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Sexual Harassment in Organizations: A Decade of Research in Review

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For 30 years, sexual harassment has been recognized as a serious organizational problem and a violation of US law. The Navy Tailhook scandal and Clarence Thomas hearings in 1991 launched sexual harassment to the forefront of public attention. This was followed by a virtual explosion of research on the topic, leading to the estimate that one out of every two women is harassed at some point in her working life. We review this scholarship in the current chapter, concentrating on the last decade of work.

Our principal focus is sexual harassment in the workplace. Although sexual harassment also occurs elsewhere, other domains are beyond the scope of this chapter. This chapter also primarily covers research since the mid-1990s (except for brief historical overviews). Sexual harassment scholarship began in the late 1970s, and several large-scale surveys in the 1980s (Gutek, 1985; USMSPB, 1981, 1988; Martindale, 1990) influenced work that followed. Since then, however, the workforce has become more educated about sexual harassment, organizational methods of combating sexual harassment have evolved, and sexual-harassment research methodologies have become increasingly advanced. We therefore concentrate on the most recent, methodologically sophisticated work. Finally, research on this topic largely addresses men's harassment of women, so this will be the main focus of our review.

We organize this chapter around the following questions: What is sexual harassment? Why does it happen? Who harasses whom? What are its effects? Finally, how do and how should individuals and organizations respond to sexual harassment? Each of these sections provides a brief historical recap of early work on the topic, followed by a detailed review of recent scholarship. Throughout, we address relevant issues in US law but maintain a focus on theory and findings from social science (particularly psychology). The chapter will close with a discussion of the future of sexual harassment scholarship.

DEFINING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

There are two main approaches to defining sexual harassment: One from a legal perspective and the other from a social-psychological perspective. In general, social-psychological definitions are broader than legal ones, though recent exceptions exist. A third perspective on sexual harassment – the public, or lay perspective – preceded legal and social-psychological ones but now lags well behind each in understanding the scope, nature, and impact of the phenomenon. We review each in turn below.

Legal definitions

According to historical writings, sexually harassing behavior has long been a problem (e.g., Segrave, 1994). The term 'sexual harassment,' however, only emerged in the 1970s, when feminists argued that sexual threats, bribes, and objectification presented odious conditions of employment often faced by women, but rarely by men, and therefore constitute unlawful sex discrimination (Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). The historical pervasiveness of this behavior made it so taken-for-granted that courts initially balked at the idea of calling it discrimination, and early cases were denied or decided in favor of defendants. Organizations saw sexual harassment as a 'private' issue between the harasser and victim, beyond the scope of organizational responsibility (MacKinnon, 1979).

This changed in the late 1970s when US courts finally decided that women who lost jobs for failing to comply with their employers' sexual demands were discriminated against based on sex (beginning with Williams v. Saxbe, 1976). Courts used Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to reason that quid pro quo sexual harassment (the loss/denial of a job-related benefit for refusal to cooperate sexually) was illegal sex discrimination. The legal definition of sexual harassment was expanded in the 1980s to include hostile environment harassment: Unwanted sexual attention and requests that do not necessarily come from a supervisor or result in the loss/denial of a job-related benefit, but that create a hostile work environment (Bundy v. Jackson, 1981; Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson, 1986). Unlike quid pro quo harassment, which typically involves one perpetrator and victim, hostile environment harassment can involve multiple perpetrators and victims. Some acts (e.g., posting pornography, telling sexist jokes) may be experienced by many employees but create a hostile environment for only a few. Recognizing hostile environment harassment meant recognizing that sexual behavior itself can be hostile and demeaning, particularly to women, who constitute the main targets of sexual objectification, exploitation, and violence in the world. Sexual behavior at work can therefore remind men and women of their unequal status in society more broadly and reinforce their inequality at work.

In 1980 the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC; the legal entity charged with enforcing federal sex discrimination law) developed the following definition of sexual harassment, still used today:

> Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. (p. 74677)

The EEOC has since offered more specific guidelines for identifying sexual harassment. Prompted by court rulings, these include that the victim and harasser can be of the same sex, that the harasser need not be employed by the victim's organization, and that the victim can be anyone affected by the conduct (including those not directly targeted).

As awareness of sexual harassment and the breadth of behavior covered by law have grown, so too have the number of grievances filed. In 1980, the EEOC received one sexual harassment complaint. By 1989, nearly 6,000 new cases had been filed, and between 1990 and 1999 this number soared

to 37,725. The number of new complaints filed annually peaked at 5,332 in the year 2000, and has declined slightly each year since (http://www.eeoc.gov/stats/harassment.html).

Social-psychological definitions

Unlike legal definitions, social-psychological perspectives on sexual harassment do not require negative work outcomes and therefore tend to be broader. The focus instead is on specific behaviors and the victim's subjective experience of those behaviors. Illustrating this perspective, Fitzgerald et al. (1997: 15) define sexual harassment as 'unwanted sex-related behavior at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding her resources, or threatening her well-being.'

Psychologists have concentrated on developing operational definitions of sexual harassment. In a now-classic study, Till (1980) collected descriptive anecdotes and classified sexually harassing conduct into five categories:

(1) generalized sexist remarks or behavior;
(2) inappropriate and offensive (but essentially sanction-free) sexual advances;
(3) solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by promise of rewards;
(4) coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishments; and
(5) sexual assaults.

Fitzgerald and colleagues (1988) developed a list of behaviors to reflect these five categories and asked women students and employees how often they experienced each. Factor-analysis revealed a three-factor structure:

(1) gender harassment (Till's category 1, sexist remarks and behavior);
(2) unwanted sexual attention (Till's categories 2 and 5, sexual attention and force); and
(3) sexual coercion (Till's categories 3 and 4, threats and bribes).

Gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention correspond to the legal definition of hostile environment harassment, while sexual coercion parallels illegal quid pro quo harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald et al., 1995a). Based on this work, Fitzgerald and colleagues developed the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ), the most widely-used and validated measure of sexual harassment to date.

Lay definitions

It is important to consider opinions about sexual harassment in the general public. Lay perceptions have a profound influence on managerial policy and employee ideas about what constitutes 'appropriate' behavior at work and what justifies a complaint. More research has examined lay perceptions than any other aspect of sexual harassment (over 300 studies to date, according to the PsycINFO database), perhaps due to the ease and speed with which such research can be conducted.

Not surprisingly, lay perceptions of sexual harassment have differed over time, between men and women, and across cultures. The US Merit Systems Protection Board (USMSPB) asked federal employees in 1980, 1987, and 1994 to indicate whether they thought each of six different types of behavior (from sexual teasing to sexual pressure) constituted sexual harassment. In each successive survey, a greater proportion of employees judged each type of behavior as harassing. Other studies have consistently shown that women are more likely than men to view sexual behaviors as harassing. The gap between men's and women's perceptions is quite small for sexual pressure and coercion, especially from a supervisor, but is greater for gender harassment (USMSPB, 1994; Blumenthal, 1998; Rotundo, Nguyen, and Sackett, 2001). It is important to note, however, that a majority of men and women consider gender-harassing behaviors to be sexual harassment (77–88 per cent of women, and 64–70 per cent of men, USMSPB, 1994). In studies asking participants to evaluate how offended or bothered they would be (or have been) by specific behaviors, the gender gap widens: Men often report not being upset by, and even enjoying, a variety of behaviors that women

find harassing (Berdahl, 2007a; Berdahl et al., 1996; Gutek, 1985).

Emerging developments and debates about definitions of sexual harassment

Although sexual harassment is now a well-established construct in both law and psychology, questions remain about how best to define and assess this behavior.

Which definition should researchers adopt?

