (UCMJ) originally defined sexual assault as:

a crime...; intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, physical threat or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. Sexual assault includes rape, nonconsensual sodomy (oral or anal sex), indecent assault (unwanted, inappropriate sexual contact or fondling), or attempt to commit these acts....Consent” shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the victim to offer physical resistance (DoD 2004).

Revised Uniform Code of Military Justice Provisions

In Section 522 of the NDAA for FY 2006, Congress amended the UCMJ regarding sex offenses to consolidate and reorganize the array of military sex offenses under Article 120, UCMJ, “Rape, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Misconduct.” These revised provisions took effect October 1, 2007. As amended, rape is defined in the UCMJ as a situation where any person causes another person of any age to engage in a sexual act by: (1) using force; (2) causing grievous bodily harm; (3) threatening or placing that other person in fear that any person will be subjected to death, grievous bodily harm, or kidnapping; (4) rendering the person unconscious; or (5) administering a substance, drug, intoxicant or similar substance that substantially impairs the ability of that person to appraise or control conduct. The revised Article 120 of the UCMJ defines “consent” as “words or overt acts indicating a freely given agreement to the sexual act at issue by a competent person.”

Military crime statistics for 2007 indicated that 2,085 total sexual assaults were reported by or against service members (DoD 2007). However, past research suggests that few individuals (the range of reported incidences is from 15%–25%) report sexual assault to authorities (Clay-Warner and Burt 2005; Firestone and Harris 2003; 2008; Harned et al. 2002). Past research also indicated that while both men and women can experience sexual assault, the risk of workplace assault may be higher for women, especially those in male-dominated occupations (Dekker and Barling 1998; Frank et al. 1998; Haavio-Mannila et al. 1998; Sadler et al. 2003). This is reinforced by data

from a recent DoD survey. A single-item measure of unwanted sexual contact (asking whether someone, without their consent or against their will, sexually touched them, had (attempted or completed) sexual intercourse with them, oral sex with them, anal sex with them, or penetrated them with a finger or object), as reported in the 2006 Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members report, indicated that 6.8% of women and 1.8% of men indicated experiencing unwanted sexual contact. Women in the Army were more likely than women in the other Services to indicate experiencing unwanted sexual contact, whereas women in the Air Force were less likely. Also, junior enlisted members were more likely than senior members, junior officers, and senior officers to indicate unwanted sexual contact (Lipari et al. 2008: iv).

Research Methods

Data Sources—2002 Sexual Harassment Survey

A sample of respondents from the “Armed Forces 2002 Sexual Harassment Survey” generated data for the Office of the Secretary of Defense by the Defense Manpower Data Center. This was a “worldwide scientific survey of how men and women work together in the Active-duty Military Services.” The stated purpose of the survey was “to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment and other unprofessional, gender-related behaviors”.

A single-stage, stratified random sample of 60,415 respondents was drawn for the survey by mail and the Web, representing male and female enlisted personnel and officers in the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. A total of 19,960 usable surveys were returned for a response rate of 36% and includes 10,235 males and 9,725 females, illustrating the oversampling of women. The sampling frame was stratified by service branch, sex, paygrade, race/ethnicity, likelihood of deployment and geographic location.

In this analysis, cross-tabulation is used to assess the extent to which men and women report various types of behaviors that might be construed as harassment. Logistic regression is used to test the impact of different forms of sexual harassment on the likelihood of reporting sexual assault. In addition we investigate whether men or women, different race and ethnic groups, and/or different ranks are more or less likely to label an event as sexual harassment. Results should support past research indicating that the presence or absence of environmental sexual harassment is highly predictive of both individual harassment and sexual assault.

Variable Construction 2002 Sexual Harassment Survey

Among the items in the “Gender Related Experiences in the Military in the Past 12 Months” section of the survey, respondents were asked about sex/gender related talk and/or behavior that was unwanted, uninvited, and non-consensual. Respondents were provided a list of 19 items and asked whether that item had occurred “very often,” “often,” “sometimes,” “once or twice,” or “never.” We recoded the first four responses in an “ever” occurred category with a value of 1. “Never” was coded 0. Based on the original statements, we identified individualistic forms of sexual

harassment that are personal, directly physical in nature, and leave little room for misinterpretation by either the victim or the perpetrator (sexual assault, touching, sexual phone calls). This form can be differentiated from a broader category of more public, environmental harassment (jokes, whistles, suggestive looks). The latter actions can be experienced even if directed at another individual and are ambiguous enough to leave their interpretation dependent on the environmental context. Respondents were initially classified as having experienced individualistic or environmental unwanted, uninvited sexual behavior, or any form (individualistic, environmental, or both).

Respondents were then asked whether they considered “ANY of the behaviors... which YOU MARKED AS HAPPENING TO YOU ... to have been sexual harassment [emphases part of original survey]”. Responses included “none were sexual harassment,” some were sexual harassment; some were not sexual harassment,” and “all were sexual harassment.” This variable was dichotomized to indicate whether “any” events were labeled as sexual harassment, or none were labeled as harassment. Another question asked “Did you report this situation to any of the following installation/Service/DoD individuals or organizations.” The responses included references to the various official channels for reporting. Individuals who responded “yes” to any of the categories were classified as having used official channels to report the incident. Independent variables utilized include sex of respondent, rank (junior enlisted, senior enlisted, junior officer, senior officer), whether respondent was married, and service branch.

With response categories options of “very often,” “often,” “sometimes,” “once or twice,” or “never”, sexism was operationalized by the following four questions:

- How frequently have you heard people of your gender referred to in negative or insulting terms?
- How frequently were you treated you “differently” because of your gender (for example, mistreated, slighted or ignored you)?
- How frequently did you hear offensive sexist remarks (for example, suggesting that people of your gender are not suited for the kind of work you do).
- How frequently did someone put you down or was condescending to you because of your gender?

Variable Construction 2006 Gender Relations Survey

Sexist behavior involves unwanted actions that refer to an individual’s sex and are directed toward all persons of that sex. Experiences of sexist behavior include verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors that convey insulting, offensive, or condescending attitudes based on the sex of the respondent. To be included in the calculation of the sexist behavior rate, members must have experienced at least one of the four behaviorally stated items defining sexist behavior. Sex discrimination is unfair or unequal access to professional development resources and opportunities due to a Service member’s gender. A new baseline measure of sex discrimination was introduced in 2006 where members were asked if they had experienced, within the 12 months preceding the survey, any discriminatory behaviors related to evaluations, career development, or assignments where their

gender was factor *and* whether they considered at least one of the behaviors to be sex discrimination.

Sexual harassment is comprised of three component measures (each measured by four of the 12 items in Question 35 that measures sexual harassment): crude/offensive behavior (verbal/nonverbal behaviors of a sexual nature that were offensive or embarrassing), unwanted sexual attention (attempts to establish a sexual relationship), and sexual coercion (classic *quid pro quo* instances of specific treatment or favoritism conditioned on sexual cooperation).

To insure valid comparisons for the analysis, Respondents were then provided a list of 19 items and asked whether that item had occurred “very often,” “often,” “sometimes,” “once or twice,” or “never.” We recoded the first four responses in an “ever” occurred category with a value of 1. “Never” was coded 0. Based on the original statements, we identified individualistic forms of sexual harassment that are personal and frequently directly physical in nature, and leave little room for misinterpretation by either the victim or the perpetrator (sexual assault, touching, sexual phone calls). This form can be differentiated from a broader category of more public, environmental harassment (jokes, whistles, suggestive looks). The latter actions can be experienced even if directed at another individual, and are ambiguous enough to leave their interpretation dependent on the environmental context. Respondents were initially classified as having experienced individualistic or environmental unwanted, uninvited sexual behavior, or any form, (individualistic, environmental, or both). We focus on the separate categories of environmental and individual harassment for this research.

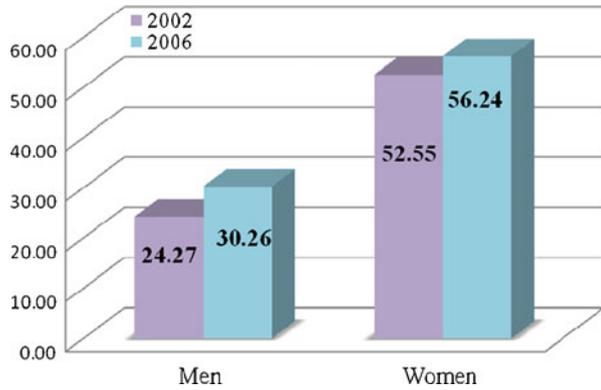
In this survey, unwanted sexual contact includes rape, non-consensual sodomy (oral or anal sex), or indecent assault (unwanted, inappropriate sexual contact or fondling) and can occur regardless of gender, age, or spousal relationship. Incident rates of unwanted sexual contact used two measures, 1) A two-item measure based on the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ), allowing results to be compared to the 1995 and 2002 results, and 2) A new baseline measure designed for the *WGRA2006* to be consistent with the definition in the amended Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) effective in October 2007 (See Lipari et al. 2008: iv).

Analysis

Figure 1 presents the basic information on the extent to which respondents reported sexual harassment behaviors in 2002 and 2006. More than half of the females identified at least one unwanted, uninvited, did not participate willing type of incident in both surveys and the percent increased from 52.55% in 2002 to 56.25% in 2006. The percent of women experiencing harassing behaviors was more than twice that of men in 2002 and nearly twice that of men in 2006. This comparative change is due to the fact that the increase in reported harassment was greater for the men (increase by 5.99%) than for the women (increase by 3.69%).

Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 show percentages reporting experienced harassment or assault. It is noteworthy that when percentages are translated into numbers, the data suggest that 475,913 members of the active duty services reported one or more harassing

Fig. 1 Percent reporting some form of sexual harassment, 2002 and 2006



incidents (34.27%). Of these 360,946 are estimated for males and 114,967 are estimated for females. Similar patterns of results are displayed for environmental and individual harassment. The results for sexual assault are striking. With 2.17% of the males reporting attempted or actual sexual assault, this translates into 25,702 incidents. Over 5% of women (5.02%) reported attempted or actual assault, reflecting 10,185 incidents. The percentages reporting experiencing harassment or assault are displayed visually in Figs. 2 through 5.

In an attempt to show the impact of environmental harassment on individualized experiences, Table 1 focuses on attempted or actual sexual assault for men and women by whether or not environmental harassment is reported. Results are provided both for 2006 and 2002. The most striking observation is that assault reports are very rare when no environmental harassment is claimed and much more prevalent when environmental harassment is reported. In a proportional sense, the impact is greater for the men than the women. With well under 1% of men reporting assault but no environmental harassment, but nearly 9% when environmental harassment is reported, the odds of assault are increased by nearly 35 times.

(34.53). There is also a substantial increase in the odds of assault for women when environmental harassment is present, nearly twelve times higher (11.84). The same pattern of increased odds of assault is evident for 2002, even though the reported incidents were lower.

Fig. 2 Percent reporting sexual harassment behaviors, 2006

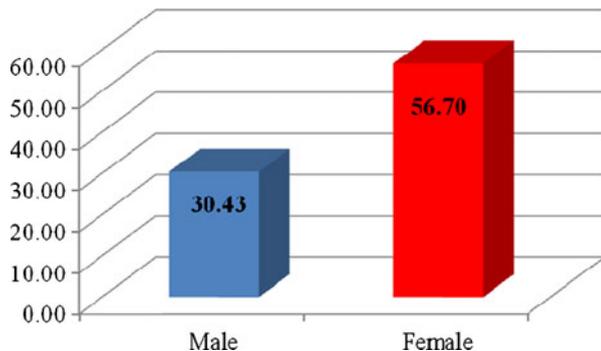


Fig. 3 Percent reporting environmental harassment 2006

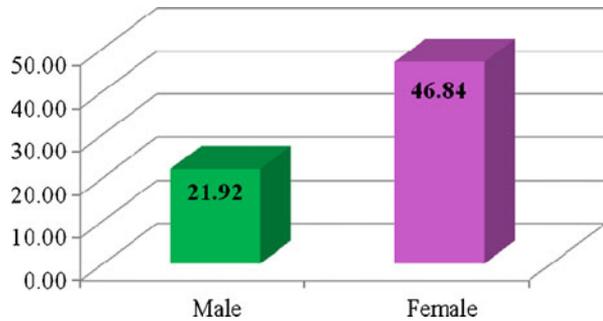


Figure 6 provides a clear display of the differing experiences of men and women and the impact of environmental harassment.

Table 2 breaks out the data on sexual assault by sex and race/ethnicity of the respondents. As shown in the top portion of the table, of the males African American respondents have the highest percent reporting assault at 3.36%. Next are the “others” (2.72%), followed by the Hispanics (2.44%), and white non-Hispanic respondents have the lowest incidence (1.77%). Females have higher rates than males for all race and ethnic categories, but Hispanic women have the highest rate (6.45%) followed by Black women (5.23%), then others (4.76%) and finally white non-Hispanic women (4.52%).

The middle and lower portions of Table 4 add a control for whether or not the respondents reported any environmental harassment. The differences are striking. For both males and females, when no environmental harassment is reported the percent reporting sexual assault is under 1% for all race and ethnic groups. The percentages are substantially higher for all categories when environmental harassment is reported. Among the males, nearly 15% (14.63%) of the African American respondents report attempted or actual assault. This is followed by others (9.34%), then Hispanics (8.83%) and finally white, non-Hispanics (7.65%).

Though the percentages reporting assault are higher in all categories for the women than the men, the link to environmental harassment is very clear. Over 12% (12.20%) of Hispanic women report sexual assault if they also reported environmental harassment, compared to 0.66% reporting assault if they did not experience environmental

Fig. 4 Percent reporting individual harassment 2006

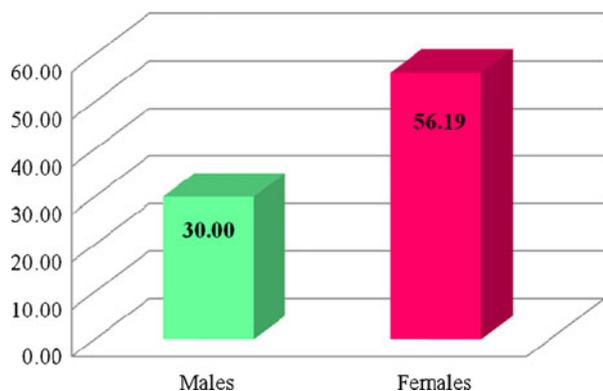
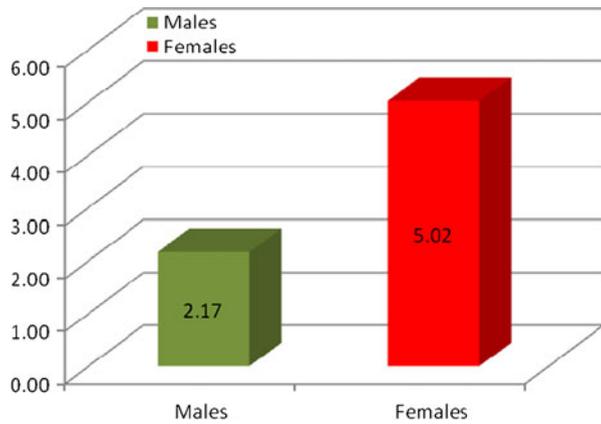


Fig. 5 Percent reporting sexual assault, 2006



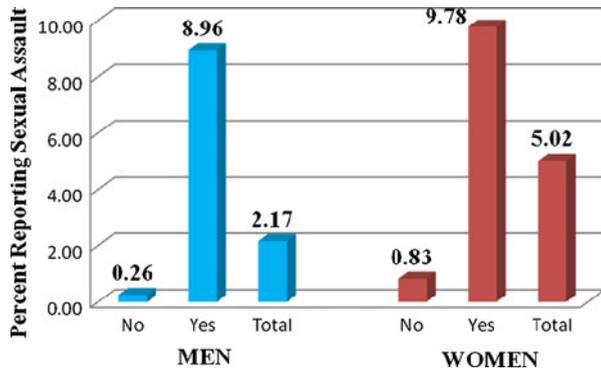
harassment. Nearly 11% (10.95%) of Black women reported assault if they also reported environmental harassment, followed by 8.99% for others and 8.63% for whites.

Table 3 provides the results of logistic regression models designed to predict the probability of reporting attempted or actual sexual assault. The first model is for males, the second for females and the third for the total sample. In all three models the dominant variables increasing the likelihood of assault are individual harassment, followed by sexist behavior and then environmental harassment. Controlling for these three factors three other variables are statistically significant for the males. Officers are about half as likely, junior enlisted men are more than twice as likely and Black males are nearly twice as likely to report sexual assault. The non-significant variables are also of interest. There are no meaningful differences by branch, deployment status or being stationed outside the U.S.

Table 1 Assault or attempted assault by environmental harassment

		2006 Environmental Harassment			Ratio: Yes/No
	Assault	No	Yes	Total	
Male	No	99.74	91.04	97.83	34.53
	Yes	0.26	8.96	2.17	
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	
Female	No	99.17	90.22	94.98	11.84
	Yes	0.83	9.78	5.02	
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	
		2002 Environmental Harassment			Ratio: Yes/No
	Assault	No	Yes	Total	
Male	No	99.93	97.67	99.46	33.06
	Yes	0.07	2.33	0.54	
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	
Female	No	99.48	94.77	97.25	9.99
	Yes	0.52	5.23	2.75	
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	

Fig. 6 Sexual assault by reported environmental harassment, 2006



Again controlling for the three major predictors, two other variables are statistically significant for the females. Being a junior enlisted member increases the odds of reporting assault by more than three times, though note that being an officer is not statistically significant in reducing the likelihood of assault. Being deployed outside of the U.S. more than doubles the likelihood reporting assault. Again, branch and deployment status display no statistically meaningful

Table 2 Sexual assault by race, ethnicity and sex and by whether or not respondents reported environmental harassment

	Sexual Assault	Black (non-Hisp.)	Hispanic	White (non-Hisp.)	Other (non-Hisp.)	Total Total
Male	Did not exper.	96.64	97.56	98.23	97.28	97.83
	Experienced	3.36	2.44	1.77	2.72	2.17
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Female	Did not exper.	94.77	93.55	95.48	95.24	94.98
	Experienced	5.23	6.45	4.52	4.76	5.02
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Male						
Envir: None	Did not exper.	99.76	99.46	99.83	99.44	99.74
	Experienced	0.24	0.54	0.17	0.56	0.26
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Envir: Some	Did not exper.	85.37	91.17	92.35	90.66	91.02
	Experienced	14.63	8.83	7.65	9.34	8.98
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Female						
Envir: None	Did not exper.	99.19	99.34	99.10	99.24	99.17
	Experienced	0.81	0.66	0.90	0.76	0.83
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Envir: Some	Did not exper.	89.05	87.80	91.37	91.01	90.19
	Experienced	10.95	12.20	8.63	8.99	9.81
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 3 Probability of reporting attempted/actual sexual assault (2006)

	Assault-Males			Assault-Females			Assault-Total		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Individual harassment	3.89	0.00	48.95	2.35	0.00	10.50	3.23	0.00	25.24
Environmental harassment	1.09	0.00	2.97	0.82	0.00	2.27	1.04	0.00	2.83
Sexist Behavior	3.13	0.00	22.92	1.11	0.00	3.05	2.58	0.00	13.23
Female	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	-0.20	0.04	0.82
Army	0.20	0.56	1.22	0.51	0.43	1.66	0.27	0.38	1.31
Navy	0.48	0.17	1.62	0.31	0.63	1.36	0.42	0.17	1.53
Marines	-0.15	0.68	0.86	0.39	0.57	1.48	-0.09	0.78	0.91
Air force	0.28	0.45	1.32	-0.06	0.93	0.95	0.13	0.69	1.14
Deployed	-0.03	0.83	0.97	0.19	0.26	1.20	0.04	0.66	1.04
Stationed outside U.S.	-0.02	0.87	0.98	0.75	0.00	2.11	0.26	0.02	1.29
OFFICER	-0.73	0.00	0.48	-0.50	0.17	0.61	-0.67	0.00	0.51
JREnlisted	0.83	0.00	2.30	1.22	0.00	3.39	0.94	0.00	2.56
HISP	-0.02	0.86	0.98	0.17	0.40	1.19	0.06	0.63	1.06
BLACK	0.68	0.00	1.98	0.26	0.17	1.30	0.57	0.00	1.76
Constant	-10.68	0.00	0.00	-7.70	0.00	0.00	-9.59	0.00	0.00
	-2LL	Cox & Snell Nagelkerke		-2LL	Cox & Snell Nagelkerke		-2LL	Cox & Snell Nagelkerke	
	2937.96	0.08	0.41	1209.10	0.09	0.26	4209.99	0.08	0.37

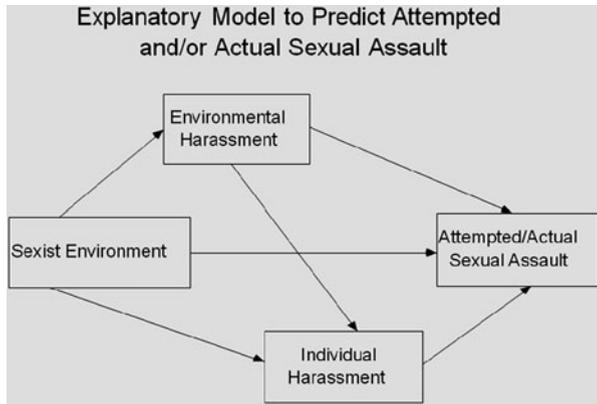
differences and Black women are not significantly different from others in this model.

The results for the total sample roughly parallel those for the separate analyses, with one major surprise. When the other variables are controlled the coefficient for “Female” is negative (-0.20) and statistically significant at the 0.04 level. This suggests that if sexist context, environmental harassment and, consequently, individualized harassment did not occur women would actually have a lower probability of reporting sexual assault than men in the armed services.

The roles of individual and environmental harassment in the logistic regression analyses are interesting. Our conceptual model (Fig. 7) suggests that environmental harassment along with sexist behavior create a context in which individual harassment is viewed as acceptable by potential perpetrators, and this context in turn increases the likelihood of sexual assault.

Figure 8 captures the linkage between individual and environmental harassment in a clear and powerful display. When no environmental harassment is reported, individual harassment is very rarely reported. For males, of those reporting no environmental 89.11% also report an absence of individualized harassment. For females, of those reporting no environmental 81.61% also report an absence of individualized harassment. When environment is reported the probability that there will also be individualized harassment is extremely high: 98.09% of the time for

Fig. 7 Explanatory model to predict attempted and/or actual sexual assault



males and 99.09% of the time for females. The reporting of individualized harassment has by far the greatest increase in the probability of sexual assault.

The results in Fig. 7 are also displayed in Table 4, capturing the statistical strength of this relationship with gamma. Gamma is an interesting statistic that can attain a value of 1.0 in circumstances where a relationship is “conditionally perfect.” This means that if one condition is present one could perfectly predict the presence of another condition. This is very close to the case here, with gammas of 0.995 for males and 0.996 for females. When environmental harassment is reported, individualized harassment also is almost always reported.

Discussion

The above analyses support past research indicating that sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace are overlapping, yet distinct concepts. Findings suggest that the context in which men and women perform work duties is a key factor in whether or not individuals reported sexual harassment or rape. For large social institutions such as the various branches of the military and criminal justice system, survey efforts that provide reporting opportunities are valuable in multiple

Fig. 8 Individual by environmental harassment

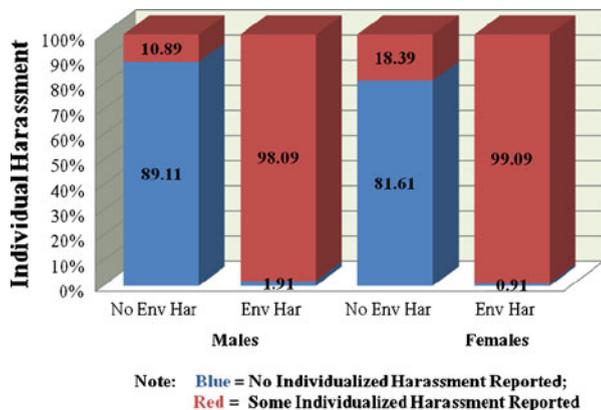


Table 4 Environmental harassment reporting by gender

Individual Harassment		Environmental Harassment			Gamma
		None	Some	Total	
Male	None	89.11	1.91	70.00	0.995
	Some	10.89	98.09	30.00	
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	
Female	None	81.61	0.91	43.81	0.996
	Some	18.39	99.09	56.19	
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	

respects. Beyond providing victims a collective voice, there is a strong correlation between increased reports of sexual misconduct, regardless of form, and reported rape and attempted rape. Ostensibly, sexual assault is more likely to occur in environments where sexism and sexual harassment are more prevalent—thus, environmental harassment manifests in individual harassment and, in extreme cases, sexual assault. The anticipatory model illustrated above (Fig. 8) captures this escalation trajectory and suggests that attention to environment can better prevention. Gender ratio, degree of supervision, minor form tolerance, and nature of job duties are all variable elements that, when conceptualized as risk factors, are subject to policy manipulation and daily practice discretion.

Results highlight how attempting to remedy the problem of harassment by focusing on changing individual behaviors, rather than on altering a militaristic culture in which sexism may still be unofficially condoned and institutionally supported are unlikely to succeed. Though necessary for punishment and individual deterrence, it is uncertain whether punishment examples yield any general deterrence effect. It seems likely that an organizational context in which environmental harassment may still be unofficially condoned and institutionally supported as a process for excluding women (and men considered “outsiders,” e.g. race/ethnic minorities, sexual minorities) from becoming part of an organization which values cohesion and *esprit d’corp*, sends a message of permissiveness to those individuals inclined to engage in the more egregious individualized forms of harassment and sexual assault.

There are multiple research queries still to be addressed necessary for a thorough prevention approach. Regarding deterrence, the question of whether discretionary leniency by “sentencing” authorities, such as ranking officers in the armed services and police chiefs and sheriffs in law enforcement, communicates tolerance and amnesty has not been empirically addressed. This issue is particularly important in administrative sanctioning decisions for non-criminal policy violations as leniency here may well suggest unimportance assigned by supervisors. In that minor sexual misconduct forms are more prevalent, readily addressable through administrative measures, and vital in terms of victimization severity escalation, lower tolerance policies may affect deterrence.

Another largely unexamined issue is the effectiveness and best practices nature of awareness and prevention training. It is not known, for example, the extent that sexual misconduct prevention training is represented across different levels of law

enforcement training academy curricula and, related, whether continuing education is addressing workplace sexual misconduct.

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Juanita M. Firestone, Ph.D. is currently a Professor of Sociology in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1984. She has over 25 years of experience in evaluation and survey research, quantitative analysis and computer applications. She has published extensively in professional journals and chapters in edited books, and has been Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator in 25 community research projects. She has developed and managed all aspects of research projects including initial grant proposal, designing research instruments, selecting analysis techniques, and use of a variety of computer applications to organize, analyze and report data. During Spring semester 2002 she served as the first Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Gender Studies at the University of Klagenfurt in Austria teaching courses in gender issues and research methods. During the summers of 2007 2008 and 2009 she served as a Senior Researcher at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Patrick AFB, FL, and was a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Behavior Sciences and Leadership at the U.S. Air Force Academy for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 where she taught a seminar on Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Class and Sexuality and gave several invited research presentations. Her substantive research specializations encompass issues related to gender inequality, military sociology, health disparities, sexual harassment, and intimate partner abuse. Substantive research areas include (1) cultural competency in the U.S. military, (2) gender issues in social justice, especially sexual harassment and sexual assault, (3) the impact of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue Policy” on the extent to which individuals in the military experience or observe harassment based on sexuality, (4) occupational change and the gender based wage gap, and (5) minority health disparities.

J. Mitchell Miller, Ph.D. is a Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Texas, San Antonio. His research clusters around criminological theory development, the drugs and crime nexus, and justice system program evaluation. A past president of the Southern Criminal Justice Association, he is also a former editor of the *Journal of Crime & Justice* and *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. Currently, he is conducting an evaluation of the impact of in-prison alcohol treatment for the National Institute of Justice.

