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# Sexual Harassment in the Federal Workplace Revisited: Influences on Sexual Harassment by Gender

*Using data from the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board's most recent survey on sexual harassment, this study examines influences on sexual harassment in the federal workplace. We investigate the effect of workers' sociodemographic characteristics, aspects of their daily work environment (the sex of the supervisor and female/male ratio of coworkers), and agency location. Drawing on a variety of theoretical models and addressing a limitation of a previous study, we assess whether and how influences on sexual harassment differ for men and women. Not only does the likelihood of sexual harassment differ for men and women, but the determinants of harassment differ as well. Women are more likely to indicate receipt of unwanted sexual attention as their ratio of male coworkers increases, and men are more likely to indicate its receipt as their ratio of female coworkers increases. We also find differential effects for sex of supervisor, age, education, and job type, among other variables. Our analyses highlight that gender conditions the influences on sexual harassment.*

In a recent study Newman, Jackson, and Baker (2003) examine the influences on sexual harassment in the federal government workplace. Using a raw data file from the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board's most recent survey on sexual harassment, they assess the relative impact of several independent variables on the likelihood that a federal worker will receive unwanted sexual attention. Newman, Jackson, and Baker consider individual-level sociodemographic variables (sex, education, age, marital status, pay grade, and job type), the sexual composition of respondents' daily work setting (the sex of the supervisor and female/male ratio of coworkers), the agency where the respondent works, and the type of sexual harassment training offered by the agency. Not surprisingly, they discover that young, single or divorced females in low-status jobs are most likely to receive this type of attention. Furthermore, they report that contextual factors demonstrate lesser influence. For example, controlling for other factors, the likelihood of harassment does not vary markedly from agency to agency. In addition, Newman, Jackson, and Baker

indicate the effects of the day-to-day work environment (the sex of the supervisor and female/male ratio in the daily work setting) are not dramatic.

Although Newman, Jackson, and Baker's multivariate analyses provide theoretically and empirically important insights, a limitation is inherent in the treatment. Specifically, they estimate models of sexual harassment that pool men and women, and their additive model specifications

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rest on the assumption that the independent variables operate in the same way across these two subsamples. This assumption may be problematic, especially in regard to the influence of certain independent variables. Most obviously, the same sexual composition of coworkers likely has differential implications for men and women. Whereas women likely receive the most unwanted sexual attention in settings where they work primarily with men, men may receive the most unwanted sexual attention in settings where they work primarily with women (Gutek 1985). The point is that the influences on sexual harassment likely differ across the sexes. In the present study, we revisit their analyses and assess whether and how the influences on sexual harassment differ for women and men. We find noteworthy differences. However, the present effort is more than an incremental extension; it makes fundamental contributions to our understanding of sexual harassment in the federal government workplace. The remainder of the article provides a brief introduction to the subject of sexual harassment, reviews existing theoretical models of the influences on sexual harassment, and presents our findings and conclusions.

## Introduction

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was instrumental in prying open the doors of opportunity for women and minorities in the workplace. The major purpose of Title VII was to identify and eliminate discriminatory employment practices, with the goal of equal opportunity for all workers. Title VII proscribes both quid pro quo and hostile work environment harassment. However, despite the passage of some four decades of equal opportunity legislation, judicial rulings that outline illegal behavior in the workplace, and extensive workplace training, sexual harassment continues to define the work experience of many women and some men. Recent studies report that up to 50 percent of women (Fitzgerald 1990; Gruber 1990) are the recipients of one or more forms of sexual harassment on the job. According to a study conducted by the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, approximately 10 million women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace that meets all of the criteria outlined in Title VII (Dansky and Kilpatrick 1997, 152).

Although sexual harassment primarily takes the form of men harming women, the sexual harassment of men is also well documented. A 1994 survey of federal workers by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (1995, 13) indicated that 44 percent of women and 19 percent of men had experienced sexual harassment during the preceding two years. While only 1 percent of the women who had been harassed reported having experienced harassment from other women, 21 percent of the men who had been

harassed reported having experienced harassment from other men (MSPB 1995, 18). Male-to-male sexual harassment may be especially common in male-dominated work contexts (Pryor and Whalen 1997, 140).

Moreover, formal reports of sexual harassment are on the rise.<sup>1</sup> The overall number of sexual harassment charges received by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission increased from 10,532 in 1992 to 15,475 in 2001. The percentage of charges filed by men also increased over the same period, from 9.1 percent in 1992 to 13.7 percent in 2001. Beyond the numbers, the subject of sexual harassment is now part of the national consciousness. One need only recall the Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas controversy, the Tailhook scandal, and the allegations of sexual harassment directed against former Oregon senator Robert Packwood and President Clinton to appreciate that sexual harassment is an endemic feature of the contemporary workplace.

That sexual harassment remains entrenched in the workplace may be largely due to the persistence of occupational sex segregation. According to Schultz (1998, 1760), “hostile work environment harassment is both engendered by, and further entrenches, the sex segregation of work.” A central organizing principle of Title VII was the desegregation of the workforce—that is, the dismantling of occupational sex segregation by integrating women into work formerly reserved for men (Schultz 1998). Sexual harassment represents a major impediment to the desegregation of the workforce. Harassment provides a means for men to “mark their jobs as male territory and to discourage any women who seek to enter” (Schultz 1998, 1760), thereby preserving “the masculine image and male-dominated composition of favored types of work” (1762).

Despite the increasing number of women in the workplace and some accommodation of their needs, many women remain segregated in quintessentially “female” occupations. According to Guy and Newman (2004), job segregation continues to be extraordinarily stable, even though over half of all college students are women and some high-profile professions, including the legal and medical professions, have seen a tremendous influx of women in recent years. Over one-half of all employed women would have to change their occupational category to equalize occupational distribution by gender (Jacobs 1989). The relationship between sexual harassment and occupational sex segregation appears to be symbiotic.