There has been some debate about whether researchers should use legal or social-psychological definitions of sexual harassment to study its prevalence (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Gutek et al., 2004). Because social-psychological definitions are broader than legal ones, measuring sexual harassment according to the former yields higher prevalence estimates. This may pose a problem in legal contexts if the focus of the assessment is strictly limited to unlawful behavior. On the other hand, if researchers are interested in studying and understanding sexual harassment as a social and psychological phenomenon, using definitions derived from social-psychological theories makes the most sense. Confining measures to current legal definitions risks studying a narrow and moving target. It would make cross-temporal and cross-cultural comparisons difficult because sexual harassment law has evolved over time and differs widely across countries (some of which have no laws against sexual harassment). Restricting studies of sexual harassment to legal definitions implicitly argues that sexual harassment should not have been studied prior to the late 1970s in the US and should not be studied in many parts of the world today. As social scientists, our charge is to shed light on social phenomena, not to limit our attention to phenomena currently deemed illegal.

There is also debate about whether lay perceptions of sexual harassment should be used to inform definitions of the construct. This is a complicated issue. On the one hand, the general public is usually much less informed about sexual harassment than the lawyers, judges, policy experts, and social scientists who study it. During some eras, and among some people and cultures, behaviors that we now consider to be the most heinous examples of harassment were considered justified (Segrave, 1994). Had the courts and social scientists relied on majority public opinion polls, sexual harassment probably would have never been identified as a form of sex discrimination. After all, these behaviors were tolerated – even condoned – for centuries.

On the other hand, if sexual harassment is partially defined by the subjective experience of its victim, then *how* the victim experiences these behaviors must be taken into account. If someone reports *enjoying* sexual attention at work – even uninvited sexual attention – then it is probably inappropriate to label that person's experience 'harassing.' Research shows that many victims do not label their own experiences as harassment (Arvey and Cavanaugh, 1995; Magley et al., 1999a). Thus, rather than having respondents categorize it as such, researchers should instead define sexual harassment and use those guidelines to measure harassment.

Considering non-sexual forms of harassment

Research has increasingly identified forms of harassment that discriminate based on sex but do not necessarily entail sexual advances. For example, professional women compared to men report significantly more incivility and aggression – behaviors that alienate the victim rather than approach them sexually (Berdahl, 2007c; Cortina, 2008). Moreover, when men are harassed, it often involves punishment for deviating from traditional masculine gender roles (Berdahl et al., 1996; Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, 1998; Waldo et al., 1998). Examples include teasing a man about his role in the home; deriding him for failing to participate in the objectification of women; and calling him derogatory names that challenge his masculinity. Consistent with this, legal theorists argue that sex-based harassment often

entails behaviors that undermine the victim but make no explicit reference to sexuality (Franke, 1997; Schultz, 1998). That is, 'much of the time, harassment assumes a form that has little or nothing to do with sexuality but everything to do with gender' (Schultz, 1998: 1687). Capturing the notion sexual harassment can be *based on sex* but not necessarily *sexual*, Berdahl (2007b) offers a new definition of sexual harassment as 'behavior that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on that individual's sex.'

Considering perspectives beyond mainstream White America

Despite the fact that some of the most prominent sexual harassment cases in the US have involved ethnic-minority victims (e.g., Anita Hill in the Senate confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas; Mechelle Vinson in Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson, 1986), the most prominent sexual harassment research has focused on White/European American women. Questions remain about whether and how models of sexual harassment extend to women from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

One manifestation of harassment that may be more salient to ethnic minority women is *sexual racism*. This refers to harassment that combines sexism and racism to create a simultaneous manifestation of sex and race discrimination. These are '...forms of sexual aggression [that] are embedded in a system of interlocking race, gender, ethnicity, and class oppression' (Murrell, 1996: 56). Behaviors falling into this category include not only those that disproportionately target minority women, but also conduct that reflects and perpetuates stereotypes about particular genders in particular ethnic groups (e.g., Adams, 1997; Buchanan and Ormerod, 2002; Cortina, 2001). To date, this concept has primarily been the focus of theory and commentary, so it remains unclear how sexual racism might fit into empirical models. Given that sexual harassment transcends boundaries of race, class, and country (e.g., Barak, 1997), definitions and assessments of this phenomenon must begin considering perspectives beyond mainstream White America.

Evolving measures of sexual harassment

Operational definitions of sexual harassment have varied over the past 20 years, for good reason: Criteria for what constitutes sexual harassment have expanded (e.g., to include same-sex harassment); research has shown that groups differ on which behaviors they consider to be harassing (e.g., unlike women, many men do not experience uninvited sexual attention as harassing); and scholars have come to recognize that sexual harassment involves different language, insinuation, and reference by context (e.g., the military vs. a law firm; one culture vs. another). This poses a problem for comparative research purposes (Gutek et al., 2004). The USMSPB studies spanning 14 years used the same six items assessing 'socio-sexual behavior;' this facilitated comparisons across survey administrations, but ignored developments in understanding sexual harassment, such as its frequent non-sexual forms and the important qualification that it be unpleasant or offensive to the victim.

The SEQ has been adapted over time to reflect the particular styles of sexual harassment in different contexts and against different groups, such as the military (Fitzgerald et al., 1999b), Latinas (Cortina, 2001), Turkish women (Wasti et al., 2000), and men (Waldo et al., 1998; Berdahl and Moore, 2006). At the same time, the factor structure of the SEQ (gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion) has remained stable across time, culture, and occupational sector, despite variations in the specific items assessing each construct (Gelfand et al., 1995; Lee and Ormerod, 2003).[1] Lee and Ormerod (2003: 6) argued that, 'similar to aptitude testing ... it is the dimensions, rather than any particular items, that form the core construct ... The dimensions are considered finite, whereas infinite items can be sampled as needed for the assessment of particular populations.' In addition to this structural robustness, the SEQ consistently predicts various professional, psychological,

and physical health outcomes (see Hershcovis and Barling, under review). Moreover, all SEQ items were developed to meet the highest psychometric standards (e.g., using clear behavioral language; avoiding 'double-barreled' items or those with multiple components; including multiple items to assess each latent construct; e.g., Dillman, 2000). As such, the SEQ presents a flexible but highly reliable and valid approach to assessing unwanted sex-related behavior at work.

THEORIZING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Why does sexual harassment occur? Below we discuss four viewpoints:

(1) The 'nature' perspective, which sees sexual harassment as the result of biological sex differences;
(2) The 'nurture' perspective, which conceptualizes sexual harassment as a consequence of socialized sex roles and stereotypes;
(3) The 'power' perspective, which views sexual harassment as emerging from sex differences in power; and
(4) the 'nurture x power' perspective, which regards sexual harassment as a means of protecting valued social identities (for other reviews, see Tangri and Hayes, 1997; Welsh, 1999).

The nature perspective: Physical design

Within the nature perspective, sexual harassment is viewed as the inevitable and natural result of biological sexual urges. The most common pattern of male perpetrators harassing female victims is attributed to assumed sex differences in sexual drive and function (Studd and Gattiker, 1991). This explanation fails to predict most sexual harassment, however, which constitutes hostile acts aimed not at sexual intimacy but rather at degradation and alienation of the victim. It also fails to explain why sexual harassment is usually targeted at individuals who violate gender ideals rather than those who meet them (Berdahl, 2007b). Thus, despite its ready acceptance among the lay public, most sexual harassment scholars have dismissed the nature perspective. Some have also rejected it for its pessimistic implications. As one scholar noted, 'linking sexual harassment with libido laid the groundwork for excusing, accepting, and forgiving male violence against women ... If it is libido, then nature is the culprit, and what can be done about nature?' (Segrave, 1994: 2).

The nurture perspective: Cognitive design

Within the nurture perspective, sexual harassment is viewed as the result of sex roles and stereotypes. One version of this theory views cognitive biases as the main cause of sexual harassment. A second accords this role to negative attitudes toward women, or misogyny. A third version considers both cognitive and attitudinal biases to play important roles.