Dr. Richard J. Harris is a Professor of Sociology in the Department of Social Work at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He received a B.A., with honors, from Macalester College in May 1971, a M.A. in Sociology/Demography from Cornell University September 1974, and a Ph.D. in Sociology/Demography from Cornell University in September 1976. He served as a Senior Researcher at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) at Patrick AFB, FL during the summers of 2007, 2008 and 2009. He was selected as a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the U.S. Air Force Academy during the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 and taught in the department's methods sequence of courses. He also participated in several invited research presentations. Dr. Harris specializes in social demography, demographic techniques, quantitative analysis and computer applications. He has developed and managed all aspects of research projects including initial grant proposal, designing research instruments, selecting analysis techniques, and use of a variety of computer applications to organize, analyze and report data. Dr. Harris has published extensively in professional journals and edited books. His research focuses on important current issues including sexual harassment in the U.S. military, attitudes about changes to the military's current 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue' Policy, Hispanic issues, incorporating work on testing, income and poverty, labor force participation and changes in family structure. He served as the Project Director for the Alamo Area Community Information System grant from the Texas Telecommunications Infrastructure Board in San Antonio, TX, and served on their Policy Committee from 2004 to the present.

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The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Depressive Symptoms during the Early Occupational Career

Jason N. Houle¹, Jeremy Staff¹, Jeylan T. Mortimer²,
Christopher Uggen², and Amy Blackstone³

Abstract

Sexual harassment has been theorized as a stressor with consequences for the physical and mental health of its targets. Although social scientists have documented a negative association between sexual harassment and mental health, few longitudinal studies have investigated the association between sexual harassment and depressive symptoms. Using longitudinal survey data from the Youth Development Study, combined with in-depth interviews, this article draws on Louise Fitzgerald's theoretical framework, stress theory, and the life course perspective to assess the impact of sexual harassment on depressive affect during the early occupational career. In support of Fitzgerald's model, the authors' findings confirm that sexual harassment is a stressor that is associated with increased depressive symptoms. Quantitative results show that women and men who experience more frequent sexual harassment at work have significantly higher levels of depressed mood than nonharassed workers, even after controlling for prior harassment and depressive symptoms. Moreover, the authors find evidence that sexual harassment early in the career has long-term effects on depressive symptoms in adulthood. Interviews with a subset of survey respondents point to a variety of coping strategies and reveal further links between harassment and other aspects of mental health, such as anger and self-doubt.

Keywords

depressive symptoms, sexual harassment, work stress

Since Mackinnon's (1979) *Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, social scientists have conceptualized sexual harassment as a stressor detrimental to one's mental and physical health (Fitzgerald, Hulin, and Drasgow 1994). Harassment is associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder as well as diminished self-esteem, self-confidence, and psychological well-being (for reviews, see Pryor and Fitzgerald 2003; Welsh 1999; Willness, Steel, and Lee 2007). Despite this evidence, questions remain regarding the association between sexual harassment and depressive symptoms across the early life course for men and women.

This study uses longitudinal survey and in-depth interview data from the Youth Development Study (YDS) to investigate the association between sexual harassment and depressive affect during the early occupational career. We offer four contributions.

¹Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, USA

²University Of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA

³University of Maine, Orono, ME, USA

Corresponding Author:

Jason N. Houle, Department of Sociology, Pennsylvania State University, 211 Oswald Tower, University Park, PA 16802-6207

Email: jnh143@psu.edu

First, our study follows young people prospectively from their earliest work experiences to their adult jobs. This allows us to assess the long- and short-term implications of harassment experiences across the entire early occupational career. Second, our longitudinal design allows us to account for potential confounders identified in the literature, such as depressive symptoms prior to harassment. This analytic strategy increases confidence that the harassment–depressive symptoms relationship is not spurious. It also allows us to examine whether harassment affects feelings of depression only among subgroups of individuals who may be especially vulnerable to such workplace behavior because of their prior mental health or harassment history (Schneider, Swan, and Fitzgerald 1997). As we review in more detail below, we can also account for key antecedents and confounders of sexual harassment and mental health identified by stress theory and Fitzgerald’s integrated theoretical model of sexual harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald et al. 1994, 1997; Schneider et al. 1997).

Third, we examine whether sexual harassment affects depressive symptoms for *both* men and women. Prior research on the psychological consequences of sexual harassment is based primarily on women, but men are also at risk for workplace harassment (Waldo, Berdahl, and Fitzgerald 1998). Although men are less likely than women to label harassing behaviors as sexual harassment (Uggen and Blackstone 2004), men accounted for 16 percent of all sexual harassment charges filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Commission in 2009 (U.S. EEOC; 2010). On the basis of extant research, it is unclear whether sexual harassment is likely to lead both men and women targets to feel depressed.

Finally, we describe how these processes unfolded for some of our survey respondents through interviews with 33 YDS participants. Interviewees described the context of their experiences and their subjective reactions to sexual harassment. From the interview data, we are able to hear directly from respondents in their own words. Interviewees report elements of risk, coping, and resilience that are not directly measured in the survey. Our qualitative data are not representative of all survey respondents; instead, we interviewed a purposive sample of those who reported harassment in the survey to learn more about the context and consequences of their experiences. We thus draw from both survey and interview data to better understand the link between mental health and harassment.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Sexual harassment, defined as unwelcome sexual conduct that interferes with one’s job and creates a hostile work environment, can occur as either a single isolated incident or repeated incidents over time (Mackinnon 1979; Uggen and Blackstone 2004:65). Sexual harassment includes behaviors ranging from offensive materials in the workplace to sexual comments and inappropriate touching (Gruber 1990; Osman 2004). We consider sexual harassment to be a chronic stressor because it puts targeted workers under physical and mental stress in their day-to-day work activities. We ask four research questions about the relationship between sexual harassment and mental health across the early adult life course as they pertain to stress theory (Pearlin 1989).

Is Harassment Associated with Depressive Symptoms?

According to stress theory (Pearlin 1989), group differences in mental health and well-being result from disparities in exposure to stressors and access to personal and social resources that allow individuals to cope with stressful experiences. Stressful experiences are expected to be particularly deleterious to mental health when they are chronic, negative, and unpredictable; are a threat to one’s identity; or signify a failure to achieve a desired goal (Avison and Turner 1988; Thoits 1991). Stress theory also predicts that some groups may be more vulnerable to stress than others, particularly if these groups lack the power or resources to cope with stressors (Kessler and McLeod 1984; Thoits 1995).

Louise Fitzgerald and her colleagues (Fitzgerald et al. 1994, 1997; Fitzgerald and Shullman 1993; Schneider et al. 1997) developed an integrated theoretical model that identifies the causes and consequences of workplace sexual harassment. The authors identify possible antecedents of sexual harassment, including individual (e.g., race, age, marital status, socioeconomic status) and workplace characteristics. They also theorize that sexual harassment is a stressor that can lead to work withdrawal, career instability, job dissatisfaction, and poor mental and physical health. This portion of the model, analogous to Pearlin’s (1989) general stress process model, posits that the frequency and severity of harassment are key predictors of mental health and

well-being and that personal vulnerability (i.e., gender, prior harassment, and prior mental health) moderates the association between harassment and negative outcomes.

Previous tests of Fitzgerald's model rely on cross-sectional data from adult women workers in single occupations (e.g., lawyers) or in particular organizations (e.g., university employees). However, because sexual harassment experiences vary by occupation (Richman et al. 1999), samples should include workers in a broad range of occupations. Harassment studies based on cross-sectional samples of adult workers may also miss previously targeted respondents who have withdrawn from the labor market (Coles 1986; Gutek and Koss 1993). Prior research is also limited because it does not include lagged measures of mental health. The inclusion of lagged standardized measures of depressive symptoms in the present study increases confidence that the relationship between harassment and mental health is not biased by stable differences across persons. Thus, our first research question simply asks, net of confounders, is the frequency and severity of sexual harassment in adulthood associated with increased depressive symptoms?

Is There a "Long Arm" of Early Career Harassment for Depressive Symptoms in Adulthood?

An important unanswered question is whether harassment has long-term consequences for mental health and well-being. Although most harassment research has focused on adult workers, workplace sexual harassment is common in adolescence and young adulthood (Fineran 2002) in part because younger workers have little power in the workplace and are perceived as easier targets (Blackstone, Uggen, and McLaughlin 2009; Uggen and Blackstone 2004). As such, harassment in early life may have long-term implications for adult depressive symptoms.

Fitzgerald's integrated model does not fully explore the potential long-term effects of sexual harassment on adult mental health. Prior work merging stress theory with the life course perspective provides more insight into this relationship and identifies pathways by which early life stressors may affect later-life mental health (e.g., Elder, George, and Shanahan 1996; George 1999; Pearlin et al. 2005). We focus on three of

these pathways: (1) stress proliferation, (2) stability of depressive symptoms over time, and (3) depletion of resources.

One way that early life stressors can affect later mental health is through stress proliferation, which occurs when stressful experiences lead to additional stressors (Pearlin et al. 2005:210). Early life stressors can have long-term effects on mental health because stressful experiences at one point increase the risk of stressful experiences at a later point. There is evidence that sexual harassment proliferates across the life course. Early targets are more likely than nontargets to be targeted again later in life (Uggen and Blackstone 2004). As such, early-career sexual harassment may affect later-life depressive symptoms through subsequent experiences of sexual harassment.

Another pathway by which early sexual harassment could influence later-life depressive symptoms is through the stability of depressive symptoms. If sexual harassment heightens depressed mood among young workers, and if depressive symptoms are stable over time, then early targeting could contribute to poor long-term mental health, irrespective of harassment in adulthood. Poor mental health also increases the likelihood of exposure to social stressors (Turner and Turner 2005). Thus, early harassment could increase depressive symptoms, which could in turn increase the risk of later harassment and depressive symptoms in adulthood.

Finally, early-life sexual harassment may affect later-life depressive symptoms through diminished resources. Sexual harassment is associated with work withdrawal, job turnover, and career instability (Coles 1986; Gutek and Koss 1993), all of which can threaten adult socioeconomic status and increase depressive symptoms. Given this extant research and theory, we ask whether early-career sexual harassment is associated with depressive symptoms in adulthood. If so, is the association explained by (1) sexual harassment later in the career, (2) prior depressive symptoms, or (3) adult socioeconomic status and employment status?

The Vulnerability of Targets: For Whom Is Harassment Distressing?

Fitzgerald's theoretical model, like stress theory, also suggests that the psychological impact of sexual harassment is conditioned in part by the

target's vulnerability to harassment. Some groups may be more vulnerable to the psychological impact of stressful experiences, especially if the stressors are chronic or if they have insufficient resources to buffer stressful life events and circumstances (Kessler and McLeod 1984; Thoits 1995). Drawing from the stress literature, several individual characteristics are expected to moderate the psychological impact of sexual harassment, including prior sexual harassment, prior mental health, and gender.

Fitzgerald's model suggests that those who were harassed before may react more negatively to harassment than first-time targets because past experience diminishes one's ability to cope (Fitzgerald et al. 1997). Similarly, stress theory and the life course perspective assume that stressful experiences create a generalized vulnerability to stress, so that stressors have stronger effects on mental health for those who experienced earlier life stressors (George 1999). Negative experiences at work may be especially deleterious to mental health if they occur repeatedly through the career, as the accumulation of workplace stressors may exert larger effects than a single isolated incident (Avison and Turner 1988). Yet past research does not consider prior harassment as a moderator of subsequent harassment effects on depressive symptoms.

Another oft-cited but rarely tested indicator of target vulnerability is prior mental health. Prior research suggests that sexual harassment is most deleterious to the mental health of those who are "particularly sensitive" to such behaviors, such as those with poor mental health (Schneider et al. 1997:403). We ask whether past harassment moderates the proximal association between harassment and depressive affect and whether the detrimental effects of harassment are exacerbated for those with a history of frequent depressive symptoms.

Gender is another potential indicator of target vulnerability. Although harassment is more prevalent among women, harassment rates of men are nontrivial (Uggen and Blackstone 2004), as nearly 20 percent of men in some studies report that they experienced sexual harassment (Pryor and Fitzgerald 2003:81). Similarly, the percentage of all EEOC sexual harassment claims filed by men rose from 11.6 percent in 1997 to 16 percent in 2009 (U.S. EEOC 2010), although the number of harassed men may be even higher (Waldo et al. 1998).¹

Prior research on this topic focuses almost exclusively on the harassment and mental health

of women. But there are several reasons to expect gender differences in the effect of sexual harassment on mental health. Research on gender stratification shows that women are less likely than men to hold positions of power in the workplace (Smith 2002). Relative to men, women also receive fewer rewards for their work (Kilbourne et al. 1994; Reskin 2000) and are more likely to experience role strain when employed (Aneshensel and Pearlin 1987). Men's more privileged position in the workplace may shield them from the harassment's detrimental effects, whereas for women, the negative effects may reinforce their subordinate position in the workplace (Berdahl, Magley, and Waldo 1996). We thus consider whether the effect of harassment on depressive affect is greater for women than men.

How Do Targets Frame Their Experience? Insights from Interviews with Targets of Harassment

This study also draws from qualitative interviews with targets of harassment to better understand their perceptions and how they cope with such potentially distressing events. A key tenet in the stress literature is that the effects of stressful experiences on mental health depend on an individual's coping resources and coping strategies (e.g., Lazarus 1993; Thoits 1995:60). Of particular importance to the coping process is how individuals appraise their stressful experiences (Lazarus 1993), which is illuminated in the qualitative interviews. Our qualitative data also allow us to use inductive reasoning to generate hypotheses about the nature of the relationship between sexual harassment and mental health. This multi-method approach offers a rare opportunity to understand not only *what* people experience when it comes to sexual harassment but also *how* some people experience it. What is the subjective experience of harassment among a subset of our survey respondents? That is, how do targets respond to and cope with their harassment experiences?

METHOD

The YDS

Data are drawn from the YDS, a prospective longitudinal study of 1,010 teenagers located in

a greater metropolitan area of approximately 3 million residents. The YDS began in 1988 with a randomly chosen community sample of ninth graders enrolled in the St. Paul Public School District in Minnesota. U.S. 1990 Census data indicate that this site is comparable to the nation as a whole with respect to per capita income, rates of unemployment and labor force participation, and the percentage of nonwhite residents (Mortimer 2003). The YDS panel was surveyed annually from grades 9 to 12. Yearly questionnaires, administered in school, included a large battery of items tapping early experiences in work, plans for the future, school performance, and adjustment. From 1992 to 2004, respondents completed up to 11 follow-up surveys indicating their mental health, achievement, job-related conditions, and harassment. By 2004, when most respondents were 30 to 31 years old, 73 percent of the initial participants had been retained ($n = 735$). Although panel retention through the study is uncorrelated with numerous measures of socioeconomic background, achievement, and adjustment, women were more likely to be retained than men, and whites were more likely to be retained than nonwhites; youth who did not have an employed parent at the outset of the study also had greater attrition (see Staff and Mortimer 2007).

We used the ICE multiple imputation procedure in the Stata statistical package to regain respondents who were missing information on the predictor variables (Royston 2009). We imputed values into five data sets using all of the outcome and predictor variables in the imputation procedure. The ICE procedure uses tailored regression equations to calculate imputed values for continuous and categorical variables (Royston 2009). Following von Hippel (2007), we then deleted three cases that were originally missing data on the outcome variable. After imputation, our analysis sample included 732 respondents.

In addition to the survey data, we interviewed 33 of the YDS respondents. Participants were selected on the basis of their survey responses in 1999; we sent letters to 98 men and 86 women who reported experiencing some form of harassing behavior at work, inviting them to discuss their experiences in a one-on-one interview for which they would be paid \$40. Of those invited to participate, 28 men and 30 women expressed interest by returning a postcard and providing

a telephone number where they could be reached. We attempted to schedule interviews with all those who expressed interest, but we were not able to reach some respondents. In all, we completed interviews with 14 men and 19 women. We found little difference in the harassing behaviors and depressive mood of interview participants and those who were invited but did not participate. Of course, we have no way of knowing for certain that the qualitative findings would remain with a larger sample. We therefore caution against interpreting our qualitative findings as representative of the entire population of eligible interview participants.

Measures

Our analyses include survey measures of workplace sexual harassment, depressive affect, educational attainment, job characteristics, and background characteristics. Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for all variables in the observed and imputed data sets.

Sexual harassment. Workplace sexual harassment is assessed by questions based on the Inventory of Sexual Harassment (Gruber 1992) and the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (Gefland, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow 1995). In 2004, respondents (ages 30 to 31) were asked,

At any job you have held since July 2003, were you ever in a situation where a supervisor, co-worker/customer, or client: (1) stared or leered at you in a way that made you uncomfortable; (2) attempted to discuss sex; (3) displayed offensive pictures, posters, or other materials; (4) made repeated requests for drinks or dinner despite rejection; (5) made attempts to establish an unwanted sexual relationship with you; (6) told suggestive stories or made offensive remarks; (7) touched you in a way that made you uncomfortable; or (8) suggested that you cooperate with sexual behaviors in order to be well treated.

If respondents had experienced sexual harassment, they were also asked to report how often these sexual harassment incidents occurred (each item ranged from *zero* to *four or more times*). The sexual harassment items had highly skewed distributions. For instance, the percentage of workers who reported zero times to the

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages for Observed and Imputed Data

Variable	Observed			Imputed		
	M or %	SD	n	M or %	SD	n
Depressive affect						
Ages 30-31	9.21	3.10	732	9.21	3.10	732
Ages 14-15	10.34	3.19	719	10.35	3.20	732
Harassment experiences (IRT scales)						
Ages 30-31	0.01	0.76	662	0.02	0.77	732
Ages 29-30	0.00	1.85	598	0.04	1.85	732
Ages 19-26	0.00	1.53	628	0.00	1.53	732
Ages 14-18	0.00	2.54	627	-0.04	2.48	732
Demographics						
Educational attainment (ages 30-31)	4.36	1.74	735	4.37	1.74	732
% Currently married or cohabiting (ages 30-31)	71		735	72		732
% Not currently employed (ages 30-31)	16		733	16		732
% Male (vs. female)	42		735	42		732
% White race (vs. nonwhite)	79		719	79		732
Standardized household income (ages 14-15)	0.17	0.93	709	0.16	0.94	732
Other workplace stressors						
Job stressors (age 28-29)	2.25	0.53	562	2.26	0.54	732

Note: IRT = item response theory.

harassment items ranged from 81 percent (for attempting to discuss sex) to 99.5 percent (suggesting cooperation with sexual behaviors to be well treated). Approximately 7 percent of respondents were not employed from 2003 to 2004 and thus did not report harassment experiences, and 59 percent of the employed respondents reported no harassment.

Since the frequency and severity of stressors are hypothesized to be important predictors of mental health and well-being (Fitzgerald et al. 1997; Loy and Stewart 1984), we used item response theory (IRT) scaling procedures (Hambleton and Swaminathan 1985; Osgood, McMorris, and Potenza 2002) to construct a measure of sexual harassment. This measure ranks individuals along a latent continuum of the construct of interest based on the observed response patterns of both the frequency and severity of harassment. Because the categorical harassment items were skewed, the intervals between response choices were unequal, and the behaviors ranged in seriousness, we created a harassment scale using the IRT scaling methods

available in Stata's Glamm program (Zheng and Rabe-Hesketh 2007).

Respondents were also asked questions regarding prior workplace sexual harassment experiences in 2003 (ages 29 to 30) and 1999 (ages 25 to 26). In both surveys, the items included (1) offensive jokes, remarks, or gossip about other men or women; (2) offensive jokes, remarks, or gossip directed at the respondent; (3) direct questioning about the respondent's private life; (4) staring or invasion of the respondent's personal space; (5) unwanted touching; (6) staring or leering at the respondent in a way that made him or her uncomfortable; and (7) pictures, posters, or other material that the respondent found offensive. In 2003, respondents were asked about harassment experiences in the past year, whereas in the 1999 survey, respondents were asked about sexual harassment during (1) any job during high school or (2) any job since high school. Using IRT scaling methods for categorical data, we created three additional measures of harassment experiences at ages 29 to 30, 19 to 26, and 14 to 18.

Depressive affect. Depressive affect is measured during ninth grade (1988; ages 14 to 15) and 16 years later (2004; ages 30 to 31). These measures are based on the General Well-being Scale of the Current Health Insurance Study Mental Health Battery (see Ware et al. 1979). In both surveys, respondents were asked four items: (1) "Have you felt depressed?" (2) "Have you been in low or very low spirits?" (3) "Have you felt downhearted and blue?" and (4) "Have you been under any strain, stress, or pressure?" Responses to the four items ranged on a five-point scale from *none of the time* to *all of the time*. Although not shown, measures of depressive affect (in adolescence and adulthood) are significantly correlated ($r = .196, p < .001$).

Work stressors. The measure of work stressors is a summary composite of eight items ($\alpha = .65$) that indicate time pressure; exposure to excessive heat, cold, or noise; work overload; and a lack of clarity in job responsibilities (see Mortimer, Harley, and Staff 2002). As Fitzgerald (1994:61) insists, "if none of the quotidian work stressors are represented in the models, then estimates of the effects of one particular stressor (in this case, sexual harassment) will be biased because of model misspecification." However, unlike our harassment measures, the work stress variables were asked of employed respondents only during the wave 13 survey (ages 28 to 29), two years prior to the depressive symptoms outcome. Job stress items were imputed for respondents who were not working at ages 28 to 29.

Control variables. We include a number of control variables relevant to both Fitzgerald's integrated model and Pearlin's stress model that are correlated with sexual harassment and depressive symptoms. Educational attainment indicates the respondent's highest academic degree attained by ages 30 to 31. The responses ranged from 1 (elementary or junior high school) to 8 (PhD or professional degree), with the average corresponding to some college. We also include a measure of current work status at ages 30 to 31. Approximately 16 percent of respondents were not employed at ages 30 to 31. Union formation indicates whether the respondent was currently married or cohabiting in an intimate relationship (approximately 71 percent of respondents at ages 30 to 31). Analyses include controls for gender (1 = *male*, 0 = *female*), race (1 = *white*, 0 = *non-white*), and a standardized base year parental

report of total household income (13-point scale ranging from *under \$5,000* to *\$100,000 or more*). Approximately 58 percent of the analysis sample are female and 79 percent of the sample are white.

Qualitative interviews. In conducting the interviews, our goal was to learn about the context of participants' experiences and their ideas about sexual harassment more generally. As is common in qualitative interviewing (Esterberg 2002), we asked our interview participants to describe their experiences in their own words and did not provide specific response categories. Instead, we asked them to tell us about the experiences they felt were most important to share, given their knowledge of our interests in sexual harassment, problems in the workplace, and workplace sexuality.

To analyze the in-depth interview data, we first tape-recorded and transcribed each of the interviews. The transcripts, ranging from 20 to 60 pages each, were then imported into the NVivo qualitative analysis program. NVivo is designed to assist researchers with organizing, managing, interpreting, and analyzing non-numerical, qualitative data. Each transcript was closely reviewed in a search for common themes across interviews and like categories of data. Similar passages were coded together and these passages or "meaning units" (Weiss 2004) were then labeled and given a name intended to succinctly portray distinct themes. For this article, we focus on passages from the interviews that address how respondents cope with harassment. The interview excerpts we include were chosen because they represent patterns across the interviews. We use pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality of interview participants and, in some cases, have changed minor but potentially identifying details (e.g., company names and locations)

RESULTS

In Table 2, we display unstandardized ordinary least squares coefficients indicating the effect of workplace sexual harassment on depressive affect at ages 30 to 31. In all of our analyses, we used the *mim* command in Stata (Royston, Carlin, and White 2009) to combine estimates for the imputed data sets and adjust standard errors according to Rubin's (1987) rules. As shown in Table 2, sexual harassment in the most recent year is positively

Table 2. Unstandardized Ordinary Least Squares Coefficients for the Effect of Sexual Harassment on Depressive Affect in Adulthood (Ages 30-31)

Predictor Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Harassment experiences (IRT scales)						
Age 30-31	0.673*** (0.143)				0.512** (0.162)	0.395* (0.174)
Age 29-30		0.217*** (0.062)			0.118 (0.069)	0.084 (0.067)
Age 19-26			0.202* (0.078)		0.134 (0.092)	0.121 (0.088)
Age 14-18				0.046 (0.049)	-0.036 (0.056)	-0.035 (0.053)
Educational attainment (ages 30-31)	-0.161* (0.065)	-0.154* (0.066)	-0.167* (0.066)	-0.158* (0.066)	-0.165* (0.065)	-0.180** (0.065)
Currently married or cohabiting (ages 30-31)	-0.808*** (0.240)	-0.870*** (0.241)	-0.875*** (0.243)	-0.900*** (0.243)	-0.799*** (0.240)	-0.763*** (0.237)
Not currently employed (ages 30-31)	0.895** (0.304)	0.948** (0.306)	1.017*** (0.304)	1.024*** (0.307)	0.885** (0.306)	0.859** (0.308)
White race (vs. nonwhite)	-0.553* (0.275)	-0.575* (0.277)	-0.598* (0.277)	-0.626* (0.279)	-0.525 (0.273)	-0.502 (0.274)
Standardized household income (ages 14-15)	-0.071 (0.125)	-0.059 (0.127)	-0.045 (0.126)	-0.045 (0.127)	-0.071 (0.125)	-0.053 (0.123)
Depressive affect (ages 14-15)	0.143*** (0.036)	0.159*** (0.035)	0.161*** (0.036)	0.168*** (0.036)	0.139*** (0.036)	0.120*** (0.035)
Male (vs. female)	-0.603** (0.227)	-0.615** (0.228)	-0.554* (0.229)	-0.594* (0.230)	-0.588* (0.228)	-0.822*** (0.228)
Job stressors (ages 28-29)						1.071 (0.305)
Intercept	9.555*** (0.586)	9.421*** (0.585)	9.452*** (0.584)	9.398*** (0.591)	9.582*** (0.582)	7.485*** (0.874)
Adjusted R ² (ranging across the five data sets)	.119-.123	.109-.113	.101-.107	.092-.098	.122-.129	.141-.172

Note: $N = 732$. Standard errors in parentheses. IRT = item response theory.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

associated with adult depressive affect, even after controlling for prior depressive affect and other controls (model 1). Prior harassment at ages 29 to 30 (model 2) and ages 19 to 26 (model 3) likewise have statistically significant independent effects on depressive symptoms, net of earlier depressed mood and controls. Adolescent harassment (ages 14 to 18) had no significant effect on depressed mood at ages 30 to 31. Thus, prior harassment has a potent lagged effect, even after several years, and current harassment has detrimental effects even when prior harassment is taken into account (model 5). However, when prior and adult harassment measures are included in the same model, the effects of prior harassment

at ages 29 to 30 and 18 to 26 are reduced to statistical nonsignificance. Thus, more recent measures of harassment fully explain the effect of prior harassment on adult depressive symptoms. Given that early harassment is predictive of later harassment (see appendix), these findings suggest that the effects of early career harassment on depressive symptoms operate through later career harassment. In additional analyses (not shown), we find that depressive symptoms measured concurrently with prior harassment (e.g., depressive symptoms at ages 29 to 30 and harassment at ages 29 to 30) do not fully explain the relationship between earlier career harassment and adult depressive symptoms. These results suggest that

early career harassment affects adult depressive symptoms through stress proliferation.

In model 6, we included job stressors as an additional control. Sexual harassment remains associated with depressive affect, net of job stressors at ages 28 to 29 and background factors.² Females and nonwhites report higher levels of depressive affect than males and whites. Not working at ages 30 to 31 also predicts higher levels of depressed mood. In addition, consistent with the stress literature, there is notable variation in depressive affect depending on adult family roles and educational attainment. For instance, in all of our model specifications, married or cohabiting individuals have lower levels of depressive affect than individuals who are unmarried or not cohabiting. Educational attainment is negatively associated with depressive affect.

Since exposure to harassment may be a function of these and other key life circumstances, we examined how education, relationship status, prior harassment, and other background variables influenced sexual harassment at ages 30 to 31. The appendix shows estimates for a Tobit model predicting sexual harassment at ages 30 to 31. Tobit regression models are especially useful when predicting IRT transformed scores because they appropriately handle “censored” cases (i.e., the 59 percent of respondents who did not report harassment at ages 30 to 31). As shown in the appendix, prior harassment at ages 29 to 30 and 18 to 26 is positively related to harassment at ages 30 to 31. Depressive affect in adolescence, but not harassment, is also positively associated with harassment at ages 30 to 31. Respondents who are married or cohabiting are less likely to be harassed.