Sexual harassment harms work style, job satisfaction, self-perception, and the ability to perform job functions (Gutek 1985; Kelly 1995). It serves to remind women of their place by punishing those who have dared to transgress prescribed gender boundaries (Schultz 1998, 1769). When female victims are no longer willing to stay the course at work and decide to leave, sexual harassment rep-

resents a barrier to desegregation of the workplace. For women who choose to stay, sexual harassment too often limits their effectiveness and demeans their status and authority at work (Newman 2004), in turn reinforcing sex-typed work.

Within existing organizational structures, what are the influences on sexual harassment, and to what extent do these influences vary by gender? We turn to the literature to inform our inquiry.

## Theoretical Review

Three theoretical models summarize the scholarly literature that investigates influences on sexual harassment: (1) the sociodemographic (also referred to as the sociocultural), (2) the social contact, and (3) the sex-role spillover. The following sections review variables that are drawn from these explanations of sexual harassment. These explanations also provide some insight into which variables likely demonstrate differential influence across men and women.

### The Sociodemographic Explanation

A worker's sociodemographic characteristics suggest his or her relative status and power, both within the workplace and within society (Tangri, Burt, and Johnson 1982). Whereas some characteristics are associated with positions of relative power, others are associated with personal vulnerability and risk. The most likely targets of sexual harassment are those who are lower on the rungs of status and power. According to this explanation, gender is a (perhaps *the*) key predictor of harassment risk; the value system of a patriarchal society legitimates power and status differences between men and women, rendering women vulnerable (Welsh 1999; Bowes-Sperry and Tata 1999). Empirical studies confirm that women are much more likely than men to be victims of sexual harassment. Furthermore, the results of multivariate models that control for other variables indicate that gender is the most powerful influence on (and predictor of) harassment (Newman, Jackson, and Baker 2003).

Extending this explanation, numerous studies confirm that marital status is also strongly related to sexual harassment (Gutek 1985; Lafontaine and Tredeau 1986; Schneider 1982; Tangri, Burt, and Johnson 1982; Fain and Anderton 1987; Kelly, Guy, and Bayes 1991; Newman 1993; MSPB 1995). Single, divorced, separated, and widowed women are more likely to be harassed than married women. Among the likely explanations, some potential harassers may perceive "married women as falling under the protection of another man" and as unavailable sexually (Gutek 1985, 57). Drawing on the existing literature, our expectation is that being married is more important for women (than for men) as a deterrent to sexual harassment.

However, Gutek (1985, 57) reports that married men are somewhat less likely than unmarried men to indicate they have been sexually harassed. Being married may provide some protection against sexual harassment for both women and men.

Age is another factor that influences a worker's likelihood of being sexually harassed. Female victims tend to be younger than the general female working population (Gutek 1985, 55; Welsh 1999). According to Fain and Anderton (1987), women aged 16–34 are most likely to be harassed, with the likelihood of harassment decreasing with age. These results are consistent with those of the Merit Systems Protection Board study (1995), which found that employees under the age of 35 have a greater chance of being harassed than do those who are older (see also Lafontaine and Tredeau 1986, 433). We will assess whether age demonstrates similar influence across women and men.

Although sex, marital status, and age are the most important sociodemographic influences on a worker's likelihood of being sexually harassed, some research also notes effects for education level, income, and job type. The findings for the directional influence of education are mixed. Whereas some studies indicate that education is associated with a lower likelihood of harassment, others find a positive relationship (Tangri, Burt, and Johnson 1982; Gutek 1985; Fain and Anderton 1987). A greater level of education generally enables workers to attain positions of greater status in the workplace, but schooling also increases awareness of sexual harassment and appears to empower workers to report it. These countervailing implications of education likely contribute to the mixed results for its influence. Similarly, some research suggests that, if anything, high-income workers are more likely to indicate they have received unwanted sexual attention (Newman, Jackson, and Baker 2003).

Due to their hierarchical organization, most workplaces confer differential power and status on employees in different positions or types of jobs. Not surprisingly, research indicates that workers who occupy high-status positions are less likely to be harassed than those in low-status positions (Fain and Anderton 1987; Bowes-Sperry and Tata 1999). Low-status workers (such as trainees and clerical workers) are more vulnerable than those in professional, managerial, and administrative positions.

Do education, high incomes, and high-status jobs provide women with personal resources that protect them from harassment? Alternatively, do education and high-status jobs make women more sensitive to harassment and empower them to report it? We assess the influence of these factors on a woman's likelihood of being harassed, as well as whether the influence of these factors differs across men and women.

## The Social-Contact Explanation

An extension of Kanter's pioneering work (1977a, 1977b), the social-contact hypothesis suggests that female workers who have extensive, routine contact with men in the workplace are more likely to be victims of inappropriate sociosexual behaviors (Gutek, Cohen, and Konrad 1990), largely independent of the type of jobs they hold. In a related inquiry, Gutek (1985, 117) finds that women with male supervisors are more likely to report the receipt of unwanted sexual attention.

A long line of research also documents the influence of workplace gender ratio on the incidence of sexual harassment (Schneider 1982; Tangri, Burt, and Johnson 1982; Gutek and Morasch 1982; Gutek 1985; Lafontaine and Tredeau 1986; Gutek and Cohen 1987; Gutek and Dunwoody 1987; Fain and Anderton 1987; Gutek, Cohen, and Konrad 1990; Niebuhr and Oswald 1992; Gruber, Smith, and Kauppinen-Toropainen 1996). Findings support the thesis that women in high-contact, male-dominated (nontraditional) work groups experience more sexual harassment than do women in traditional jobs or in jobs that have an equal representation of men and women. For example, women in blue-collar jobs may be especially likely to be harassed (Bowes-Sperry and Tata 1999). Research on the military highlights the influence of male normative dominance. Martindale (1990) reports that 64 percent of women in the military experienced sexual harassment during a two-year period. A U.S. Navy survey in 1991 found an even higher rate of harassment (74 percent) (Culbertson, Rosenfeld, and Newell 1993, cited in Gruber 1998, 303; Pryor 1995; Niebuhr 1997).