Representing the cognitive-bias perspective is sex-role spillover theory (Gutek, 1985; Gutek and Morasch, 1982), which regards sexual harassment as behavior guided by socialized roles of men as sexual agents and women as sexual objects. When the ratio of men to women in an occupational context is highly skewed, these sex roles are confounded with the job. Thus, secretaries, elementary school teachers, and nurses are viewed as sexual objects, whereas construction workers, fire fighters, and engineers are seen as sexual agents. Sex-role spillover theory predicts that women should experience equally high levels of sexual harassment in both male- and female-dominated occupations. However, research shows that women are sexually harassed more in male-dominated than female-dominated work contexts (Berdahl, 2007a; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Glomb et al., 1999; Gruber, 1998; Mansfield et al., 1991). It might be the amount of contact a woman has with men, rather than occupational sex ratios, that best predict women's likelihood to be sexually harassed (Gutek et al., 1990; Gruber, 1998).

A second perspective is that negative attitudes toward women drive sexual harassment.

Theorists have long argued that sexual harassment is a form of hostility and aggression toward women in the workplace (e.g., Farley, 1978; Franke, 1997; MacKinnon, 1979; Schultz, 1998). In a now-classic study, Pryor (1987) demonstrated that men who held negative attitudes toward women, and who admitted to being likely to rape a woman if they could get away with it, were more likely to sexually harass a woman when given the chance.

A third perspective offers a combination of the first two: Sexual harassers are motivated by sex roles and sexist hostility (Fiske and Glick, 1995). Based on their theory of ambivalent sexism, Fiske and Glick (1995) suggested that:

(1) unwanted sexual attention is mainly motivated by romantic interest and 'benevolent' sexist beliefs (i.e., those assuming heterosexual interdependence and complementarity);
(2) gender harassment is mainly motivated by intergender competition and hostile sexist beliefs (i.e., those assuming female malevolence and inferiority); and
(3) most episodes of sexual harassment include some combination of these behaviors and motives.

The fact that sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention, and gender harassment are highly correlated (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995a; Schneider et al., 1997) supports this assertion as well as the possibility that all forms of sexual harassment share a common root.

The power perspective: Structural design

The power perspective views sexual harassment as the result of power inequality that enables harassers to sexually coerce and objectify those 'beneath' them in a hierarchy (e.g., Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). Power inequality facilitates sexual harassment, and sexual harassment reinforces power inequality. Advocates of this perspective rarely articulate the direct motives of harassers, but usually assume that harassers are motivated by sexual desire, a desire to dominate the victim, or both. As Farley (1978: 207) argued,

> [F]emale oppression at work is the result of nearly universal male power to hire and fire. Men control the means of economic survival. This control, however, is also used to coerce working women sexually. Institutionalized male power has thus created its own means of maintaining its superior position.

Different types of power may enable sexual harassment (Berdahl et al., 1996; Cleveland and Kerst, 1993; Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979). A frequent argument is that harassers use their organizational power to impose their sexual will on victims, as in quid pro quo harassment. This is a limited view of power, however. A broader view considers power relationships outside the organization. Women are usually more economically dependent on men than vice-versa. Thus, if a woman does not please her male boss (sexually or otherwise), she is less able to support herself and must depend on a man at home; if a woman does not please a man at home, she is made more dependent on her male boss, and so on. This pervasive economic power yields another type that enables men to sexually harass women: Social power, upheld by societal values and beliefs about men and women's appropriate status, roles, and inherent worthiness. With social power, a man can act as a sexual agent and treat a woman as a sexual object even when he lacks organizational or economic power over her.

Finally, physical power, or the ability to physically intimidate and dominate someone, enables men to sexually harass women. Physical power often seems so obvious that it gets overlooked, but it may be the original source of men's economic and social power over women (Engels, 1884), and clearly plays a role in sexual violence.

Nurture x power: The social identity perspective

Combining the nurture and power perspectives, social identity theories of sexual harassment emphasize prescriptive stereotypes

(beliefs about how men and women *should* differ, rather than how they *do* differ) and their motives. According to this viewpoint, sexual harassment is a mechanism for punishing those who threaten a harasser's gender identity and the benefits derived from it (Berdahl, 2007b; Berdahl et al., 1996; Dall'Ara and Maass, 1999; Franke, 1997; Maass et al., 2003; Schultz, 1998). Berdahl (2007b) proposes that sexual harassment is triggered by the harasser's desire to protect or enhance his or her sex-based social status in a system of gender hierarchy. Sexual harassers are more likely to be men, because men compared to women have more to gain from protecting their sex-based status. Harassers can protect or define their status by derogating another's in a variety of ways, including sexual and non-sexual harassment targeted at members of both sexes.

We have considered different explanations for what motivates harassment, from nature to nurture to power to social identity. Different explanations have different implications for who harasses whom.

WHO HARASSES WHOM?

Because the first court cases of sexual harassment involved male bosses making sexual cooperation a condition of women's employment, this became the prototype of sexual harassment. We now know, however, that this scenario represents a small minority of incidents: Co-workers, subordinates, customers, and clients are often the harassment perpetrators; men are harassed based on sex; and same-sex harassment is surprisingly common.

Gender

Most sexual harassment is targeted against women. Only 10–14 per cent of sexual harassment cases filed with the EEOC are filed by men. The 1994 USMSPB study of federal workers found that more women (44 per cent) than men (19 per cent) had experienced any of seven types of sexual behavior in the past two years at work. Perpetrators of these sexual behaviors toward women were almost exclusively men (93 per cent). In contrast, men were targeted by both women (65 per cent) and men (21 per cent). In more recent research assessing not just sexual behavior but sexual behavior that is offensive, or unwanted, a similar pattern has emerged. Women are sexually harassed more than men (e.g., Cortina et al., 2002; Magley et al., 1999), especially when researchers only count negatively-appraised behaviors (e.g., Berdahl, 2007a). Without such adjustments, some studies have found men and women report similar amounts of sexual experiences at work (e.g., Berdahl, 2007a; Konik and Cortina, in press).

Systematic research into the gender of both harassers and victims has been rare, however. Many studies only investigate women's experiences, and until the late 1990s, most surveys only asked about behaviors instigated by men. More research is needed to understand same-sex sexual harassment as well as non-sexual forms of gender harassment. 'Not man enough' harassment, for example, first identified in male samples, has recently been studied in women as well. It appears that women too are teased for being 'not tough enough' or 'overly sensitive' in male-dominated jobs (Berdahl and Moore, 2006). Berdahl (2007b) predicts that when different forms of harassment based on sex are considered, the most common pattern should be men harassing women, followed by men harassing men and women harassing women; women harassing men should be the least common. These and other questions require further exploration.

Status

Early research into sexual harassment focused on sexual attention and coercion from bosses and supervisors. Co-workers were included when hostile environment harassment was recognized. The stem used in the SEQ was limited to 'supervisors or co-workers' until recently, when researchers included subordinates, customers, and anyone else in the

work environment (e.g., Berdahl, 2003; Konik and Cortina, in press). In service-oriented jobs and organizations, customers and clients are common sources of sexual harassment (Barling et al., 2001; Berdahl, 2003; Gettman and Gelfand, 2007). Research has demonstrated that subordinates sometimes sexually harass their superiors, though rarely. This type of 'contrapower' harassment has mainly been studied among female professors who experience it from their male students (e.g., DeSouza and Fansler, 2003). More research is needed on harassment from subordinates and those outside the organization.

Race/ethnicity

To date, sexual harassment research has paid only limited attention to issues of race and ethnicity. Ethnic stereotypes, numerical minority status, cultural marginality, and economic vulnerability should theoretically increase the risk of sexual harassment for ethnic minority women (e.g., MacKinnon, 1979; Murrell, 1996). That said, most empirical research on sexual harassment has focused on White/European American women. When ethnic differences have been examined, findings have been mixed. Earlier large-scale studies yielded no differences in the harassment rates of White and non-White women (Gutek, 1985; USMBSP, 1987). More recent research reports higher rates of sexual harassment against ethnic minority women compared to White women (Berdahl and Moore, 2006; Bergman and Drasgow, 2003; Cortina et al., 1998; Mansfield et al., 1991) and men (Berdahl and Moore, 2006). In contrast, some surveys found Latina and Black women to report significantly lower rates of harassment than their non-Latina White counterparts (Shupe et al., 2002; Wyatt and Riederle, 1995). Each of these studies followed a different approach to assessing sexual harassment, making comparisons and conclusions difficult.