Next, to examine whether prior harassment, prior depressive affect, gender, job stress, and educational attainment condition the effect of sexual harassment on depressive symptoms, Table 3 shows results for a series of models that interact recent workplace sexual harassment with prior harassment (models 1 to 3), prior depressive affect (model 4), gender (model 5), job stress (model 6), and educational attainment (model 7). Overall, the interaction coefficients show little evidence of conditional effects. Even though prior harassment and depressive affect influence depressive symptoms in adulthood, the results show that recent sexual harassment is not especially detrimental for those who experienced prior harassment or for those who were depressed. Furthermore, although females report higher levels of depressive affect

than males, we did not find that the consequences of sexual harassment for depressive symptoms were significantly more detrimental for women than for men. We also found little evidence that educational attainment or prior job stress mitigated or intensified the impact of harassment.

In analyses not shown, we conducted sensitivity tests to ensure that our results were not influenced by how we measured sexual harassment or depressive symptoms. For instance, the removal of items that may not necessarily indicate sexual harassment, such as “direct questioning of private life,” from the harassment measure did not affect the pattern of findings. In addition, since 79 percent of respondents had experiences that matched the items on the harassment scale at ages 30 to 31 but did not classify the acts as sexual harassment, we included a dummy variable indicating whether respondents considered any of the experiences sexual harassment. This variable did not change the effect of harassment on depressive affect, nor did it have a significant main effect on depressive affect. Finally, we removed an item from our outcome measure (i.e., “Have you been under any strain, stress, or pressure?”) that may be confounded with prior stressors, but omitting this item again did not affect the pattern of findings.

In supplemental analyses (not shown), we also considered additional moderators of the relationship between harassment and mental health. These included the status of the perpetrator (supervisor vs. coworker), the gender of the perpetrator, and the sexual orientation of the respondent. None of the moderating effects was statistically significant for women or men.

Interview Results

We now turn to interview data to examine respondents’ own descriptions of harassment and its aftermath. Three patterns emerged from our analysis of the qualitative data, characterized by mixed feelings, self-doubt, and anger. Participants who expressed mixed feelings were upset by the harassment they experienced, but they also felt strongly about wanting to keep their jobs, even in the face of ongoing harassment. Others questioned, doubted, or even blamed themselves for the harassment they experienced. Another group of interview participants placed blame more directly on their harassers and felt angry.

Table 3. Unstandardized Ordinary Least Squares Coefficients for Potential Moderators of the Effects of Recent Harassment on Depressive Affect in Adulthood (Ages 30-31)

Potential Moderating Factor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Harassment (ages 30-31) × Harassment (ages 29-30)	-0.051 (0.075)						
Harassment (ages 30-31) × Harassment (ages 19-26)		-0.070 (0.106)					
Harassment (ages 30-31) × Harassment (ages 14-18)			-0.032 (0.053)				
Harassment (ages 30-31) × Depressive Affect (ages 14-15)				-0.011 (0.048)			
Harassment (ages 30-31) × Male				0.177 (0.324)			
Harassment (ages 30-31) × Educational Attainment (ages 30-31)					-0.122 (0.087)		-0.326 (0.299)
Harassment (ages 30-31) × Job Stressors (ages 28-29)							
Harassment experiences (IRT scales)							
Ages 30-31	0.433* (0.184)	0.422* (0.183)	0.410* (0.174)	0.514 (0.558)	0.333 (0.219)	0.920* (0.424)	1.167 (0.755)
Ages 29-30	0.091 (0.067)	0.085 (0.066)	0.085 (0.067)	0.083 (0.066)	0.083 (0.067)	0.086 (0.067)	0.087 (0.067)
Ages 19-26	0.119 (0.088)	0.122 (0.088)	0.118 (0.088)	0.122 (0.088)	0.123 (0.088)	0.129 (0.088)	0.116 (0.089)
Ages 14-18	-0.034 (0.054)	-0.035 (0.053)	-0.030 (0.054)	-0.035 (0.053)	-0.036 (0.053)	-0.037 (0.053)	-0.033 (0.054)
Educational attainment (ages 30-31)	-0.180** (0.065)	-0.178** (0.065)	-0.181** (0.065)	-0.181** (0.065)	-0.179** (0.065)	-0.181** (0.065)	-0.183** (0.065)
Currently married or cohabiting (ages 30-31)	-0.759*** (0.237)	-0.761*** (0.237)	-0.757*** (0.237)	-0.761*** (0.237)	-0.755** (0.238)	-0.780*** (0.237)	-0.761*** (0.237)

(continued)

Table 3. (continued)

Potential Moderating Factor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Not currently employed (ages 30-31)	0.856** (0.309)	0.859** (0.309)	0.846** (0.309)	0.856** (0.308)	0.864** (0.309)	0.889** (0.306)	0.852** (0.312)
White race (vs. nonwhite)	-0.497 (0.275)	-0.503 (0.275)	-0.502 (0.274)	-0.504 (0.276)	-0.503 (0.275)	-0.463 (0.274)	-0.496 (0.276)
Standardized household income (ages 14-15)	-0.055 (0.123)	-0.052 (0.123)	-0.050 (0.123)	-0.054 (0.123)	-0.057 (0.123)	-0.046 (0.123)	-0.052 (0.124)
Depressive affect (ages 14-15)	0.120*** (0.035)	0.120*** (0.035)	0.120*** (0.035)	0.120*** (0.036)	0.118*** (0.035)	0.116*** (0.035)	0.120*** (0.035)
Male (vs. female)	-0.826*** (0.228)	-0.830*** (0.228)	-0.825*** (0.228)	-0.818*** (0.229)	-0.826*** (0.228)	-0.828*** (0.228)	-0.829*** (0.228)
Job stressors (ages 28-29)	1.076** (0.308)	1.066** (0.307)	1.071** (0.306)	1.071** (0.306)	1.073** (0.308)	1.061** (0.304)	1.100** (0.303)
Intercept	7.494*** (0.881)	7.500*** (0.880)	7.496*** (0.871)	7.485*** (0.876)	7.491*** (0.876)	7.521*** (0.878)	7.449*** (0.874)
Adjusted R ² (ranging across the five data sets)	.141-.172	.140-.173	.140-.172	.140-.171	.140-.171	.143-.165	.143-.164

Note: N = 732. Standard errors in parentheses. IRT = item response theory.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Cam had mixed feelings after he was groped by a female client in a company vehicle. Cam was visibly upset during the interview and revealed that he had never told anyone about his harassment before. He felt conflicted about whether he should tell anyone, saying, "I don't know if it's right or wrong to tell someone." After his experience, Cam said he has become more suspicious of people in his interactions. "I feel that I need to be careful," Cam said. "I need to look at people, and just to be conscious that there's bad people and good people out there and you don't know who you're going to run into."

Marie and Erin also described mixed feelings, as they were unhappy with the ongoing harassment they experienced but "put up with it" to keep their jobs. Marie, who reported verbal harassment on her survey items, struggled with the stress caused by the verbal "come-ons" of male coworkers in her most recent job in the construction industry:

Sometimes guys would just stare at you. And that is annoying. They say things like "hey honey" or something and sometimes that just gets annoying. It was very common because I was working out in the field outside with the guys every day. What's really hard is the fact that you still need to be in a working relationship with these people if you expect to keep the job. If you wanted to leave, sure you could file a claim or do whatever, but if you want to stay at the job, some [of] it I guess to a certain extent you kind of feel like you have to put up with.

As with Marie, Erin noted many things she enjoyed about her job as a school custodian (e.g., friends at work, autonomy), which strengthened her resolve to keep her job even though a coworker regularly sexually harassed her. Erin was on medical leave at the time of her interview, receiving just two thirds of her regular salary, because her harasser had injured her after coming up from behind her and picking her up. Erin describes the strain she felt in this situation:

I only make enough to cover exactly what is here [pointing around apartment]. And I have no money left over. For me to lose some money, I'm probably gonna have to rob Peter to pay Paul, you know what I mean? Or go get Grandpa and say, "Hey, borrow me some money," and then cover this dough with that dough.

Erin, whose survey results indicate she experienced verbal and physical harassment, said that in the end she did not believe her experience would have a lasting impact. In Erin's words, "I was mad about it but it really doesn't affect me much. I mean, I'm over it. It happened; I got over it."

For other interviewees, the impact was more lasting. These participants described the self-doubt they felt after being harassed, even blaming themselves in some cases. This was most common among interviewees who worked in environments that were otherwise friendly, where coworkers mingled and got along well. Pam says she "felt some responsibility" for not rejecting a coworker's advances more assertively when working at a local diner. But, she explains, "the atmosphere there was so much like a family. Most people just got along. That may be one of the reasons why I never put up a fuss about it. I definitely feel now that I should have taken more responsibility, on my part, for things that were said."

Liz, who worked at a communications firm, also blamed herself. Liz said, "I lost so much of my self-esteem by working there because I always felt like 'there's something wrong with me.'" Rather than blame her harassers, Liz said, "I so much felt like it was just me and that I had a really big problem getting along with other people." Self-blame was common among the interviewees. Some blamed themselves for interpreting as harassment conduct that others saw as unproblematic. These participants experienced stress not only from harassment but also from the knowledge that their perceptions differed from those of at least some of their coworkers.

Not all interviewees blamed themselves or had mixed feelings. Some felt angry—at their own harassers and sometimes at harassers in general. While working as a prison guard, Jerry described the anger he felt after a male harasser grabbed him inappropriately in the hallway. "I freaked," he said.

I'm like, "You don't do that, you just don't do that." One, this is the workplace, and two, you don't know me, you don't know anything about me, you don't do that. Well I freaked out and my friends were on me. They were joking with me, and I was more mad just because he did it, not because it was like embarrassing. You just don't do that.

Jerry's harasser was later fired for his actions.

Bethany says that the offensive remarks about her body she endured as a teenage fast food worker have made her "a lot less tolerant" of harassment today, making her "more angry that they think they can just do that." Rachel, whose coworker at a restaurant once "came from behind" and "grabbed" and "rubbed up against" her, says she would respond the same way today: She reported her harasser and emphatically stated that she would do the same if it happened again. Rachel did not blame herself or wish she had interpreted her experiences differently. Instead, she and other interview participants directed their anger toward harassers, toward employers who responded poorly, and toward harassment more generally.

Whether respondents described mixed feelings, self-doubt, or anger, the theme of resilience resonated throughout the interviews. Even those who felt some negative psychological impact were determined that the impact not be lasting. Their descriptions of their experiences indicate that although sexual harassment may have a negative psychological impact for some, its effects may be tempered by workers' determination to overcome such negative experiences. Holly, who was groped by a client at a company event, summarized the impact of her experience in a way similar to many of our interview participants. Holly said, "I've never been one to let my emotions control my life or make this [a] life changing [experience]. It is not a good thing and I don't think it should happen to anybody and I'm not belittling the situation but that's my personality." As with other respondents, Holly describes herself as someone who will not and does not define herself on the basis of her harassment experiences. Instead, Holly and our other interview participants focused on getting through the negative experiences and overcoming them in the long term.

Like Holly, Dan described the difficulties of dealing with verbal harassment from his coworkers at his post office job and also exhibited resilience. Although he did not report the harassment, Dan said that his experience made interactions at work difficult and uncomfortable. In the long run, he said he has grown from the experience. Dan said, "I think that it's affected me in a way that I can look at it and take with me a positive attitude that I don't work there anymore. But no, me personally, I don't think that it's affected me at all." Dan, whose experience made him realize he did not want to work in the post office for

the rest of his life, reported being much less tolerant of harassment today because he is "more mature," and he "would be able to approach it and actually bring it up and say, 'Okay, this is happening and I think it's offensive.'" According to Dan, he will no longer allow harassment to affect his life.

Although resiliency was a theme in our interviews, we also see similarities more consistent with findings from the survey data: Many of the men we interviewed, like the women, are emotionally affected by their experiences with sexual harassment.

DISCUSSION

A fundamental question in sexual harassment research is whether harassment has a real and sustained impact on mental health or whether its effects are trivial or ephemeral (Schneider et al. 1997). Our results support the former position. Consistent with stress research, our quantitative analyses indicate that harassment is a stressor that has a positive and linear relationship with depressive affect for *both* men and women, even after controlling for past depressive symptoms, harassment experiences, and other workplace stressors. Importantly, we also find evidence that harassment early in the career has long-term effects on depressive symptoms in adulthood, in part because of stress proliferation. Our interviews suggest that harassed workers feel annoyed, angry, and conflicted, often leading to self-blame and self-doubt.

The stress literature has long noted the lasting psychological impact of stressful events or circumstances (Pearlin 1989), especially when stressors are chronic, unpredictable, or threatening to one's identity or life goals (Avison and Turner 1988; Thoits 1991). We find similar patterns among targets of sexual harassment. Our quantitative data showed that the effects of harassment are indeed lasting, as harassment experiences early in the career were associated with heightened depressive symptoms nearly 10 years later.

The study findings suggest that stress proliferation—not the stability of depressive symptoms or diminished socioeconomic attainment—is the mechanism that links early career harassment to later-life depressive symptoms. That is, early targets of harassment experience heightened emotional distress later in their career in part because their early harassment experiences increase their

risk of being targets of harassment throughout their career. However, harassment may also lead to stress in other domains, such as family conflict or negative stressful life events. Future research should further explore processes of stress proliferation among targets of workplace harassment to understand the full emotional cost of workplace sexual harassment.

Although stress theory's differential-vulnerability hypothesis posits that stressful experiences' impact on mental health and well-being may vary across groups, we find little evidence that prior depressive symptoms, harassment, or gender condition or moderate sexual harassment's effects on depressive symptoms. This is consistent with other work finding little support for a differential-vulnerability hypothesis (Kessler and McLeod 1984; Turner, Wheaton, and Lloyd 1995).

Although our longitudinal survey measures of harassment and mental health represent an improvement compared to past research, these measures may still fail to capture important aspects of target vulnerability, such as coping resources and strategies (Fitzgerald et al. 1997). Our interviews tap a broader range of attitudes and attributes and suggest that preexisting individual differences may shape reactions to harassment. Among interviewees, resiliency emerged as a theme for both women and men. For instance, Holly asserted that her positive outlook helped her overcome her harassment experiences, suggesting that differences in individual resilience and coping resources may moderate the impact of harassment on mental health. It is possible that respondents may be less resilient when harassment is more frequent and pervasive, which, as we show in the quantitative analyses, is associated with diminished mental health.

Our qualitative interviews also suggest that harassment may affect dimensions of mental health other than depressive symptoms. Our qualitative analysis shows that harassment led to feelings of anger, self-blame, and self-doubt. Research suggests the importance of anger as a dimension of mental health and emotionality (Schieman 1999), but no research to our knowledge has considered how harassment, a common workplace stressor, influences feelings of anger. Moreover, if harassment is associated with self-doubt and self-blame, then harassment may diminish coping resources, such as self-esteem and mastery.

Finally, our qualitative interviews also raise questions about the role that organizational context

may play in shaping how targets emotionally respond to and cope with harassment. The women who were interviewed seem to have reacted more negatively to harassment when it occurred in a work environment they had once considered safe or when it occurred in an all-male environment. For instance, Marie received very little support from coworkers when she was harassed on a construction site in an all-male environment, an experience in sharp contrast with that of Erin, whose autonomy and friends at work helped her cope with her harassment experience. Although we lacked detailed measures of organizational context in our quantitative analysis to assess whether they conditioned or mediated the harassment-distress relationship, future research should examine how workplace characteristics, such as the gender context of the workplace, may moderate the psychological impact of sexual harassment.

Although our mixed-methods approach provides evidence that harassment is a distressing experience for targets, we remain cautious in interpreting our findings as causal associations between stressors and poor mental health. We account for many potential confounders, but we cannot rule out spuriousness resulting from unobserved characteristics that might influence depressive affect and harassment experiences. Second, we are unable to draw strong conclusions about gender differences in the effect of harassment on mental health, because our study uses only a single outcome measure of mental health (depressive symptoms). This may be especially problematic because the effects of stress on mental health in women are more likely to manifest as depression, whereas the effects of stress on mental health in men are more likely to manifest as substance abuse (Aneshensel, Rutter, and Lachenbruch 1991). Thus, we are surprised not to have found a gender interaction in our study, because the effects of harassment on mental health should be more likely to manifest as depressive symptoms for women. Future research should use multiple measures of mental health (such as depressive symptoms and alcoholism) to draw conclusions about sex and gender differences in the association between harassment and mental health. We also have limitations in our quantitative and qualitative samples that may hinder the generalizability of our findings. Finally, our measure of sexual harassment is based on targets' perceptions (rather than an objective measure), which may bias the findings of our study.

In conclusion, whereas research on the mental health effects of sexual harassment were once criticized as “junk science” (McDonald and Lees-Haley 1995), a growing body of high-quality research has consistently shown negative effects of workplace harassment on mental health. Our study adds to this literature and the stress literature more generally by showing that sexual harassment influences depressive symptoms in both women and men, irrespective of whether they had previously experienced harassment or were already distressed. Future research should continue to investigate how personal attributes, resources, and organizational contexts shape target vulnerability and the relationship between harassment and mental health. Such work is critical to elucidating the pathways by which sexual harassment affects the lives of women and men across the occupational career.

APPENDIX

Estimates for a Tobit Model Predicting Sexual Harassment at Ages 30 to 31

Predictor Variable	Estimate (Standard Error)
Harassment experiences (IRT scales)	
Ages 29-30	0.323*** (0.045)
Ages 19-26	0.186*** (0.047)
Ages 14-18	0.012 (0.028)
Educational attainment (ages 30-31)	-0.014 (0.037)
Currently married or cohabiting (ages 30-31)	-0.280* (0.130)
White race (vs. nonwhite)	-0.162 (0.167)
Standardized household income (ages 14-15)	0.044 (0.072)
Depressive affect (ages 14-15)	0.059** (0.021)
Male (vs. female)	-0.027 (0.131)
Intercept	-1.004** (0.363)

Note: N = 732. Standard errors in parentheses. IRT = item response theory.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

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NOTES

1. Although both men and women are targets of harassment, sexual harassment is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. Most sexual harassment against men is by other men (Berdahl, Magley, and Waldo 1996; Welsh 1999). Little research examines sexual harassment among men, but some research suggests that men who are targets of harassment may be targeted because of their sexuality or performance of masculinity (Berdahl et al. 1996; Waldo, Berdahl, and Fitzgerald 1998; Welsh 1999).
2. Results were the same when nonworkers at ages 28 to 29 were excluded from the analyses.

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Sexting, Catcalls, and Butt Slaps: How Gender Stereotypes and Perceived Group Norms Predict Sexualized Behavior

Jennifer A. Jewell · Christia Spears Brown

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Abstract The current study examined the role of endorsed stereotypes about men and women and perceived peer norms in predicting three distinct types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors (verbal, physical, and indirect) among late adolescents. Two hundred and fifty U.S. college students from the mid-South (178 females, 72 males) between the ages of 17 and 19 completed a number of surveys regarding sexual gender stereotypes (e.g., men are sex-focused and women are sexual objects), perceived peer norms about the acceptability of stereotypical sexualized behaviors (SSB), and their own SSBs. Results revealed that most college students have perpetrated these SSBs at least once, and that the most common form of sexualized behavior was verbal SSB, such as rating someone's body. Results also showed that, although the young men and women did not differ in their perpetration of indirect SSBs (e.g., sending pictures via text), young men perpetrated more verbal and physical SSB than women. For young women, endorsing the idea that men are sex-focused predicted all three types of SSB. For young men, endorsing the stereotype that men are sex-focused predicted verbal and physical SSB, and endorsing the stereotype that women are sex objects predicted physical SSB. Importantly, perceived peer group norms were a significant predictor of all three types of SSB for both women and men. Thus, the current study suggests that distinct types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors are common among college students, and are predicted by an individual's stereotypes about men and women and perceived peer norms.

Keywords Sexual behavior · Peer norms · Gender stereotypes

J. A. Jewell · C. S. Brown (✉)
University of Kentucky, 125 Kastle Hall, Lexington,
KY 40506, USA
e-mail: christia.brown@uky.edu

Introduction

Gender stereotypes that portray women as sexual objects, and portray men as sexually voracious, are common in modern U.S. society (Galambos et al. 1985; Kim et al. 2007; Swim et al. 2001; Terrance et al. 2004; Ward 2002). These stereotypes are heavily promoted in mainstream U.S. television, movies, commercials, and magazines, particularly media that target adolescents (Krassas et al. 2003; Ward 1995; Ward et al. 2006). Analyses of popular U.S. men's magazines, for example, found that 80.5 % of women are depicted in sex object roles (Krassas et al. 2003). Television programs popular among U.S. college students have references to women as sexual objects almost 6 times per hour and references to men as sex-focused almost 4 times per hour (Ferris et al. 2007). Because these stereotypical messages are so pervasive, it is important to examine how individuals are impacted by these stereotypes. U.S. college age students in late adolescence are a particularly important group to examine because youth of this age are heavily targeted by media portraying sexualized gender stereotypes (Cope-Farrar and Kunkel 2002; Ward 2002). Because of the current state of the field, the background and hypotheses are based on research conducted primarily with U.S. samples (unless otherwise noted).

At the same time they are inundated with sexualized gender stereotypes, college age students are also actively pursuing sexual relationships, and thus engaging in sexualized behaviors. For example, according to the Center for Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics, 64 % of adolescents aged 17–19 have had sexual intercourse at least once (Tyler et al. 2012), while studies of "hooking up" (sexual encounters without the intention of forming a long-term relationship) show that anywhere from 64 % to 78 % of undergraduates report having engaged in at least one hookup (Garcia and Reiber 2008; Paul et al. 2000).

Adolescents also actively engage in sexualized behaviors that do not constitute actual sexual activity, which are referred to as *stereotypical sexualized behaviors*. While sexual behaviors, such as kissing or intercourse, are overtly sexual and usually consensual, stereotypical sexualized behaviors are less actively sexual. Furthermore, stereotypical sexualized behaviors are distinct from sexual behaviors in that they may be wanted or unwanted by the target of the behavior, may be in the context of a relationship or not, and may be verbal, physical, or indirect. In addition, stereotypical sexualized behaviors are often public, perpetrated in front of peers (Timmerman 2003, 2005). When these behaviors are unwanted, they are considered to be sexual harassment or sexual coercion (AAUW 2001; Hand and Sanchez 2000; McMaster et al. 2002). For example, sending a sexual text message (i.e., “sexting”) or snapping a female peer’s bra strap would be stereotypical sexualized behaviors, rather than sexual behaviors.

The current study examines three basic types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors (although this list is not necessarily exhaustive): verbal, physical, and indirect. Examples of *verbal* stereotypical sexualized behaviors include making a sexual comment or joke about someone or rating someone’s body or body parts; *physical* stereotypical sexualized behaviors include touching, grabbing, or pinching someone in a sexual way, or purposefully pulling at someone’s clothes in a sexual way; and *indirect* stereotypical sexualized behaviors include sexting or posting a sexual message to or about someone on the internet.

Research with U.S. samples has clearly shown that these stereotypical sexualized behaviors, whether wanted or not by the target, are extremely common among adolescents and college students. One example of a common indirect stereotypical sexualized behavior is sexting, which occurs among 28 % of 17-year-olds and 32 % of 18-year-olds (Dake et al. 2012). Other studies (e.g., Leaper and Brown 2008) find that more than 90 % of girls by late adolescence have been the target of some form of stereotypical sexualized behaviors. For example, 67 % of girls have been the target of verbal stereotypical sexualized behaviors, such as being told an embarrassing or mean joke or being called a demeaning name, while 51 % of girls have been the target of physical stereotypical sexualized behaviors, such as receiving unwanted physical contact (Leaper and Brown 2008). Thus, it is clear that many adolescents are experiencing these stereotypical sexualized behaviors.

Stereotypical sexualized behaviors are, in several ways, normative. First, they are very common among late adolescents. Second, they are often part of teenage flirting and are one way in which adolescents may express sexual interest or intent towards members of the opposite gender. Despite some normative features, however, they can be associated with many negative academic, social, and psychological outcomes

for the target. For example, stereotypical sexualized behaviors that are unwanted, especially when they are power-based, are labeled as sexual harassment. The targets of sexual harassment, particularly girls, are at risk for feeling emotional distress, embarrassment, depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, and externalizing behaviors (Chiodo et al. 2009; Goldstein et al. 2007). They are also at increased risk for academic problems, school absenteeism, and school disengagement (AAUW 2001; Larkin and Popaleni 1994), and are more likely to question their potential happiness in a long-term relationship than adolescents who do not experience sexual harassment (AAUW 2001).

Although unwanted stereotypical sexualized behaviors may result in negative consequences for the target, the perpetrator may not know that the behavior is unwanted. Among college age students—late adolescents who engage in extensive sexual behaviors (Paul et al. 2000)—it is likely that an individual may perpetrate a stereotypical sexualized behavior oblivious to (or undeterred by) the desires of the target. Furthermore, if these behaviors are perpetrated by women toward men, the behavior may be misinterpreted as a precursor to sexual behavior, when in fact it is intended as benign flirting behavior. Men and women have been shown to interpret benign sexual behaviors differently, such that men may perceive sexual interest and consent when women do not (Basow and Minieri 2011; Muehlenhard and Linton 1987). Unfortunately, there is little research on the perpetrations of these behaviors in college age samples.

The current study, therefore, predicts the perpetration of late adolescents’ stereotypical sexualized behaviors. One particularly relevant theory that helps predict an individual’s behavior is a reasoned action theory. Theories of reasoned action argue that an individual’s behavior is influenced by his or her (a) own attitudes and (b) perceptions of peer norms (e.g., Fishbein and Middlestadt 1989). In other words, based on this theoretical framework, the current study predicted that college students’ stereotypical sexualized behaviors are driven by (a) their own attitudes, in the form of their sexualized gender stereotypes about what is expected in heterosexual male–female interactions, and (b) their perceptions of peer norms, such as what they perceive their peers’ stereotypical sexualized behaviors to be. Therefore, situated within reasoned action theory framework, the current study examines whether the endorsement of sexualized gender stereotypes (with women as sexual objects and men as sex-focused), in addition to perceived peer norms about sexualized behaviors, predict late adolescents’ own stereotypical sexualized behaviors.

Sexualized Gender Stereotypes

By adolescence, many individuals endorse *sexualized gender stereotypes*, stereotypic attitudes about how men and women

(and boys and girls) should act and interact with one another (Ward 2002; Ward and Rivadeneyra 1999). These stereotypes establish a “heterosexual script” regarding heterosexual male–female interactions (Kim et al. 2007; Tolman et al. 2007). These stereotypes indicate (a) that women should strive to be pretty (at the expense of other traits), should seek and be flattered by the sexual attention of men, and should assume men are primarily interested in their bodies, and simultaneously (b) that men should only be interested in women as sexual conquests (not friends), should always be assertively pursuing sexual relationships, and should not be expected to be monogamous. Thus, the “heterosexual script” for men and women involves simultaneously enacting sexualized gender stereotypes in which women are sex objects and men are sex-focused (Kim et al. 2007; Tolman et al. 2007; Ward 2002).

In general, men endorse these stereotypes more strongly than women (Greenberg et al. 1993; Ward 2002; Ward and Rivadeneyra 1999). This finding parallels the broader gender stereotype literature, which finds that boys and men typically endorse gender stereotypes more strongly than girls and women (e.g., Morrison et al. 1997; Signorella et al. 1993). These gender differences may be a reflection of the greater power and status of men relative to women in the US and reflect the more general stereotype that men should be assertive and women should be passive.

It is hypothesized that the endorsement of sexualized gender stereotypes will predict engaging in stereotypical sexualized behaviors. Although these stereotypes have not been previously linked with common stereotypical sexualized behaviors, they have been linked with sexually coercive behaviors among U.S. college students. For example, U.S. college students who endorsed the stereotype that men are sex-focused and serve as sexual pursuers of women were more likely to condone sexually coercive behaviors, were more accepting of dating violence, and were more likely to perceive relationships between women and men to be adversarial, compared to students who reject such stereotypes (Muehlenhard and Linton 1987). It is important, however, to examine whether these stereotypes are also linked to the common sexualized behaviors experienced by the majority of U.S. college age students.