According to Gruber, "Numerical and normative dominance are twin aspects of the degree of influence and control one gender has over the other. Normative male dominance occurs in a number of work contexts that vary widely in male numerical dominance from, for example, situations where a few men have superordinate status over a largely female work group (doctors/nurses, managers/secretaries) to the 'male preserves' where women are virtually absent but highly visible" (1998, 302).

## The Sex-Role-Spillover Explanation

Sex-role-spillover theory (Nieva and Gutek 1981) denotes the carryover into the workplace of gender-based roles that are usually irrelevant or inappropriate to work (Gutek 1985, 15) and interfere with work performance. According to the typical treatment that draws on this explanation, sexual harassment occurs because male workers carry into the workplace improper role expectations for women—notably, sexual expectations they have learned elsewhere (Schultz 1998, 1761). Related to the contact hypothesis, sex-role-spillover theory predicts that "nontraditionally employed women with predominantly male colleagues are

treated differently than their (male) colleagues, are aware of this differential treatment, are likely to report a high frequency of social-sexual behaviors that are not part of the work role in general, and to feel that sexual harassment is a problem at work" (Tangri and Hayes 1997, 117).

When a job comes to be seen as either a man's job or a woman's job, the "appropriate" gender role spills over and becomes incorporated, formally or informally, into the work role (Gutek and Morasch 1982, cited in Konrad and Gutek 1986, 425). This is most likely to occur when the gender ratio in the workplace is heavily skewed—either predominantly male or predominantly female (Tangri and Hayes 1997, 117). That is, the gender role of the predominant group influences the workplace expectations for that job and the treatment and behaviors of women and men within the work group (Hotelling and Zuber 1997, 101).<sup>2</sup> Sex-role spillover occurs because gender identity is more salient than work identity (Tangri and Hayes 1997, 116). Thus, when there are more men than women in a workplace, the men treat the women first as women and secondarily as workers (Gutek 1985). Sex segregation of work facilitates sex-role spillover because sex segregation calls attention to gender (Gutek 1985, 40). Drawing on both the contact hypothesis and the sex-role-spillover theory, some subsidiary empirical questions have received less attention: whether men are more likely to receive unwanted sexual attention when they have frequent contact with women in the workplace or when they work in a (numerically) female-dominated work setting or occupation.

## Overview of the Data, Variables, and Models

The explanations just outlined complement each other and provide guidance for our examination of sexual harassment in the federal government workplace. We obtained the raw data file of the Merit Systems Protections Board's 1994 survey. In April 1994, the board sent survey questionnaires to a random sample of almost 13,200 federal employees situated in 22 departments and agencies nationwide. The response rate was 61 percent, with a total of 8,081 questionnaires returned. The board's 1995 report details the survey methodology, and the appendix of this article contains a statistical overview of the variables that we incorporated into our analyses.

## Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is identical to the one that was the primary focus of Newman, Jackson, and Baker's investigation. It is a dichotomous variable (SEXUALLY HARASSED, based on question 20 of the 1994 MSPB survey) of whether the respondent had received "uninvited and unwanted sexual attention" during the past 24

months from someone where he or she worked in the federal government.<sup>3</sup>

## Independent Variables

Our baseline independent variables are also identical to those of Newman, Jackson, and Baker and reflect the explanatory models outlined previously. Obviously, we are restricted to those variables that are available in the data set (as were Newman, Jackson, and Baker). For example, measures for demographic factors such as race and ethnicity are unavailable. Furthermore, the data do not contain highly detailed information about workers' job types and day-to-day work contacts; however, they do enable us to consider many important topics.

**Worker Characteristics.** Our specifications take into account a variety of worker characteristics: sex, education, age, marital status, pay grade, and job type. These variables reflect the sociodemographic or sociocultural explanation. For each of these characteristics, we coded a series of dichotomous (dummy) variables based on the respondent categories in the MSPB survey (see appendix).

**Daily Work Setting.** We created a series of dichotomous variables to gauge aspects of a respondent's daily work environment. Specifically, we created a dichotomous variable for male supervisor (MALE SUPERVISOR) and a series of dichotomous variables to gauge the ratio of men to women in the respondent's daily work setting (ALL MEN, MORE MEN, EQUAL, MORE WOMEN, and ALL WOMEN). Although these variables do not capture the full richness of either the contact hypothesis or the sex-role-spillover theory, they should provide important insights.

**Agency Location.** Finally, we created a series of dichotomous variables to account for the agency in which the respondent works (see appendix). These variables enable us to assess whether sexual harassment is more common in some federal agencies, controlling for other factors. Does general organizational climate matter? The collective works of Lowi (1964, 1985), Newman (1994), Selden (1997), Miller, Kerr, and Reid (1999), and Kelly and Newman (2001), for example, underscore the relationship between policy or agency type and both institutional structure and employee behavior. Specifically, research at the state level suggests that female managers in redistributive agencies in Arizona and Florida experience a higher incidence of sexual harassment than do their counterparts in distributive and regulatory agencies (Kelly and Newman 2001; Newman 1994). Among other things, we can assess whether women working in the defense agencies face greater risk, other things being equal. Furthermore, we will assess whether the effect of agency location differs for men and women.

## Models

Building on the models of Newman, Jackson, and Baker, we directly assess whether and how the influences on sexual harassment work differentially for men and women. Because our dependent variable is dichotomous, we estimate binary logit models.<sup>4</sup> Our general strategy takes the following form: First, we replicate their full sample models. Second, we estimate models for the subsamples of men and women.<sup>5</sup> Third, we estimate full-sample, multiplicative models that interact a dichotomous variable for sex (FEMALE) with the remaining independent variables. These multiplicative models provide direct statistical assessment of whether variables operate differentially across men and women (Long and Miethe 1988).

## Empirical Results

### Worker-Characteristics Models

Model 1.a (see table 1) replicates Newman, Jackson, and Baker's full-sample, baseline sociodemographic model of sexual harassment.<sup>6</sup> We refer the reader to their article for a detailed discussion of the results. Consistent with their findings, sex emerges as the most important influence on harassment likelihood, controlling for other factors, and women are more likely to be harassed.