The empirical literature is virtually silent about the race and ethnicity of sexual harassers, possibly due to the intricacy of this issue. Perpetrators can be members of the victim's own ethnic group, or numerous other groups of varying social class and organizational power, which can change the victim's subjective experience For example, from the perspective of a Black woman, the experience of being harassed likely 'feels' very different, depending on whether it comes from White men in power, Black men in power, Black men of lower organizational status, or male members of other low-status ethnic groups. More studies are warranted to disentangle the complexity of race, class, and power in sexual harassment.

OUTCOMES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In the early 1990s, researchers lamented the 'appalling' lack of systematic empirical attention to sexual harassment outcomes (Gutek and Koss, 1993: 43). This situation changed dramatically over the decade that followed, as scientists documented myriad links between sexual harassment and victims' occupational functioning, psychological/behavioral health, and physical health. Such outcome relationships remained significant even when controlling for the experience of other stressors (e.g., general job stress, trauma outside of the workplace), other features of the job (occupational level, organizational tenure, workload), personality (negative affectivity, neuroticism, narcissism), and other demographic factors (age, education level, race). Table 1 summarizes findings of this scholarship, reviewed below.

Occupational outcomes

Not surprisingly, the organizational psychology literature has focused primarily on associations between sexual harassment and victims' occupational well-being (see Table 1). In particular, over 20 articles report that sexual harassment is associated with job dissatisfaction (for a meta-analytic review, see Lapierre et al., 2005). This finding applies to not only White American civilians, but also US military personnel, ethnic minority women in the US, and women in other nations

Table 1 Summary of research (from the mid-1990s to the present) on outcomes of sexual harassment. An 'X' indicates that a significant relationship was found between sexual harassment and that outcome. When the harassment-outcome relationship was indirect (i.e., mediated through other variables), this is noted in parentheses

Key

Job outcomes
- A Job satisfaction
- B Actual and intended turnover
- C Work withdrawal or neglect
- D Organizational commitment
- E Productivity or performance
- F Job stress
- G Other

Psychological outcomes
- H Depression, anxiety, or general distress
- I Post traumatic stress disorder
- J Other psychological outcomes

	Job outcomes							*Psychological outcomes*			*Health*
Study	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Health
Barling et al. (1996)	X (indirect)	X (indirect)								negative mood	X (indirect)
Barling et al. (2001)			X (indirect)	X (indirect)	X		justice perceptions and cognitive difficulties			fear (direct) and negative mood (indirect)	
Bergman and Drasgow (2003)	X			X (indirect)	X (indirect)			X			X
Bond et al. (2004)	X							X			
Chan et al. (1999)	X										
Cortina, Fitzgerald and Drasgow (2002)	X	X (indirect)	X (indirect)					X		life satisfaction (indirect)	X
Cortina, Lonsway et al. (2002)	X	X (indirect)				X					
Culbertson and Rosenfeld (1994)			X					X		anger, disgust, fear, self-blame, and low self-esteem	X

Dansky and Kilpatrick (1997)								X	X		
Fitzgerald et al. (1997)	X	X (indirect)	X (indirect)					X	X	life satisfaction	X (indirect)
Fitzgerald et al. (1999)	X			X (indirect)	X (indirect)			X			X (indirect and direct)
Fontana and Rosenheck (1998)									X		
Freels et al. (2005)										problem drinking	
Glomb et al. (1999)	X	X (indirect)	X (indirect)					X	X	life satisfaction	
Harned and Fitzgerald (2002)	X							X		disordered eating (indirect), self-esteem and self-blame (direct)	X (indirect)
Harned et al (2002)	X			X (indirect)	X (indirect)			X			X (indirect and direct)
Langhout et al. (2005)	X			X (indirect)	X (indirect)			X			X
Lim and Cortina (2005)	X	X				X		X		life satisfaction	X
Magley et al. (2005)		X		X		X	job burnout	X			
Magley et al. (1999)	X			X	X			X			X
Morrow et al. (1994)	X			X		X	role ambiguity, role conflict				
Munson et al. (2000)	X									life satisfaction	
O'Connell and Korabik (2000)	X	X				X		X		negative mood	
Parker and Griffin (2002)							over-performance demands	X			
Piotrkowski (1998)	X							X			X
Ragins and Scandura (1995)	X										

(*continued*)

Table 1 Cont'd

	Job outcomes							*Psychological outcomes*			*Health*
Study	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Health
Raver and Gelfand (2005)					X		impaired team relationships and cohesion; increased team conflict				
Richman et al. (1999)								X		prescription drug use; problem drinking	
Richman et al. (2002)								X		problem drinking	
Richman et al. (2006)										problem drinking	
Rospenda et al. (2005)											X
Schneider et al. (1997)	X	X	X	X				X	X	life satisfaction	
Schneider et al. (2001)								X			X
Shaffer et al. (2000)	X	X		X							
Shupe et al. (2002)	X	X						X			
Sims et al. (2005)		X									
USMSPB (1994)		X	X		X						X
Vogt et al. (2005)								X	X		
Wasti et al. (2000)	X	X (indirect)	X (indirect)					X	X	life satisfaction	X (indirect)
Wislar et al. (2002)										problem drinking	
Wolfe et al. (1998)									X		
Woodzicka and LaFrance (2005)					X						

(e.g., Canada, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Turkey).

Over 15 studies have addressed organizational withdrawal as an outcome of sexual harassment. Some harassed personnel engage in work withdrawal, remaining in the organization but disengaging from work (e.g., through absenteeism, tardiness, work neglect). Others manifest more complete forms of withdrawal, through turnover thoughts and intentions or actual turnover. Organizational withdrawal is often conceptualized as a way of avoiding further exposure to sexual harassment at work.

Sexual harassment is also associated with decrements in employees' organizational commitment, performance, and productivity. Other job-related correlates include impaired team relationships, increased team conflicts, lowered team financial performance, lowered justice perceptions, cognitive difficulties (e.g., distraction), and over-performance demands (i.e., the 'need to overperform to gain acceptance and recognition within the workplace'; Parker and Griffin, 2002). These studies often include job stress as a covariate; when researchers instead conceptualize job stress as an outcome in its own right, they invariably uncover significant direct relationships with sexual harassment.

Organizations pay a price for these outcomes. The USMSPB used a 'behavioral costing approach' to attach a dollar value to sexual harassment, based on its large-scale surveys of federal employees. The most recent figures, extrapolated to the entire federal workforce, estimated the annual cost of sexual harassment for the US government to be $327 million (in 1994 dollars). This includes costs related to employee turnover, employees' self-reported use of sick leave due to harassment, self-reported individual productivity losses, and estimated workgroup productivity losses (USMSPB, 1994). Costs related to the harasser's lost time or productivity, complaint processing, litigation, or medical and counseling services for the victim are excluded from this figure, thereby underestimating the cost of sexual harassment to the federal government.

Psychological and physical health outcomes

Many studies (detailed in Table 1) of sexual harassment outcomes have appeared in the clinical and psychiatric literatures. The more that employees experience sexual harassment, the more that they report symptoms of depression, general stress and anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and overall impaired psychological well-being. In a series of articles based on a 4-wave longitudinal survey, Richman and colleagues documented associations between earlier sexual harassment and later alcohol use and misuse. Other psychological and behavioral correlates include negative mood, disordered eating, self-blame, lowered self-esteem, increased prescription drug use, anger, disgust, and lowered satisfaction with life in general.