Although we predict a link between sexualized gender stereotypes and stereotypical sexualized behaviors, we assume that stereotypical sexualized behaviors will be gender-specific, as each gender has a different “part” to enact in the heterosexual script (Kim et al. 2007). Specifically, it is hypothesized that young women who endorse sexualized gender stereotypes (and thus are enacting their role in the heterosexual script) will engage in the types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors that sexually objectify themselves to men. In contrast, young men who endorse these stereotypes will be explicitly sexually assertive (both verbally and physically) towards women. Thus, we predict that young women who endorse stronger sexualized gender stereotypes will engage in more stereotypical sexualized

behaviors (e.g., in which they objectify themselves via sending sexual pictures to young men) than women who don’t endorse these stereotypes. Further, it is predicted that young men who endorse stronger sexualized gender stereotypes will engage in more stereotypical sexualized behaviors (e.g., in which they assertively grab or touch a woman in a sexual way) than men who don’t endorse these stereotypes.

Perceived Peer Norms

In addition to an individual’s stereotypes, according to reasoned action theory (Fishbein and Middlestadt 1989), another factor that may increase the likelihood that someone would engage in stereotypical sexualized behaviors is their perceived norm about that behavior. Specifically, if these behaviors are perceived to be part of the peer culture (i.e., “everyone is doing it”), late adolescents may be particularly inclined to also engage in the behavior. Perceived peer norms, also referred to as descriptive norms, are the perceived rules or expectations about what types of beliefs or behaviors are acceptable or common within a particular peer group (Kincaid 2004). When individuals perceive their peers to strongly endorse a behavior, they are more likely to engage in that behavior (Rimal 2008). In other words, if late adolescents witness their friends directing stereotypical sexualized behaviors towards others, and assume that all of their friends approve of these behaviors, then they are also likely to perpetrate these behaviors towards others.

Studies with U.S. samples have shown that 63 % of younger adolescents in middle and high school who admit to behaving sexually towards a peer claim that they did so because “a lot of people do it” or “their friends encouraged them” (AAUW 2001). As Rodkin and Fischer proposed, sexualized behavior emerges out of “a peer-based school society where attitudes and behaviors are strongly connected to peer group influence and concerns about social status” (2003, p. 177).

Perceived peer norms have been found to be predictive of other types of behaviors. For example, U.S. college students are more likely to drink if they perceive their peers to drink, regardless of their peers’ actual drinking behaviors and expectations (Borsari and Carey 2001, 2003; Neighbors et al. 2006). U.S. students are also more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors if they perceive their friends to do so as well, and conversely, they delay intercourse if they perceive their friends to be abstinent (Kapadia et al. 2012; Maxwell 2002). Ironically, the influence of perceived norms may or may not reflect actual peer behaviors, but are still influential in shaping an individual’s behavior (Berkowitz 2003).

Although it has been suggested that peer norms influence these types of sexualized behaviors (McMaster et al. 2002) and reasoned action theory supports this suggestion, no research has examined the link. However, because of the strong links with other type of behaviors, we predict the same pattern will emerge with stereotypical sexualized behaviors. In the current study,

we examined whether late adolescents' perceived peer group norms surrounding the acceptability of these stereotypical sexualized behaviors predicted their perpetration of these behaviors, over and above their own sexualized gender stereotypes.

Current Study

In the current study, based on predictions derived from the theory of reasoned action, we examined college students' endorsements of sexualized gender stereotypes, their own reported participation in stereotypical sexualized behaviors, and the perceived acceptability of these behaviors among their peers. We specifically examined three different categories of stereotypical sexualized behaviors: verbal, physical, and indirect. To predict the perpetration of these three types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors, we examined two primary factors: (a) individual endorsement of gender stereotypes about the sexual behaviors and objectification of women and men (i.e., sexualized gender stereotypes, which reflect the common heterosexual script), and (b) perceived peer group norms supporting the different types of behaviors.

First, we predicted that young women and men would hold different levels of stereotypes and report engaging in different frequencies of behaviors. Based on existing research (Morrison et al. 1997), we hypothesized that men would more strongly endorse sexualized gender stereotypes than women. Based on existing research with high school students (AAUW 2001), we also hypothesized that a majority of late adolescents would report engaging in stereotypical sexualized behaviors, although we expected men to report higher frequencies of engaging in these behaviors than women. Specifically, we expected men to engage in more physical and verbal stereotypical sexualized behaviors (the most assertive of the behaviors) directed toward women, relative to women toward men, because of their more assertive role in the heterosexual script.

Second, and more importantly, we hypothesized that late adolescents' endorsement of sexualized gender stereotypes, specifically their endorsement of the stereotype that men are sexually voracious and women should be content to be sexual objects, would predict the degree to which they reported perpetrating the three types of stereotypical sexualized behavior. We also hypothesized that peer norms about the acceptability of each type of stereotypical sexualized behavior would predict late adolescents' own reported perpetration of those behaviors, above and beyond their own stereotypes.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 250 college students in late adolescence (72 boys, 178 girls) attending a large university in

a medium-sized city (population approximately 300,000). Of the 250 participants, all were between 17 and 19 years old. Their mean age was 18.49 years (boys' mean age was 18.42 years; girls' mean age was 18.52 years). All were heterosexual and had begun dating. Slightly more than one-quarter (27 %) of the men were members of a fraternity, and more than one-third of the women (39 %) were members of a sorority. Of the participants, 81 % were White (71 % of which were women), 11 % were African-American (63 % of which were women) and 4 % were multi-racial (80 % of which were women). The ethnic composition is representative of the school and the region it serves (U.S. Census Bureau 2012).

Procedure

Participants were students enrolled in introductory psychology classes. They responded to research credit advertisements and received research credit towards their class requirement in return for their participation.

After confirming via e-mail that they were between the ages of 17 and 19, heterosexual, and had begun dating, participants reported to a research lab and met with a lab assistant. In order to preserve participants' privacy, only one participant was present in each research lab at a time. Participants were given an iPad containing an electronic consent form and the surveys via an online survey program. Once the online survey was completed, participants were given research credit and excused.

Measures

The measures were always administered in the following order: demographics, sexualized gender stereotypes, stereotypical sexualized behaviors (perpetration followed by norms for each behavior before addressing the next behavior).

Sexualized Gender Stereotypes

Participants completed the "Attitudes about Dating and Sexual Relationships" scale (Ward 2002). We specifically tapped their endorsement of the beliefs that (a) men are sex-focused (six items) and (b) women are sex objects (six items). The men as sex-focused (MSF) subscale included items such as, "It's natural for a boy to want to admire girls and to comment on their bodies" and "Boys are always ready and willing for sex; they think about it all the time." The women as sex objects (WSO) subscale included items such as "The best way for a girl to attract a guy is to use her body and looks" and "An attractive girl should expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them." (We used the terms boys and girl, rather than men and women, because those are the terms the college age participants most identified with).

Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement using the following

scale: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (somewhat disagree), 4 (somewhat agree), 5 (agree), 6 (strongly agree). Although it was possible to average all of the items together for one overall stereotype score, the subscales were kept separate in the analysis for a more complete picture of how stereotypes predict behaviors. Thus, scores within each subscale were averaged, with higher numbers indicating a greater endorsement of stereotypes. See Table 1. Reliability was acceptable for both subscales (MSF $\alpha=.76$; WSO $\alpha=.73$).

Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors (SSB)

To measure reported perpetration of stereotypical sexualized behaviors, we used a modified version of the AAUW Sexual Harassment Survey (2001). This measure includes specific sexualized behaviors that can be perceived as sexual harassment if unwanted by the target. However, the current study was most interested in what predicts these sexual behaviors, rather than how the targets perceive the behaviors. From the AAUW larger measure, we created three categories of stereotypical sexualized behaviors, each of which consisted of two behaviors that were conceptually similar and significantly correlated. These categories are *verbal SSB* (“Made sexual comments, jokes, gestures” and “Made comments about or rated the parts of someone’s body”); *physical SSB* (“Touched, grabbed, or pinched someone in a sexual way” and “Pulled at someone’s clothing in a sexual way”); and *indirect SSB* (“Shown, given, sent, or left sexual pictures or text messages” and “Left sexual posts on someone’s wall or sent someone sexual messages”). These categories were created on the basis of (a) a factor analysis, which indicated that the indirect SSB loaded as one distinct factor, and (b) the conceptual differences (in terms of differences in associated physicality, strength, and gender norms) between making a comment to someone (i.e., verbal SSB) and grabbing someone (i.e., physical SSB).

We created two subsections of this measure to investigate participants’ (a) reported perpetration of each SSB and (b) perceived peer group norms about the acceptability of each SSB. All participants completed both subsections. Means for each subscale are reported in Table 1.

Perpetration of Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors To assess whether participants reported perpetrating the three categories of stereotypical sexualized behaviors, they answered questions that were phrased as “How often have you done the following behavior to a peer?” Participants responded using the following scale: 0 (never), 1 (a few times), 2 (often), 3 (very often), 4 (daily). Following each item, participants were asked, “Did you do this to...,” with the response options of a boy, a girl, both, or neither. For the current study, we only examined behaviors that were directed to other-gender peers. Inter-item correlations on each subscale were significant at $p<.01$ (verbal SSB $r=.33$; physical SSB $r=.54$; indirect SSB $r=.34$).

Table 1 Means and standard deviations of variables used in analyses

Measure	Males	Females	Total
MSF	2.77(1.99) _a	2.30(.76) _a	2.44(1.26)
WSO	2.57(1.98) _b	1.82(1.27) _b	2.04(1.54)
Verbal SSB Perpetration	1.27(.77) _c	.80(.61) _c	.94(.69)
Physical SSB Perpetration	.81(.72) _d	.49(.60) _d	.59(.65)
Indirect SSB Perpetration	.40(.42)	.35(.47)	.37(.45)
Verbal SSB Norms	1.28(.58) _e	1.05(.52) _e	1.12(.55)
Physical SSB Norms	.91(.37) _f	.75(.53) _f	.80(.50)
Indirect SSB Norms	.83(.57) _g	.56(.50) _g	.64(.54)

Means are listed first, standard deviations appear in parentheses. Abbreviations: *MSF* Men are Sex-Focused, *WSO* Women are Sex Objects, *SSB* Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors. Scores for MSF and WSO range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Scores for SSB Perpetration range from 0 (never) to 4 (daily). Scores for SSB Norms range from 0 (never) to 3 (always). Means with matching subscripts are significantly different from one another at $p<.05$

Perceived Norms about Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors To assess participants’ perceived peer norms surrounding each category of stereotypical sexualized behavior, the questions were phrased as “Do your friends think it is okay to...” Participants responded using the following scale: 0 (never okay), 1 (sometimes okay), 2 (usually okay), 3 (always okay). Inter-item correlations on each subscale were significant at $p<.01$ (verbal NSSB $r=.31$; physical NSSB $r=.61$; indirect NSSB $r=.42$).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 shows the means of all variables and Table 2 shows the correlations of all variables. All means were tested for gender differences. Gender differences were found for all variables except indirect SSBs.

Correlations were also tested for gender differences. There were both similarities and differences across young women and men. For both women and men, the two subscales of the sexualized gender stereotype measure (that men are sex-focused and women are sex objects) were positively correlated with each other. Also, for both men and women, perpetration of each SSB was correlated with perceived norms about that SSB. The primary gender difference between the correlations (at $p<.05$) is that the associations between reported perpetration and perceived norms for each SSB were significantly stronger for men than women (ranging from $r_s=.57-.70$ for men and $.37-.42$ for women). In other words, men’s reported behaviors were more closely aligned with their perceptions of peer norms than women’s were.

Table 2 Pearson correlations

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. MSF	–	.25*	.35**	.40**	.18	.12	.14	.24*
2. WSO	.33**	–	.13	.38**	.20	.10	.17	.16
3. Verbal SSB Perpetration	.30**	.16*	–	.50**	.26*	.61**	.45**	.35**
4. Physical SSB Perpetration	.23**	.10	.59**	–	.38**	.26*	.42**	.23*
5. Indirect SSB Perpetration	.22**	.15*	.39**	.27**	–	.23*	.31**	.39**
6. Verbal SSB Norms	.23**	.14	.36**	.25**	.36	–	.52**	.45**
7. Physical SSB Norms	.23**	.16*	.36**	.70**	.14	.50**	–	.51**
8. Indirect SSB Norms	.25**	.22**	.32**	.22**	.57**	.53**	.27**	–

Correlations above the diagonal are for males ($N=72$); correlations below the diagonal are for females ($N=178$)

MSF Men are Sex-Focused, WSO Women are Sex Objects, SSB Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Gender Differences in Endorsement of Stereotypes and Reported Behavior

Sexualized Gender Stereotypes

To test the hypothesis that young men would endorse more gender stereotypes than young women, a 2 (gender: men, women) X 2 (sexualized gender stereotype subscale: men are sex-focused [MSF], women are sex objects [WSO]) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. Results indicated a main effect of gender, such that that young men endorsed both components of the gender stereotype more than young women, $F(1,248)=15.37$, $p < .001$. As predicted, late adolescent men endorsed the beliefs that men are sex-focused and women are sex objects more than women did. In addition, results indicated a main effect of stereotype component, such that both women and men endorsed the idea that men are sex-focused more than they endorsed the idea that women are sex objects, $F(1,248)=8.53$, $p < .001$.

Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors

It was hypothesized that a majority of late adolescents would report perpetrating stereotypical sexualized behaviors (SSB), and that young men would report perpetration more than young women. We further predicted that men would perpetrate the two types of direct (i.e., assertive) SSBs—physical and verbal—more often than women (because of their more assertive role in the “Heterosexual Script”).

Overall, the rates of stereotypical sexualized behaviors were extremely high. As predicted, the majority of participants of both genders engaged in these behaviors, with 95.8 % of young men and 88.8 % of young women reporting engaging in these behaviors *at least once*. This was a significant gender difference, $t(248)=4.58$, $p < .001$. The percentages of men and women who reported perpetrating each behavior at least once are listed in Table 3.

To examine whether the type of stereotypical sexualized behavior differed based on participants' gender, a 2 (gender of perpetrator: men, women) X 3 (type of SSB: verbal, physical, and indirect) repeated measures ANOVA was conducted.

Means are presented in Table 1. Results revealed a main effect of gender, such that young men perpetrated more overall stereotypical sexualized behaviors than young women, $F(1,248)=19.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2=.07$. There was a main effect of type of behavior, $F[2,247]=108.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2=.30$. Post hoc tests indicated that verbal SSB were reported as occurring significantly more often than physical SSB, which in turn were reported as occurring significantly more often than indirect SSB. There was also a significant interaction between gender and type of SSB, $F(2,247)=11.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2=.04$. Tests of simple effects indicated, as hypothesized, that young men reported perpetrating more physical SSB and verbal SSB than women. There was no gender difference in indirect SSB.

Predicting Perpetration of Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors with Gender Stereotypes and Peer Norms

We hypothesized that late adolescents' endorsement of sexualized gender stereotypes and perceived peer norms would predict the degree to which they reported perpetrating the three types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors. To test this hypothesis, hierarchical multiple regression models were analyzed for each type of SSB. Specifically, we examined whether endorsement of the sexualized gender subscales accounted for a significant amount of variance in reported perpetration of the different types of SSB. We then examined whether perceived peer group norms were important predictors of reported perpetration of SSB over and above endorsement of gender stereotypes. To examine whether gender moderated these associations, analyses were conducted separately by gender.

Table 4 details the results of these regression models. For young men, the endorsement of the stereotype that men are sex-focused predicted their reported perpetration of verbal and physical SSB. Thus, believing that men should always be assertively pursuing sexual relationships with women predicted their own use of the more direct stereotypical sexualized behaviors. Endorsing the stereotype that women are sexual objects also predicted males' physical SSB. For all three types of SSB, perceived peer group norms were a significant predictor of reported perpetration. For indirect SSB, peer norms were, in fact, the only significant predictor. Thus, perceiving

Table 3 Stereotypical Sexualized Behaviors (SSB): percentage and counts of participants who have perpetrated each behavior at least once

	Men		Women	
	Percentage	Count (<i>N</i> =72)	Percentage	Count (<i>N</i> =178)
Verbal SSB:				
Made sexual comments, jokes, gestures	93.1 %	67	78.1 %	139
Made comments about someone's body	75.0 %	54	53.9 %	96
Physical SSB:				
Touch, grab, or pinch in a sexual way	70.8 %	51	44.9 %	80
Pulled at someone's clothes in sexual way	61.1 %	44	34.8 %	62
Indirect SSB:				
Left sexual pictures or text messages	54.2 %	39	48.3 %	86
Left sexual posts/sent sexual messages on website	20.8 %	15	9.6 %	17

Numbers are percentages of men and women who have perpetrated each behavior at least once (i.e., gave any rating above 0, indicating never)

their friends to be accepting of SSB predicted young men perpetrating all three types of SSB, above and beyond their own stereotypes about women and men.

For young women, a simpler pattern emerged. For all three types of SSB, reported perpetration of SSB was predicted by two factors: (a) endorsement of the stereotype that men are sex-focused and (b) reported perceived peer group norms. Thus, young women's stereotypes about men's strong interest in sex (but not the component of the stereotype that women

are sex objects) predicted their own SSB perpetration, and their perceived peer group norms predicted all three types of SSB, over and above their own stereotypes.

Discussion

The goal of the current study was to examine how the endorsement of sexualized gender stereotypes and perceived

Table 4 Hierarchical regression models predicting different types of sexualized behaviors by gender

Type of SB	Variable	Males			Females		
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (<i>B</i>)	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (<i>B</i>)	β
Verbal							
	(1) MSF	.13	.05	.34**	.22	.06	.28***
	WSO	.02	.05	.04	.03	.04	.07
	(2) Verbal Norms	.77	.12	.58***	.35	.08	.30***
	R^2 with SGS		.13**			.10***	
	$R^2 \Delta$.32***			.09***	
	<i>F</i> Final Model		18.71***			12.87***	
Physical							
	(1) MSF	.12	.04	.33**	.17	.06	.22**
	WSO	.11	.04	.29**	.01	.04	.03
	(2) Physical Norms	.65	.20	.33**	.78	.06	.69***
	R^2 with SGS		.24***			.05**	
	$R^2 \Delta$.11**			.44***	
	<i>F</i> Final Model		11.92**			56.57***	
Indirect							
	(1) MSF	.03	.03	.14	.12	.05	.20*
	WSO	.05	.03	.16	.03	.03	.09
	(2) Indirect Norms	.26	.08	.35**	.51	.06	.54***
	R^2 with SGS		.06			.06**	
	$R^2 \Delta$.11**			.27***	
	<i>F</i> Final Model		4.71**			28.00***	

All *B*, *SE* (*B*) and β values are for the final model

MSF Men are Sex-Focused, *WSO* Women are Sexual Objects, *SGS* Sexualized Gender Stereotypes

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

peer norms predicted the reported perpetration of stereotypical sexualized behaviors among late adolescents of college age (using reasoned action theory as the guiding framework). As predicted, and as shown in previous research with U.S. samples, stereotypical sexualized behaviors were common among college students, with the vast majority of men and women reporting that they had perpetrated these SSBs against an opposite-gender peer at least once. Despite the high frequency of having perpetrated SSB at least once, the overall means of perpetration were relatively low. On average, young men and women reported perpetrating physical, verbal, and indirect SSBs a few times or less. Thus, though almost everyone reported having perpetrated stereotypical sexualized behaviors at some point, most adolescents did not engage in these behaviors with regularity.

The current study extended previous research by closely examining the reported perpetration of different types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors. Specifically, the results indicated that late adolescents were most likely to report making sexualized comments to others. Indeed, the single most frequently reported type of stereotypical sexualized behavior was young men making sexual comments or jokes to women. As hypothesized, although it occurred less often than verbal SSB, young men were also likely to report touching, grabbing, pinching, or pulling the clothing of a young woman in a sexual way (physical SSB), a behavior much less common among young women. Least common, although still reported by more than half of the young men and women in the study, was indirect SSB, which involved sending someone sexual pictures or texts (i.e., “sexting”). Young men and young women reported perpetrating this form of SSB at the same rate.

These findings indicate that young men and women are both similar and different in their reported perpetration of stereotypical sexualized behaviors. They are similar in that they both report engaging in similar levels of indirect stereotypical sexualized behavior. These indirect forms are markedly different than verbal or physical sexualized behavior in that they are never face-to-face and typically done while alone rather than in front of peers (although the pictures may be received, shown, or looked at with peers). Indirect forms of sexualized behaviors may feel like the safest way (both physically and socially) for women to engage in sexualized behavior toward men.

Based on the current study, it is unclear exactly what types of pictures young men and women were sharing. Some evidence suggests that young women feel social pressures to send sexual pictures of themselves to men they are either currently dating or wanting to date, pictures which are then often shared with other men (Lenhart 2009). For example, one girl stated that “most of the girls who have [sent sexual pictures] are usually pressured by a guy that they like or want to like them, or their boyfriends” (Lenhart 2009). This finding suggests that both young men and women are allowing men to be sexually

assertive in sexually objectifying women, in line with the broader social stereotypes and the Heterosexual Script (Kim et al. 2007; Swim et al. 2001; Ward 2002). Future research should closely examine this specific type of stereotypical sexualized behavior, as it this form of sexualized behavior is increasingly common in our current era of computers and smartphones (Lenhart 2009).

There were, however, gender differences in the perpetration of stereotypical sexualized behaviors. Young men reported making more harassing comments, jokes, and gestures, and being more physically assertive, than young women. This gender difference reflects the same power dynamic that is part of the broader societal stereotype that females should be passive and males should be assertive (e.g., Swim et al. 2001). That broader social stereotype seems to be played out in the actual behaviors of the late adolescents, with young men directing more assertive sexualized behaviors toward young women than vice versa. This gender difference also parallels gender differences in intimate partner violence and sexually coercive behaviors, such that men are more likely to be physically abusive and sexually coercive than women (Belknap and Melton 2005; Ménard et al. 2003). Future research should explore attributes of the men who are most likely to be physically assertive by sexually harassing women, and whether this tendency is linked with more extreme forms of sexual violence.

The primary goal of the current study, however, was to better understand what predicts these relatively common stereotypical sexualized behaviors. It was hypothesized that, as reasoned action theory would predict, endorsing the stereotypes that men are sex-focused and women are sex objects would be linked with late adolescents’ sexualized behavior. This hypothesis was supported, although the different components of the sexualized gender stereotype played different roles for different types of stereotypical sexualized behaviors.

Among young women, endorsing the component of the gender stereotype that women are sexual objects was never a significant predictor of their own stereotypical sexualized behaviors. In contrast, endorsing the component of the stereotype that men are sex-focused was consistently related to their perpetration of all three types of SSB. Specifically, young women who more strongly endorsed the stereotype that men are always focused on sex reported making more sexual comments to and about young men, pulling their clothing in a sexual way more often, and sending sexual pictures more often than young women who did not strongly endorse this stereotype. Although young men endorsed this component of the sexualized gender stereotype more strongly than young women, only half of the young women in the sample explicitly disagreed with this sexualized gender stereotype that men are focused on sex.

For young women, there is potential risk in endorsing the stereotype that men are solely interested in women because of

sex, and exhibiting corresponding sexualized behaviors. Men and women have been shown to interpret benign sexual behaviors differently, such that men may perceive sexual interest and consent when women do not (Basow, and Minieri 2011; Muehlenhard and Linton 1987). Thus, women who engage in physical or verbal stereotypical sexualized behaviors towards men may be simply “flirting,” but these behaviors may be misinterpreted as sexual interest and consent, which may put young women at greater risk for acquaintance or date rape. This misunderstanding is especially likely if they are engaging in those behaviors simply because of perceived pressures from men or peers.

Among young men, those who endorsed the component of the sexualized gender stereotype that men are sex-focused were more likely to report engaging in both types of direct stereotypical sexualized behaviors—verbal and physical—than young men who did not report endorsing the stereotype that men are sex-focused. In other words, men who believed that men should sexually pursue as many women as possible, and should consider it a sign of status to obtain sexual partners, were more likely to report making sexual comments to women, rating their bodies, and touching, grabbing, or pulling on their clothes in a sexual way than men who do not endorse these stereotypes. Furthermore, young men’s reported perpetration of sexualized physical behaviors was also predicted by their endorsement of the sexualized gender stereotype in which women are sexual objects.

Together, these findings lend support to previous research that found that men who endorse statements such as “Men are out for only one thing” are more likely to be involved in sexual aggression during dating scenarios than men who do not endorse such statements (Muehlenhard and Linton 1987). The current study extends this previous research by linking sexualized gender stereotypes with more normative (although perhaps not entirely unrelated) assertive sexualized behaviors. The young men in our sample seem to be following a gendered Heterosexual Script, in which men are *supposed* to act in a specific, highly sexual way toward women (Kim et al. 2007). Future research should examine whether these physical and verbal stereotypical sexualized behaviors are, in turn, associated with sexual aggression among men.

As predicted by reasoned action theory, perceived peer norms about stereotypical sexualized behaviors were highly predictive of college students’ behavior, above and beyond their own stereotypes. Perceived peer norms have been shown to be incredibly powerful in predicting individuals’ behavior (e.g., Rimal 2008). Indeed, in the current study, perceived peer group norms predicted reported perpetration of all three types of behavior for both men and women, over and above their own sexualized gender stereotypes. For young men, in fact, their perception of what their friends accept was a more consistent predictor of their verbal, physical, and indirect stereotypical sexualized behaviors than their own attitudes.

Thus, late adolescents in college are using their perceptions of their friends’ attitudes to drive their own behavior, even more than their own attitudes.

It is important to remember that the current study investigated the *perception* of their friends’ attitudes and not their friends’ actual behavior. Interestingly, previous research with U.S. samples has shown that late adolescents’ perception of their friends’ behavior can be more predictive of their own behavior than their friends’ actual behavior (for drinking behaviors, see Borsari and Carey 2001, 2003; Neighbors et al. 2006). If an individual perceives his or her friends to engage in a certain behavior, regardless of what the friends are actually doing, the individual is more likely to engage in the same behavior than if he does not perceive his friends to engage in that behavior. Social norms, and fitting into the social norm, are powerful forces for humans, particularly among this age group (Berkowitz 2003). Indeed, numerous college-based interventions designed to reduce risky behaviors are most effective when they change individuals’ perceptions of peer norms (Berkowitz 2003). The current study extends this general peer finding to stereotypical sexualized behavior, and supports previous work suggesting that sexualized behaviors are peer-normed behaviors, similar to drinking and risky sexual behavior.

As with all research, the current study has limitations. First, the study is cross-sectional and correlational. It is unclear whether the perception of peer acceptance of stereotypical sexualized behavior leads to greater perpetration of the behaviors over time, or whether individuals perpetrate these behaviors and then simply assume that their friends are accepting of the behavior. In addition, this study was conducted with primarily White U.S. college students. It is important to examine these behaviors and stereotypes among younger adolescents and with a more diverse sample. Indeed, many of these issues may only be relevant to a U.S. college culture, noted for its high rates of casual sexual behavior, and not indicative of same-age peers in the workforce or cross-cultural samples. The measures were not counterbalanced, so there is a chance that the earlier measures influenced participants’ responses to the later measures. Finally, the current study does not explain the context in which these stereotypical sexualized behaviors occur. For example, do adolescents only behave this way when peers are physically present or does alcohol contribute to increased stereotypical sexualized behaviors? Future research should more closely examine these contextual influences.

Despite the limitations, however, the findings from this study have implications for interventions aimed at reducing the risks associated with stereotypical sexualized behavior. These behaviors are potentially risky for two reasons. First, these behaviors could be unwanted and thus experienced as sexual harassment by the target. Second, these behaviors, particularly when enacted by women, could be misinterpreted by men as signs of sexual consent. We suggest that college-age

women and men be taught to attend to the reactions of the target. If the behaviors are unwanted, then the perpetrator needs to stop the behavior. In addition, both women and men need to be clear about their intentions in engaging in these behaviors. These behaviors could be benign signs of courtship and precursors to consensual sexual relationships. However, because these behaviors are linked to sexualized gender stereotypes that include different power dynamics between women and men, they have the potential to be stereotyped scripts rather than expressions of actual interests.