Model 1.b isolates the subsample of women and model 1.c the subsample of men. Although similar in some aspects, the influences on sexual harassment differ in fundamental ways across the two subsamples. An initial review of the coefficient estimates in models 1.b and 1.c indicates that a higher level of education tends to be associated with a higher level of unwanted sexual attention for women but not for men, controlling for other factors. Likewise, a higher pay grade appears to be associated with more unwanted sexual attention for women but not for men.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas older age diminishes the likelihood of harassment for women in a dramatic and powerful fashion statistically, the influence of age is much less noteworthy for men. Somewhat surprisingly, marital status appears to operate similarly for men and women.<sup>8</sup> Relative to the married, those who are single and divorced are much more likely to be sexually harassed, and this conclusion applies to both men and women. An interesting caveat in regard to the influence of marital status is that widowed men appear to be inclined to indicate receipt of unwanted sexual attention—relative to both married men and their widowed female counterparts.

Turning to type of job, for both women and men, trainees experience the highest levels of sexual harassment, with one important qualifier for women. Controlling for other factors, women in blue-collar jobs are as likely—perhaps even more likely—than female trainees to indicate they

**Table 1 Sociodemographic Logit Models of Sexual Harassment**

Independent variable	Model 1.a (Full sample)		Model 1.b (Female subsample)		Model 1.c (Male subsample)		Model 1.d (Multiplicative model)	
	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value
High school	.251	.80	.821*	1.90	-.245	-.54	-.245	-.54
High school x female							1.07*	1.70
High school plus	.457	1.48	1.22**	2.81	-.504	-1.17	-.504	-1.17
High school plus x female							1.72**	2.82
Some college	.772**	2.52	1.34**	3.13	.125	.30	.125	.30
Some college x female							1.22*	2.03
College	.756**	2.42	1.41**	3.23	-.146	-.34	-.146	-.34
College x female							1.55**	2.53
College plus	.889**	2.75	1.57**	3.47	-.026	-.06	-.026	-.06
College plus x female							1.60**	2.52
Advanced degree	.711*	2.23	1.21**	2.72	-.020	-.05	-.020	-.05
Advanced degree x female							1.23*	1.97
25-34 years old	-.318*	-1.81	-.363*	-1.79	-.094	-.24	-.094	-.24
25-34 years old x female							-.270	-.61
35-44 years old	-.327*	-1.86	-.452*	-2.23	.098	.25	.098	.25
35-44 years old x female							-.550	-1.25
45-54 years old	-.704**	-3.93	-.862**	-4.16	-.188	-.47	-.188	-.47
45-54 years old x female							-.674	-1.50
55 plus years old	-1.31**	-6.66	-1.70**	-7.25	-.453	-1.10	-.453	-1.10
55 plus years old x female							-1.25**	-2.63
Single	.405**	5.54	.350**	3.88	.548**	4.30	.548**	4.30
Single x female							-.198	-1.27
Divorced	.511**	6.61	.527**	5.73	.514**	3.41	.514**	3.41
Divorced x female							.013	.07
Widowed	.114	.55	.071	.31	1.15*	2.14	1.15*	2.14
Widowed x female							-1.08*	-1.85
Pay grade 5-10	.120	.94	.204	1.36	.071	.28	.071	.28
Pay grade 5-10 x female							.133	.45
Pay grade 11-12	.142	.98	.232	1.31	.052	.19	.052	.19
Pay grade 11-12 x female							.180	.56
Pay grade 13-15	.255	1.62	.476**	2.41	-.044	-.15	-.044	-.15
Pay grade 13-15 x female							.520	1.50
Pay grade 15 plus	.726*	2.02	.718	1.11	.436	.93	.436	.93
Pay grade 15 plus x female							.283	.35
Blue collar	-.225	-.83	.358	.98	-.915*	-2.19	-.915*	-2.19
Blue collar x female							1.27*	2.30
Clerical	-.685**	-2.62	-.575*	-1.70	-.903*	-2.18	-.903*	-2.18
Clerical x female							.329	.62
Professional	-.832**	-3.17	-.685*	-2.00	-1.12**	-2.77	-1.12**	-2.77
Professional x female							.438	.82
Administrative	-.654**	-2.47	-.596*	-1.74	-.812*	-1.97	-.812*	-1.97
Administrative x female							.216	.40
Other job	-.871**	-2.82	-.541	-1.33	-1.46**	-3.02	-1.46**	-3.02
Other job x female							.920	1.46
Female	1.29**	20.24	—	—	—	—	-.154	-.17
(constant)	-1.19**	-2.82	-.603	-1.09	-.449	-.65	-.449	-.65
LR chi-square (d.f.) =	863.4	** (23)	278.9**	(22)	83.7**	(22)	928.0**	(45)
Number of obs =	6,496		3,544		2,952		6,496	

Note: For purposes of estimation and statistical comparison, the reference categories are "less than high school," "16-24 years old," "married," "pay grade 1-4," and "trainee."  
\*Significant at  $p < .05$  (one-tailed); \*\* significant at  $p < .01$  (one-tailed).

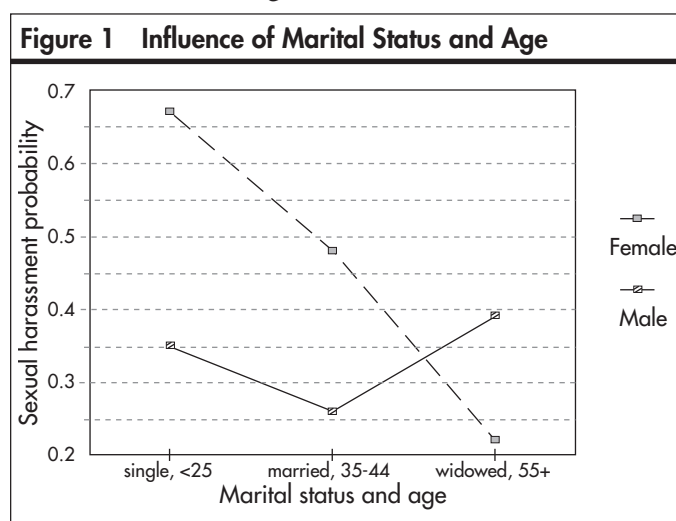
have been sexually harassed. Again, part of the explanation for the elevated level of harassment of females in blue-collar jobs is likely the nontraditional nature of their employment and the belief among (some) male coworkers that they are infringing on a male domain.