Less research has addressed relationships between sexual harassment and physical health. Such effects are often indirect, mediated through mental health. Some research has documented links to overall health perceptions or satisfaction. Others have identified specific somatic complaints (headaches, exhaustion, sleep problems, gastric problems, nausea, respiratory complaints, musculoskeletal pain, and weight loss/gain) associated with experiencing harassment. In the only experiment of its kind, Schneider et al. (2001) showed that exposure to mild gender harassment leads to increased cardiovascular reactivity.

What mitigates or exacerbates the harm?

Employees report considerable variability in the outcomes they experience from sexual harassment, prompting research on person and situation factors that moderate these outcomes. Searching for moderators of this relationship has both theoretical and applied significance, isolating which populations are most at risk for harm, under which circumstances, and what might be done to reduce that harm.

Victim gender

The moderator that has received the most empirical attention is gender: when sexually harassed, do women and men experience comparable consequences? Male targets of unwanted sex-related behaviors often report that these experiences were not anxiety-provoking (Berdahl, Magley, and Waldo, 1996), 'bothersome,' 'stressful' (Berdahl, 2007b), or 'upsetting' (Cochran et al., 1997). In fact, some men describe these behaviors as 'welcomed' and even 'fun and flattering' (Berdahl, 2007b; Gutek, 1985). Moreover, studies find harassed women vs. men to report worse outcomes, in terms of negative mood and turnover intentions (Barling et al., 1996), disordered eating (Harned and Fitzgerald, 2002), over-performance demands (Parker and Griffin, 2002), and longitudinal effects on anxiety, problem drinking, job stress, job burnout, and turnover intentions (Freels et al., 2005, Magley, Cortina and Kath, 2005). In stark contrast with this prior work, Vogt et al. (2005) reported sexual harassment to be a stronger depression and anxiety risk factor for men compared to women.

Other research reports that, when women and men experience similar rates of sexual harassment, the impact is comparable. For instance, no sex differences were found in the relationship between sexual harassment and various job outcomes (Cortina et al., 2002; Morrow et al., 1994), psychological and physical health outcomes (Magley et al., 1999), and longitudinal links to depression, anxiety, hostility, prescription drug use, and problem drinking (Richman et al., 1999, 2002, 2006). Morrow et al. (1994) also described sex similarities in relationships between supervisor harassment and victims' occupational stress and satisfaction.

Despite these mixed findings, the weight of the research evidence suggests that women face greater harm from sexual harassment than men. Even studies that report sex similarities acknowledge that women are far more likely than men to be sexually harassed, 'thus making sexual harassment a bigger and more harmful problem for women as a group' (Magley et al., 1999: 299). Other research (e.g., Berdahl et al., 1996; Waldo et al., 1998) shows sexual harassment to be a qualitatively different phenomenon for women and men, questioning whether sex comparisons in outcomes should be conducted at all.

Victim race, ethnicity, and culture

Various writers have suggested that minority ethnicity should amplify the negative impact of sexual harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995b; Murrell, 1996; Shupe et al., 2002). The rationale for this expectation is that minorities face additional stressors beyond sexual harassment, such as racism and racial harassment, economic hardship, and (for recent immigrants) lack of adequate support networks.

To date, however, little research has directly compared outcomes for minority and non-minority women, and findings have been mixed. In comparing the experiences of Latina and non-Latina White women, Shupe et al. (2002) reported that Latinas fared worse in terms of work and coworker satisfaction, whereas effects on turnover intentions were stronger for Whites; culture did not moderate relationship between harassment and supervisor satisfaction, psychological distress, or psychological well-being. Bergman and Drasgow (2003) compared harassment outcomes across members of five different ethnic groups in the US Armed Forces, finding no evidence that ethnicity moderates relationships between sexual harassment and occupational, psychological, or health-related outcomes. Likewise, Piotrkowski (1998) reported no moderating influence of minority status on effects of gender harassment on job satisfaction and 'distress.' It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from these limited, divergent findings on ethnic differences in sexual harassment outcomes.

Even less is known about cross-national differences (or similarities) in the experience of sexual harassment outcomes. Wasti and colleagues (2000) compared employed women in Turkey and the US, reporting a similar pattern of harassment outcomes in both populations. Shaffer et al. (2000) found no differences among US, Chinese

Mainland, and Hong Kong Chinese women in the impact of harassment on job satisfaction and turnover intentions, but culture did moderate relationships with organizational commitment. Beyond these two studies, we could locate no other recent, rigorous research that directly compares harassment-outcome relationships across nations, so this remains an area ripe for further research.

Victim self-labeling

Among women who report unwanted sex-related behavior in the workplace, fewer than 20 per cent typically label their experiences as 'sexual harassment' per se (Magley et al., 1999). Nevertheless, regardless of whether victims self-label or not, they report a similar pattern of negative occupational, psychological, and physical outcomes (Magley et al., 1999; Munson et al., 2001). In an experimental study, Woodzicka and LaFrance (2005) demonstrated that even brief, subtly sexually harassing behaviors lead to impaired performance in victims, irrespective of what they call these behaviors. These studies suggest that labeling does not moderate the link between sexual harassment and outcomes.

Perpetrator power

Although sexual harassment has adverse effects whether perpetrated by peers or superiors (e.g. Morrow et al., 1994), research suggests that harassment 'from above' is more harmful. Cortina et al. (2002) and Langhout and colleagues (2005) found significant correlations between perpetrator power/status and victim perceptions that the harassment was severe, upsetting, and frightening. In addition, O'Connell and Korabik (2000) and Morrow et al. (1994) analyzed outcomes of harassment from higher- and equal-level perpetrators separately; they reported more numerous negative effects of the former. O'Connell and Korabik (2000) also investigated women's experiences of sexual harassment from lower-status men ('contrapower harassment'), finding no negative outcomes at all. Explanations for the greater consequences associated with top-down sexual harassment emphasize the victim's heightened experience of helplessness and fear (e.g., Cortina et al., 2002; Langhout et al., 2005).

Support of the victim

To generate practical recommendations for organizations, some studies have investigated whether social and organizational supports mitigate the impact of sexual harassment. Several studies have found that military women's perceptions of leaders as fair, supportive, trustworthy, and intolerant of sexual harassment were related to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions (Murry et al., 2001; Offerman and Malamut, 2002; Williams et al., 1999). Likewise, Bond and colleagues (2004) and Cortina (2004) reported that positive social support from leaders, co-workers, friends, and family attenuates effects of sexual harassment on women's job satisfaction.

Mixed results have emerged regarding the benefits of social support for victims' mental health. Cortina (2004) found no moderating impact of positive support on victims' anxiety and depression, whereas Bond and colleagues (2004) did find such an effect. The divergent findings could result from disparate methodologies (e.g., sample composition, measurement of harassment, operationalization of support). More research is clearly needed to understand what types of support can benefit which harassment victims, and under what conditions.

COPING WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Compared to the 1980s, studies of coping with sexual harassment have been relatively scarce in the past decade. We summarize this research below and in Table 2. Excluded from this review are 'analogue' studies, in which participants (often college students with limited work experience) read brief harassing scenarios and report how they *would* respond *if* confronted with such a situation. This method is known to be highly flawed: how individuals say they would think, feel or behave in response to hypothetical sexual harassment fails to reflect the reality

of how sexually harassed individuals actually respond in real life. In particular, the analogue method yields inflated estimates of assertive or confrontational coping (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995c; Gutek and Koss, 1993; Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2001).

The nature and antecedents of harassment coping

Reporting

Of all potential responses to sexual harassment, intra-organizational reporting has received most research attention, reflecting increasing emphases by American employers and courts on organizational reporting as *the* key mechanism for eliminating workplace sexual harassment (Burlington Industries v. Ellereth, 1998; Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, 1998). Some social scientists allege that reporting is the most appropriate or effective means of coping with sexual harassment (e.g., Knapp et al., 1997; Reese and Lindenberg, 1997). This claim, however, has little empirical basis. On the contrary, various studies (described below) have revealed that harassment reporting can give rise to additional problems that exacerbate the situation for the victim.