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Interpersonal Mistreatment in the Workplace: The Interface and Impact of General Incivility and Sexual Harassment

Sandy Lim and Lilia M. Cortina
University of Michigan

This article examined the relationships and outcomes of behaviors falling at the interface of general and sexual forms of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Data were collected with surveys of two different female populations ($N_s = 833$ and $1,425$) working within a large public-sector organization. Findings revealed that general incivility and sexual harassment were related constructs, with gender harassment bridging the two. Moreover, these behaviors tended to co-occur in organizations, and employee well-being declined with the addition of each type of mistreatment to the workplace experience. This behavior type (or behavior combination) effect remained significant even after controlling for behavior frequency. The findings are interpreted from perspectives on sexual aggression, social power, and multiple victimization.

Among the different forms of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace, sexual harassment has probably received the most attention in the media, the academy, and the law. However, in recent years interest has increased in “milder” forms of workplace mistreatment, known under various names: emotional abuse (Keashly, 1998), bullying (Einarsen, 1999), generalized workplace abuse (Rospenda, Richman, Wislar, & Flaherty, 2000), and incivility (e.g., Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001). Such mistreatment refers to behaviors such as verbal aggression (e.g., swearing), disrespect (e.g., interruption, public humiliation), and isolation (e.g., from important work activities). Although most would agree that all of these antisocial acts—both sexual and general—fall under the same larger rubric of *interpersonal mistreatment*, researchers have tended to focus on each category of behavior in isolation. As a result, the literatures on sexual and general mistreatment have been developing along separate lines. The present study attempts to bridge this divide by integrating perspectives on sexual harassment and general incivility.

Central Constructs

Fitzgerald and colleagues (e.g., Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) asserted that sexual harassment

consists of three theoretically distinguishable but related categories of behavior. *Gender harassment* refers to experiences of disparaging conduct not intended to elicit sexual cooperation; rather, these are crude, verbal, physical, and symbolic behaviors that convey hostile and offensive attitudes about members of one gender—typically women. By contrast, *unwanted sexual attention* involves experiences of sexually inappropriate behaviors that are unwanted and unreciprocated by the recipient. This includes such verbal and physical actions as sexually suggestive comments, attempts to establish sexual relationships despite discouragement, and unwanted touching. The third category is *sexual coercion*, which parallels the legal concept of *quid pro quo*: subtle or explicit bribes or threats to make job conditions contingent on sexual behavior. Gelfand, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1985) argued that these three categories “are necessary and sufficient to classify any particular incident of sexual harassment . . . they constitute the irreducible minimum of the construct as it is currently understood” (p. 167).

Now that research has explicated the domain of behavior known as sexual harassment, an important next step is to understand its relationships to adjacent domains. Such relationships might manifest themselves in terms of behavioral co-occurrences in the workplace environment or, at a more conceptual level, links in the nomological net. To test such possibilities, we examined sexual harassment in the context of a more general form of workplace mistreatment: incivility.

Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined *workplace incivility* as “low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others” (p. 457). Incivility is a specific form of employee deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), which in turn represents a subset of antisocial employee behavior (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997). When unambiguous intentions and expectations to harm the target or organization are present, definitions of incivility overlap with psychological aggression. However, incivility differs from psychological aggression when behaviors lack clear intentionality. That is, while incivility may occasionally have

Sandy Lim, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan; Lilia M. Cortina, Department of Psychology and Program in Women’s Studies, University of Michigan.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sandy Lim, University of Michigan, Department of Psychology, 525 East University, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. E-mail: sandylim@umich.edu

visibly injurious objectives, it can often be attributed to other factors, such as the instigator's ignorance, oversight, or personality; intent, whether present or not, is ambiguous to one or more of the parties involved (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001).

Articulating the Relationship Between Sexual Harassment and Incivility

Although incivility and sexual harassment are both forms of interpersonal mistreatment, past research has typically studied them separately. This is not surprising, given that incivility is more prevalent in many workplaces, has no gendered or sexualized content on its face, and generally does not violate law. In addition, the notion of "workplace incivility" is relatively new to the psychological literature. Nevertheless, we investigated sexual harassment and incivility simultaneously, seeing strong connections between these two constructs.

Theoretical and empirical evidence lends support to the likelihood of a link between sexual harassment and incivility. Feminist theorists have long argued that the underlying motivation for sexual aggression is one of power and dominance rather than a desire for sexual gratification (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Farley, 1978; Groth, 1979; MacKinnon, 1979). In the workplace, sexual harassment is one means by which perpetrators exert their power to acquire desired outcomes or resources (e.g., Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Thacker & Ferris, 1991). Similarly, several studies have shown that men who are sexually aggressive also tend to be aggressive nonsexually (e.g., Lim & Howard, 1998; Sigelman, Berry, & Wiles, 1984), and they cognitively connect sexuality and social dominance (Pryor, Lavite, & Stoller, 1993). From the target's perspective, women who have experienced unwanted sexual attention and coercion in the workplace have typically also endured general disparagement toward their gender (Fitzgerald et al., 1988, 1995; Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997). These empirical findings support feminist arguments that sexual intention is not the sole motivation behind this collection of behaviors (MacKinnon, 1979). Dominance and power also seem to be a driving force behind workplace sexual harassment, and they could motivate workplace incivility as well.

Gender harassment is an important indicator of sexual harassment, and it may also be the type of harassment most closely connected to incivility. Unlike sexual attention and coercion, gender harassment conveys hostility devoid of any explicit sexual motive. Likewise, incivility is also manifested in terms of rude and disrespectful behaviors with no sexual intent. We therefore see gender harassment as the bridge between other forms of sexual harassment and incivility. In other words, we hypothesized (H1) that gender harassment will be correlated with incivility, in addition to being correlated with unwanted sexual attention/coercion. Another manifestation of this relationship would be the frequent co-occurrence of different forms of mistreatment within the same employees' experiences. In fact, some past research (Gutek, 1985; Richman et al., 1999; Rospenda et al., 2000) suggested that such joint manifestations of mistreatment may be the norm rather than the exception.

Because of strong correlations among gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion, past researchers have generally studied "sexual harassment" as a global construct, col-

lapsing across all three dimensions (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Glomb, Munson, Hulin, Bergman, & Drasgow, 1999; Munson, Hulin, & Drasgow, 2000). Although this procedure permits examination of sexual harassment as a holistic phenomenon, it obscures relationships among harassment subtypes. These relationships become important when we try to compare harassing behavior with other, more general forms of mistreatment (i.e., incivility). Unwanted sexual attention, as the name suggests, represents unwelcomed, unreciprocated behaviors aimed at establishing some form of sexual relationship. One could argue that sexual coercion is a specific, severe, rare form of unwanted sexual attention, involving similar sexual advances coupled with bribery or threats to force acquiescence. Although the distinction between unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion is practical from a legal standpoint, from a behavioral perspective, these constructs show more similarities than differences. This becomes particularly apparent when comparing these behaviors to less sexualized forms of workplace mistreatment, such as gender harassment and incivility.

Given the parallels between unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion, from this point forward we combine the two constructs into a single, parsimonious category termed *sexualized harassment*. This encapsulates all inappropriate and unwanted behaviors in the workplace that aim to gain sexual access to a target. Gender harassment, being hostile but nonsexual, should remain a separate construct that is correlated with sexualized harassment. Incivility, which has no sexual or gendered content on its face, should be even more removed, albeit still correlated.

To test this new conceptualization of the larger construct domain, in the present study we empirically examined the relationships among incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment. Specifically, we compared three different models of mistreatment. Figure 1 presents conceptual representations of these models. The first—our proposed three-factor model—specified three constructs (incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment) that are interrelated. The second, two-factor model included an incivility construct and a sexual harassment construct (the latter collapsing across gender harassment and sexualized harassment). The third model specified only one construct, so as to test the plausible alternative that incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment are best represented as components of a global mistreatment construct (one-factor model). On the basis of our prior arguments, we expected to find the strongest support for the first model. Next, we turn to potential outcomes of this collection of abusive behaviors in the workplace.

Implications for Employee Outcomes

If the joint occurrence of general incivility and sexual harassment is indeed frequent, questions arise about implications for the well-being of targeted employees. Theory and data already suggest that both general and sexual mistreatment in the workplace can trigger a range of adverse effects. For example, in his model of workplace violence, Barling (1996) theorized that experiences of abusive behaviors at work lead to negative mood, cognitive distraction, and fear. These affective and cognitive reactions, in turn, adversely affect victims' organizational, psychological, and somatic functioning. Similarly, Fitzgerald, Swan, and Magley (1997) proposed a model of harm, theorizing how person and situational

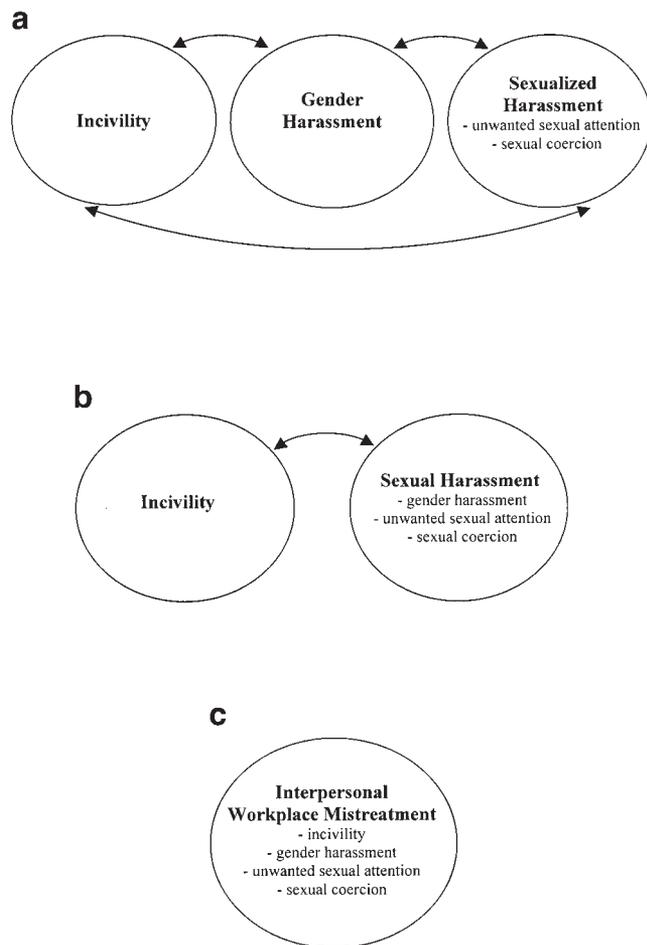


Figure 1. (a) Conceptual representation of proposed three-factor model, specifying gender harassment as a “bridge” between general incivility and sexualized harassment. (b) Alternative model specifying two factors. (c) Alternative model specifying one overall mistreatment construct.

factors determine negative job-related, psychological, and health-related outcomes of sexual harassment.

Supporting such theory, empirical studies have documented harmful effects of workplace mistreatment on targeted employees. For example, Pearson, Andersson, and Porath (2000) found qualitative evidence of impaired concentration, productivity decline, and turnover cognitions among employees who had faced uncivil encounters at work; 12% ultimately quit their jobs. Similarly, Cortina et al. (2001) reported that uncivil workplace experiences were associated with lower job satisfaction, increased job withdrawal, and greater psychological distress. In a similar vein, numerous studies have documented a plethora of negative outcomes among targets of sexual harassment (e.g., Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Gutek, 1985; Rospenda et al., 2000). These included job-related consequences (e.g., negative job attitudes, turnover intentions), psychological problems (e.g., fear, anxiety, depression), and impaired health (e.g., psychosomatic symptoms). An important next step for organizational research is to integrate these two lines of mistreatment–outcome scholarship, systematically examining

the effects of generalized forms of interpersonal mistreatment when they converge with sexual harassment.

In the current study, we investigated how combined forms of mistreatment relate to employees’ occupational, psychological, and physical health. Whereas experiencing workplace incivility by itself is known to have a multitude of negative consequences, targets that also encounter gender and sexualized harassment may suffer even more adverse outcomes. Support for this argument comes from studies in the clinical psychology literature documenting effects of multiple stressors, victimizations, and traumas (e.g., Banyard, Williams, & Siegel, 2001; Follette, Polusny, Bechtel, & Naugle, 1996). For example, the additive impact of life stressors—particularly negative life events—has long been documented in studies of depression (e.g., Brown & Harris, 1978; Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974). More recently, Green et al. (2000) studied 1,909 sophomore women, finding that participants who reported multiple, different types of interpersonal trauma (e.g., physical abuse, molestation, sexual assault) had significantly more mental health symptoms than all other groups, including those who had been repeatedly exposed to any single type of trauma. Likewise, in a study of 16,000 adults nationwide, Pimlott-Kubiak and Cortina (2003) documented more depression, substance use, and health impairment among people who had experienced multiple forms of interpersonal aggression across their lifetimes, compared with nonvictims and victims of single forms of abuse.

Although studies of multiple victimization have rarely focused on workplace settings, it appears reasonable that such findings would translate to the context of work. Compared with employees who are subjected to incivility only, those targeted with both incivility and gender harassment should suffer more detrimental effects on their work and their psychological and health functioning. Moreover, individuals exposed to incivility and gender harassment as well as sexualized harassment are likely to suffer the worst outcomes. One reason for this pattern is that, in general, it may be difficult for employees to develop effective coping mechanisms in the face of varied or evolving manifestations of antisocial behavior. In addition, the potential for physical harm to the targeted employee and the perceived intent of the perpetrator may be unclear in the case of incivility alone, but harm potentials and intentions may be more evident with gender harassment and quite obvious with sexualized harassment. Furthermore, the target group may become increasingly personal, as the mistreatment ranges from incivility (which can include generally rude behaviors targeted toward anyone and everyone within earshot) to gender harassment (targeted to one’s gender group) to sexualized harassment (targeted to oneself). On the basis of such arguments, we hypothesized (H2) that employee well-being will worsen as mistreatment becomes increasingly complex, involving more gendered and sexualized behaviors.

The Current Studies

Data were collected from two surveys of employees working in very different roles in the context of the U.S. federal courts: the Court Employee Survey (Study 1) and the Attorney Survey (Study 2). In this article, we focus only on female respondents, for several reasons. First, past research has consistently shown that women constitute the great majority of sexual harassment victims (e.g., APA Taskforce on Male Violence Against Women, 1994; Fitzger-

ald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999). Indeed, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2003), more than 85% of the sexual harassment charges across the country were filed by women. Second, men's experiences of sexual harassment appear to differ from those of women. Research has shown that men are considerably less threatened than women by behaviors that women find harassing, and men also identify behaviors as harassing that have not been identified for women (e.g., Berdahl, Magley, & Waldo, 1996; Gutek, 1985). Given such disparities, we chose not to include data from men in the current article, to maintain a tight focus on sexual harassment (and incivility) from the unique perspective of women. For the remainder of this article, we thus focus exclusively on women's experiences.

Study 1: The Court Employee Survey

Method

Participants and Procedure

Paper-and-pencil surveys were mailed to all 1,662 employees, excluding judges, of one of the larger federal judicial circuits. Participants were told that the surveys were part of a study commissioned by the Circuit Judicial Council to examine work experiences and gender in the federal courts. Special care was taken to emphasize the confidentiality of survey responses, which were directly sent to an external university for data analysis. Participants were also informed that no judges, court staff, or other organizational members would see their individual survey responses, and no individuals would be identified in any reports of the study.

Several procedures were implemented to maximize the response rate. These included a cover letter from the chief judge of the circuit, encouraging participation; a reminder postcard; and the mailing of a second survey to nonrespondents. A response rate of 71% was obtained, but 13 individuals were excluded from all analyses because of extensive missing data. Subsequent analyses were conducted on the women's data only ($N = 833$). These women ranged in age from 21 to 78 years ($M = 40.31$). Most were European American/White (88%), and the majority were married (69%). They worked in a range of occupations, with 13% employed as managers, supervisors, or unit heads, 14% as attorneys, 18% as specialists (e.g., budget analyst, personnel specialist, systems administrator), 16% as secretaries, and 39% as administrative support staff (e.g., library technician, data quality analysts, mail room clerk). Ninety percent of these women reported that they held jobs traditional for their gender, and 91% worked in units where women were either equally represented or in the clear majority.

Measurement

Construction of the survey focused primarily on two issues: psychometric rigor and minimization of response bias. The placement of measures within the survey partly addressed the latter concern. For example, scales intended to measure outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment preceded the scales assessing interpersonal mistreatment so that respondents' experiences of mistreatment would not bias their descriptions of their job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and so forth. Table 1 presents summary statistics and intercorrelations for all constructs. Note that all items were coded such that higher scores reflected greater levels of the underlying construct. We then summed constituent items to create the corresponding scale composites for the following measures.

Incivility. Four items from the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001) measured the frequency of participants' experiences of incivility (e.g., disrespect, rudeness, condescension) from superiors or coworkers

Table 1
Summary Statistics and Correlations Among Study 1 Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Incivility	3.44	3.62	.85														
2. Gender harassment	1.62	2.41	.50**	.76													
3. Sexualized harassment	1.03	2.92	.32**	.54**	.87												
4. Mistreatment frequency	0.34	0.41	.81**	.82**	.76**	.87											
5. Work satisfaction	20.46	6.80	-.25**	-.11**	-.10**	-.19**	.87										
6. Coworker satisfaction	19.79	5.50	-.38**	-.24**	-.14**	-.31**	.36**	.42**									
7. Supervisor satisfaction	20.29	7.43	-.49**	-.24**	-.12**	-.35**	.36**	.42**	.88								
8. Pay and benefit satisfaction	18.85	7.17	-.24**	-.05	-.04	-.15**	.27**	.21**	.24**	.83							
9. Promotion satisfaction	9.43	6.71	-.38**	-.18**	-.13**	-.30**	.39**	.30**	.44**	.44**	.84						
10. Job withdrawal	2.26	2.55	.38**	.17**	.10**	.28**	-.47**	-.33**	-.40**	-.29**	-.38**	.75					
11. Job stress	12.26	7.76	.36**	.20**	.07*	.25**	-.13**	-.21**	-.35**	-.24**	-.25**	.32**	.86				
12. Psychological well-being	8.87	2.08	-.17**	-.06	-.07*	-.14**	.35**	.20**	.25**	.17**	.17**	-.28**	-.26**	.85			
13. Psychological distress	13.84	5.65	.27**	.15**	.09*	.21**	-.28**	-.21**	-.30**	-.15**	-.15**	.28**	.37**	-.69**	.91		
14. Life satisfaction	17.81	3.48	-.18**	-.08*	-.08*	-.15**	.31**	.13**	.18**	.23**	.17**	-.17**	-.20**	.52**	-.47**	.84	
15. Health satisfaction	10.41	3.21	-.13**	-.03	-.02	-.10**	.16**	.09*	.15**	.08*	.07	-.05	-.16**	.41**	-.40**	.36**	.74

Note. Correlations appear below the diagonal, and coefficient alphas appear italicized along the diagonal. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

within the previous 5 years. Sample items include “put you down or was condescending to you”; “doubted your judgment on a matter over which you have responsibility”; and “paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinion.” Note that these items assessed behaviors with no overtly gendered or sexual content, and intention to harm the target or organization was not readily apparent. Further, these items were consistent with the most common negative acts in the workplace identified by Einarsen, Raknes, Matthiesen, and Hellesøy (1994). Respondents used a 5-point response scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*most of the time*) to rate the frequency with which they had experienced each behavior. Cortina et al. (2001) reported an alpha coefficient of .89 for the Workplace Incivility Scale and found that it correlated $-.59$ with Donovan, Dragow, and Munson’s (1998) Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment Scale, thus supporting its reliability and construct validity.

Sexual harassment. Participants completed an abbreviated version of the behavioral Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised (Fitzgerald et al., 1988, 1995). This instrument was composed of four items that assessed the participants’ experiences of gender harassment (e.g., “made offensive remarks or jokes about women in your presence”), seven items that assessed unwanted sexual attention (e.g., “touched you in a way that made you uncomfortable”), and three items that assessed sexual coercion (e.g., “made you afraid that you would be treated poorly if you did not cooperate sexually”). We combined items measuring unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion into the “sexualized harassment” composite. This instrument used a 5-point response scale that paralleled that of the Workplace Incivility Scale. In developing the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised, Fitzgerald et al. (1988) found high internal consistency and test–retest reliability as well as strong evidence of content and criterion-related validity.

Job-related outcomes. Three types of job-related outcomes were examined in this study: (a) job satisfaction, (b) job withdrawal, and (c) job stress. Job satisfaction was measured with a 43-item version of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969; revised by Roznowski, 1989). On a 3-point response scale (0 = *no*, 1 = *cannot decide*, 3 = *yes*), respondents described whether they were satisfied with five aspects of their jobs: work, coworkers, supervisor, pay and benefits, and promotional opportunities. The JDI is one of the most frequently used measures of job satisfaction and has been subjected to rigorous psychometric evaluation (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002; Smith et al., 1969).

Three items from the Job Withdrawal Scale (Hanisch, 1990; Hanisch & Hulin, 1990, 1991) were used to assess organizational withdrawal behaviors. This scale tapped turnover thoughts or intentions, asking respondents questions such as “how likely is it that you would quit in the next few months.” A 5-point response scale (with varying anchors) was used for this measure. Hanisch (1990) conducted psychometric evaluation of the Job Withdrawal Scale, reporting longitudinal data linking earlier job attitudes and stresses and subsequent job withdrawal 3 years later.

In addition, nine items from the Stress in General Scale (Stanton, Balzer, Smith, Parra, & Ironson, 2001) measured job stress. Using the same 3-point response scale as the JDI, respondents indicated whether each of a list of adjectives (e.g., “hectic,” “tense,” “calm”) described their “job in general.” Stanton et al. reported evidence of the convergent and discriminant validity of this scale.

Psychological and health outcomes. Psychological and physical health outcomes included in this study were (a) psychological well-being and distress, (b) life satisfaction, and (c) health satisfaction. Specifically, 12 items from the Mental Health Index (Veit & Ware, 1983) assessed emotional well-being and common psychiatric symptoms of anxiety (feeling “tense or high strung” or “restless, fidgety, or impatient”) and depression (feeling “downhearted and blue” or “in low or very low spirits”). On a scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*most of the time*), respondents indicated the frequency of these feelings in the prior month. This psychometrically

sound scale (Brooks et al., 1979) has appeared in various studies of general health and victimization (Koss, Koss, & Woodruff, 1991).

The five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, 1984; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) assessed participants’ global subjective well-being or overall satisfaction with life. This scale required respondents to rate statements such as “the conditions of my life are excellent,” using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Diener et al. have found that items in this scale were internally consistent, correlated appropriately with personality measures, and loaded on a single common factor.

We assessed health satisfaction with a subscale of the Retirement Descriptive Index (Smith et al., 1969), which contains short, descriptive, health-related phrases and adjectives (e.g., “never felt better”; “feel tired all the time”). Respondents indicated whether each phrase described their health, using the same 3-point response scale as the JDI. Hanisch and Hulin (1990) reported a coefficient alpha of .70 and a 2-year stability coefficient of .63 for this scale. They also found links between health satisfaction and health conditions, supporting the validity of the index as an indicator of health status.

Results

Analyses followed multiple stages. After reviewing descriptive findings about the incidence rates of each type of mistreatment, we used structural equation modeling to test the three competing models of mistreatment relationships. This was followed by multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to determine the effect of mistreatment frequency and type on employee outcomes. Finally, we conducted discriminant function analyses to further probe outcome differences on the basis of different types and combinations of interpersonal mistreatment.

Incidence of Mistreatment

Incidence rates were calculated on the basis of the report of at least one incident (i.e., a response of “1” or above for any behavior) within each category of mistreatment. Results revealed frequent co-occurrence in experiences of incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment. Whereas 23% of the women ($n = 187$) experienced general incivility alone, only 3% ($n = 22$) experienced gender harassment alone, 1% ($n = 7$) experienced unwanted sexual attention alone, and none experienced sexual coercion alone. On the other hand, 22% ($n = 178$) experienced both general incivility and gender harassment, and 21% ($n = 171$) experienced general incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment.

Relationships Among Types of Mistreatment

We conducted confirmatory factor analyses to test latent variable models of the relationships in Figure 1 using EQS software (Bentler, 1995). This analytic technique allows one to generate an estimated covariance matrix by solving a series of regression equations simultaneously. The estimated matrix is then evaluated against the actual sample covariance matrix to determine whether the hypothesized model is an acceptable representation of the data. For this procedure, we randomly assigned and summed incivility items into three manifest indicators, and then followed the same procedure to create three gender harassment indicators and three sexualized harassment indicators (nine indicators total). In the

three-factor model, each collection of indicators was allowed to load onto a separate latent construct, and the latent constructs were allowed to correlate. We specified the two-factor model such that the gender and sexualized harassment indicators all loaded onto a common latent construct, leaving the incivility indicators to load onto a second construct; again, a correlation was permitted between constructs. The single-factor model allowed all nine indicators to load onto one latent construct. Using maximum likelihood estimation, we then estimated the parameters of each model. To assess data-model fit, a variety of statistics were examined, including the chi-square-to-degrees-of-freedom ratio, the normed fit index (NFI), the nonnormed fit index (NNFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMSR).

Supporting our proposed conceptualization, the three-factor model provided a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(24, N = 805) = 135.92$, $NFI = .97$, $NNFI = .96$, $CFI = .97$, $RMSEA = .08$, $SRMSR = .05$. By contrast, fit indices for both the two-factor model, $\chi^2(26, N = 805) = 726.14$, $NFI = .83$, $NNFI = .77$, $CFI = .83$, $RMSEA = .18$, $SRMSR = .13$, and the one-factor model, $\chi^2(27, N = 805) = 1,518.79$, $NFI = .63$, $NNFI = .52$, $CFI = .64$, $RMSEA = .26$, $SRMSR = .17$, were unacceptably poor.

As shown in Figure 2a, all loadings for the three-factor model were statistically significant, with standardized values ranging from .69 to .95. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, gender harassment was highly correlated with both general incivility ($r = .56$) and sexualized harassment ($r = .61$). In addition, a moderate correlation ($r = .34$) emerged between general incivility and sexualized harassment.

Outcomes of Interpersonal Mistreatment

To examine job-related, psychological and health outcomes of different constellations of interpersonal mistreatment, we first conducted a MANCOVA, with type of mistreatment as the predictor and frequency of mistreatment as the covariate. An extension of analysis of variance, the MANCOVA procedure allows us to examine whether both type and frequency of mistreatment are significantly associated with reliable mean differences in linear combinations of outcomes. By focusing on a series of related outcomes simultaneously, this analysis maximizes parsimony while reducing alpha inflation.

To create a variable to indicate type of mistreatment, we categorized respondents according to their mistreatment experiences. The descriptive data revealed that those who had experienced gender harassment typically reported concomitant incivility, and respondents who had endured sexualized harassment also tended to report gender harassment and incivility. Thus, we divided respondents into four groups. The first group contained employees who did not report any experience of mistreatment (i.e., gave a response of “never” to all mistreatment questions; $n = 216$). The second group consisted of those who had experienced at least one uncivil behavior but no gender or sexualized harassment (i.e., employees who gave a response other than “never” to at least one incivility item and “never” responses to all gender harassment and sexualized harassment items; $n = 187$). The third group contained employees who had experienced at least one instance of incivility

and at least one instance of gender harassment but no sexualized harassment (i.e., employees who gave responses other than “never” to at least one incivility item and to at least one gender harassment item and “never” responses to all sexualized harassment items; $n = 178$). The fourth group consisted of respondents who had experienced incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment (i.e., employees who gave responses other than “never” to at least one incivility item, at least one gender harassment item, and at least one sexualized harassment item; $n = 171$). On the basis of this categorization scheme, we created a mistreatment-type variable with four categories.

In analyses of the effect of mistreatment type on outcomes, it seemed important to take mistreatment frequency into account. For this purpose, we created a variable based on the mean of all mistreatment items, scored polytomously along their full 5-point response scales (from 0 = *never* to 4 = *most of the time*). The resulting score represented the average behavioral frequency (i.e., magnitude) of mistreatment. This variable constituted the covariate in the MANCOVA equations.