Containing the complete set of interactions between sex (FEMALE) and the remaining sociodemographic variables, model 1.d provides direct statistical assessment of differential influences across men and women.<sup>9</sup> To illustrate, recapturing the estimate from model 1.c, the coefficient operating on HIGH SCHOOL for men in model 1.d is  $-0.245$ . Recapturing the estimate from model 1.b, the coefficient operating on HIGH SCHOOL for women in model

1.d is  $(-0.245 + 1.07) = 0.820$ . Also of interest is the  $t$  value of 1.70 ( $p = .09$ ) that accompanies the coefficient for the interaction term (HIGH SCHOOL x FEMALE), which suggests a marginally statistically significant difference between men and women in the influence of this variable (that is, HIGH SCHOOL). The interaction terms are also positive and statistically significant for HIGH SCHOOL PLUS, SOME COLLEGE, COLLEGE, COLLEGE PLUS, and ADVANCED DEGREE. These results reinforce the fact that education demonstrates a powerful, positive influence for women but not for men. Controlling for other factors, highly educated women are especially inclined to indicate they have been sexually harassed.

The significant, negative interaction between sex and the dichotomous variable for the oldest age category (FEMALE x AGE 55 PLUS) highlights the fundamental difference in the influence of age across the oldest female and the oldest male workers. Overall, getting older appears to play a greater role in attenuating the likelihood of unwanted sexual attention among women than it does among men. Furthermore, whereas widowed women are no more likely to be sexually harassed than married women, widowed men are more likely to be sexually harassed than married men, all other things being equal. This difference in the influence of widower status across the sexes is statistically significant.

As a generalization, women are more likely than men to be sexually harassed. However, it appears that most women go through a life-cycle trajectory (they get older, many marry, and some ultimately become widows) that dramatically lowers their harassment risk. The pattern for men differs in important respects; aging does not appear to demonstrate as powerful an attenuating influence among men, and, if anything, becoming a widower places them at greater risk of receiving unwanted sexual attention. Figure 1 illustrates the differential influence of life-cycle changes in marital status and age on female and male workers.<sup>10</sup>



Finally, consistent with our expectations, working a blue-collar job demonstrates an effect on the harassment likelihood of a woman that is significantly greater than its effect on the harassment likelihood of a man, all other things being equal. This result supports the hypothesis drawn from the extant literature. Blue-collar female workers are at a unique risk of receiving unwanted sexual attention in the workplace.

### Daily-Work-Setting Models

The coefficient estimates in table 2, model 2.a emerge from Newman, Jackson, and Baker's full-sample model of sexual harassment that specifies, in addition to socio-demographic variables, indicators of daily work setting—specifically, a dichotomous variable for the sex of the supervisor and a series of dichotomous variables that gauge the ratio of men to women in a respondent's day-to-day work life.<sup>11</sup> The estimates in model 2.b emerge from the companion model that isolates the subsample of women, and the estimates in model 2.c emerge from the companion model that isolates the subsample of men. Consistent with our expectations, these variables work quite differently for men and women. As the ratio of female workers increases, the likelihood that a *female* worker experiences sexual harassment declines significantly. A woman is most likely to receive unwanted sexual attention when all of her immediate coworkers are men. Table 3 and figure 2 illustrate the effect of the sexual composition of coworkers on a woman's probability of having been sexually harassed.<sup>12</sup> Moving from an environment in which all coworkers are male to one in which all coworkers are female decreases her probability of having been harassed by 31 percentage points (50 percent).

For men, the likelihood of receiving unwanted sexual attention is greatest when all coworkers are female and smallest when all coworkers are male. However, between these extremes, the likelihood of harassment does not vary markedly for men. Table 3 and figure 2 illustrate the effect of the sexual composition of coworkers on a man's prob-

**Table 2 Coefficient Estimates for Variables Gauging Sexual Composition of Work Setting**

Independent variable	Model 2.a (Full sample)		Model 2.b (Female subsample)		Model 2.c (Male subsample)		Model 2.d (Multiplicative model)	
	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value
Male supervisor	-.140*	-2.04	-.077	-0.94	-.318**	-2.53	-.318**	-2.53
Male supervisor x female							.241	1.61
More men	.044	.31	-.329*	-1.65	.794**	2.89	.794**	2.89
More men x female							-1.12**	-3.31
Equal men	-.170	-1.16	-.652*	-3.23	.770**	2.68	.770**	2.68
Equal men x female							-1.42**	-4.05
More women	-.281*	-1.86	-.749**	-3.66	.684*	2.28	.684*	2.28
More women x female							-1.43**	-3.95
All women	-.305	-.86	-1.27**	-2.80	1.85**	2.89	1.85**	2.89
All women x female							-3.13**	-3.97

Note: For purposes of estimation and statistical comparison, the reference categories are "female supervisor" and "all men."  
 \*Significant at  $p < .05$  (one-tailed); \*\* significant at  $p < .01$  (one-tailed).

**Table 3 Probability of Having Been Sexually Harassed**

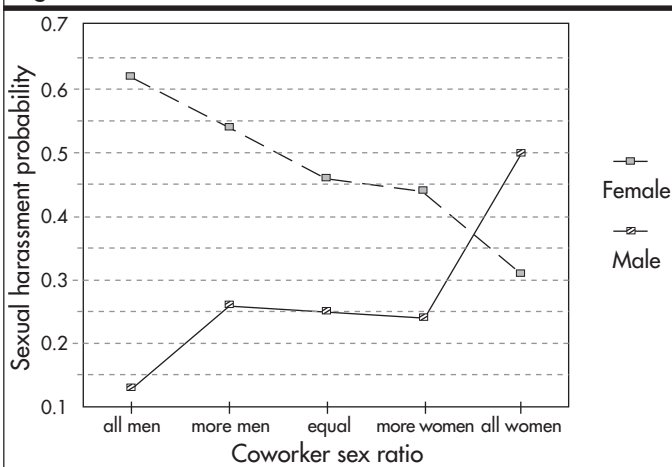
	Female	Male
All men (coworkers)	.62	.13
More men	.54	.26
Equal	.46	.25
More women	.44	.24
All women	.31	.50

Note: These estimates are based on a 35-44 year old in a clerical position who has a male supervisor, some college education, and a pay grade of 5-10.

ability of having been sexually harassed. Moving from an environment in which all coworkers are female to one in which all coworkers are male decreases his probability of having been harassed by 37 percentage points (74 percent).