According to victims' accounts of how they responded to previous experiences of sexual harassment, fewer than one-third of victims informally discuss sexual harassment with supervisors, and less than 25 per cent file formal sexual harassment complaints with their employers (see Table 2). Moreover, only a tiny minority of victims take their complaints to court. Victims typically only turn to formal reporting (internal or external to the organization) after they have exhausted all other response options. Employees' reluctance to report experiences of sexual harassment is primarily attributed to fear – fear of blame, disbelief, inaction, retaliation, humiliation, ostracism, and damage to one's career and reputation (e.g., Cortina, 2004; Fitzgerald et al., 1995c; Wasti and Cortina, 2003).

Victims' fears of reporting are well-founded. Cortina and Magley (2003) learned that two-thirds of employees who spoke out against workplace mistreatment then faced some form of retaliation. Others have found that sexual harassment reporting is often followed by organizational indifference or trivialization of the harassment complaint as well as hostility and reprisals against the victim (Bergman et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2004). Perhaps it comes as no surprise, then, that victims often leave the complaint process with a greater perception of organizational injustice (Adams-Roy and Barling, 1998).

Confrontation

Confronting the harasser is less common that popular wisdom suggests. Woodzicka and LaFrance (2001) conducted an experiment in which 50 job applicants were asked questions by a male interviewer that were mildly harassing and clearly inappropriate in a job interview (e.g., 'Do you have a boyfriend?', 'Do people find you desirable?'). *Not a single woman* challenged the interviewer about the inappropriate questions or refused to answer them. Among the harassed women in civilian organizations described in Table 2, an average of 39 per cent had confronted their harassers in some way. This coping strategy may be more prevalent in the military, where Culbertson and Rosenfeld (1994) found 72 per cent of enlisted women and 54 per cent of female officers confronting their perpetrators.

Social-support seeking

A more typical response to sexual harassment is to rely on informal social support from colleagues, friends, and family members. In the research detailed in Table 2, an average of one-third of victims had discussed the harassing situation with family members, and approximately 50–70 per cent had sought support from friends or trusted others.

Avoidance, denial, and endurance

Illustrating what might be the most prevalent response to sexual harassment in the workplace (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Gutek and Koss, 1993), harassed employees frequently try to avoid the perpetrator or the harassing context, deny or downplay the seriousness

Table 2 Summary of research (from the mid-1990s to the present) on the prevalence of specific harassment coping strategies

Key

Coping strategy

1 Filed formal complaint or grievance
2 Talked with supervisor, manager or union representative
3 'Reported' the harassment
4 Confronted the harasser in some way
5 Talked with friend or trusted other
6 Talked with family
7 Avoided harasser
8 Denied or downplayed gravity of situation
9 Attempted to ignore, forget or endure

Note on population of study
Cochran et al. (1997) – University staff and students (male and female)
Cortina (2004) – Working Latinas (different companies)
Culbertson and Rosenfield (1994) – Navy women
Schneider et al. (1997) – Working women (different companies)
USMSPB (1994) – Federal workers (male and female)

	Coping strategy								
Study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cochran et al. (1997)	2%			25%			45%		60%
Cortina (2004)	17–20%	26%	21%		49–64%	27–37%			
Culbertson and Rosenfeld (1994)	6–8%		24% of enlisted, 19% of officers	72% of enlisted, 54% of officers			75% of enlisted, 54% of officers		
Schneider et al. (1997)	6–13%	17–36%		33–57%	53–70%		54–74%	54–73%	49–70%
USMSPB (1994)			13% of women, 8% of men	41% of women, 23% of men			33% of women, 20% of men		45% of women, 44% of men

of the situation, or simply ignore or endure it if possible (see Table 2). Women in these circumstances often hope that if they evade the harasser or fail to show any reaction, he will lose interest and leave them alone. Note that this research only represents individuals who remain in their jobs despite being harassed, typically excluding those who quit or retire due to the harassment.

Some writers have criticized avoidance, denial, and endurance as passive, unassertive, or otherwise undesirable reactions to sexual harassment (e.g., Knapp et al., 1997; Gruber and Smith, 1995). Judges, juries, and the media and lay public often interpret the lack of vocal protest (preferably, a formal complaint) as evidence that the woman consented to, 'welcomed,' or fabricated the inappropriate conduct. This was clear in the case of Anita Hill, whose credibility was assailed because she had not formally complained about Clarence Thomas at the time of the alleged harassment. If the harassment had really happened, Senators reasoned, she would have reported it.

However, avoidance, denial and 'doing nothing' often reflect deliberate attempts to extinguish the harasser's behavior by refusing to reinforce it. Such reactions appear quite reasonable when a woman fears for herself or her job, has no other effective response options available, or seeks to bring an end to the harassment without 'rocking the boat' (Fitzgerald et al., 1995c; Magley, 2002). Thus, these behaviors represent a common, albeit quiet method of resisting sexual harassment; they are the only coping responses available to some women in some situations.

Antecedents of coping

Generally speaking, as sexual harassment becomes more severe (i.e., upsetting, disruptive, enduring, frequent), attempts to ignore it decrease while efforts to avoid, confront, report, and seek social support increase (Bergman et al., 2002; Cochran et al., 1997; Cortina, 2004; Malamut and Offermann, 2001; Wasti and Cortina, 2003). Victims are also more likely to report the situation and seek social support when being harassed by an authority figure (Bergman et al., 2002; Cochran et al., 1997; Cortina, 2004; Malamut and Offermann, 2001). Reporting and confrontation are more common among victims who are lower in occupational status, female, or White/European American (Malamut and Offermann, 2001; Rudman et al., 1995; Wasti and Cortina, 2003), whereas avoidance and denial are more frequent among women from traditional, patriarchal, collectivist cultures (Wasti and Cortina, 2003).

ELIMINATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

Given the negative consequences – personal, legal, and financial – that accompany sexual harassment, many organizations have taken steps to eliminate harassment where possible, and correct it where necessary. We now review and critique harassment policies, procedures, and training programs implemented by organizations.

Sexual harassment policies

Today, most large US organizations and many smaller ones have policies prohibiting sexual harassment and specifying reporting procedures. The policies vary with respect to content, but often include language from the EEOC's (1980) definition of sexual harassment, quoted earlier. This definition, however, has been criticized as overly vague (Gutek, 1997), and it privileges *sexualized* actions while neglecting the more common, *sexist* forms of hostility (Schultz, 1998; 2003).

Experts agree that sexual harassment policies should clearly delineate grievance procedures. Some add that policies should explain disciplinary actions that harassers might face; prohibit retaliation against complainants; and provide safeguards for the confidentiality of all parties. Several scholars emphasize that supervisors and top management must be committed to and well-trained on these policies for them to be effective (Gutek, 1997; Gruber, 1998; Reese and Lindenberg, 1997; Riger, 1991; Rowe, 1996; Stokes et al., 2000).

Few empirical studies have evaluated the impact of such policy-making. One notable exception is Gruber (1998), who found that employees reported the lowest rates of sexual harassment when they worked for organizations that proactively developed, disseminated, and enforced the sexual harassment policy (e.g., by training all employees, creating official complaint procedures, designating a specialist to receive complaints). Significantly more harassment was reported by personnel whose companies only used informational approaches to policy dissemination (e.g., posting it in the workplace or employee handbook), and individuals in workplaces with no policy at all described the most sexual harassment. In a unique study of factors related to men's reports of harassment perpetration, Dekker and Barling (1998) found that men who perceived strong sanctions against sexual harassment in their organization reported engaging in less frequent harassment of others.