We performed separate multivariate analyses of covariance on the two sets of dependent variables, namely, job-related outcomes (including job stress, job withdrawal, and five facets of job satisfaction) and psychological/health outcomes (i.e., psychological distress and well-being, life satisfaction, health satisfaction). Results suggested mistreatment frequency to be significantly related to the multivariate collection of job-related outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .91, $F(7, 628) = 9.02$, $p < .01$, but its effect fell just short of significance for the psychological/health outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .99, $F(4, 706) = 2.22$, $p = .07$. After controlling for frequency of mistreatment, type of mistreatment had a multivariate main effect on both job outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .90, $F(21, 1804) = 3.07$, $p < .01$, and psychological/health outcomes, Wilks's lambda = .96, $F(12, 1868) = 2.54$, $p < .01$.

In order to further investigate the effects of types and combinations of mistreatment on outcomes, we conducted multiple-group discriminant function analyses following the MANCOVA. A *discriminant function* represents a linear combination of discriminating variables—in this case, outcomes—weighted in such a way as to maximize the between-groups differences. Because average discriminant scores (centroids) can be computed for each group, we can plot and compare group centroids to determine how each group fares relative to other groups on the basis of the multivariate collection of outcomes (for more details about this analytic approach, see Klecka, 1980).

One significant discriminant function, Wilks's lambda = .80, $\chi^2(21, N = 639) = 142.17$, $p < .01$, accounted for 90% of the between-groups variance in job-related outcomes. To interpret the substantive meaning of the function, we examined the structure coefficients (i.e., correlations between each of the outcomes and the function); these appear in Table 3. According to these coefficients, the function was defined negatively by job stress and job withdrawal and positively by the various facets of job satisfaction, suggesting a continuum of occupational well-being that ranged from negative to positive.

Figure 3a displays the group centroids (i.e., each group's mean score on the linear combination of outcomes). Work appeared to become increasingly negative with additional types of mistreatment. That is, the group that did not describe any experiences of

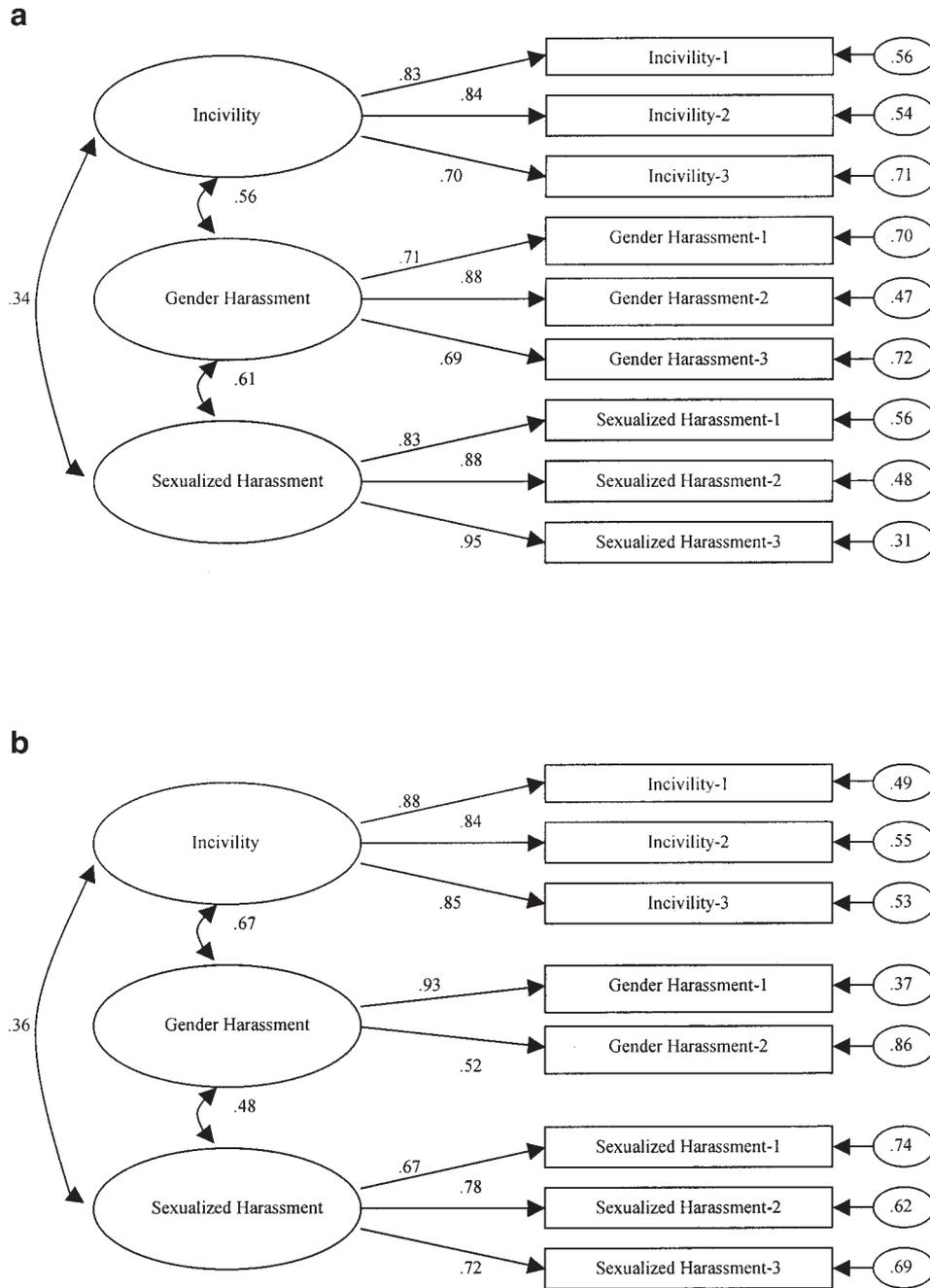


Figure 2. (a) Study 1: Proposed model with standardized factor loadings and path coefficients. (b) Study 2: Proposed model with standardized factor loadings and path coefficients.

mistreatment at work, reported the highest occupational well-being. Well-being dropped for the group that reported incivility by itself, and it dropped further for the incivility plus gender harassment group. The final group, which had experienced all types of mistreatment, reported the lowest occupational well-being.

Similar to job-related outcomes, one significant discriminant function, Wilks's lambda = .92, $\chi^2(12, N = 714) = 62.96, p < .01$, accounted for 92% of the between-groups variance in psychological and health outcomes. The structure coefficients appear in

Table 3. According to these coefficients, life satisfaction and psychological distress defined the positive and negative poles, respectively, of this continuum of psychological and physical well-being.

As shown in Figure 3b, the addition of each type of mistreatment to employee histories was associated with incremental declines in their psychological and health functioning. In other words, whereas the group not reporting any mistreatment at work reported the best mental and physical health, a dip was apparent for

Table 2
Summary Statistics and Correlations Among Study 2 Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Incivility	3.15	3.69	.85						
2. Gender Harassment	0.49	1.04	.56**	.57					
3. Sexualized Harassment	0.19	0.81	.31**	.42**	.70				
4. Mistreatment Frequency	0.30	0.37	.96**	.74**	.51**	.82			
5. Job Satisfaction	16.06	2.78	-.18**	-.02	-.04	-.15**	.79		
6. Job Stress	13.90	3.79	.26**	.09**	.07*	.23**	-.55**	.78	
7. Job Withdrawal	6.00	2.93	.09**	.03	.03	.09**	-.43**	.43**	.74

Note. Correlations appear below the diagonal, and coefficient alphas appear italicized along the diagonal.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

the incivility-only group, and a further decrease was found for the incivility plus gender harassment group. Once again, the group that encountered incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment reported the worst outcomes. Overall, these findings provided good support for Hypothesis 2.

Study 2: The Attorney Survey

Conducting one of the first studies to examine sexual harassment and general incivility concurrently, we sought to validate Study 1 results using data collected from a fairly different and much larger sample.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Based on a list of cases filed in the same large federal judicial circuit, a disproportionate, stratified random sample of 9,223 names was drawn, balanced across gender, geographical location, and type of practice. Because of the greater proportion of men in federal legal practice, the sample contained more men than women. The purpose of the survey provided to participants was similar to Study 1, and equivalent procedures were implemented to maximize the response rate, resulting in a 53% response. Again, analyses focused only on women ($n = 1,425$); the female participants ranged in age from 24 to 79 years ($M = 49.1$). The majority were European American/Caucasian (93%) and were either married or living with a partner (68%). Unlike the women in the court employee sample, these women all had at least a juris doctor, if not an additional, graduate degree, and they all worked in an occupation that is nontraditional for women, in environments where women remain a clear minority.

Measurement

Similar to Study 1, questions were carefully ordered within the survey to minimize potential response bias. We piloted this survey on a sample of attorneys practicing in the federal courts of a different federal circuit. Table 2 presents summary statistics and intercorrelations for each construct. All items were coded such that higher scores reflected greater levels of the underlying construct. Responses to each item were summed to create the corresponding scale composites for the following measures.

Incivility and sexual harassment. Similar to Study 1, incivility was assessed by five items from the Workplace Incivility Scale (Cortina et al., 2001). In addition, a subset of eight Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised items (Fitzgerald et al., 1988) from Study 1 measured participants' experiences of gender harassment (two items), unwanted sexual attention (four items), and sexual coercion (two items).

Job-related outcomes. Three measures of job outcome were developed for Study 2 on the basis of collaboration between social scientists and legal practitioners. Specifically, a four-item, global Job Satisfaction Scale assessed satisfaction with work and relationships in the federal courts (e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with my professional work in federal court"). Six items measured the extent to which attorneys experienced work in federal court as stressful (e.g., "My experiences working in federal court are frustrating"). A three-item Job Withdrawal Scale assessed attorneys' intentions to leave or change their work situations, including thoughts about leaving federal litigation altogether. All three measures were rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Results

Incidence of Mistreatment

Similar to Study 1, there was significant co-occurrence in women's experiences of the different types of mistreatment. Whereas 40% of the women ($n = 543$) experienced general incivility only, fewer than 1% experienced gender harassment alone ($n = 8$) or unwanted sexual attention alone ($n = 1$), and none experienced sexual coercion alone. On the other hand, 16% ($n = 217$) experienced both general incivility and gender harassment, and 7% ($n = 93$) experienced general incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment.

Relationships Among Types of Mistreatment

In order to validate the latent variable model depicted in Figure 2a, we tested competing factor models that paralleled those from Study 1. Again, our proposed three-factor model provided a satisfactory fit to the data: $\chi^2(17, N = 1321) = 184.60$, NFI = .96, NNFI = .94, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .086, SRMSR = .045. By contrast, the fit indices for the two-factor model, $\chi^2(19, N = 1321) = 752.13$, NFI = .84, NNFI = .76, CFI = .84, RMSEA = .171, SRMSR = .12, and the one-factor model, $\chi^2(20, N = 1321) = 1287.60$, NFI = .72, NNFI = .61, CFI = .72, RMSEA = .219, SRMSR = .14, were unacceptably poor.

As shown in Figure 2b, all factor loadings were statistically significant in the three-factor model, with standardized values ranging from .52 to .93. Similar to Study 1, gender harassment was correlated with both general incivility ($r = .67$) and sexualized harassment ($r = .48$). A moderate correlation ($r = .36$) also emerged between general incivility and sexualized harassment.

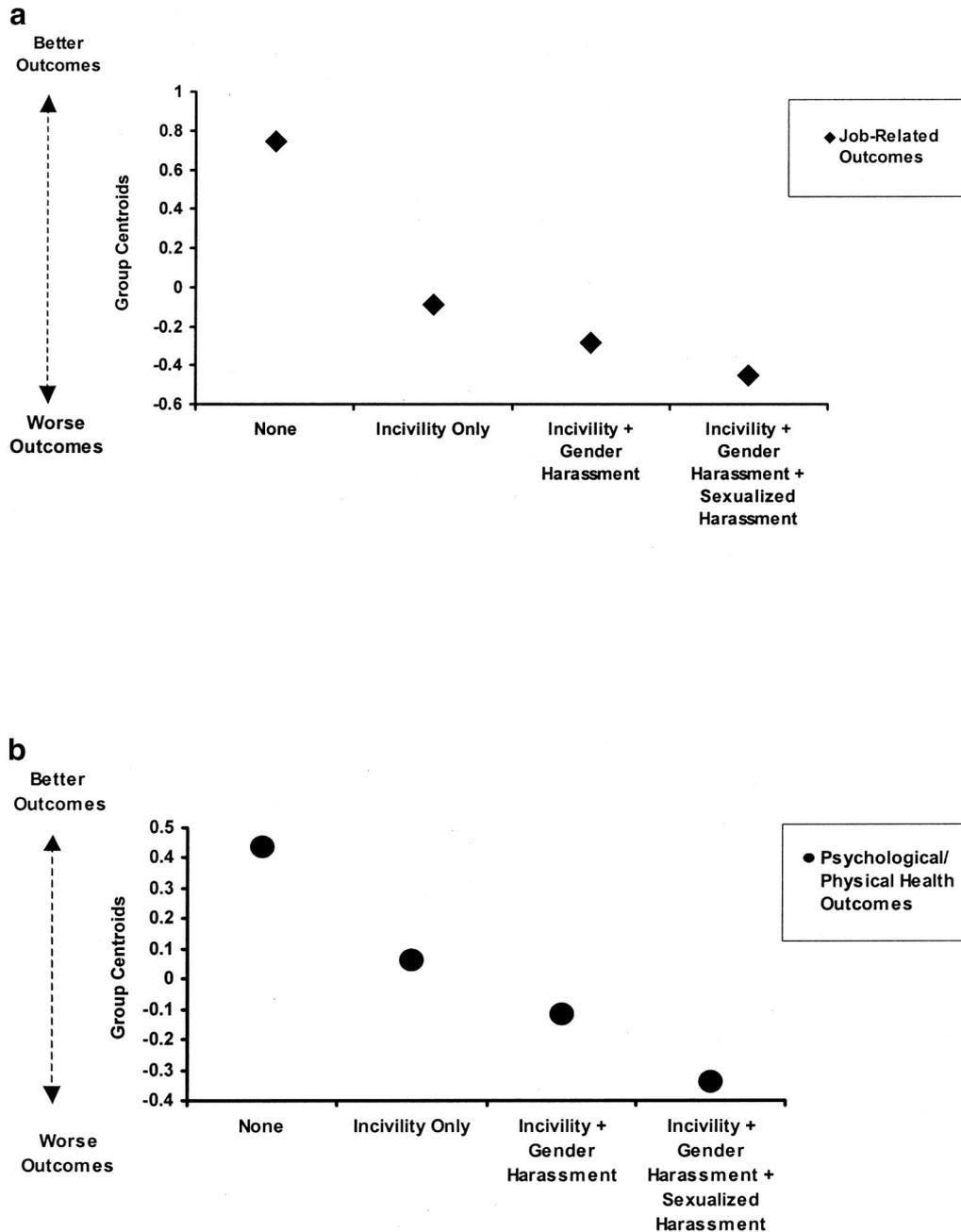


Figure 3. (a) Study 1: Job-related outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment. (b) Study 1: Psychological/physical health outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment.

Outcomes of Interpersonal Mistreatment

To parallel Study 1 job–outcome analyses, we again divided respondents into four groups: (a) those who did not report any experience of mistreatment ($n = 495$), (b) those who experienced incivility only ($n = 543$), (c) those who experienced both incivility and gender harassment ($n = 217$), and (d) those who experienced incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment ($n = 93$). Specific criteria for categorization into a mistreatment group were the same as those used in Study 1. This yielded a four-category

variable that constituted the independent variable in the MANCOVA. For the MANCOVA covariate, we again created one composite variable based on the mean of all mistreatment items, resulting in a measure of average mistreatment frequency.

MANCOVA results revealed that mistreatment frequency was significantly related to the multivariate collection of job outcomes, Wilks’s lambda = .96, $F(3, 1138) = 15.82, p < .01$. Controlling for this frequency of mistreatment, type of mistreatment also had a significant effect on these outcomes, Wilks’s lambda = .98, $F(9,$

Table 3
Structure Coefficients (Pooled Within-Group Correlations Between Each of the Measures and the Function) for All Discriminant Function Analyses

Outcome measure	<i>r</i>
<i>Study 1: Job-related function</i>	
Job stress	-.62
Job withdrawal	-.57
Pay and benefit satisfaction	.23
Work satisfaction	.39
Promotional opportunity satisfaction	.61
Coworker satisfaction	.64
Supervisor satisfaction	.75
<i>Study 1: Psychological and health function</i>	
Psychological distress	-.94
Health satisfaction	.39
Psychological well-being	.44
Life satisfaction	.49
<i>Study 2: Job-related function</i>	
Job stress	-.89
Job withdrawal	-.03
Job satisfaction	.24

2770) = 2.99, $p < .01$. As in Study 1, we conducted follow-up discriminant function analyses to explore the nature of these outcome differences on the basis of type and combination of experience.

Echoing the results from Study 1, one significant discriminant function emerged, Wilks's $\lambda = .97$, $\chi^2(9, N = 1145) = 38.49, p < .01$. This accounted for 99% of the between-groups variance for job-related outcomes. The structure coefficients appear in Table 3. According to these coefficients, the function was defined negatively by job stress and positively by job satisfaction. Figure 4 shows that, again, occupational well-being decreased with the addition of each type of mistreatment to a respondent's history.

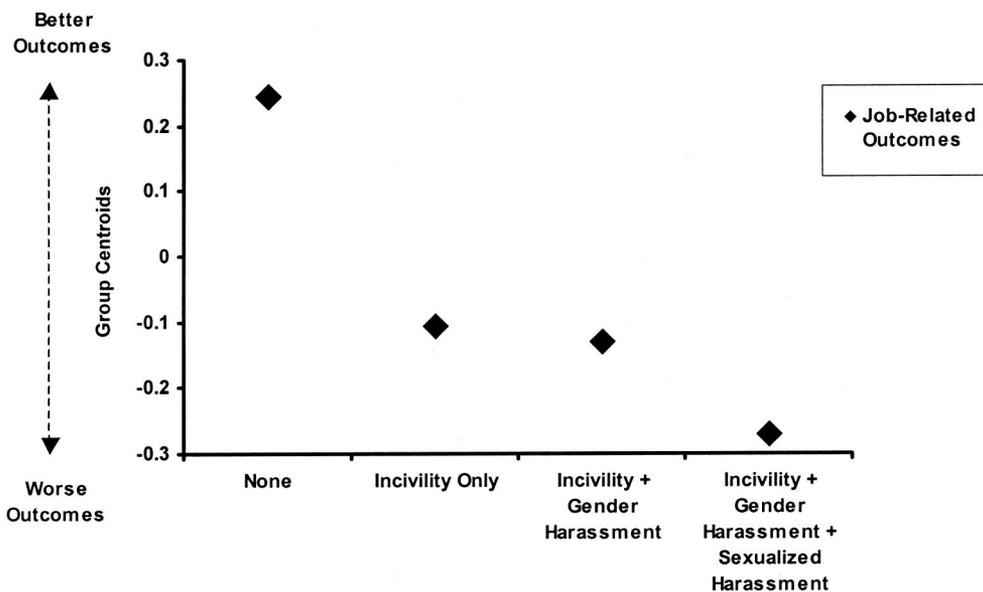


Figure 4. Study 2: Job-related outcomes of interpersonal mistreatment.

Discussion

This article attempts to integrate the literature on sexual harassment with emerging research on generalized interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace. Overall, results underscore the need to look at sexual harassment as an experience embedded in a larger context of disrespect. These findings should cast a new perspective on how such seemingly different forms of antisocial behavior relate and combine to interfere with working women's occupational, psychological, and physical health.

Relationship Between Sexual Harassment and General Incivility

The first aim of this article was to investigate the relationship between sexual harassment and general incivility. Consistent with our hypothesis, gender harassment correlated strongly with both general incivility and sexualized harassment (i.e., sexual attention/coercion) in two female samples. A moderate correlation also emerged between incivility and sexualized harassment, even after controlling for the relationship between incivility and gender harassment. In fact, almost all women who had been subjected to gender or sexualized harassment also reported experiencing general incivility (but not vice versa). It appeared that sexual harassment often took place against a backdrop of generalized disrespect in the workplace.

The association and co-occurrence between sexual harassment and general incivility fall in line with feminist theories of sexual aggression, which argue that sexuality and dominance are interconnected. In fact, we suspect that the perpetrators of the different forms of mistreatment could often be the same person(s). That is, the same aggressors may instigate multiple forms of mistreatment—both sexualized and generalized—in efforts to debase women and reinforce or raise their own social advantage. The result of such aggressor behavior would be a combined manifes-

tation of sexualized harassment, gender harassment, and incivility within the targets' experiences—exactly what we found. This would argue against notions that sexual harassment is merely natural sexual attraction or innocent flirting. Indeed, the present studies raise a number of interesting questions about the intersection of gender, power, and the perpetration of workplace mistreatment, a topic that clearly warrants further research.

Organizational climates may also help explain relations between sexual and nonsexual forms of hostile behavior. Previous sexual harassment research has revealed that climate plays an important role in fostering or inhibiting harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, et al., 1997; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1996; Williams, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1999). In “tolerant” organizational climates, management tends to overlook or appear indifferent to sexually harassing behavior. As a result, victims have little voice, and perpetrators receive little or no punishment. Although the organizational antecedents of harassment are not the focus of the current study, it seems likely that an environment that permits or contributes to the incidence of sexual harassment would also be conducive to nonsexual forms of mistreatment, such as general incivility. If harassment of a sexual nature is not seen as a deviant behavior that warrants correction, incidents of general incivility should be even less likely to receive attention from management.

A third explanation for the high co-occurrence of incivility and harassment also bears mentioning. That is, the experience of one form of interpersonal mistreatment might sensitize targets to other varieties of antisocial behavior, increasing the chance that they will notice other interpersonally inappropriate acts. Along these lines, the social psychology literature clearly indicates that targets of stereotyping and discrimination are more likely to notice even subtly biased behaviors, as compared with nontargets (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Swim, Scott, Sechrist, Campbell, & Stangor, 2003). To shed more light on these issues, future qualitative and longitudinal work on workplace mistreatment should focus, in particular, on perpetrators, climates, and other factors that might account for the convergence of different types of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.

Outcomes of Incivility and Sexual Harassment

To investigate the impact of the various forms and combinations of mistreatment, we conducted MANCOVA and discriminant function analyses of two types of outcomes: job-related and psychological and physical health. Note that the effects of experiencing incivility alone could not be compared against effects of experiencing sexual harassment alone because, as noted above, employees rarely experienced sexual harassment without concomitant incivility. In fact, the joint manifestation of general and sexual mistreatment suggests that simply attributing adverse outcomes to sexual harassment alone might obscure the bigger picture, that is, that sexual harassment typically occurs within a larger context of disregard for social norms of mutual respect.

Results from both studies revealed that the addition of each type of mistreatment to one's workplace history was related to an incremental worsening of outcomes, even after controlling for the overall magnitude or frequency of mistreatment. Specifically, women who had endured incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment reported the worst outcomes, and those who

had faced both incivility and gender harassment (without sexualized harassment) described lower well-being than employees who had “only” encountered incivility. Nevertheless, experiences of incivility alone were sufficient to trigger a decrease in occupational, psychological, and physical health. This last finding highlights the fact that forms of mistreatment that do not violate law can, nevertheless, be harmful to employees. More generally, these outcome findings were consistent with the literatures on multiple victimization and trauma (e.g., Follette et al., 1996; Green et al., 2000; Pimlott-Kubiak & Cortina, 2003), suggesting that exposure to a constellation of interpersonally abusive events increases risk that professional and personal problems will manifest.

Such results support our hypothesis that work, psychological, and health functioning decline as employees' experiences of mistreatment become increasingly gendered and sexualized. We have proposed that this could be explained by the severity of the mistreatment, as defined by multiple criteria: the potential for physical harm to the targeted employee, the perceived intent of the perpetrator, and the extent to which the target group becomes increasingly personal. Consistent with the literature on stress and coping (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), other important indicators of mistreatment severity may be its duration, predictability, and controllability. Indeed, operationalizing severity in the context of interpersonal mistreatment will be a critical direction for future research.

From these cross-sectional data, we cannot make the temporal assumption that the mistreatment progressed over time from general to gendered to sexualized. However, it is possible that some situations follow such a pattern, especially if hostility and dominance are key motivations for the perpetrators. Indeed, this would be consistent with Andersson and Pearson (1999), who argued that unchecked incivility can spiral into increasingly intense aggressive behaviors. Future longitudinal studies, involving methods such as in-depth interviews and daily diaries, could be useful in investigating such possibilities.

Methodological Issues

One might wonder whether the strong relations between incivility and sexual harassment could be the result of “double counting” of the same behavior by respondents. Although scales in the questionnaire were designed to address relatively discrete behaviors, perhaps participants reported the same harassment experiences on both the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Revised and the Workplace Incivility Scale. To avoid this possibility, all analyses in the present article included only a subset of the seven original Workplace Incivility Scale items (Cortina et al., 2001), removing the ones that seemed most vulnerable to double counting (e.g., “addressed you in unprofessional terms”). It was thus unlikely that double counting would explain the correlations among the different types of mistreatment.

Regarding the generalizability of our findings, close examination of the court organization under study revealed that it is comparable to many other public-sector organizations in terms of gender ratios and hierarchical power structures. Men dominated the top of the organizational hierarchy, whereas women far outnumbered men at the bottom, and gender ratios approached parity in the middle. Furthermore, we replicated findings in two subpopulations with demographics that varied widely (e.g., by occupational

status, educational background, gender traditionality of occupation, and gender ratios of peers). We believe that these findings would generalize to similar organizations, and future studies should determine whether they apply in other contexts as well.

Questions may also arise about our reporting of Study 1 and Study 2 results separately. This decision was driven by several concerns: cross-validation (noted above), a desire to avoid pooling data from populations that are too dissimilar, and differences in the two surveys. Although data for both studies were collected within the same federal judicial circuit, they came from two very different employee populations. Study 1 ($n = 833$) surveyed women who work directly for the circuit, primarily as secretaries, support staff, and specialists. On the other hand, Study 2 ($n = 1,425$) focused on a specific, high-level occupational group: attorneys who practice in the federal courts (but who are not employed per se by the federal circuit itself, instead working for law firms or other external agencies). Moreover, the Study 1 survey assessed many more psychological constructs than the Study 2 survey, so we relied on Study 2 primarily for the purpose of testing the replicability of findings.

Limitations

Because of practical constraints on the length of the questionnaire, we were only able to include two gender harassment items in Study 2, yielding a measure with less-than-optimal reliability. Low reliability can interfere with the ability to detect significant associations among constructs. However, a major part of our analyses entailed tests of latent variable models, which to some extent correct for measurement unreliability. These Study 2 modeling results closely replicated those of Study 1, including significant relationships between gender harassment and the other mistreatment constructs. However, gender harassment showed fewer significant correlations with Study 2 outcomes than with Study 1 outcomes, perhaps because of the less reliable Study 2 gender harassment measure.

As is typical in survey research, response bias could be a problem. For example, responses to earlier measures in the surveys might have affected responses to later instruments. For this reason, we paid careful attention to scale placement, ensuring that work, psychological, and health measures appeared prior to the assessment of mistreatment experiences. This reduced the likelihood that responses to the outcome measures would be influenced by responses to the mistreatment measures. Furthermore, measurement of the mistreatment constructs was based on reports of specific behaviors, rather than subjective labeling, and none of the items analyzed contained potentially loaded terms such as *sexual harassment*.

Because of the single-source, self-report nature of the data, common method variance or response set could potentially explain some significant relationships. However, the wide range of correlations among variables—including near-zero correlations—argued against a mono-method-bias explanation of findings. For example, consider the relationship between sexual harassment and physical health. Past research (e.g., Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, et al., 1997; Glomb et al., 1997) has suggested that the experience of sexual harassment has the greatest impact on work-related outcomes but does not exert a direct effect on health outcomes (rather, such health effects are mediated by psychological outcomes).

Consistent with this prior work, in Study 1 we found many significant correlations between gender/sexualized harassment and job-related outcomes, but virtually no correlation with health satisfaction (see Table 1). This and similar patterns of results made it unlikely that the relationships among variables in the study were simply a manifestation of common method biases.

A final limitation lies in the perceptual nature of our variables. Consistent with prior workplace victimization research (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, et al., 1997; Gutek, 1985), we examined these experiences from the perspective of individual targets—attending to their subjective experiences of mistreatment. This reflects our reliance on a cognitive stress framework, which defines psychological stress in terms of an individual's appraisal of a situation as challenging, threatening, or harmful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This approach necessarily implies a subjective component to experiences and definitions of workplace stressors such as interpersonal mistreatment. Indeed, it is precisely this personal experience of stress that likely drives the psychological harm of these behaviors.