The coefficient estimates in model 2.d emerge from a full-sample multiplicative model that contains the complete set of interactions between sex (FEMALE) and the

**Figure 2 Influence of Coworker Sex Ratio**



**Table 4 Coefficient Estimates for Agency Variables**

Independent variable	Model 4.a (Full sample)		Model 4.b (Female subsample)		Model 4.c (Male subsample)		Model 4.d (Multiplicative model)	
	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value	Coefficient	t value
Agriculture	-.187	-1.02	-.124	-.54	-.305	-.97	-.305	-.97
Agriculture x female							.181	.47
Commerce	.189	.99	.238	.98	.105	.33	.105	.33
Commerce x female							.133	.33
Air Force	.136	.75	.303	1.35	-.152	-.48	-.152	-.48
Air Force x female							.455	1.17
Army	.232	1.29	.330	1.48	.023	.08	.023	.08
Army x female							.307	.81
Navy	.171	.88	.323	1.32	-.074	-.23	-.074	-.23
Navy x female							.397	.97
Other DOD	.151	.84	.094	.42	.212	.69	.212	.69
Other DOD x female							-.118	-.31
Education	.075	.38	.222	.93	-.228	-.61	-.228	-.61
Education x female							.450	1.02
Energy	-.046	-.26	-.087	-.39	.144	.46	.144	.46
Energy x female							-.231	-.60
EPA	.227	1.19	.285	1.22	.271	.81	.271	.81
EPA x female							.014	.03
GSA	.303	1.64	.301	1.33	.305	.96	.305	.96
GSA x female							-.005	-.01
HHS	-.142	-.72	-.101	-.43	-.167	-.47	-.167	-.47
HHS x female							.067	.16
HUD	.294	1.51	.328	1.41	.339	.96	.339	.96
HUD x female							-.011	-.03
Interior	.298	1.68	.179	.79	.426	1.48	.426	1.48
Interior x female							-.247	-.67
Justice	.129	.73	.404	1.79	-.281	-.90	-.281	-.90
Justice x female							.685	1.78
Labor	.113	.59	.191	.82	.086	.26	.086	.26
Labor x female							.105	.26
NASA	.023	.13	.135	.60	-.050	-.15	-.050	-.15
NASA x female							.184	.47
OPM	.270	1.36	.394	1.63	.060	.17	.060	.17
OPM x female							.334	.77
SBA	-.044	-.23	.056	.25	-.296	-.76	-.296	-.76
SBA x female							.352	.78
State	.219	1.06	.181	.70	.352	1.04	.352	1.04
State x female							-.171	-.40
Transportation	.161	.88	.344	1.49	-.151	-.46	-.151	-.46
Transportation x female							.495	1.24
Treasury	.338	1.93	.366	1.68	.373	1.26	.373	1.26
Treasury x female							-.007	-.02
VA	.318	1.78	.270	1.19	.357	1.22	.357	1.22
VA x female							-.086	-.23

Notes: None of these coefficients is significant at  $p < .05$  (two-tailed). We rely on two-tailed tests due to the absence of a strong directional expectation in most instances. For purposes of estimation and statistical comparison, the reference category is "other agency."



**Table 5 Statistically Significant Agency-to-Agency Differences in Sexual Harassment**

<b>3.a (Full sample)</b>				
	Agriculture	Energy	HHS	SBA
Army	2.30*			
EPA	2.13*			
GSA	2.59**			
HUD	2.43*			
Interior	2.69**			
OPM	2.26*			
Treasury	2.94**	2.17*	2.51*	2.05*
Veterans	2.78**	2.01*	2.36*	
<b>3.b (Female subsample)</b>				
	Agriculture	Energy	HHS	
Justice	2.24*	2.14*	2.08*	
OPM	2.05*			
Treasury	2.14*	2.04*	2.00*	
<b>3.c (Male subsample)</b>				
	Agriculture	Air Force	Justice	SBA
Interior	2.60**	2.02*	2.51*	1.98*
Treasury	2.33*		2.26*	
Veterans	2.29*		2.21*	

Note: Relative to its incidence in the agencies arrayed vertically, sexual harassment is significantly less likely in the agencies arrayed horizontally (controlling for other factors).  
 \*Significant at  $p < .05$  (two-tailed); \*\* significant at  $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

remaining independent variables. These significant interactions in model 2.d highlight the differential influence of the variables gauging the sexual composition of daily workgroup on the likelihood that a male worker and a female worker have received unwanted sexual attention.

Furthermore, controlling for other factors, men are significantly less likely to indicate receipt of unwanted sexual attention when they have a male supervisor—alternatively, men are more likely to indicate its receipt when they have a female supervisor. Somewhat surprisingly, the sex of the supervisor does not demonstrate a significant effect on a female’s harassment likelihood, all other things being equal.<sup>13</sup>

### Agency-Location Models

The coefficient estimates in table 4, model 4.a, emerge from Newman, Jackson, and Baker’s full-sample model of sexual harassment that specifies, in addition to the sociodemographic variables, a series of dichotomous variables for agency location.<sup>14</sup> The estimates in model 4.b emerge from the companion model that isolates the subsample of women, and the estimates in model 4.c emerge from the companion model that isolates the subsample of men. Consistent with the result for the full-sample model (Newman, Jackson, and Baker 2003), the difference of chi-square (log-likelihood ratio) tests indicate the set of agency dummies does *not* provide statistically significant explanatory leverage for either subsample. Furthermore, an initial review of the individual coefficients operating on the specific agency variables does not reveal much in the way of dramatic differences in harassment like-

lihood across agencies for either men or women, holding other things constant. Perhaps of greatest interest, the defense agencies do not appear to be outliers for the female subsample.