Sexual harassment complaint procedures

In some workplaces, the only procedures available for reporting sexual harassment are formal, requiring victims to lodge written, signed complaints against their harassers; the organization then typically notifies the harasser of the complaint and conducts an investigation. Some companies have specialized personnel for these investigations; many do not. Organizations also differ in the standard of proof used to determine whether sexual harassment has taken place. Some rely on the civil standard of 'preponderance of evidence' (i.e., is it 'more likely than not' that harassment occurred), the standard used by the courts in Title VII cases. Other companies use the more stringent criminal standard of 'beyond a reasonable doubt,' the highest level of proof required to win a case in court; because sexual harassment is not considered a criminal offense under US law, it is peculiar to apply this criminal standard to these investigations. Penalties imposed on employees found guilty of sexual harassment also vary widely across organizations. Some grievance procedures offer the possibility of appeal, others do not. Companies typically maintain formal records of the complaint and outcome, including names of all parties involved (Gutek, 1997; Riger, 1991; Rowe, 1996).

Formal grievance mechanisms have distinct advantages, allowing for official sanctions to be imposed, repeat offenders to be tracked, and managers to be held accountable (Rowe, 1996). However, these procedures are often adversarial, with the complainant's perspective potentially competing against that of the accused, his union representatives, and management. Such procedures frequently fail to end the harassment, sometimes worsen the situation, and rarely protect the complainant's privacy (e.g., Cortina and Magley, 2003; Gutek, 1997; Riger, 1991).

Because of these drawbacks, some experts recommend that informal dispute resolution also be available to sexually harassed employees (Gutek, 1997; Riger, 1991; Rowe, 1996). Many victims do not want to lodge a formal complaint, set an investigation into motion, or see their harasser punished; they simply want the offensive behavior to end (Fitzgerald et al., 1995c). Informal dispute resolution could involve, for example, someone speaking with the offender on behalf of the complainant or a neutral third party mediating discussions between them. The goal is generally not to determine guilt or impose punishment, but rather to restore peaceful co-existence between the parties. Often no formal records are kept, and participation is purely voluntary (Riger, 1991; Rowe, 1996). Outcomes can include an agreement to change behavior, an apology, a voluntary transfer or resignation of either party, or nothing at all (Gutek, 1997).

Opinions of informal methods for handling sexual harassment have been mixed. Informal processes provide a more accessible and realistic option for harassment victims who wish to avoid formal investigation and adjudication (Riger, 1991; Rowe, 1996), and they tend to be less public, confrontational, and litigious (Gutek, 1997). However, if the aim of informal procedures is not to establish

guilt or punish the offender, this process will not necessarily deter would-be harassers. If a third party mediator is involved, that person typically must remain neutral, lacks authority over the harasser, and cannot protect the victim from retaliation (Riger, 1991).

A general recommendation about harassment complaint procedures is that choices be available to complainants, including a choice among multiple procedures (both informal and formal), and choices among multiple 'complaint handlers' with different ethnicities, sexes, and positions in the organization (Gutek, 1997; Reese and Lindenberg, 2004; Riger, 1991; Rowe, 1996; Stokes et al., 2000).

Sexual harassment training

As with reporting procedures, sexual harassment training initiatives also vary tremendously. Some organizations mandate training for all employees; others train only managers, supervisors, complaint handlers, or employees found guilty of sexual harassment; still others offer no training at all. The trainer may be a manager, HR employee, compliance officer, EEO specialist, sexual harassment expert, or attorney. Different training programs use different formats, including lectures, speeches from organizational leaders, skits or plays with professional actors, behavioral modeling, role-plays and other experiential exercises, computer-based programs, films, readings, and case-studies. The length of these different programs ranges from minutes to hours to days (e.g., Bingham and Scherer, 2001; Gutek, 1997). In a recent survey of 1,277 working adults in the US, Magley and colleagues (2004) found that only 46 per cent of respondents had received any training at all on sexual harassment, which was more common in larger organizations and lasted an average of 1.5 hours.

Content also differs across sexual harassment training programs. Many experts agree that training should include education about what constitutes harassing conduct and how employees can report such conduct. Some programs are oriented around awareness-raising or sensitivity-training, whereas others focus more on legal issues and penalties for harassers (Bingham and Scherer, 2001; Gutek, 1997; Magley et al., 1997; Reese and Lindenberg, 1997). Some training uses 'rational-empirical' techniques (assuming that people are more likely to change behavior when given a rational justification), while others use 'power-coercive' strategies (assuming that a threat from a legitimate authority will promote behavior change). Yet another approach is 'normative re-educative,' the assumption being that substantive change requires the development of new norms, shared meanings, and transformations in attitudes, values, skills, and relational styles (Bingham and Scherer, 2001). The primary goal of such training is generally prevention, but little empirical evidence shows that training actually deters would-be harassers from abusing others. Another goal of training is to encourage employees to come forward with internal complaints of sexual harassment, but as noted earlier, such complaints are rare. One longitudinal study, however, did document an increase in internal sexual harassment complaints following company-wide training (Magley et al., 1997). What else do sexual harassment training programs accomplish?

Researchers have found that recipients of sexual harassment training (particularly men) report increased knowledge of sexual harassment definitions, legal regulations, and organizational policies (Antecol and Cobb-Clark, 2003; Bingham and Scherer, 2001). Other outcomes include satisfaction with the organization's harassment policy or complaint procedures (Magley et al., 2004; Reese and Lindenberg, 2004), lowered victim-blaming or harassment-trivializing attitudes (Lonsway et al., 2008; Magley et al., 2004), and greater belief that sexual behavior is inappropriate in the workplace (Bingham and Scherer, 2001). The USMSPB (1994) found that employees working in federal agencies providing sexual harassment training described less 'uninvited and unwanted sexual attention.' This effect was strongest for agencies that trained *all* employees.

We could locate only one study providing direct evidence that sexual harassment training affects men's behavior toward women, at least in the short run. Perry et al. (1998) showed male participants a training video on either sexual harassment or sign language, followed by a golf training video. Participants then trained a female confederate on how to putt. The researchers found that harassment training increased knowledge and reduced inappropriate touching for men with a prior propensity to sexually harass women.

Some research, however, has found sexual harassment training programs to have either null effects (e.g., Magley et al., 1997, 2004) or adverse effects on employees. Magley and colleagues (1997) and Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003) reported that some trained employees became more cynical about their organization's ability or commitment to prevent sexual harassment, and Bingham and Scherer (2001) found male trainees to report *greater* victim-blaming attitudes and *less* willingness to file a complaint of sexual harassment, compared to women and non-trained men. Moreover, the short-term attitudinal changes reported by Perry et al. (1998) did not persist over the long term.

It is important to note, however, that each of these studies evaluated different sexual harassment training programs. Moreover, the methodological quality of this research varied (Magley et al., 1997), often lacking control groups, utilizing small samples, failing to take into account pre-training assessment effects, or lacking pre-training assessment altogether. Most post-training assessments were conducted immediately after the training, making it impossible to know whether the training has any lasting effects. More research is clearly warranted to demonstrate empirically the effectiveness of sexual harassment training interventions.

THE FUTURE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT RESEARCH

As this chapter makes clear, sexual harassment remains a serious problem that takes a toll on employees, workgroups, and their organizations. Notably, the bulk of research on this topic has appeared outside of the mainstream organizational literature. Conducting searches on the keyword 'sexual harassment' in all issues published through 2006 of the top five OB and I/O journals, we found only 31 sexual harassment articles:

- *Journal of Applied Psychology* (18 articles);
- *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (3 articles);
- *Academy of Management Journal* (6 articles);
- *Academy of Management Review* (3 articles); and
- *Administrative Sciences Quarterly* (1 article).

By contrast, 183 articles on workplace sexual harassment have appeared in five social science journals that do not specialize in organizational behavior:

- *Sex Roles* (100 articles);
- *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (31 articles);
- *Journal of Social Issues* (24 articles);
- *Gender and Society* (19 articles); and
- *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (9 articles).