Concluding Remarks

Results from the current studies lend empirical support to conceptualizations of incivility, gender harassment, and sexualized harassment as associated phenomena. However, current organizational interventions targeting interpersonal mistreatment rarely consider issues of general civility. If they address sexual harassment, they often focus on this behavior in isolation. The present findings suggest that such conventional approaches to intervention are likely to be limited, as interpersonal mistreatment comes in general, gendered, and sexualized varieties that are highly interrelated. These behaviors combine in employees' experiences to have a considerable negative impact on well-being. Thus, sexual harassment interventions might do well to dovetail with those addressing incivility (Cortina et al., 2002). Instead of taking a dual path in combating either sexualized or generalized mistreatment, a concerted effort aimed at eliminating all elements of a hostile work environment might be more effective and efficient.

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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Sexual Harassment of Low Income Women in Housing

Maggie E. Reed
Ball State University

Linda L. Collinsworth and
Louise F. Fitzgerald
University of Illinois at
Urbana–Champaign

Although sexual harassment in the workplace has received considerable attention, harassment in rental housing is a virtually unresearched phenomenon, despite informal data that it is widespread. This article reviews empirical data and legal remedies on sexual harassment in rental housing, comparing these with harassment in employment contexts. Using data drawn from Title VIII sexual harassment cases, the authors present 3 studies designed to examine the nature of sexual harassment in housing. Despite overall similarities to its workplace counterpart, a number of distinctive characteristics of residential harassment were evident; in particular, the phenomena of home invasion and masculine possessiveness have no apparent workplace parallels. Housing sexual harassment often takes place in the victim's home, creating an intensely threatening atmosphere. Legal and public policy implications are discussed.

Every month when he come over to get the rent . . . he would say, 'You know, you a single mom, you shouldn't have to work so hard . . . you wouldn't have to pay no rent at all if you just let me have a little of that pussy.'—Witness in a residential sexual harassment lawsuit¹

He said he come over to fix the sink, but he didn't have no tools with him. He went down the hall with me and said, 'Show me where the sink is broke.' I bent down to show him under the sink. The next thing, he pushed me down. He said, 'I want to fuck your brains out.' He was grabbing me and pulling my clothes. His pants were down and you could see his penis.—Witness in a residential sexual harassment lawsuit

Introduction

The word *home* evokes images of safety and security for most Americans. As citizens, we assume our homes to be private and inviolable, a shelter to which we can retreat from the importunities of everyday life. For many women, however, these assumptions have been profoundly shattered. Each year, thousands of women are subjected to predatory sexual advances at the hands of landlords,

Maggie E. Reed, Counseling Center, Ball State University; Linda L. Collinsworth and Louise F. Fitzgerald, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Maggie E. Reed, Counseling Center, 320 Lucina Hall, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47304. E-mail: mereed2@bsu.edu

¹Because these cases were filed by the Housing Section of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, the victims were technically witnesses, not plaintiffs.

building managers, and property owners; although no true prevalence data exist, one estimate suggests that between 7,000 and 15,000 such incidents occurred nationwide between 1981 and 1986, most of them never reported (Cahan, 1987). According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the department processed 3,838 official reports of sexual discrimination between 1988 and 2000, and other HUD-funded agencies have handled 4,703 additional complaints (HUD, 2000; cf. Lindemyer, 2000).

Women's² vulnerability to landlords' mistreatment is exacerbated by the significant lack of affordable rental housing in this country. In the face of our nation's current housing crisis,³ the power imbalance between landlords and tenants is increasingly problematic, especially for low-income tenants with limited residential options (Adams, 1998), who must often compete intensely for a small number of affordable units. This power imbalance between landlords and tenants creates an atmosphere in which tenant exploitation is increasingly common and virtually risk-free for the perpetrator.

Although harassment affects women of all social classes, the poor are particularly vulnerable. Waiting lists are long for the increasingly limited number of Section 8 certificates and vouchers, and many low-income applicants must wait years to obtain housing assistance (Zalesne, 1997). Women are disproportionately affected by the shortage of affordable housing because, as a group, they tend to be poorer and, therefore, more inadequately housed. Women (especially female householders with children) are historically the largest subgroup of the nation's poor and poorly housed; they are more likely than men to be burdened by housing costs⁴ and to live in substandard housing (Birch, 1985). Indeed, women are over 40% more likely to be poor than men; even those who work outside the home are almost 40% more likely to live in poverty than are employed men (National Organization for Women Legal Defense & Education Fund, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Families headed by a single woman are particularly vulnerable to poverty, with rates of 27.8%, compared with rates of 11.7% for male householders and 4.8% for married couples (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002, 2003).

As the shortage of affordable housing becomes more acute and federal entitlement programs decrease, those who control these resources become increasingly powerful and those who lack them become correspondingly more vulnerable. Faced with a lack of affordable housing options, low-income women must often tolerate a landlord's abusive behavior to keep a roof over their heads. In

²Men can be sexually harassed; however, like most forms of sexual violence, the vast majority of residential sexual harassment behaviors appear to involve female victims and male perpetrators.

³As this article was undergoing final revisions, the federal administration had proposed legislation that would place a financing cap on the Section 8 program (Congress later rejected this proposal). The administration's assault on Section 8 has continued through the appropriations process and through administrative rulings at HUD. In April, HUD issued new guidelines indicating that it would no longer pay the full cost of housing vouchers. Instead, it would cap the federal contribution at the level of August 2003, providing an adjustment for inflation ("Killing Off Housing," 2004).

⁴The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines *cost-burden* as renters paying 30% or more of their income for rent; or owners paying more than 35% of their income for mortgage and maintenance.

addition to the obvious (e.g., eviction), harassing landlords may threaten to provide false information to the authorities concerning drug use or other illegal activity, allegations that can cost the woman her housing subsidy. In such cases, the perpetrator literally “holds the keys” to safety and shelter (Cahan, 1987, p. 1061).

Legal Background

Similar to its counterparts in employment and education, sex discrimination in housing is prohibited conduct. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act, also known as the Fair Housing Act (FHA), was passed in 1968 to “provide . . . for fair housing throughout the United States” (FHA, 1995). The FHA did not originally address discrimination based on sex, but it was amended in 1974 after a study conducted by HUD indicated that such conduct was a serious problem (Leiwant, 1996).

Title VIII is often considered analogous to Title VII (1964), which prohibits sex-based discrimination in employment. Although neither Title VII nor Title VIII articulated specific prohibitions against sexual harassment, Title VII case law (e.g., *Henson v. City of Dundee*, 1982; *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 1986) eventually recognized sexual harassment as a form of illegal sex discrimination, and the legal contours of workplace harassment have since become increasingly well-defined (e.g., *Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth*, 1998; *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*, 1998; *Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.*, 1993; *Oncale vs. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc.*, 1998). Using a similar analysis, a number of courts have held that the Title VII prohibition on sex discrimination includes sexual harassment (e.g., *DiCenso v. Cisneros*, 1996; *Honce v. Vigil*, 1993; *Shellhammer v. Lewallen*, 1985).

The FHA prohibits discrimination by building managers, landlords, real estate brokers, and their agents on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Leiwant, 1996). Section 3604 (a) of the Act states that it is illegal “to refuse to sell or rent . . . or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of . . . sex” (FHA, 1974). Section 3604 (b) makes it unlawful “to discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of . . . sex” (FHA, 1995). Finally, Section 3617 of the FHA makes it illegal “. . . to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person in the exercise or enjoyment of . . . any right granted or protected by Section . . . 3604 . . . of this title” (FHA, 1995). These sections may be violated, for instance, when a landlord⁵ conditions rental or repairs on compliance with sexual advances, engages in retaliatory acts because of a refusal to comply with sexual demands, or substantially interferes with a tenant’s enjoyment of the premises by engaging in offensive sexual conduct.

Compared with Title VII, few housing cases have actually reached the courts. When they have, most decisions have reflected the logic and language of em-

⁵Landlords, property owners, resident managers, their agents (i.e., resident staff, maintenance personnel), and real estate agents are among those who may be found liable under the FHA. We use the term *landlord* to simplify the terminology.

ployment law, although it can be argued that the language of Title VIII implies far stricter liability standards than its Title VII counterpart (see Schwemm & Oliveri, 2002, for the most recent statement of this argument). The watershed case in housing, *Shellhammer v. Lewallen* (1983/1985), was filed in Ohio in 1982 (Bode, 1987). *Shellhammer*, which eventually reached federal court, was the first Title VIII case to hold that sexual harassment violates the FHA (Butler, 1989). *Shellhammer* and subsequent decisions imported the quid pro quo/hostile environment distinction from employment cases and applied it to parallel claims in housing (Leiwant, 1996).

Quid pro quo (literally, *this for that*) sexual harassment in the context of employment involves the coercion of sexual favors conditioned on some job-related benefit (e.g., promotions, salary increases) or punishment (e.g., demotion, firing). Analogous situations in housing often involve the exchange of sexual favors for rent, needed repairs, or even access to rental housing, and failure to comply with these demands may result in denial of housing applications, increases in rent, retaliatory harassment, or even eviction. For example, in *Shellhammer* (*Shellhammer v. Lewallen*, 1983/1985), Mr. Lewallen, the owner of the plaintiff's building, asked Mrs. Shellhammer for sex and to pose for nude photographs in exchange for money. When she refused, she and her husband were evicted. The plaintiffs' quid pro quo claim prevailed, the court holding that Mr. Lewallen had evicted the Shellhammers at least in part because of Ms. Shellhammer's refusals.

In contrast, a hostile housing environment claim alleges unwelcome sexual behavior ranging from hostile and derogatory sexual jokes, comments, or gestures, to unwanted sexual attention and sexual assault. Similar to Title VII plaintiffs, housing complainants are typically required to prove actions "sufficiently severe or pervasive" to create a hostile, intimidating, or abusive living situation or to unreasonably interfere with the tenant's housing (Leiwant, 1996; *Shellhammer v. Lewallen*, 1983/1985). In the case described above, the Shellhammers' claim of hostile environment sexual harassment was rejected when the Sixth Circuit found that two sexual requests in four months of tenancy did not meet the "pervasive and persistent conduct" requirement (*Shellhammer v. Lewallen*, 1983/1985). Feminist legal scholars have recently criticized such wholesale application of Title VII standards to Title VIII sexual harassment cases on a number of grounds. In particular, scholars have argued that analogizing from Title VII is faulty because it fails to take into account either the tremendous vulnerability of these victims or the traditionally privileged context of the home (Adams, 1998; Lindemyer, 2000; Roos, 1998).

Historically, society has considered the home a protected sphere, a retreat from the stresses of public life, in which persons are entitled to greater privacy and protection than those provided in the more public arenas of work or the marketplace. The sanctity of the home has long been recognized in many areas of the law: For example, citizens are free from warrantless arrests (*Payton v. New York*, 1980) and unwanted speech (*Frisby v. Shultz*, 1988). They are also free to engage in private marital relations, including the use of contraceptives (*Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965), in their homes. In this last decision, the Court recognized in the home a "zone of privacy created by several fundamental constitutional guarantees" (*Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965, p. 485; cf. Roos, 1998, p. 1143).

Finally, in determining whether a search or seizure is unreasonable, the Courts consistently hold that a person must be afforded greater privacy when in their own residence. "At the core of the Fourth Amendment, whether in the context of a search or an arrest, is the fundamental concept that any governmental intrusion into an individual's home. . . must be strictly circumscribed" (*Payton v. New York*, 1980). In contrast, under the Fourth Amendment, Courts consistently find that employees only hold limited expectations of privacy when they enter their employer's workplace (see *O'Connor v. Ortega*, 1987). Several commentators (e.g., Adams, 1998; Roos, 1998) argue that many Title VIII claims are wrongly dismissed because courts fail to take the privileged status of the home into account when determining whether allegations are sufficiently severe or pervasive to trigger the statute.

The case of *DiCenso v. Cisneros* (1996) is a classic example of the dangers of importing Title VII analysis without appreciation for the context of the home. In *DiCenso*, Plaintiff Brown's landlord (DiCenso) allegedly appeared at her door, seeking to collect sexual favors in lieu of rent. While caressing Brown's arm and back, he told her "she could take care of [the rent] in other ways" (*DiCenso v. Cisneros*, 1996, p. 1006; cf. Roos, 1998, p. 1138). Brown refused and slammed the door; DiCenso stood outside the door shouting obscenities, including calling her "bitch" and "whore."

The Seventh Circuit applied the typical Title VII analysis and found the conduct was not sufficient to state a cause of action, stating that "... DiCenso's conduct, while clearly unwelcome, was much less offensive than other incidents which have not violated Title VII. DiCenso's comment vaguely invited Brown to exchange sex for rent, and . . . he did not touch an intimate body part, and did not threaten Brown with any physical harm" (*DiCenso v. Cisneros*, 1996, pp. 1008-1009; cf. Roos, 1998, p. 1139). The Court thus failed to take into account either the privileged context of the home or the inherent severity of being fondled, propositioned, and cursed by a man with the ability to enter one's home at will.

A few courts have acknowledged the unique context of the home in their analysis of residential sexual harassment cases. *Beliveau v. Caras* (1995) is the first and remains one of the few cases in which the context of the home was specifically articulated and referenced. The Court ruled that the resident manager's offensive touching of the plaintiff in her bathroom stated a claim for sexual harassment, noting that the defendant's alleged conduct constituted sexual harassment because it "was committed (a) in the plaintiff's own home, where she should feel (and be) less vulnerable, and (b) by one whose very role was to provide that safe environment" (*Beliveau v. Caras*, 1995, p. 1397). Although at least two other courts have cited *Beliveau* and incorporated the context of the home into their analysis of residential sexual harassment claims (*Reeves v. Carrollsburg Condominium Unit Owners Association*, 1997; *Williams v. Poretzky Management*, 1996; see Lindemyer, 2000, for a discussion), most courts continue to apply Title VII standards to Title VIII cases without appreciating the unique circumstances inherent in residential claims. Unfortunately, little empirical research exists to guide their reasoning.

Social Science Background

Research on the problem of sexual harassment in housing in the social sciences is virtually nonexistent, and most of the literature on the topic is summarized from a handful of law review articles or drawn from the popular media. In the early 1990s, a number of popular women's magazines such as *Ms.*, *Redbook*, *Glamour*, and *Jet* brought the issue to the attention of their readers (Bode, 1987; "Chicago Landlord Agrees to Pay," 1994; Deane, 1992; Gross, 1992); despite this publicity, housing harassment has yet to engage public consciousness in the same way as its workplace counterpart.

Most of what is believed about the nature and impact of residential sexual harassment is extrapolated from the literature on victimization of the homeless, harassment in the workplace, and sexual assault, on the basis of the assumption that sexual harassment in the home is a substantively similar experience (Butler, 1989; Cahan, 1987). The only direct empirical information on housing sexual harassment in the United States comes from HUD, which has collected case information from the few official complaints they have received, and few scientific studies have been conducted to date.

In the only known study of residential sexual harassment in the United States, Cahan (1987) surveyed 150 public and private fair housing organizations across the country to determine the extent and nature of the problem. Of the 87 centers that responded, 65% reported receiving complaints of sexual harassment; a total of 288 incidents of residential sexual harassment were reported. Cahan cited the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Bureau Survey (1981) finding that only 2%–3% of workplace sexual harassment victims took formal institutional remedies, extrapolated from her figure of approximately 300 incidents of residential sexual harassment, and suggested that 6,818 to 15,000 cases of sexual harassment in housing may have occurred between 1981 and 1986. However, these data come from a very small sample of formal reports made to housing authorities and may not be representative of most victims' harassment experiences. In addition, Litt, Robinson, Anderson, and Bershon (1992) have suggested that, given the lack of public attention to the problem and substantial obstacles to reporting, Cahan's prevalence estimate may be low.

Novac (1994) conducted the only known directly empirical study of victims of residential sexual harassment to date. In 1991, Novac surveyed women in 1,000 rental households in Ontario. Of the 352 useable surveys returned, 25% of survey respondents reported experiencing residential sexual harassment. However, the survey questions, based on Gruber's (1992) typology of workplace sexual harassment, may not have adequately sampled the universe of sexually harassing behaviors experienced by tenants. In particular, Novac (1994) noted that, in open-ended responses, 29% of respondents reported that their landlord had entered their home without notice. It is unclear how many incidents of sexual harassment described by respondents occurred in conjunction with home invasion.

Even the nature of residential sexual harassment must be extrapolated from the literature on employment. The most well-validated model of sexual harassment in the workplace is that of Fitzgerald and colleagues (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald et al., 1995), originally based on Till's (1980) content analysis of sexually harassing behaviors.

Till's original five-factor model consisted of the following: (a) *Gender Harassment*—insulting, degrading, or sexist remarks and behavior; (b) *Seductive Behavior*—inappropriate and offensive, but sanction-free sexual advances; (c) *Sexual Bribery*—solicitation of sexual activity by promise of reward; (d) *Sexual Threat*—coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishment; and (e) *Sexual Imposition/Assault*—unwanted physical contact, including sexual assault.

Gelfand, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1995) later found that a three-factor solution adequately accounted for the variance in sexual harassment behaviors. Gender harassment, identical to Till's (1980) original formulation, consists of insulting and misogynistic behaviors conveying the message that women are inferior, sexually objectified, and degraded beings. Despite some perverse elements of sexual invitation (e.g., "Wanna suck me off?"), such behaviors are essentially "put-downs" having little to do with desire. Gender harassment can be further broken down into *sexist hostility*, consisting primarily of discriminatory experiences (e.g., being put down or receiving condescending treatment because of sex), and *sexual hostility*, degrading treatment that is more explicitly sexual in nature (e.g., being called a cunt; Fitzgerald, Magley, Drasgow, & Waldo, 1999). *Unwanted sexual attention* (combining Till's [1980] seductive behavior and sexual imposition/assault) consists of unsolicited and unwanted sexual approaches (or "come-ons") that, although unwelcome, lack explicit links to job-related rewards or punishment. Finally, *sexual coercion* (combining sexual bribery and sexual threat) refers to the extortion of sexual cooperation through job-related rewards or sanctions. This latter category parallels the legal concept of *quid pro quo*, whereas gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention comprise the behavioral components of a hostile environment. Research has repeatedly shown that these three categories account for the majority of the variance in workplace sexual harassment (see, e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995).

Despite obvious similarities, it is likely that important material differences exist between the housing and employment contexts. First, sexually predatory behavior in the home may be inherently more threatening than similar experiences in the workplace. For example, a common element of housing harassment is home invasion, facilitated by the access that perpetrators generally possess to the victim's apartment. Women report that landlords use their keys to enter apartments late at night, often without warning, and refuse to leave when requested to do so (Cahan, 1987; Roos, 1998), experiences that are extremely frightening. Even when the landlord does nothing explicitly sexual, such acts are an implicit reminder of his power of access and her vulnerability. Notably, the frightening nature of home invasion was a consistent theme in the tenant focus groups conducted by Novac (1994). One participant stated that "When you are being sexually harassed in a living situation—to me that would really shake up your sense of safety . . . you think that when you go home—you lock your doors—that the place is safe. When that no longer becomes a place of safety, where do you go?" (Novac, 1994, p. 135).

Another difference between employment and residential sexual harassment has to do with perpetrator access to family and significant others, access generally unavailable in the employment context (Adams, 1998; Cahan, 1987). Many reports describe how landlords threaten friends, boyfriends, and family members,

even on occasion making sexual approaches to adolescent female children. Some women describe being afraid to let their children play outside, due to threats from the landlord (Adams, 1998).

Finally, sexual coercion may be even more daunting in housing than in employment, especially for the poor and those receiving public assistance. Women who are threatened with demotions or firing if they do not give in to sexual demands often describe these experiences as extremely threatening and frightening. It seems reasonable to suppose, however, that being threatened with eviction for failure to comply with sexual demands may be even more frightening, especially for low-income women. Poor women of color, being at greater risk of poverty and the triple bind of sexual, racial, and class discrimination, appear to be the “typical” victims of housing sexual harassment (Lindemyer, 2000; Zalesne, 1997). Women receiving HUD subsidies are particularly vulnerable, as are single mothers and the unemployed. Women with few housing options are often faced with the realistic fear that if they do not give in to their landlords’ demands, they and their families may be homeless.

Purpose of the Study

Reliable data on this problem are difficult to come by. Not only is the target population not easily available for study, but issues of trust, safety, and the like complicate interactions with those who are. Whereas most researchers are White and middle-class, many victims appear to be low-income minority women, who are often not likely to return surveys. Finally, it is unclear whether the nature of sexual harassment in housing is sufficiently similar to behaviors in employment to enable standard tools and assumptions to be applied. It is critical that these problems be addressed, if reliable data are to guide interventions, legal decision making, and public policy.

The present article describes a series of studies representing the initial stage of a project designed to address this important social problem. We begin with an attempt to define the nature and contours of housing harassment. Using archival data from three residential sexual harassment cases, each with multiple victims, we examined the behaviors that constitute sexual harassment in housing to (a) identify the similarities and differences it shares with its workplace counterpart; and (b) develop a comprehensive and reliable framework that can guide data collection and theory building in this area.

The studies we present below are, by necessity, exploratory in nature, as virtually no empirical work has been done in this area. Nonetheless, on the basis of extrapolations from the literature on workplace harassment as well as the small body of work on residential harassment and anecdotal evidence, we hypothesize that the general structure of harassment in housing (i.e., the types of behavior that define the construct) will be largely similar to that of its workplace counterpart. Given the differences in context, however, as well as the unique relationship of targets and perpetrators, and the degree of perpetrator access, we also propose the existence of housing-specific behaviors, that is, those involving (a) invasion of the victim’s home and (b) the victim’s significant others and/or children. Finally, we propose that the relative frequency of various types of harassing conduct may differ in residential versus workplace contexts.

Data Preparation

Basic data for all three studies consisted of approximately 3,500 pages of sworn testimony given by 39 victim-witnesses (see Footnote 1) in three separate federal law suits filed against landlords and property owners in Texas, Georgia, and Ohio. These cases were drawn from an archival set of depositions collected over several years, involving cases in which the third author was retained as an expert witness. All available depositions were used, with the exception of those given by two individuals who were employees, as opposed to tenants, of the defendants. Each deposition was read by two of the authors, who identified all specific examples of harassing behavior described by each witness. The two lists were then compared and collated to ensure complete coverage of the data, a process that yielded 389 unique instances of sexually offensive behavior directed toward the various tenants by their landlords.

These instances were recorded on index cards, and sorted by the research team into groups of similar content using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach to qualitative data analysis allows the researcher to generate theory on the basis of the data rather than use the data to verify a preexisting theory. Although there is extensive literature on workplace sexual harassment, and previous research suggests categories that would likely be uncovered, grounded theory was chosen to allow categories to emerge from the data as much as possible, rather than being constrained by previous theory.

The research team used the coding procedure of constant comparison to facilitate the generation of categories for analysis. Throughout coding, incidents were compared with previous incidents to construct and refine relative groups or categories. As coding proceeded, the list of categories was further defined and reduced. This stage of the analysis was complete when theoretical saturation was achieved (i.e., no new categories were uncovered and the existing categories are well-defined; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

This initial sort produced 20 relatively homogeneous types of harassing conduct and one miscellaneous group consisting of idiosyncratic behaviors; these behavior types appear in Table 1. Specific examples assigned to each of the first 20 groups were essentially identical at the behavioral level (e.g., touching breasts, asking for dates), although the details of each incident as described by the various witnesses varied. We then reviewed each of the 389 cards, with the following three goals in mind: (a) identification of exemplars that best conveyed the essence and most salient features of the 21 types of conduct, (b) selection of a representative sample of behaviors of each type and elimination of overlap and duplication, and (c) retention of unique items that might be idiosyncratic to the housing situation. This process produced a final sample of 56 incidents that best captured the nature and range of the women's experiences. These were left in the exact language of the witnesses' testimony; in a few instances, a clarifying word or phrase was placed in parentheses to provide the necessary context. The 56 incidents represent the full range of behaviors captured by the 21 groups, each of which was represented by between one and four cards.

To provide an initial test of the validity and representativeness of these behavioral groups, we identified all published cases concerning residential sexual harassment heard in federal courts to date, as documented by Westlaw. Eighteen

Table 1
Types of Harassing Conduct Based on Initial Content Analysis

Type of harassing conduct
Requests for sex in exchange for reward: housing, lowered rent or Section 8 status, or housing-related benefits (explicit)
Threats to terminate housing or Section 8 status, raise rent, or decrease housing-related benefits unless tenant complies with sexual requests (explicit)
Requests for sex (without obvious sexual exchange)
References/requests to give or receive oral sex
Comments about tenant's body (general)
Comments about tenant's genitals
Touching (or attempting to touch) breasts
Touching (or attempting to touch) buttocks
Touching (or attempting to touch) body (general) or hold tenant's hand
Kissing (or attempting to kiss) tenant
Sexual assault
Dirty talk/general sexual comments
Sexist and/or threatening comments
Stalking/following/watching tenant (threatening nonverbal behaviors)
Invasion of tenant's home
Phone sex, harassing phone calls
Request to date tenant
Requests/offers to provide for/take care of tenant and/or tenant's children
Comments about or to tenant's boyfriends
Comments about or to tenant's children
Miscellaneous

of these provided some description of the behaviors alleged to have occurred; though such decisions do not necessarily contain a detailed and comprehensive description, they do represent a general sense of the types of harassment alleged. Review of these decisions yielded a total of 99 distinct behavioral instances, 90%⁶ of which could be accounted for by the 21 group typology; further examination revealed exemplars from 19 of the typological groups. These results allow some confidence that our initial behavioral groupings are not idiosyncratic and that our data are representative of, if not residential sexual harassment as a whole, at least the types of behavior found in residential harassment cases heard in the federal court system.

These 56 behavioral examples constituted the main database for the three studies described below. Study 1 presents a free sort; participants sorted instances into groups they felt were substantively meaningful with no guidance from the researchers. In Study 2, participants were given a model that has been validated with respect to the structure of workplace sexual harassment and were instructed to sort instances into categories based on this model. This study provides an important comparison of the two types of harassment and indicates the extent to which the literature on workplace sexual harassment is applicable to this new area of research.

⁶ The remaining 11 incidents fell into the miscellaneous category; examination revealed that these incidents were extremely heterogeneous, indeed idiosyncratic, in nature and did not appear to represent any coherent category of behavior.

Study 1

Method

Participants. Participants for Study 1 were drawn largely from the introductory psychology course participant pool at a large Midwestern university, supplemented by volunteers recruited through a flyer posted in the department. The final sample consisted of 107 participants (49 men and 58 women), the great majority of whom were Caucasian ($n = 89$; 83.2%), and who were either freshmen ($n = 64$; 59.8%) or sophomores ($n = 30$; 28.0%).

Procedure. Sets of stimulus cards were presented (in the same order) to all participants, who were then instructed to sort them into groups on the basis of their perceived similarity. Participants were instructed to form as many groups as they liked, the only restriction being that these should number more than 1 and less than 56. In addition, they were told that pilot participants tended to form between 3 and 12 groups. They were further instructed to group the statements on the basis of content rather than characteristics such as sentence length.

Following completion of the sort, participants were instructed to attach a post-it note to each pile and label it with a short description of the content (e.g., vulgar language, touching, flirting). We ran participants in groups of 10 or less, each consisting of same-sex participants with a same-sex experimenter; they were instructed not to consult with one another and were seated at individual work tables to ensure privacy while they were completing the task.

Results

The first step in the analysis was the development of a co-occurrence matrix representing the number of times any pair of cards (i.e., behaviors) was sorted together by the participants; for example, if 10 participants placed Behavior 1 and Behavior 2 in the same group, then the matrix entry for this pairing was recorded as 10; the higher the number, the greater the perceived similarity between the two behaviors. This matrix was then subjected to a complete-link cluster analysis and nonmetric multidimensional scaling procedure to examine thoroughly the relationships among the behaviors.

Cluster analysis consists of a group of nonparametric multivariate techniques designed to group complex stimuli on the basis of shared characteristics (Hair & Black, 2000). The statistical algorithm for complete-link clustering applies stringent criteria for grouping items, which are added to the cluster if and only if they correlate more highly with all other cluster members than with any noncluster member, producing compact, homogeneous groupings. In the present case, this procedure yielded five major clusters. Table 2 lists the names and definitions of the clusters described below and Figure 1 represents them graphically.