Although these global assessments of the significance of the *set* of agency variables, which are based on the difference of chi-square (log-likelihood ratio) tests, do not depend on the selected base category (in this instance, OTHER AGENCY), the individual coefficients and *t* values in table 4 do—that is, each emerges from a specific comparison to OTHER AGENCY. Other comparisons could reveal significant agency-to-agency differences in harassment likelihood, controlling for other factors. To assess this possibility, we estimated a series of models in which each agency was specified as the base category. Table 5 summarizes the statistically significant findings.

In comparison to workers in the agencies arrayed vertically, workers in the agencies arrayed horizontally are significantly *less* likely to report having been sexually harassed (controlling for other factors). To illustrate, for all three samples (the full sample, the female subsample, and the male subsample), workers in the Department of Agriculture are less likely to report having been sexually harassed than are workers in the Treasury Department. The results indicate that sexual harassment is less likely in the Department of Agriculture than in many other federal agencies. Furthermore, it appears that the Departments of Treasury and Veterans Affairs are associated with somewhat elevated levels of sexual harassment, at least relative to several other agencies. These findings are consistent with the earlier work of Kelly and Newman (2001) and Newman (1994). Other noteworthy patterns emerge. For example, whereas men working in the Justice Department are significantly *less* likely to report having been sexually harassed than are men working in several other agencies (specifically, the Interior, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs departments), women working in the Justice Department are significantly *more* likely to report having been sexually harassed than are women working in several other agencies (specifically, the Agriculture, Energy, and Health and Human Services departments). Again, despite their high-profile sexual harassment scandals in recent years, the defense agencies do not emerge as outliers.

Are there identifiable factors associated with the work culture and organizational environment at the Agriculture Department that set it apart from the Treasury and Veterans Affairs departments? Do women and men at the Justice Department experience a markedly different work climate? These more specific questions deserve consideration in future research.

The coefficient estimates in model 4.d emerge from a full-sample multiplicative model that contains the complete set of interactions between sex (FEMALE) and the

remaining independent variables (sociodemographics and agency location). A difference of chi-square (log-likelihood ratio) test between this model (the full model) and a model without the interactions between agency and sex (the “restricted” model) indicates this set of interactions does not provide statistically significant leverage—globally speaking, sex does not condition the influence of agency (or, alternatively, agency does not condition the influence of sex) on sexual harassment. Although the specific coefficients in model 4.d are based on comparisons to OTHER AGENCY as the base category, a review of a series of models in which each agency becomes the base category also reveals very few statistically significant interactions between sex and agency. However, in several agency-to-agency comparisons, women working in the Justice Department are significantly more likely than men working in the same department to indicate they have been sexually harassed, other things being equal. These results reinforce findings from table 5.

## Discussion

Female workers are more likely than male workers to receive unwanted sexual attention in the federal workplace. The influence of gender holds, even in the face of controls for a variety of other characteristics. However, this study provides new insights into sexual harassment in the federal workplace and, more specifically, how sexual harassment differs across men and women. We demonstrate that the influences on sexual harassment differ across men and women.

As the contact hypothesis and sex-role-spillover theory suggest, women who work primarily with men are more likely to receive unwanted sexual attention, and women who work primarily with other women are less likely to receive unwanted sexual attention. Our results also demonstrate that men who work primarily with women are more likely to receive unwanted sexual attention, and men who work primarily with other men are less likely to receive unwanted sexual attention. Furthermore, men are significantly more likely to indicate receipt of unwanted sexual attention when they have a female supervisor. Of course, we do not come away from our results advocating gender segregation in the workplace. Our findings demonstrate that organizations must recognize the difficult work environment that faces both female workers in (numerically) male-dominated work settings and male workers in (numerically) female-dominated work-settings. Serious, ongoing training programs focused on workers in these settings are especially necessary. Our results also indicate that women in blue-collar jobs are at a unique risk of receiving unwanted sexual attention. Again, we suggest that employers direct proactive and, ideally, preemptive training ef-

forts toward workers in these environments. Although researchers should exercise caution in reaching conclusions about life-cycle phenomena from cross-sectional data, our results are consistent with some interesting patterns. Based on these data, female workers who are older and either married or widowed are much less likely than female workers who are young and either single or divorced to receive unwanted sexual attention. The results suggest that women’s harassment risk plunges over the course of their working life. However, older men are not markedly less likely than young men to receive unwanted sexual attention, all other things being equal. Similar to the results for women, single or divorced men are more likely than married men to be sexually harassed; however, unlike widowed women, widowed men, if anything, are more likely than married men to indicate receipt of unwanted sexual attention. In summary, these results suggest a flatter and less predictable pattern of harassment probability over the course of a man’s working life.

Our results also indicate that educated women are markedly more likely to indicate receipt of unwanted sexual attention in the workplace, controlling for other factors. Education does not operate in a similar fashion for men. Educated women appear to be especially aware of and sensitive to inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace.

Finally, our analyses do not reveal dramatic differences in the likelihood of harassment across the various federal agencies, holding worker characteristics constant. Again, this general conclusion holds for the full sample and for both the male and female subsamples. Counter to conventional wisdom based on anecdotal evidence, the defense agencies do not emerge as outliers for the female subsample.

## Conclusion

Writing in the early 1980s, Gutek (1985, 178) predicted that “it is possible by the mid-1990s to eliminate sexual harassment, leaving a more productive and professional workplace for everyone.” Clearly, her prediction was too optimistic. Even at the start of the new century, sexual harassment remains commonplace for women at work and the norm in many organizations. Sexual harassment has the consequence of maintaining the sex-segregation of the contemporary workplace, thereby limiting the dismantling of glass walls and glass ceilings. This outcome is in strict contradiction to the spirit and letter of Title VII. Our results also reinforce that some men receive unwanted sexual attention in the workplace.