The topic of workplace sexual harassment clearly deserves greater attention from organizational scientists. Below, we propose three questions that warrant further research, and conclude with methodological suggestions to enrich this literature.

What constitutes 'sexual harassment'?

After three decades of legal decisions and social science on sexual harassment, an explicit definition remains elusive. We continue to discover 'new' forms of harassment, which have long occurred but seldom been studied. One such form is extra-organizational sexual harassment, i.e., harassment from customers, clients, or members of the public. These organizational outsiders can easily target an employee with sex-based disparagement and unwanted sexual advances, interfering with that person's work and well-being

(Barling et al., 2001; Gettman and Gelfand, 2007). With the recent expansion of the service professions, 'outsider sexual harassment' deserves more empirical attention.

Non-sexual forms of harassment are also being increasingly recognized. Sexist behaviors directed at women, such as jokes about women's intelligence and comments about women 'not belonging' in certain jobs, represent the most common manifestations of sex-based harassment; these behaviors, however, are often overlooked in research, the law, and organizational policy. Likewise, sexist conduct directed against men (e.g., 'not man enough' harassment) is rarely studied. Not only should science focus more on these sexist but non-sexualized behaviors, it should also examine sex-based harassment that makes no explicit reference to gender, such as incivility, sabotage, and threats directed disproportionately at women (and some men) in the workplace (Berdahl, 2007b; Berdahl, 2007c; Cortina, 2008).

More sexual harassment research should also consider how gender intersects with other social identities. Having a low-status identity, such as being ethnic minority, poor, or gay, may increase an individual's risk for sex-based harassment (e.g., Berdahl and Moore, 2006; Konik and Cortina, in press). These identities may also affect the *type* of harassment experienced, because sex-based disparagements can take different forms and meanings specific to one's ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other social dimension. Research addressing these intersections can further our understanding of sexual harassment as a tool that reinforces social hierarchies in the workplace.

What motivates (or inhibits) sexual harassment?

Sexual harassers were originally assumed to be driven by a desire for sexual expression or gratification. Men's wish to dominate or control women was later proposed to motivate sexual harassment. Research now considers a more basic motive: The desire to retain a valued social identity and attendant benefits in a system of gender hierarchy. Given that this theorizing has continued for several decades, it is striking to see how little *empirical* research has focused explicitly on harassers (exceptions include Bargh et al., 1995; Dekker and Barling, 1998; Perry et al., 1998; Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1993). This is an important direction for future studies.

How can organizations eliminate sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment grievance mechanisms have limited effectiveness and efficiency, as they attempt to correct harassment by rooting out and punishing individual harassers, and place the burden of managing misbehavior on individual victims. Moreover, grievance procedures typically fail to address broader problems that fuel hostile work environments. Experts therefore emphasize the futility of relying primarily or solely on formal victim complaints to correct workplace harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995c; Magley, 2002; Shultz, 2003). Instead, innovative harassment-prevention and control mechanisms are badly needed; below are several examples.

One novel approach to managing sexual harassment is bystander intervention (Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly, 2005; Rowe, 1996). As Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) explain, this can take a variety of forms. Employees who witness the harassment of a co-worker can redirect the harasser, remove the victim, or otherwise interrupt the situation. Further, bystanders can provide support to the victim, bolstering the victim's resources and sense of clarity and control. Bystanders can also take it upon themselves to confront or report the harasser, as such responses may be easier for nonvictims. These possibilities suggest that organizations should train employees on how to respond not only when they personally experience harassment, but also when they witness the harassment of others.

Sexual harassment interventions might also be embedded in broader initiatives to establish a civil, respectful workplace. For instance,

to promote civility, experts (e.g., Pearson and Porath, 2004) recommend that senior management model appropriate, respectful workplace behavior; clearly state expectations of civility in mission statements or policy manuals; and educate all employees on civility expectations. Cortina (2008) adds that organizational practices to set norms of civility should explicitly discuss equitable respect toward women and men (and Whites, gays, ethnic minorities, etc.). Leaders should also emphasize that unacceptable conduct includes not just overt acts of misogyny, obscenity, and sexual aggression, but also subtle devaluation and derision of members of either sex. This integrated strategy of embedding harassment-prevention efforts into larger civility-promotion programs would attract broader audiences, being relevant to all employees (female and male) and avoiding the resistance met by interventions that exclusively target sexual harassment (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2002; Lim and Cortina, 2005).

A final intervention aims to prevent sexual harassment by overhauling the structures that support it. The recommendation itself is quite simple: employ more women, promote more women, and integrate more women into every level of the organization. The goal should be a 'well-integrated, structurally egalitarian workplace,' in which women and men equally share power and authority (Schultz, 2003: 2071). Supporting this recommendation is empirical research linking male-skewed sex ratios to sexual harassment (e.g., Berdahl, 2007a; Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Gruber, 1998), stereotyping, and discrimination (see Kanter, 1977; Whitley and Kite, 2006). Organizational 'desegregation' may not eradicate sexual harassment entirely, but it can reduce the culture of hypermasculinity that promotes objectification, devaluation, and aggression toward women and gender-nonconforming men.

Methodological recommendations for sexual harassment research

Most sexual harassment research relies on cross-sectional, self-report surveys, with findings restricted to a single level of analysis. The importance of this work cannot be overstated, but it is time to broaden the range of methods employed in this domain.

With some notable exceptions (Glomb et al., 1999; Magley et al., 2005; Rospenda et al., 2006), few have investigated sexual harassment longitudinally. Longitudinal methods can address questions about causality, temporal patterning, and the persistence of negative outcomes. These approaches also allow researchers to conceptualize harassment as a dynamic process that 'unfolds' or has 'cascading effects' over time. Moreover, when self-report research temporally separates assessment of the predictor (harassment) and criterion (outcome) variables, concerns about mono-method bias are lessened.

We also encourage more experimental studies of sexual harassment. However, we do not advocate vignette-based paradigms in which students imagine how they might interpret or respond to a hypothetical scenario (if anything, such studies should be discontinued, given that their data have questionable validity). Instead, more fruitful and interesting possibilities lie in simulations of harassing behavior in the laboratory. There are ethical limits to such studies, but they are possible (see Maass et al., 2003; Pryor, 1987; Schneider et al., 2001; Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2001) and can yield unique contributions to the field.

Sexual harassment research should also incorporate multiple levels of analysis. Most studies have revolved around individual self-reports of perceptions, experiences, responses, etc. Not only does this approach have potential problems with mono-method bias, it typically misses group- or organizational-level antecedents (e.g., work-group gender attitudes) and outcomes (e.g., declines in unit productivity; see Raver and Gelfand, 2005, for a notable exception). We therefore recommend that multilevel methods become more customary in sexual harassment research, addressing processes at the level of the individual, team, organization, and society.

CONCLUSION

The past decade has witnessed great strides in research on sexual harassment. Much has been learned about its different forms, perpetrators, and victims, the contexts that promote it, and its effects on individuals and organizations. No longer seen as 'just' a 'women's issue,' sexual harassment is now recognized as illegal and immoral behavior that harms women, men, and the 'bottom line.' Despite these knowledge gains and the organizational changes that have accompanied them, harassment based on sex remains all too common. More research is clearly needed to better understand and prevent sexual harassment, helping organizations to foster vibrant, healthy, and respectful work environments.

NOTES

1 Some might wonder about the division between sexist and sexual hostility (Cortina, 2001; Fitzgerald et al., 1999b), or the gender-role-deviation harassment (e.g., Berdahl and Moore, 2006; Konik and Cortina, in press) identified in some administrations of the SEQ. Readers should note, however, that these are all subdimensions of gender harassment that emerged with the addition of new items. Thus, the higher-order tripartite factor structure of the SEQ has remained quite constant for over a decade.

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