Group 1 consisted of items we labeled *crude verbal behavior*⁷ and included a variety of verbal comments running the gamut from moderately offensive (e.g., "I'd like to see what's under that dress") to highly degrading (e.g., "have you made up your mind . . . are you going to let me stick my tongue in your pussy?"). Some of these expressed sexual interest, whereas others were more hostile in nature (e.g., calling the tenants "bitches").

Cluster 2 consisted of requests for dates or sex; in general, these experiences tended to reflect a less ambiguous expression of sexual desire as well as being less

⁷The interpretive process was informed by the labels participants attached to their sorts; however, no formal analysis of these labels was conducted.

Table 2
Categories of Residential Sexual Harassment Derived From Study 1 (Free Sort) and Study 2 (Forced Sort)

Category	Definition
Study 1	
Crude verbal behavior	Verbal comments from mildly offensive to highly degrading; some are sexist whereas some are sexual
Verbal sexual approaches	Verbal behavior involving requests for dates or sexual behavior, less offensive than Category 1
Significant others	Any comments, threats or nonverbal behavior involving tenants' significant others
Home invasion	Landlord entering/attempting to enter tenant's dwelling without permission
Unwanted physical contact	Any unwanted touching or attempted touching, from hand-holding to rape
Study 2	
Seductive behavior	Inappropriate and offensive, but sanction-free sexual advances.
Gender harassment	Insulting, degrading, or sexist remarks and behavior.
Crude verbal approaches	Degrading behavior that has a more sexual connotation.
Sexual hostility	Degrading behavior that includes a sexual component.
Hostile references to significant others	Hostile or degrading remarks about significant others.
Sexual threat	Coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishment.
Sexual bribery	Solicitation of sexual activity by promise of reward.
Unwanted physical contact	Any unwanted touching or attempted touching, from hand-holding to rape.
Home invasion	Landlord entering attempting to enter tenant's dwelling without permission

crude and vulgar than those in Cluster 1. Examples included such things as “[The landlord asked her] do you need a man in your life . . . I’m available.” Some participants labeled these situations as “compliments” or “flirting,” whereas others described them as unwanted sexual attention; we labeled these situations *verbal sexual approaches*.

Cluster 3 included all items relating to *significant others*, usually boyfriends or husbands. Some of these involved asking the women whether they had boyfriends, representing an indirect form of sexual approach or possibly sexual possessiveness (i.e., the landlord resented the man because of his sexual access to the tenant). Also included in this cluster were explicit threats involving the tenant having boyfriends (e.g., the landlord told the tenant her boyfriend had to leave or she would be out on the street). Finally, some items contained references to tenants' sexual activities with other men (e.g., “I bet your boyfriend likes to get up in that”).

Cluster 4 consisted of situations in which the landlord entered the tenant's dwelling without permission, that is, *home invasion* (e.g., the tenant came out of the shower to find the landlord inside the apartment, standing in her hallway and grinning at her). Finally, Cluster 5, *unwanted physical contact*, included all

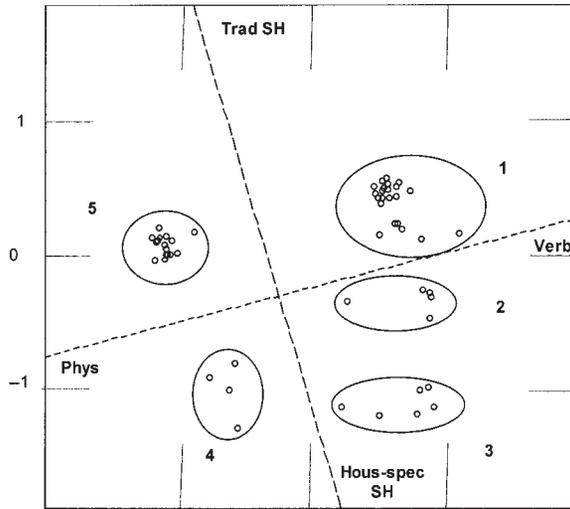


Figure 1. Study 1: Configuration of free sort multidimensional scaling analysis and cluster analysis. Trad SH = traditional sexual harassment; Verb = verbal behavior; Hous-spec SH = housing-specific sexual harassment; Phys = physical behavior.

instances of unwanted touching, from attempted handholding, to breast fondling, to attempted rape.

This five-cluster solution was then embedded in the results of a multidimensional scaling analysis, also based on the co-occurrence matrix described previously. Multidimensional scaling procedures attempt to provide a spatial representation of the interrelations among objects (Fitzgerald & Hubert, 1987); somewhat akin to a map, this dimensional representation is exploratory in nature, involving an attempt to identify a small number of dimensions or attributes that underlie the relations among the objects. In this case, we examined the data to determine whether the five-group cluster solution could be represented along two or three dimensions and, if so, what general attributes these dimensions represent. The combined results of the two procedures are displayed graphically in Figure 1.

The two-dimensional solution that appears in Figure 1 converged in 50 iterations with a stress value of .13, which accounted for 92% of the variance. We also examined a three-dimensional solution, by definition less parsimonious, which accounted for virtually no additional variance and was thus not considered further. Stress is a measure of goodness of fit that ranges from 0 to 1.0; values of less than .2 are considered to represent a good fit. Examination of the two-dimensional solution reveals a clear physical vs. verbal distinction on Dimension 1; the second dimension is somewhat less clear but appears to distinguish between the more traditional (i.e., those previously found in the workplace) vs. more housing-specific harassment situations.

Discussion

In summary, when allowed to sort according to their own impressions, nonexpert research participants produced five categories of housing harassment:

(a) crude verbal behavior, (b) verbal sexual approaches, (c) unwanted physical contact, (d) significant others, and (e) home invasion. The first three of these reflect categories found in traditional classifications of workplace harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald et al.'s [1988] gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention; Till's [1980] gender harassment, seduction behavior, and sexual imposition and assault; and Gruber's [1992] verbal remarks and nonverbal displays), whereas the latter two appear to have no parallel in workplace situations. To explore these issues further, we conducted a second study, this time using a forced sort methodology and Till's original five-category system. We chose the Till system because previous research has shown that, although Fitzgerald's (Fitzgerald et al., 1995) tripartite model is more parsimonious, lay individuals reliably reproduce Till's five categories of behavior when asked to make categorization judgments (Fitzgerald & Hesson-McInnis, 1989). By requiring participants to apply this metric, we sought to obtain at least a rough comparison of the different types of harassing behavior in the housing and employment environments.

Study 2

Method

Participants. Participants for Study 2 also consisted of volunteers from the undergraduate psychology subject pool at a large Midwestern university, as well as additional paid participants recruited through a flyer posted in the department. The sample consisted of 93 participants (36 men and 57 women), the majority of whom were Caucasian ($n = 63$; 67.7%) or African American ($n = 13$; 14.0%) and who were either freshmen ($n = 29$; 31.2%) or sophomores ($n = 23$; 24.7%).

Procedure. Participants were given stimulus cards identical to those used in Study 1 and were instructed to sort them into five groups, based on Till's (1980) original five categories of harassing behavior: gender harassment, seductive behavior, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition/assault. As in Study 1, incidents were recorded on individual index cards and presented to all participants in the same order to avoid the possibility of irrelevant order effects. Instructions also included a description of Till's five categories with examples of each. Participants were instructed to sort each card into the category that, in their opinion, best captured the behavioral example depicted. Participants again were run in same-sex groups of 10 or less, administered by a same-sex experimenter; again, they were instructed not to consult with one another about the task.

Results

As in the previous study, the first step in the analysis was to develop a co-occurrence matrix of participant responses, which was then subjected to a complete-link cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling. The clustering procedure yielded six main groupings, one of which could be further subdivided into three meaningful subgroups (see Table 2). This solution was then embedded in the results of the multidimensional scaling analysis. Results converged in 14 iterations with a final stress of .12, which accounted for 91% of the variance, again suggesting a good fit to the data.

Figure 2 displays these results graphically, revealing a number of interesting patterns (see Table 2 for a listing of cluster names and definitions). Cluster 1 consists of situations exemplifying Till's (1980) *seductive behavior* category, or unwanted sexual attention that is verbal in nature (e.g., The landlord told the tenant "you got some beautiful legs," or the landlord kept asking the tenant when

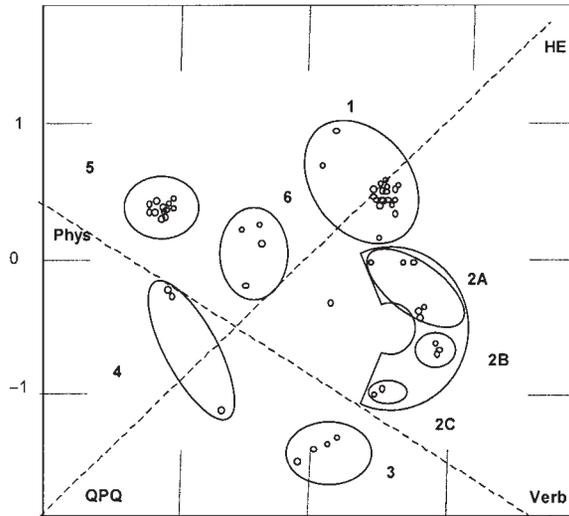


Figure 2. Study 2: Configuration of forced sort multidimensional scaling analysis and cluster analysis. HE = hostile environment sexual harassment; Verb = verbal behavior; QPQ = quid pro quo sexual harassment; Phys = physical behavior.

he could “get into bed with her”). Cluster 2, on the other hand, reflects mainly gender harassment, that is, behavior conveying crude and degrading attitudes towards women (e.g., The landlord called the tenants “bitches” and “whores”). Fitzgerald and colleagues (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1999) have noted that, despite its animosity, such behavior is often highly sexual, most likely because male hostility toward women is so often sexualized. This nonintuitive combination was clearly apparent here; for example, the group of items labeled 2A, which we call *crude verbal approaches*, reflects elements of sexual desire, albeit expressed in a crude and graphic manner (e.g., the landlord called the tenant on the phone and made orgasm sounds). Interestingly, such items are “geographically” situated between Cluster 1 and the more straightforwardly hostile items of Cluster 2B (*sexual hostility*), apparently representing a link between the “invitation” that characterizes unwanted sexual attention and the sexual hostility and misogyny of gender harassment. Moving clockwise from Cluster 1 through Cluster 2A to Cluster 2B reveals a transition from milder and more seductive “come-ons” to increasingly crude verbal behaviors. Notably absent from the analysis were any expressions typical of the more straightforward sexism, or sexist hostility, that so often characterizes gender harassment in the employment setting (e.g., “Women are too irresponsible to make good tenants”).

An additional aspect of landlord behavior that differentiates it from workplace perpetrators is its possessiveness. For example, the items in 2C, *hostile references to significant others*, imply jealousy of the tenant’s boyfriend and resistance to his presence (e.g., “I don’t want you having any boyfriends around the apartment”), suggesting that landlords appear to view these women as “property.” This theme is extended in Cluster 3 (Till’s [1980] category of sexual threat), which contained not only threats of eviction (e.g., “The landlord started telling the tenant that if she didn’t give in to him [for sex] she would be out on the street”) but also coercive

(and implicitly possessive) references to other men (e.g., “The landlord threw the tenant out on the same day that he saw and found out that she had a boyfriend”). Sexual bribery items are represented in Cluster 4; the women were offered some benefit (e.g., lower rent, painting of their apartment) in exchange for their sexual cooperation.

Behaviors grouped in Cluster 5 all involve *unwanted physical contact*, including physical touching, groping, or grabbing, and one instance of attempted rape (Till’s [1980] category of sexual imposition/assault). Finally, the items in Cluster 6 all refer to *home invasion*. By definition, landlords have keys to tenants’ apartments, and the perpetrators studied here frequently used them to enter the tenant’s apartment unannounced. As one property manager remarked, “I got a key and, you know, I basically do what I want to do.” It is interesting to note that respondents placed these behaviors in close proximity to the physical touching items, although none of them included actual physical touching.

Examination of the two dimensions underlying this spatial configuration would suggest that the first dimension represents the classic legal distinction between quid pro quo vs. hostile environment harassment, whereas the second represents a physical vs. verbal dimension (see Figure 2). Note that this is similar to results obtained by Fitzgerald and Hesson-McInnis (1989), who applied Till’s (1980) five-category system to an analysis of sexual harassment in academic settings.

Discussion

A review of the first two studies reveals that both sets of analyses exhibited good fit, exhibited low stress levels, and accounted for over 90% of the variance in the data, which strongly suggests that existing theoretical categories capture much of the variation in housing harassment. When results of the free and forced sorts were compared, several interesting patterns emerged.

First, both groups of participants recognized two types of verbal harassment, one considerably more hostile and degrading than the other. However, the results of Study 2 (forced sort) more clearly capture the distinctions between “come-ons” and “put-downs” as well as those behaviors that combine these elements of invitation and hostility. Behaviors in Cluster 1 of the forced sort (see Figure 2) resemble Till’s (1980) seductive behavior, consisting of unwanted and offensive sexual requests and invitations. Cluster 2, gender harassment, consisted of crude and misogynistic sexual remarks and invitations (Cluster 2A), and overtly hostile and degrading behaviors (Cluster 2B). Although the behaviors in Cluster 2 clearly reflect the dimensional, rather than the categorical, distinction between unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment, the majority of Cluster 2 behaviors resemble Fitzgerald and colleagues’ (1999) concept of sexual hostility.

In Study 1 (free sort), participants tended to group together items containing references to boyfriends and significant others. However, the Study 2 results once more reflect a number of finer conceptual distinctions. First, behaviors in Cluster 2C (see Figure 2), all of which involve the landlord’s jealousy of tenants’ boyfriends, appear to combine elements of sexual hostility found in gender harassment with an implied threat (e.g., “The landlord let the tenant know that he didn’t want her having any boyfriends”). These behaviors appear to reflect the

landlord's possessiveness, his sense that female tenants, as well as their homes, are his "property." These statements of sexual dominance contain an underlying element of threat that becomes more explicit in Cluster 3. Cluster 3 items are classic examples of *quid pro quo*; if the tenant does not give in to the landlord's demands for sex, or if she has other sexual partners, she will be evicted. Cluster 4 in the forced sort reflects Till's (1980) category of sexual bribery, in which tenants are offered rewards in exchange for sexual behavior.

Finally, participants in both studies clearly distinguished behaviors involving physical touching and home invasion, respectively. However, in Study 2, the home invasion behaviors were situated in close proximity to those involving physical touching, suggesting that even naïve research participants in the lab recognize the level of physical threat inherent in home invasion. It should be noted that none of the home invasion behaviors described any physical touching by the landlord; however, the intrusion of the landlord into the tenant's private space was perceived as akin to a physical threat. Novac (1994) suggests that

the outer walls of a residence can function as a second skin; a practical demonstration of this is revealed in the tendency for residents to report feeling violated when their living space is "broken and entered" in cases of home burglary. (p. 5)

Thus, sexual harassment involving an assault on the home may be perceived as a physical, or even a sexual, assault—regardless of the *objective severity* of the landlord's behaviors. This lends support to the assertions of several commentators (e.g., Adams, 1998; Lindemyer, 2000; Roos, 1998) that residential sexual harassment constitutes a higher level of threat, and necessitates a higher degree of protection, than is generally found under current interpretations of Title VIII.

Study 3

Fitzgerald and colleagues' (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1999) research on the tripartite model of workplace harassment has repeatedly demonstrated that gender harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment in organizations, followed by unwanted sexual attention and then sexual coercion, with the latter being relatively rare. The housing data reported here, however, did not appear to follow this pattern. Unlike the results of workplace studies, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion were relatively frequent, whereas gender harassment, as generally defined in the workplace, appeared to be the least common form of harassment, at least in the subset of incidents examined here. To examine these patterns more formally, we returned to the original universe of 389 incidents (i.e., every incident described in the full set of depositions), sorting the entire set into a classification system expanded from Till's (1980) original dimensions to incorporate the new information provided by the Studies 1 and 2. This final, "expert" sort allowed us to (a) determine the relative frequency of different types of housing sexual harassment compared with a large workplace sample and (b) examine the reliability of the new categories.

Method

Working independently, three expert coders (the authors) classified all 389 incidents on the basis of a set of coding rules defining the revised system: (a) gender harassment/sexist hostility—

degrading references to women that were without any element of sexual desire; (b) gender harassment/sexist hostility—degrading references to women that were sexualized in nature; (c) seductive behavior—verbal comments and questions conveying sexual interest; although sometimes crude or explicit, such behavior was neither insulting nor hostile; (d) sexual bribery—offers of favorable treatment (e.g., rent reduction, speedy repairs) in return for sexual cooperation; (e) sexual threat—threats of eviction or other mistreatment if tenant refused to cooperate sexually; (f) sexual imposition or assault—all touching, groping, grabbing, or instances of home invasion; and (g) miscellaneous or unclassifiable.

Results

To assess the degree of interrater reliability achieved by the coders, Cohen's kappa was calculated for each of the three pairs of raters and the three resulting kappa values were then averaged. Cohen's kappa assesses the agreement between the evaluations of two independent raters, over and above the agreement to be expected by chance. A value of 1 indicates perfect agreement, whereas a value of 0 indicates that agreement is no better than chance. The average kappa across the three coders was .720 (pairwise κ values were .726, .675, and .759, respectively), indicating satisfactory interrater reliability.

We then examined the distribution of the housing incidents compared with the relative frequency of such incidents in the workplace. This required that we transform the classification system into Fitzgerald and colleagues' (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1999) three-category metric. Numerous studies have demonstrated that Till's (1980) system can be translated easily into the more parsimonious following three categories proposed by Fitzgerald and her colleagues: sexist and sexual hostility combine to constitute *gender harassment*, seductive behavior and sexual imposition/assault combine to produce *unwanted sexual attention*, and sexual bribery and sexual threat are the two aspects of *sexual coercion*. Of the 389 housing incidents coded, 234 (60.2%) were classified as unwanted sexual attention, 70 (18%) as sexual coercion, 54 (13.9%) as gender harassment; and 31 (8%) as miscellaneous. These frequencies appear in Figure 3, along with comparable categories of workplace sexual harassment

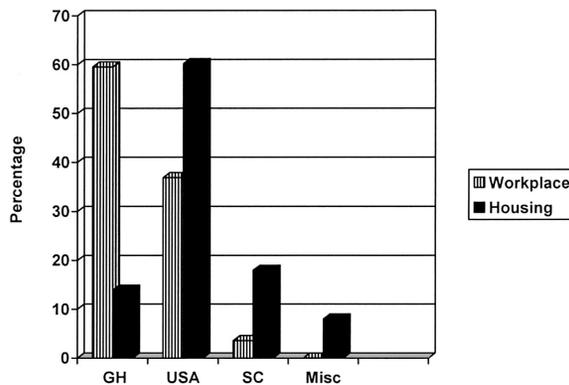


Figure 3. Comparison of housing and workplace sexual harassment incidence. GH = gender harassment; USA = unwanted sexual attention; SC = sexual coercion; Misc = miscellaneous.

drawn from the sample of working class women studied by Schneider, Swan, and Fitzgerald (1997), which are shown for purposes of comparison. Of the sexually harassed women in the workplace sample, 36.9% experienced unwanted sexual attention, 3.6% experienced sexual coercion, and 59.5% experienced gender harassment. This pattern of frequency, with gender harassment as the most common type of workplace harassment and sexual coercion being relatively rare, has been found repeatedly in both litigant and nonlitigant samples (see, e.g., Fitzgerald, 2002; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Gelfand, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1995; Reed, 2004). As the results show, housing harassment reflected considerably more unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion, but less gender harassment, than is seen in the workplace sample.

Summary and Discussion

What can these studies tell us concerning the nature of sexual harassment in housing? The present results suggest that there exist considerable similarities between the experiences of women in the workplace and those of female tenants. Our participants were reasonably able to classify landlord behaviors into Till's (1980) categories, although they had some difficulty making the distinction between gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention; this is not surprising, as many harassing remarks combine elements of misogyny and sexual desire.

It is perhaps in the differences, however, that more interest lies. One important distinction has to do with the power the landlord possesses. Clearly, the power of a supervisor to affect a female employee's work and workplace is significant. The power of the landlord is perhaps even more profound, and it is difficult to overestimate the vulnerability of this population.

The majority of residential sexual harassment lawsuits involve low-income minority women, who often lack knowledge of the law and have few realistic housing options (see, e.g., Adams, 1998; Lindemyer, 2000; Zalesne, 1997). Some of the women studied here had previously been homeless; custody of their children depended on maintaining adequate housing in a market in which housing subsidies are becoming extremely limited. Subsidized housing often has long waiting lists of individuals desiring and qualifying for assistance; many of these women had waited months or years for their names to rise to the top of the rolls. Such vulnerabilities, combined with the power disparity in the landlord-tenant relationship, present clear opportunities for landlords to prey on their tenants with what effectively amounts to impunity.

The clearest example is the instance of home invasion. Landlords have access to their tenants' home at any time of the day or night;⁸ numerous plaintiffs remarked on this fact and told of being surprised in bed, in the shower, in the bathroom, and so forth, by a landlord who supposedly "dropped by" just to see if they "needed anything." Such violations were viewed by our participants as similar to physical assault. Although all forms of sexual harassment cause distress, such an experience is clearly distinct from those of women in the

⁸Although many leases contain some restrictions on landlords' access to tenants' homes, few tenants are aware of their legal rights in this area. In addition, many tenants may hesitate to curtail the landlord's access to their homes because they may fear eviction.

workplace, who often view their homes as a "safe haven" from the importunities of their supervisors and coworkers.

In addition, the relative frequency of different forms of harassment in housing appears to differ substantially from the patterns usually seen in the workplace. Traditionally, gender harassment has been the most frequent type of harassment, followed closely by unwanted sexual attention, whereas only a small percentage of incidents involve sexual coercion (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald et al., 1999). In the present group of low-income tenants, however, unwanted sexual attention was the most common type, followed by sexual coercion, and then by gender harassment. Despite the fact that Study 3 provides only a very rough estimate of relative prevalence, these preliminary results are theoretically interesting and suggest that the underlying dynamics may be different. In the workplace, feelings of hostility or attitudes that women "do not belong" are common, whereas in housing, these types of attitudes are less common than is the desire to possess the tenant sexually and the sense of entitlement by the landlord to consider his tenants as part of his "property." The similarities to the traditional distinction between the public and private spheres are striking (Jaggar, 1983).

This series of studies should be seen as only a first step, albeit an important one, in defining the phenomenon of residential sexual harassment. In many ways this search for reliable definition and classification is comparable to the state of research in employment harassment 20 years ago, in that we are only now beginning to examine the types of behaviors victims experience and the pattern of conduct by harassing landlords.

Our conclusions include several caveats. First, the nature of the data does not allow us to generalize our findings to nonlitigant samples. Although our examination of relevant legal cases suggests that our data are representative of residential sexual harassment cases that go to trial, these cases likely represent only a very small proportion of the phenomenon. Additional research is necessary to further explore the structure of sexual harassment in the general population. This research may be extremely difficult to carry out; some scholars (see e.g., Adams, 1998; Lindemyer, 2000) suggest that perpetrators tend to target the most vulnerable segments of the female population: the very poor, women of color, and single mothers (see, e.g., Adams, 1998; Lindemyer, 2000; Zalesne, 1997). These women are often difficult to locate and tend to be less likely to return surveys. This may be one type of sexual victimization that is more closely tied to socioeconomic status (SES; although this is as yet an empirical question); in this country, one's status as a homeowner versus a renter is closely tied to SES, and existing legal cases suggest that a woman's Section 8 status may act as a "green light" to perpetrators. Future research should build on the results presented here, with data collection in the form of interviews supplementing paper and pencil surveys; targeting poor neighborhoods or women who receive housing assistance may increase the success of initial data collection efforts. In addition, focus groups with community leaders in poor neighborhoods may prove fruitful. This emerging area of research has important implications for law and public policy. Initial questions to be addressed include (a) confirming or disconfirming the present results confirming the structure and relative frequency of different types of residential sexual harassment as compared with workplace sexual harassment; (b) attempting to define the scope of the problem using prevalence studies as well as

testing the hypothesis that certain types of women are more vulnerable to being targeted by perpetrators; (c) exploring women's methods of coping with residential sexual harassment; and (d) examining various hypothesized negative outcomes of residential harassment, including negative psychological and financial outcomes, loss of housing, and/or housing-related benefits. It will be important to continue to draw on the existing literature and to examine the ways in which residential harassment is similar to, and distinct from, workplace sexual harassment.

If subsequent research confirms that sexual harassment has similar psychological outcomes for female tenants as it does for employees, harassed tenants may be particularly vulnerable to developing significant psychological disorders. Cahan (1987) noted

[w]hen sexual harassment occurs at work, at that moment or at the end of the work day, the woman may remove herself from the offensive environment. . . . In contrast, when the harassment occurs in a woman's home, it is a complete invasion in her life. Ideally, home is the haven from the troubles of the day. When home is not a safe place, a woman may feel distressed and, often, immobile. (p. 1073)

Anecdotal reports indicate that female tenants who have experienced sexual harassment report low self-esteem; feelings of guilt, shame, and helplessness; symptoms of depression; and even posttraumatic stress disorder (Butler, 1989; Cahan, 1987). This is not surprising in light of our finding that home invasion may be perceived as similar to unwanted touching and assault. However, more research is clearly needed in this area.

Despite these limitations, this research has clear implications for housing organizations, policy-makers, and legal professionals. Several commentators (e.g., Dubroff, 1997; Leiwant, 1996) have suggested that HUD may be somewhat weak on enforcement and prosecution of claims of residential sexual harassment, and it is our observation that the few existing education and prevention programs are not adequately supported. In addition to federal remedies, many states have enacted their own laws regarding residential harassment and discrimination and have contracted with HUD to investigate administrative complaints of sexual harassment or discrimination filed with HUD (see, e.g., Dubroff, 1997, for a description of California's Fair Employment and Housing Act). Although presumably closer to the tenants they serve, anecdotal evidence suggests that state agencies suffer similar problems in terms of inadequate support for antiharassment initiatives. Complaints at both the federal and state levels should be promptly and thoroughly investigated, and the women who make them should be protected from retaliation. Finally, federal and state agencies should closely monitor landlords, particularly those who have had complaints filed against them.

HUD and state housing agencies currently fund a number of nongovernmental fair housing organizations who provide FHA training to tenants and landlords in addition to employing "testers" to seek out housing violations at suspected locations. These efforts are laudable but must be expanded to meet the growing needs of renters, particularly those who are the most economically vulnerable. HUD and HUD-funded agencies should establish additional procedures and programs to prevent sexual harassment of tenants and provide a mechanism for

remedy should harassment occur. In particular, more standardized education on this issue should be implemented for HUD employees, landlords, and the tenants they serve. HUD and parallel state agencies must provide more intensive training for their frontline agency workers who have direct contact with the female tenants. Such individuals need to recognize the seriousness of this problem, as well as the hesitancy of women to report instances of such harassment, and therefore need to be proactive in asking the women about their experiences. State fair housing agencies work in closer proximity to the people they serve and may be instrumental in reeducating landlords, informing tenants of their rights, and investigating complaints.

Finally, several authors (e.g., Adams, 1998; Lindemyer, 2000; Roos, 1998) note the tendency of many courts automatically to equate residential with workplace sexual harassment, thus failing to appreciate the context of the home and the corresponding vulnerability of female tenants. *DiCenso v. Cisneros* (1996) is only one example of the failure of the judicial system to protect victims of residential sexual harassment; many other plaintiffs have been poorly served and their claims rejected because judges (and juries) fail to appreciate the inherent severity of sexual harassment that occurs within the home (see, e.g., *Honce v. Vigil*, 1993; Lindemyer, 2000; Roos, 1998). The results presented in this study provide support for the type of contextualized analysis provided in *Beliveau* (1995) rather than that in *DiCenso* (1996). As with agency personnel, legal decision makers should be educated on the dynamics of residential sexual harassment in order to inform their decisions on issues such as damage awards and standards of severity. Clearly, research in this area is urgently needed as it currently lags far behind the courts' need for empirical data that can inform their decisions. Most importantly, those who are victimized in their own homes must begin to have their voices heard.

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