The nature of the influences on sexual harassment differs across men and women. With a focus on the federal workforce, this article has shed a bright light on differential influences on sexual harassment across gender, refin-

ing an earlier analysis. In many respects, men and women experience a different workplace. Not only does the likelihood of sexual harassment differ for men and women, the determinants of harassment differ as well. Our analyses highlight the conditional nature of sexual harassment and

its influences. Although easy solutions to the problem do not exist, it is high time to deny sexual harassment a future, bringing Gutek's (1985) prediction to fruition. It is our hope that this study will move us one step closer toward attaining this seemingly elusive goal.

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## Notes

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1. Fewer than 15 percent of sexual harassment victims file formal complaints (Dansky and Kilpatrick 1997, 169).
2. See Schultz (1998, 1761, n. 409) for a critique of sex-role-spillover theory.
3. The 1995 MSPB study defines "uninvited and unwanted sexual attention" broadly and, beyond strictly legal parameters, as occurring in the following situations: actual or attempted rape or assault; stalking; uninvited and unwanted pressure for sexual favors; uninvited and unwanted deliberate touching; leaning over, cornering, or pinching; uninvited and unwanted sexual looks or gestures; uninvited and unwanted letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature; and uninvited and unwanted pressure for dates (MSPB 1995, 61). Thirty-three percent of respondents indicated receipt of uninvited and unwanted sexual attention (44 percent of women and 19 percent of men). Given the nature of some of our models and tests, we focus on sexual harassment in workers' current agencies.
4. With a dichotomous dependent variable, a binary logit model is preferable to a linear regression model (that is, a linear probability model). Linear probability models suffer from heteroskedasticity, inefficient estimates, biased standard errors and thus incorrect test statistics, non-normally distributed errors, and the possibility of nonsensical probability estimates that are negative or greater than one. Binary logit models avoid these problems.
5. An obvious qualifier is that we exclude the dichotomous variable for sex (FEMALE) from those models that isolate the subsamples of men and women.
6. We also estimated robust standard errors for all of the models that we consider. Without exception, the *t* values that accompany these robust standard errors are quite similar to the conventional *t* values.
7. However, these results for pay grade are statistically less powerful than those for education.
8. Marital status may condition the influence of other variables on sexual harassment. The existing literature suggests that being married may partially insulate female workers from unwanted sexual attention (Gutek 1985; Fain and Anderton 1987). We also estimated models of sexual harassment for the subsample of women that introduce interactions between a dichotomous variable for being married and the remaining independent variables. However, we did not discover much in the way of statistically significant results. The one noteworthy finding is that single women in blue-collar jobs are significantly more likely to be harassed than are their married counterparts.
9. A difference of chi-square (log-likelihood ratio) test between the full model with the complete set of interactions (model 1.d) and the restricted model without interactions (model 1.a) indicates that the set of interaction terms provides statistically significant explanatory leverage. Globally speaking, sociodemographic influences on sexual harassment differ for men and women.
10. These probability estimates are based on a clerical worker with some college education who is classified at a pay grade of 5–10.
11. The coefficient estimates and accompanying levels of significance for the sociodemographic variables (not presented in table 2) are similar to those in table 1.
12. These probability estimates are based on a 35–44 year old in a clerical position who has a male supervisor, some college education, and is classified at a pay grade of 5–10.
13. Following Newman, Jackson, and Baker (2003), we also estimated models of sexual harassment that examine the influence of type of sexual harassment training. Either training for all workers or training for supervisors appears to be the most effective option. However, most important for purposes of this study, the contextual influence of type of training did not differ across men and women.
14. The coefficient estimates and accompanying levels of significance for the sociodemographic variables (not presented in table 4) are similar to those in table 1.

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### Appendix Statistical Summary of Variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
16–24 years old	7292	.026	0	1
25–34 years old	7292	.201	0	1
35–44 years old	7292	.318	0	1
45–54 years old	7292	.323	0	1
55 plus years old	7292	.132	0	1
Administrative	7171	.240	0	1
Advanced degree	6886	.156	0	1
Agriculture	7803	.052	0	1
Air Force	7803	.050	0	1
All men	7202	.054	0	1
All women	7202	.007	0	1
Army	7803	.050	0	1
Blue collar	7171	.128	0	1
Clerical	7171	.283	0	1
College	6886	.212	0	1
College plus	6886	.087	0	1
Commerce	7803	.038	0	1
Divorced	7178	.159	0	1
Education	7803	.033	0	1
Energy	7803	.055	0	1
EPA	7803	.036	0	1
Equal	7202	.301	0	1
Female	7819	.545	0	1
GSA	7803	.045	0	1
HHS	7803	.038	0	1
High school	6886	.096	0	1
High school plus	6886	.133	0	1
HUD	7803	.036	0	1
Interior	7803	.050	0	1
Justice	7803	.050	0	1
Labor	7803	.037	0	1
Less than high school	6886	.014	0	1
Male supervisor	7136	.739	0	1
Married	7178	.621	0	1
More men	7202	.391	0	1
More women	7202	.246	0	1
NASA	7803	.046	0	1
Navy	7803	.039	0	1
OPM	7803	.032	0	1
Other agency	7803	.051	0	1
Other DOD	7803	.049	0	1
Other job	7171	.032	0	1
Pay grade 1–4	7776	.058	0	1
Pay grade 5–10	7776	.460	0	1
Pay grade 11–12	7776	.275	0	1
Pay grade 13–15	7776	.199	0	1
Pay grade 15 plus	7776	.007	0	1
Professional	7171	.305	0	1
SBA	7803	.039	0	1
Sexually harassed	7738	.331	0	1
Single	7178	.200	0	1
Some college	6886	.302	0	1
State	7803	.029	0	1
Trainee	7171	.012	0	1
Transportation	7803	.045	0	1
Treasury	7803	.051	0	1
VA	7803	.048	0	1
Widowed	7178	.020	0	1